AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO BROADCASTING, ONLINE CONTENT AND LIVE PRODUCTION TO RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

FEBRUARY 2016
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About the Australia Council for the Arts

The Australia Council is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. The Council’s purpose is to champion and invest in Australian arts, by supporting excellence across all art forms and leveraging investment to support and build a vibrant arts sector. The Australia Council is a national advocate for the arts and works to increase national and international access to Australian arts and culture.

The Australia Council was established as a Commonwealth statutory authority in 1975, and its functions were updated under the Australia Council Act 2013. The Council’s functions under section 9 of the Act are to:

(a) support Australian arts practice that is recognised for excellence;
(b) foster excellence in Australian arts practice by supporting a diverse range of activities;
(ba) support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practice;
(bb) support Australian arts practice that reflects the diversity of Australia;
(bc) uphold and promote freedom of expression in the arts;
(bd) promote community participation in the arts;
(c) recognise and reward significant contributions made by artists and other persons to the arts in Australia;
(d) promote the appreciation, knowledge and understanding of the arts;
(e) support and promote the development of markets and audiences for the arts;
(f) provide information and advice to the Commonwealth Government on matters connected with the arts or the performance of the Council’s functions;
(g) conduct and commission research into, and publish information about, the arts;
(h) evaluate, and publish information about, the impact of the support the Council provides;
(i) undertake any other function conferred on it by the Act or any other law of the Commonwealth;
(j) do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the above functions.

The Australia Council is a Corporate Commonwealth entity under the Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013.

The Australia Council’s Strategic Plan 2014-19: A Culturally Ambitious Nation, guides the work of Council, including the four strategic goals:

- Australian arts are without borders
- Australia is known for its great art and artists
- The arts enrich daily life for all
- Australians cherish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures.
Introduction

The Australia Council has a strong commitment to supporting artists and developing audiences in rural and regional areas. We deliver this work across all four goals of our Strategic Plan 2014-2019: A Culturally Ambitious Nation.

In particular, this is reflected in Goal Three of our Strategic Plan: The arts enrich daily life for all. This goal maintains that every Australian should be able to experience the transformative power of art, no matter where they live, what language they speak or how much they earn.

Our commitment to the arts in rural and regional Australia is delivered through a suite of funding initiatives that support regional and remote arts practitioners and arts organisations, and provide regional and remote audiences with access to the arts.

Australia Council funding for arts activity in rural and regional areas ranges from project and development grants, funding through the Australian Government’s National Regional Touring Programs and other Government initiatives, multi-year core program funding for small-to-medium arts organisations and larger Major Performing Arts (MPA) companies, as well as strategic national development and capacity building activity. All these forms of support enable artists and arts organisations to undertake work in the regions and help grow a sustainable, diverse and vibrant Australian arts sector.

The following submission provides an overview of these different forms of Australia Council support for the arts in rural and regional Australia.

Arts ecology in the regions

The Australia Council supports a complex network of arts practitioners, small-to-medium arts organisations and larger organisations to undertake artistic work in rural and regional areas.

There are many layers of Australia Council support that cultivate the arts ecology in rural and regional areas. These forms of support are complementary and stimulate activity at different levels in the arts ecology.

Work in rural and regional areas is undertaken by the following branches of Australia’s arts ecology:

- Individual artists and groups of artists working across a range of art forms who are based in or deliver arts projects in rural or regional areas
- Arts organisations based in regional areas, including arts companies and festivals creating and presenting artistic work for regional audiences and engaging with communities in rural and regional areas
- Arts organisations of varying sizes based in metropolitan areas that undertake touring and engagement in rural and regional areas.

This submission provides some context and background information about different parts of Australia’s arts ecology, including examples of work by artists and arts organisations from across the ecology who are working in rural and regional areas with Australia Council support.
Arts participation in the regions

The Australia Council undertakes significant research and publishes information to develop a greater understanding of arts and culture across Australia. This includes research about participation in the arts, career development for artists, audience development, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures, and the role of arts and culture in Australian life and the cultural economy.

The Australia Council’s *Arts Nation: An Overview of Australian Arts* report builds understanding of Australian arts through a new set of national indicators. The inaugural report was launched in March 2015, drawing on a range of existing and new data, framed within a new set of indicators designed to inform the conversation about the arts in Australia. The report looks at participation and engagement in the arts in Australia, the artist population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, the cultural economy, and Australian arts internationally.

The *Arts Nation* report serves as a snapshot in time, setting a benchmark against which the Australia Council can measure future trends. It also identifies data gaps, so the report will evolve over time as the Australia Council works collaboratively with the sector to build a comprehensive picture of the arts.

The *Arts Nation* report includes details of arts attendances in regional and remote areas, including the following figures by region and art form. Table 1 outlines arts attendance in major cities, regional and remote areas based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

*Table 1: Arts attendance by region and art form, 2013*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Major Cities</th>
<th>Inner Regional</th>
<th>Outer Regional</th>
<th>Remote</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Arts</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre &amp; Dance</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Arts Nation* report notes that, despite its size, Australia has one of the world’s most urbanised populations and there is more arts infrastructure in urban areas where there are larger populations. However, living in a regional location limits engagement with the arts less than might be expected.²

Residents in major cities were slightly more likely to attend arts events than those in inner regional, outer regional and remote areas (74%, compared with 69%, 65% and 67%). Attendance is slightly higher in major cities across art forms; but people living in regional and remote areas are more likely to have attended Indigenous or community arts.³

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² Australia Council, *Arts Nation*, 12.

³ Australia Council, *Arts Nation*, 12.
Further details about participation in Indigenous arts by region and art form are in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Indigenous arts attendance by region and art form, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Form</th>
<th>Major Cities</th>
<th>Inner Regional</th>
<th>Outer Regional</th>
<th>Remote</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts &amp; Crafts</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Music</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part of the Australia Council’s arts participation research looks at attitudes to the arts and views on impacts of the arts by region. The Australia Council commissioned an independent study, *Arts in Daily Life: Participation in the Arts*, to provide insight into how Australians engage with the arts today. It provides a comparison of shifting attitudes and behavioural trends by benchmarking findings in 2013 against those from the original study in 2009.

Survey results from the *Arts in Daily Life: Participation in the Arts* study relating to attitudes and impacts of the arts by region are attached to this submission for reference.

Monitoring participation and engagement in the arts in regional and remote areas is a priority research area for the Australia Council. Ongoing analysis will allow us to track participation trends over time and monitor the impact of our programs in the regions.

**Funding breakdown**

In 2014-15 the Australia Council invested $28.9 million in funding for the arts in regional Australia, to strengthen the mobility of diverse and excellent Australian work, foster the vitality of artists and arts organisations in regional and remote communities, and increase audience access.

Creation, presentation and access to excellent artistic work in regional Australia was achieved through the following investment in 2014-15:

- National Regional Touring Programs $8.6 million
- Major Performing Arts (MPA) $6.3 million
- Australia Council Grants $5.4 million

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- Key Organisations (small-to-medium sector) $4.7 million
- Other Government initiatives $3.9 million

The sections below provide further background and examples of the range of activity supported through these programs and initiatives.

**Grant Programs**

The Australia Council introduced a new grants model from 2015, designed to be more accessible, with flexible and streamlined programs enabling artists and arts organisations in rural and regional Australia to more easily apply for grants to create, present, tour or exhibit their work.

The core grant programs include arts project grants for individuals, groups and organisations, and development grants for individuals and groups.

In the two 2015 rounds of the Council’s grants program (March and September 2015), over 20% of funding went to artists and arts organisations working in regional and remote areas.

In the March 2015 grants round $2 million (or 24%) of the funding awarded went to artists and arts organisations either based in regional areas or for projects where the main location of activity is a regional or remote area of Australia. This includes 44 grants that were awarded to applicants based in regional and remote areas, which made up 19% of total funding awarded.

In the September 2015 round of the grants program, $2.7 million (or 26%) of the funding awarded went to artists and arts organisations either based in regional areas or for projects where the main location of activity is a regional or remote area of Australia. This includes 52 grants that were awarded to applicants based in regional and remote areas, which made up 22% of total funding awarded.

The Australia Council’s grant programs are assessed by expert artistic peers from across Australia working in a range of art forms. The group of more than 600 Australia Council Peers available to assess grant applications includes 120 peers based in regional and remote areas.

Examples of grants awarded in the September 2015 round with a regional focus include:

- A $108,630 grant to Katherine Regional Arts in the Northern Territory for the Katherine Arts Muster: Strong Arts Building Strong Communities. The Muster consists of six projects, which will run from Katherine Regional Arts’ community arts studio, an accessible space used by artists and the local community. The Muster delivers arts activities to the Katherine region, and initiates partnerships with Katherine Regional Arts’ counterparts, including regionally with Darwin Community Arts and nationally with Footscray Community Arts Centre in Victoria. The Muster will strengthen arts and culture in the Katherine region while also building links for artists nationally.

- A $149,200 grant for Brown’s Mart Theatre in the Northern Territory to deliver its BUILD UP development program and SHIMMER presentation season of new Northern Territory work. The 2016 season consists of three new Northern Territory works led by key Northern Territory Creative Producers. Brown’s Mart’s BUILD UP program
underpins the SHIMMER program by supporting artists and groups to develop new works for final presentation.

- A $149,920 grant for Corrugated Iron Youth Arts’ 2016 Presentation Program of collaborative, creative investment with young artists around Darwin in the Northern Territory.

- A $49,803 grant to the Broome Aboriginal Association Aboriginal Cooperative in WA for its Boom Aboriginal Media Association Goolarri Writers Program, which extends the creative skills of emerging playwrights and helps to develop stories through mentoring and masterclasses.


- A $50,000 grant for the City of Greater Geelong, Victoria, to curate M~M2016, Geelong’s Extreme Arts Walk, a new experience of ‘walking country’. A similar project was undertaken in 2014, involving an 80 kilometre extreme arts walk. M~M2016 will include an inaugural art commission that will extend the concept of extreme art and incorporate ceremonies in the project.

The following are examples of Australia Council grants awarded in the 2014-15 financial year for activities in regional and remote areas:

**Bush Bands Bash**

In 2014-15 Music NT received a $132,000 Arts Projects for Organisations grant to deliver the Bush Bands Bash, an annual celebration of Aboriginal desert music held in Alice Springs, Northern Territory. The Bush Bands Bash is Australia’s premier annual music event for Indigenous musicians from remote central Australian communities. The program’s reach extends from the Northern Territory into South Australia and Western Australia.

Bands involved typically play Desert Reggae, a genre unique to Aboriginal community bands, with lyrics telling of family, place and contemporary issues. Key to the program is a three-day residential music camp, the Bush Bands Business, which mentors musicians in creative, industry, business and performance skills. The camp culminates with the Bush Bands Bash concert in Alice Springs; a professional showcase and standout celebration of contemporary Indigenous music that draws an audience of thousands. Australia Council funding included support for Music NT to deliver capacity building activities to develop business skills for Indigenous musicians during the project.

**Dance projects in regional communities**

In 2014-15 the Australia Council awarded a total of $449,240 in funding to five arts organisations to stage performances, mentor local artists and engage with audiences to enable regional communities to experience contemporary dance. Projects supported include:

- Country Arts SA developing a stimulus program for audience engagement in contemporary dance titled ‘DanceXtend’
- Mandurah Performing Arts Centre presenting a comprehensive program of contemporary dance for the audiences and artists of Peel and Western Australia
- Ausdance Queensland and Cairns Centre of Contemporary Arts delivering New Move Network
- Frankston Arts Centre presenting a range of contemporary dance opportunities to engage with dance makers and build audiences in Victoria
- BlakDance Australia in partnership with Performing Lines supporting Indigenous dance to reach Australian audiences nationally.

This initiative focuses on building understanding and appreciation of high quality dance works through new presentations and community and audience engagement programs. Most of the projects extend over two years from January 2015.

**Merrigong Theatre Company’s Studio Sessions initiative**

Merrigong Theatre Company in Wollongong NSW received a $150,000 grant for its Studio Sessions initiative from 2014 – 2016, to develop and present new contemporary work from independent artists. Through this funding two new contemporary works have been developed and three new contemporary works presented each year from locally connected independent artists and groups. Merrigong Theatre Company also manage the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre.

Further examples of grants and projects supported across art forms and rural and regional areas are provided in the sections below.

**National Regional Touring Programs and other Government initiatives**

Through the Australian Government’s National Regional Touring Programs, the Australia Council supports artists and arts organisations to tour their work to regional and remote areas. Audiences across Australia are able to enjoy arts experiences that are both excellent and diverse, with projects ranging from innovative to classic works by some of the nation’s best artists and arts organisations. These projects range from performances and exhibitions by Australia’s largest arts companies and institutions to smaller scale works by individual artists and emerging arts companies. Recipients of National Regional Touring Program grants often develop strong community engagement programs to enhance the impact of their tours and to strengthen their connections with local audiences.

Goal One of the Australia Council’s Strategic Plan: **Australian arts are without borders**, includes a specific commitment that the Australia Council will maximise the impact of the National Regional Touring Programs to increase access across regional communities.

The National Regional Touring Programs currently administered by the Australia Council on behalf of the Australian Government include:

- Playing Australia: Regional Performing Arts Touring Fund, which supports the touring of professionally produced performing arts tours to reach regional and remote audiences across Australia.
- Contemporary Music Touring Program, which supports national touring activity undertaken by Australian musicians performing original contemporary music, with a focus on regional and remote areas.
- Contemporary Touring Initiative, which supports the development and touring of significant national exhibitions of contemporary visual arts and crafts to regional and remote locations.

Playing Australia

In the 2014-15 financial year $6.2 million was delivered through Playing Australia. This includes funding for the National Touring Status program. Further information on National Touring Status is provided below.

All production companies, including MPAs and small-to-medium arts performing arts organisations, tour coordinators and individual independent producers and artists are eligible to apply for Playing Australia funding.

The program supports a diverse range of work to tour, ranging from opera and classical music by MPA Companies to circus, children’s theatre, physical theatre, contemporary music and dance.

In addition to Playing Australia, the Australia Council’s investment in the development and production stages of the touring works provides an important pathway of support for new Australian work to reach wide audiences across regional Australia. Almost half of the productions that come to the Playing Australia fund have been developed with support of Australia Council multi-year core program funding or through project grant support, and demonstrate an important component of the arts ecology to ensure that regional audiences have access to contemporary and quality performing arts experiences.

In 2013-14 and 2014-15 the Australia Council supported over 60 companies to present 2,000 performances through Playing Australia to estimated audiences of over 630,000 people. These tours included over 900 additional engagement activities (workshops, masterclasses and opportunities for communities and artists to engage directly with artists and the touring companies). Over half of both the performances and engagement activities supported through these tours took place in regional and remote areas.

National Touring Status

In 2013 the Playing Australia National Touring Status initiative was created as part of a suite of enhancements made by the Australia Council to the National Regional Touring Programs, based on consultation with the arts sector and the Ministry for the Arts.

National Touring Status grants were introduced to support the 2015-2017 touring programs of performing arts companies with demonstrated national touring experience. These grants are designed to enhance the development and engagement of regional and remote audiences through longer term partnerships with presenters, and enable the funded companies to plan and present a longer-term regional touring and engagement strategy. 2015-2017 National Touring Status grant applicants were able to apply for up to $400,000 per annum.
To be eligible for National Touring Status, companies had to demonstrate a track record of national touring. The application required companies to articulate a vision, objectives and strategies for their three year touring program with a focus on how National Touring Status could be leveraged to enhance touring deliverables and audience impact over the three year period.

Successful National Touring Status applicants are not eligible to submit applications to the standard project funding rounds of Playing Australia for touring activities in 2015, 2016 or 2017.

The successful National Touring Status organisations for 2015-2017 are Bell Shakespeare, Sydney Dance Company, Patch Theatre Company and Circa. The support for these companies through National Touring Status will ensure that regional audiences have access to a diverse range of quality experiences from live theatre, theatre for children, contemporary dance, physical theatre and circus.

The first delivery year of the program was 2015, and the four companies proposed touring itineraries encompassing visits to 103 locations, with almost three quarters of these locations being in regional and remote areas. The Australia Council will conduct an analyse the outcomes and impacts of the first year of the National Touring Status initiative, however we have already identified that the National Touring Status refinement to the Playing Australia program to support a more sustained and targeted regional engagement is already translating into success.

The Australia Council will offer the National Touring Status grants program again in October 2016 for the 2018 – 2020 triennium. Applications for Playing Australia National Touring Status open on 4 October 2016. Companies can apply for up to $400,000 per annum over the three year period.

**Playing Australia examples**

Examples of Playing Australia grants awarded in 2015-16 include:

- $418,131 for Opera Australia to tour The Marriage of Figaro to Victoria, NSW, ACT and Tasmania, presenting 27 performances in 21 venues in 2016. This includes a tour to the town of Burnie and the remote town of Zeehan in regional Tasmania. This grant expands Opera Australia’s reach into towns and venues that are off the traditional touring circuit and enables new audiences to experience the best in Australian opera.

- $165,763 for the Flying Fruit Fly Circus to tour their original circus production by and for young people *Control Alt Delete* to 12 venues across regional Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

- $190,542 for Expressions Dance Company to tour Natalie Weir’s *Carmen Sweet* to 17 venues across Victoria, NSW and SA in 2015, with a strong community engagement component. Carmen Sweet is a contemporary dance interpretation of Bizet’s Carmen story, featuring three dancers playing the different states of mind of Carmen.
Another example of how Playing Australia grant funding enhances access to arts and culture in regional communities is Bangarra Dance Theatre’s tour of *Belong* to eight regional, remote and very remote communities in Queensland, NT and WA in 2014. With a $307,146 Playing Australia grant, Bangarra Dance Theatre delivered performances and community activities across the three states, including on Thursday Island. As there is no formal theatre venue on Thursday Island, the company constructed an outdoor stage for the performance to enable presentation of the work as if it were being toured in a regional theatre. In addition to the performance, the Thursday Island leg included workshops and masterclasses aimed at creative participation and cultural exchange with local young people and artists.

**Contemporary Music Touring Program**

A total $0.4 million in grants were delivered through the Contemporary Music Touring Program (CMTP) in 2014-15. CMTP supports national touring activity undertaken by Australian musicians performing original contemporary music. It provides travel support of up to $15,000 for artists and their manager for tours in Australia that include performances in regional and remote areas. An additional request of up to $15,000 can be sought for tours to remote and very remote areas.

CMTP provides an important avenue for audiences to directly engage with music artists and see live performances in regional Australia, and the program continues to support music artists based in regional areas to access support to build their profile and tour their work. CMTP supports a wide range of musical styles for diverse audiences, from indie to contemporary, classical to Indigenous bands, Australian country to metal and rock. The important focus of the program is supporting original contemporary work by Australian artists.

**Contemporary Music Touring Program grant examples**

Graham Rodger is a country music artist from remote Australia with a strong following and dedicated touring commitment to regional and remote locations, particularly in very small towns. Graham’s touring model involves a unique ‘tag-along’ component with a segment of his audience travelling with him in a caravan throughout the tour, providing additional financial and social benefits of an influx of people and spending to very small, isolated towns. Graham is based in regional Queensland. He received a grant of $30,000 in the September 2015 round of CMTP to undertake a tour in May 2016 that will reach 12 remote and very remote locations in Queensland and South Australia.

Courtney Barnett is an independent recording artist who has developed a national and international profile, receiving four awards at the 2015 ARI Independent Music Awards, including Best Independent Artist, and earning a 2016 Grammy nomination. With a $15,000 grant from CMTP, Courtney will tour with a roster of artists from her independent Milk! Records label for a 12 date tour in Victoria, NSW and Queensland in 2016, with over half the tour destinations in regional areas. As well as Courtney, the line-up features Jen Cloher, Ouch My Face, Fraser A. Gorman, The Finks and the East Brunswick All Girls’ Choir.

The Bärra band (translated West Wind) hail from Birrtjimi Aboriginal community on the tip of the Gove Peninsula. Under the guiding hand of band leader Larrtjunnga Gurruwiwi, son of Djalu Gurruwiwi, the custodian of the yidaki (didgeridoo), the band creates authentic Arnhem Land music, an eclectic mix of harmonies, reggae, ska and traditional music –
including original songs and new renditions of traditional songs all in their own language. Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (NT) received a grant of $28,500 for Bärра to tour their new CD and undertake workshops with young people in predominantly remote and very remote communities across the Northern Territory in May of 2015.

Marlene Cummins is an accomplished singer-songwriter who received $15,000 to undertake a national tour to promote her debut album Koori Woman Blues. Marlene's album features world class players such as the late Gil Askey, Fiona Boyes, Paul Williamson and Ray Beadle. The 20 date tour travelled across Victoria, NSW, WA, SA and Queensland in 2015.

Tura New Music in WA received $30,000 for its 2015 regional tour Reflection, featuring renowned Indigenous artists William Barton and Stephen Pigram with the Echo Ensemble. The tour commenced in Kununurra and Wyndham in the East Kimberley, and then travelled to Broome, One Arm Point, Djarindjin/Lombadina and Beagle Bay in the Dampier Peninsula, before moving on to the Pilbara communities of Port Hedland, Karratha and Roebourne.

Contemporary Touring Initiative

The Contemporary Touring Initiative is delivered by the Australia Council as part of the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy (VACS), a formal agreement between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to support the Australian contemporary visual arts sector. Through VACS the Australia Council provides directed funding for individual artists, arts and craft organisations, arts events and artist run initiatives.

Contemporary Touring Initiative had previously been delivered as part of the Visions of Australia program, another of the Australian Government's National Regional Touring Programs. Visions of Australia has now been transferred for the Ministry for the Arts to administer as part of the 2015-16 Budget measure, National Programme for Excellence in the Arts – establishment.

Following the separation of the Contemporary Touring Initiative from Visions of Australia, in 2016 the Contemporary Touring Initiative program will offer grants to support the development and/or touring of significant national exhibitions of work by living contemporary visual artists.

National Regional Touring Programs transferred to Ministry for the Arts from 2015-16

As noted above, under the 2015-16 Budget measure, National Programme for Excellence in the Arts – Establishment, some National Regional Touring Programs were transferred to the Ministry for the Arts to administer from 2015-16 onwards, including:

- Festivals Australia: Regional Festivals Project Fund, which supports regional and remote festivals to produce and present quality arts activities and projects that enhance their regular program of activities.

- Visions of Australia: Regional Exhibitions Touring Fund, which supports the development and touring of exhibitions of Australian cultural material that has artistic, social, cultural and historical significance.
Creative Communities Partnerships Initiative

Creative Communities Partnerships Initiative (CCPI) is an Australian Government program delivered by the Australia Council that has funded large-scale, multi-year arts and cultural development projects of excellence built around arts and non-arts partnerships to deliver significant long-term outcomes for communities across Australia, including in regional areas. CCPI’s priority areas recognise the need for investment in communities with specific needs for arts and cultural development, including regional and remote Australia.

The Australia Council was planning to offer the program in 2015-16, however, following the 2015-16 Budget, which included measures that significantly reduced the Australia Council’s annual appropriation from $211.7 million in 2014-15 to $184.5 million in 2015-16, the Australia Council identified that it no longer had capacity to continue CCPI in the changed funding environment.

CCPI funds are fully allocated for existing funding agreements, which continue in 2015-16. Following the measures in the 2015-16 Budget, the Australia Council announced that the CCPI would not be accepting applications in the 2015-16 financial year or beyond. Applicants are eligible to apply for funding for this type of activity through the Australia Council’s grants program, but it is noted that this will be part of a more competitive process.

CCPI was the result of an Australian Government investment in the program of $10 million over four years from 2008-09 to 2011-12. Based on the success of this program and the outcomes for partners and communities resulting from this investment, the Australia Council continued to invest in the CCPI program from 2011-12 until 2015. Over the life of CCPI, the Australia Council has invested a total of over $24 million to fund 59 significant and long-term creative partnership projects in communities across Australia. At least 29 of these projects totalling over $12 million were exclusively or predominantly undertaken in communities in regional Australia.

CCPI supports opportunities for Australians to participate in meaningful arts and cultural activities in the places where they live. The program has provided funding for community arts and cultural development practitioners and organisations to deliver projects with and for communities in partnership with arts and non-arts organisations. Non-arts partners range from local government and state government (particularly the non-arts portfolios) to trusts and foundations, universities, Aboriginal corporations, and not-for-profit organisations and corporations across a wide range of sectors (health, education, regional development, disability, social enterprise and technology) as well as Aboriginal organisations.

Partnerships are key to CCPI projects, with partners contributing at least 50% of the budget. It is estimated that $3 is invested in CCPI projects by non-arts partners for every $1 spent by the Australia Council. Projects supported through the CCPI deliver innovative community based arts programs with long term outcomes and stimulate innovation across organisations, governments and in communities in the use of the arts to promote social cohesion and community wellbeing. Evaluations of CCPI projects have built up a substantial body of evidence for the success of the CCPI model of long-term partnership-driven community arts and cultural development projects in delivering substantial development and artistic outcomes for communities across Australia.
A number of examples of earlier completed CCPI projects are outlined below.

**Regional Arts Victoria**

Regional Arts Victoria received $150,000 over 3 years from 2009 to 2011 to undertake Illuminated by Fire, a three year partnership between Regional Arts Victoria (RAV), the Neighbourhood house and Learning Centre (NHLC) and the local Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigades. The project embedded artists in residence in over 10 locations across regional Victoria, including in Ballarat, Kyneton, Briagolong and Portland and other bushfire-prone locations. The initiative worked with local participants, including CFA volunteers, through an arts-led process of development through the sharing of stories and the creation of artistic outcomes, including local performances, and finally to a major exhibition and presentation of the outcomes of projects across the communities in a multi-media exhibition and event at Federation Square in Melbourne in 2011. The project provided an avenue for communities in bushfire prone areas in regional Victoria to come together through arts engagement experiences, and work with a range of art forms to explore their own experiences, build connections and resilience, and create art works for exhibition within their own communities and to wider audiences.

**Change Media**

Change Media received $200,000 over two years for The Hero Project, a long-term cultural community building initiative using digital media to engage and develop skills, connections and capacity. The project involved flexible targeted workshops aimed at establishing media hubs in regional communities, based around artists working with communities to develop new skills and support communities to create their own digital stories and content. Most participants in the project were from regional communities and many were from groups experiencing challenges in accessing formal education, training and employment opportunities. The project involved over 40 partners across all tiers of government (including federal environment and education departments) non-profit organisations including Indigenous corporations and not-for-profits, as well as the private sector, including Apple Australia. The project established 8 new media hubs in Indigenous and regional communities to continue their own projects, and many community participants transitioning into formal education and training. From the Australia Council’s $200,000 grant, the project leveraged more than $459,000 in additional contributions from the project partners and won multiple awards and project outcomes were showcased within the community as well as receiving widespread distribution through film festivals in Australia and internationally.

**Artists in Residence program**

The Artists in Residence program will soon be discontinued following the 2015-16 Budget measure *Arts and Cultural Programmes – efficiencies*, which applied a reduction to the Artists in Residence program. Following this reduction, combined with a significant overall reduction in the Council’s 2015-16 appropriation, the Australia Council announced that it will cease to deliver the Artists in Residence in schools program once current funding agreements conclude. The program is in the final months of an almost decade-long partnership with all states and territories, with funding agreements concluding in June 2016.
The Artists in Residence program is delivered through co-funding partnerships between the Commonwealth Government and individual state and territory jurisdictions. The program is coordinated and funded nationally by the Australia Council, with program delivery and the partnership with their respective education department managed by each of the state and territory arts agencies.

The aim of the Artists in Residence program is to improve young people’s access to quality arts education by supporting professional artists to participate as ‘artists in residence’ in schools and universities.

The Artists in Residence program was established in 2008 as a four-year $5.2 million Australian Government initiative. It supports the principles of the National Statement on Education and the Arts released in 2007 by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs and the then Cultural Ministers Council. Based on the outcomes of the pilot program from 2008-09 to 2011-12, the Australia Council continued the program from 2012-13 to 2015-16, investing an additional $3.8 million over the last three years in a second triennium.

The Artists in Residence program places professional practising artists in residence in schools to enhance the education of students through arts engagement projects and activities. Artists in Residence is distinct from other school-based arts education, as it seeks to foster arts experiences within schools that are based on students creating and responding to art working directly with professional practicing artists and creative practitioners. The Artists in Residence model also encourages collaboration at all levels of teaching, learning, management and delivery.

Since its inception, the Artists in Residence program has supported almost 400 residencies in schools across Australia, including in regional, remote and very remote locations. Artists in Residence has seen artists and arts organisations take up residencies in schools across the country and for some young people, it has provided their first opportunity to directly engage with a practicing professional artist. The program also enables artists, arts organisations and schools to continue or to develop school based artist residencies directly funded or supported by the school community or from other sources beyond Artists in Residence.

In 2015 the Australia Council commenced planning to renew the partnership for the 2016-17 to 2018-19 triennium, however following the 2015-16 Budget the Australia Council identified that it no longer had capacity to continue the Artists in Residence program in the changed funding environment.

**Regularly Funded Organisations**

A range of small-to-medium arts organisations and larger organisations including the Major Performing Arts (MPA) companies receive multi-year core program funding from the Australia Council to undertake their activities across Australia. This includes delivering arts projects and touring live productions that engage rural and regional audiences.

Core program funding for MPA companies and small-to-medium arts organisations enriched the lives of 1.5 million people in regional areas in 2014-15 through their attendance at an exhibition, schools activity or workshop run by these organisations.
In the 2014-15 financial year $6.3 million of the $28.9 million in funding for the arts in regional Australia was delivered to the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, an MPA company working in a regional area based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia. MPA companies based in metropolitan areas also undertake a range of touring and engagement activity in rural and regional areas, and examples of this work are provided below.

In 2014-15, $4.7 million in core program funding was provided to small-to-medium arts organisations working in regional areas. This enabled the creation, presentation and access of artistic work in rural and regional Australia across a variety of art forms, including theatre, music, dance, visual arts, emerging and experimental, and community arts and cultural development. As with the MPA companies, many small-to-medium arts organisations supported by the Australia Council may be based in metropolitan areas but deliver projects and activities in rural and regional areas. Examples of this work are found below.

Major Performing Arts framework

Under the National Framework for Governments’ Support of the Major Performing Arts Sector (the MPA Framework), the Australia Council administers annual core funding to 28 MPA companies on behalf of the Australian Government and state governments, at levels they set and agree to. In 2014-15 the Australia Council administered a total of $106 million in funding to the MPA companies.

The MPA companies receive funding to develop and present excellent artistic works and foster a vibrant and sustainable performing arts sector. MPA companies are presenters and producers of large scale artistic work, are considerable employers and contributors to their local economies and have an important role to play in the development of audiences and artists nationally. This work enables regional audiences to access some of the best dance, theatre, circus, opera, and orchestral and chamber music that Australia has to offer.

Funding agreements with the MPA companies emphasise the importance of artistic vibrancy and engaging with diverse audiences, including in regional and remote areas. In addition to core program grants, a small allocation of funding supports the MPA sector through strategic initiatives, company reviews and artistic development.

Australia’s 28 MPA companies receive annual program funding under the MPA Framework. The MPA Framework was established at the meeting of the then Cultural Ministers Council in August 2000, when Arts and Cultural Ministers agreed on the recommendations made in the Major Performing Arts Inquiry Final Report: Securing the Future. This included a commitment to maintaining a shared funding model through the MPA Policy, which was implemented in 2001. In August 2011 at the Meeting of Cultural Ministers, a revised MPA Framework was endorsed and implemented in 2012.

The Australia Council monitors each MPA company against its agreed outcomes and performance indicators, which are reviewed annually with all government partners and input from the MPA Panel. The Board of the Australia Council has established an MPA Panel to assist with overseeing the MPA framework and to provide advice on specific company and sector issues. The Australia Council considers the MPA results in a broader context of support to other areas of the arts sector nationally. This overview and strategic understanding is critical to the health of each area of arts practice in Australia.
The following provides some examples of MPA company activities in rural and regional areas. These examples relate to the 2014 calendar year, being the most recent period where full reporting is available.

Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO)

In 2014, ACO delivered its ACO VIRTUAL project through regional Australia, an immersive and interactive digital installation of the ACO. This project was made possible with MPA funding, with additional support from Arts Queensland, the Commonwealth Bank, Aurizon and the Minderoo Foundation. ACO VIRTUAL provides an educational experience about the nature of the orchestra, and reached nearly 11,000 people in regional centres in 2014. ACO VIRTUAL contributed to a 60% increase in the ACO’s regional audience reach, and has the potential to continue for several years to come.

Bangarra Dance Theatre

In 2014 Bangarra undertook its longest ever regional tour, with the company performing 15 times, including 4 free community performances. As noted above, this tour included performances in eight regional, remote and very remote communities in Queensland, NT and WA.

Bangarra’s Rekindling program aims to connect young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to their cultures and communities. Rekindling relies on the participation of the local community to provide stories, song, dance and language as material for a piece of contemporary dance that is created by the participants with the help of Bangarra artists. At the conclusion of the program, there is a performance for the community.

The Rekindling program was expanded in 2014, with teams operating in regional NSW and Queensland. The program reached eight new communities and attracted over 300 applications for a maximum of 200 places. The Rekindling program was delivered in three residencies over 12 days. Communities reached include Nowra, Wollongong and Coffs Harbour (NSW) and Theodore, Beaudesert, Cairns and Weipa (Queensland). Communities involved in Rekindling 2013 were also visited by the teams as part of the follow-up process.

The Australian Ballet

In 2014 The Australian Ballet (TAB) toured to regional audiences in 11 locations throughout Victoria, WA and Tasmania. TAB’s in-schools education program reached 17,735 students, teachers and community members in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, SA, WA and NT. An additional 22,289 people participated in TAB’s audience engagement activities in 2014.

Opera Australia

In 2014 Opera Australia’s Regional Tour included the launch of the Regional Children’s Choruses, which engaged 475 children to form 23 Choruses and perform on stage with Opera Australia when the touring company came to their town. Opera Australia also offered four Regional Student Scholarships, auditioning over 100 high school students across NSW, Victoria, ACT and Tasmania. These programs were highly successful and will continue in 2015.
Small-to-medium arts organisations

A key way that the Australia Council supports the small-to-medium arts sector is by delivering multi-year core program to 145 Key Organisations and two Territory Orchestras. These organisations are recognised for their national leadership in artistic excellence and the critical role they play in the Australian arts landscape. In 2014-15 the Australia Council delivered $23.1 million in multi-year funding to the Key Organisations and Territory Orchestras.

The small-to-medium arts sector occupies the significant territory between individual arts practitioners and larger scale companies. This part of the sector can be viewed as a leading ‘public activator’ of Australia’s arts and cultural life. It embraces and engages local artists, and is collaborative and highly accessible to audiences nationally and internationally. The small-to-medium sector plays a vital role in the professional and career development of artists, serving as a practical training ground and enabling mobility of artists from one sector to another. Small-to-medium arts organisations are exceptionally diverse and responsive, providing a platform for excellent new and emerging work and engaging in creative risk and innovation.

The following provides some examples of work in rural and regional areas undertaken by Key Organisations receiving multi-year core program funding from the Australia Council. As with the MPA companies section above, many of these examples relate to the 2014 calendar year, being the most recent period where full reporting is available.

Regional Arts Australia

Regional Arts Australia (RAA) is the key national body working with, and for the arts in regional and remote Australia. Its member organisations include: Regional Arts NSW, Arts NT, Artslink Queensland, Country Arts SA, Tasmanian Regional Arts, Regional Arts Victoria and Country Arts WA. These organisations provide support to arts and cultural networks working in regional and remote communities throughout their respective states and territories. The Australia Council has provided long-term support for RAA’s biennial Summit.

The RAA Summit brings together over 500 delegates from across the country who work in, are involved with, or support the arts in regional Australia. Held in different regional destinations across Australia, each Summit is part conference and part festival as the artistic content reflects and celebrates the host community. The Australia Council has awarded grants to support the artistic program at previous RAA Summits. For example, for the 2014 RAA Summit held in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, WA, the Council awarded grants totalling up to $153,000 to support the artistic program, which were received through our competitive peer assessed grants program.

The Australia Council has a consistent presence at each RAA Summit, acknowledging the crucial role that regional arts play in the overall arts ecology. During the Summit Council staff provide information about funding opportunities through the Australia Council and discuss issues and opportunities for the regional arts sector.
The 2016 RAA Summit, *Artlands*, will be held in Dubbo and hosted by Regional Arts NSW, and the Australia Council will again have a significant presence throughout the event. The Australia Council recently awarded Regional Arts NSW a $150,000 grant in the September 2015 grant round towards delivery of the Summit.

*Artback NT*

Artback NT is the Northern Territory’s visual and performing arts touring agency, and has been delivering multi-art form artistic programs across the breadth of the Northern Territory for many years. Artback NT has offices in Darwin, Alice Springs and Borroloola, and promotes excellence and advocates for Northern Territory artists at a national level.

In 2015, Artback NT travelled over 186,000 kilometres to deliver 167 arts activities nationally across 22 locations, reaching audiences of 142,700 across its four programs. The organisation presented 76 workshops and facilitated 41 school events, while employing a total of 252 Indigenous artists and arts workers.

An example of an Artback NT project with significant impact is a workshop and training program it delivered on audio describing. Delivered as a five day audio describing workshop, an experienced audio describer and arts disability worker presented to seven arts professionals from across the Northern Territory. Audio describing involves describing what a sight-abled person would see when looking at a visual artwork, which is then recorded and made available through digital playback devices so that persons who are blind or have low vision can participate in the visual arts. This training was made available for Artback NT personnel and the public - and now includes audio descriptions with all Artback NT’s travelling exhibitions. This project was launched at *Colours of Country III* at Chan Contemporary Art Space in Darwin, in August 2014, which was attended by 1,377 people.

*Barkly Regional Arts*

Barkly Regional Arts is the regional hub for the arts in the Barkly region of the Northern Territory, delivering multi arts programs and initiatives to communities throughout the region. In 2014 Barkly Regional Arts delivers its 25th Desert Harmony Festival. Since Barkly Regional Arts began hosting the Festival, it became a catalyst to promote the area’s distinctive identity locally, nationally and globally through marketing and partnership networks. Building the Festival’s profile through innovative marketing techniques, Facebook friends increased to 13,239, web streamed to over 806 viewers and with a Festival Vlogger reached more than 800,000 people through social media. The 25th festival ran for 17 days with a total of 25 events to celebrate Barkly’s History of Innovation with more than 3,000 people attending.

*HotHouse*

Over the years HotHouse Theatre in Wodonga (Victoria) has developed into one of Australia’s leading regional theatre companies. It produces and presents high quality shows and provides valuable services to the industry and the local community.

In recent years HotHouse has further developed its drama classes and participatory programs, which aim to engage and connect with the Wodonga community creatively.

**Somebody’s Daughter Theatre Company**

Somebody’s Daughter Theatre Company works with disadvantaged communities to produce high quality theatre, music and art. The company works with women in prison and post-release marginalised young people, using the arts as a driver to help break intergenerational cycles of abuse and addiction. The Company regularly works in collaboration with education, health and welfare agencies to establish strong community partnerships.

Somebody’s Daughter is an example of an arts organisation with headquarters in a metropolitan area, however with a satellite production base in a regional area. Somebody’s Daughter Theatre Company is located in Melbourne, however in 2000 the Company established HighWater Theatre in Albury/Wodonga, a creatively led education program for young people outside the mainstream school system. HighWater Theatre is a collaboration with the Gateway Community Health Service and Victorian Department of Education and Training, working intensively on a full-time creative arts-based education program with rural teenagers.

Set on the banks of the Murray River at Gateway Island, the multi-award-winning HighWater is a unique program where professional artists and post-release women (trainee artists) work with some of the most disengaged, high risk young people in the community on a program aimed at drug prevention and improving teenage emotional and physical wellbeing. All of the school-aged participants have missed not just days but years of school. HighWater’s success has derived from being arts-led and long-term.

**Circa**

Circa is an exceptional circus company based in Brisbane, Queensland, which undertakes significant national and international touring, including in regional areas. In 2014, Circa delivered a travelling festival to 33 venues across Australia, with 5 different shows presented and many circus workshops for all ages. Presenters were offered a chance to curate a program of shows and experiences that were right for their venue, their audiences, and their program. The tour included sell out performances of “S” in Mildura and Nunawading; the population of Candelo attending *46 Circus Acts in 45 Minutes*; connecting with many youth circuses around the country, and touring *Wunderkammer* through SA and WA.

A major outcome of this work was the building of a relationship with over 20 presenters across Australia to develop a stronger national presence. As noted above, Circa was successful in receiving National Touring Status funding for 2015-2017 through the Playing Australia program, and continues to deliver significant national touring with this support.

**Dancenorth**

Dancenorth is a contemporary dance-theatre company based in Townsville, North Queensland. It is one of only two regionally-based contemporary dance companies in Australia, the other being Tasdance in Launceston, Tasmania.
Since 2010, Dancenorth has concentrated on creating world-class repertoire and generating quality partnerships with key stakeholders. Its repertoire development strategy has included two new full-length main-stage works, the creation of the Double Bill program, re-working of existing repertoire, and building its education and community program. *Threefold: Webber/Hill/Huang Yi* (2014) was the first ever collaboration between Australia’s two regional contemporary dance companies, and the combined ensemble of six dancers from Tasdance and Dancenorth.

Over the past two and a half years, the organisation has been targeting regional and national touring by developing appropriate repertoire and artistic initiatives. Through this concentrated effort, Dancenorth solidified key partnerships that have in turn resulted in unique annual and bi-annual touring circuits within the region.

**Performing Lines**

Performing Lines delivers a diverse range of activity, developing, producing and touring new and innovative Australian performing arts regionally, nationally and internationally. In 2014 Performing Lines produced a wide range of innovative, diverse and high quality projects, presentations and tours (over 500 shows) reaching regional, remote and metro audiences and communities in every state and territory. The most attended show was *Wulamanayuwi and the Seven Pamanui* (the inaugural BlakLines tour) with over 9,000 audience members. An increased focus on developing strong community engagement activities for a number of projects and all tours was highly valued by presenters, artists and community members, which lead to an increased commitment by presenters to pursue similar approaches in future. 38% of Performing Lines’ projects were theatre, 31% dance, 21% physical theatre and 10% multi-art form. Indigenous performing arts represented 14% of Performing Lines’ total program.

**Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre Corporation**

Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) in WA works with a range of communities and organisations to produce artistic works, tours and events to help maintain vibrant Aboriginal art and culture. This includes the KALACC Festival, which focuses on cultural knowledge transfer through youth programs, visual arts, men’s and women’s business, as well as dance and song from Kimberley communities.

In 2014, the Festival brought together 30 language groups from over 45 remote communities to one place together in a central location to learn the stories, songs and dances that connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to the land. In addition to the festival, KALACC began implementing a program of eight inter-generational cultural exchange youth workshops in two remote Kimberley communities for Indigenous elders to pass on specific dance and cultural material skills.

**Wangaratta Festival of Jazz**

For 25 years, the Wangaratta Festival of Jazz in Victoria has consistently presented excellent Australian artists and high profile international artists, drawing tens of thousands to the regional Victorian town every year. The Festival has extensive local programming on a main street stage, as well as a separate venue featuring blues artists. The Festival provides
opportunities for audiences of wide interests to access its work and has strong engagement with the local population as well as visitors.

Queensland Music Festival

The Queensland Music Festival (QMF) receives multi-year funding from the Australia Council for its strategic program of activities, and on recent years this support has been supplemented by $1.2 million in funding through the Australian Government’s Creative Communities Partnerships Initiative (CCPI). The CCPI funding QMF receives supports the Festival to undertake a state-wide program of community-based arts engagement and cultural development activities in regional Queensland activities over six years from 2014 - 2019. QMF has a model of working through long-term engagement with communities across Queensland. The high-profile biennial festival stages events across the state, providing a stage for national and international connections and a showcase of community talent that has been nurtured through these long-term collaborations. The QMF community partnerships supported through this grant have focused on new projects in regional/remote Queensland communities as well as disadvantaged Southeast Queensland communities, while continuing to build legacy through ongoing partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including the company’s long-term Cape York Instrumental Music partnership.

Regional Festivals

Festivals in regional areas play an important role in the overall arts ecology, and the Australia Council supports regional festivals across a range of art forms through multi-year core program funding and project funding grants. Along with the Wangaratta Festival of Jazz and Queensland Music Festival above, some further examples include:

Festival of Slow Music

Last year the Festival of Slow Music received a $28,685 Arts Projects for Organisations program grant for the August 2015 Festival of Slow Music, which ran over nine days. This included Space is the Place – an overnight festival of music and astronomy in partnership with the Ballarat Observatory, featuring a 15-piece ensemble performing new work, along with a variety of other intimate performances throughout the night. The grant also supported the Festival of Slow Music Symposium, a gathering of eight selected pianists over four days to undertake exchange, workshops, collaboration and public performances in Ballarat, Victoria.

Mildura Palimpsest Biennale

In 2015 the Australia Council supported the 10th Mildura Palimpsest Biennale in Victoria, which opened in October 2015. The Australia Council provided a total of $133,000 in funding to the Biennale, including a $98,000 Festivals Australia grant and $35,000 Arts Project for Organisations grant. The Festivals Australia funding supported the Waking Slowly Downhill and Weaving Stories collaborative project, which involved seven river communities and 34 artists.

The Waking Slowly Downhill and Weaving Stories project sought to weave stories of the Murray River, beginning with artists Domenico de Clario and Mark Minchinton walking the length of the Murray River over five months from the source in Mt Kosciuszko to the mouth of the river at Goolwa. Before they began the artists met with Traditional Owners along the River
to gain permission to walk on their land and invite communities to take part. This culminated in a major multi-media multidisciplinary installation at the Biennale, including contemporary weaving, performance, sound and video projection. This project exemplified collaboration and building connections across communities and cultures.

The community engagement component of the project, *Weaving Stories*, initiated by the Mildura Dreamtime Weavers, involved communities from around the region weaving baskets using grasses and found materials from the region, which were passed on to adjoining communities. 'Weaving Stories' was led by Master Weaver Clair Bates (Paakantji) and Community Arts Coordinator Maree Clarke (Latji Latji) along with artists in each of the seven communities.

The Australia Council also provided an Arts Project for Organisations grant for an Emerging Indigenous E-Media Mentorship Program in connection with the Biennale. Arts Mildura invited six emerging Aboriginal contemporary e-media artists from four remote communities to Mildura to engage in the mentorship. The residency culminated in an exhibition and artist talks held at the Biennale.

**Byron Bay Writers Festival**

The Australia Council has provided support over many years to the Northern Rivers Writers’ Centre in NSW to hold the Byron Bay Writers Festival, an important event for the far north coast of NSW. Most recently, the Northern Rivers Writers’ Centre received a $27,540 grant to support the 20th anniversary of the Byron Bay Writers Festival in 2015. The Byron Bay Writers Festival is an annual writers’ festival that has grown from its starting point in 1997 to now sell 45,000 tickets each year, and host over one hundred guest Australian writers to participate in lectures, panels, public conversations, launches and readings.

**Crack Theatre Festival**

The Crack Theatre Festival in Newcastle NSW received a $150,000 grant for its Setting the Stages initiative from 2014 – 2016, which seeks to develop audiences and increase the number of local and inter-state artists supported through programming and presentations at the Festival. The Crack Theatre Festival is an annual national theatre festival run by a collective of independent artists who present an annual programme of new independent works, a panel series and variety of masterclasses designed to share skills. The festival is free for artists and audiences to attend. The initiative seeks to identify a project from each state and territory across Australia created by an independent artist or group of artists with a track record of presenting high quality contemporary performance for inclusion in the Festival.

**Capacity Building and Strategic Initiatives**

**Australian Rural Leadership Program**

A key objective under Goal One of the Australia Council’s Strategic Plan: *Australia is known for its great art and artists*, is to increase the long-term resilience and capacity of the arts sector. This is achieved through targeted leadership programs delivered at a national and cross-art form level. In partnership with the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, the Australia Council is providing a scholarship over the next three years for arts leaders to participate in the Australian Rural Leadership Program.
Arts leaders in regional Australia rarely get the opportunity to take part in sector initiatives delivered in metropolitan areas. While the Australia Council has a history of supporting regional leaders to participate in these sector initiatives, arts leadership in the regions is unique and requires a different set of leadership ‘tools’.

The program will enhance the level and quality of arts leadership in regional Australia and support the ongoing development of a cohort of leaders, which is a critical part of the national arts sector. Participants take part in the program with other leaders from industries that are prominent in regional areas (such as mining and agriculture). The program consists of several two-week residential intensives and covers topics such as leadership, advocacy, media, international relations, and community projects. The program exposes leaders to a network of other leaders that have participated in the program, and includes a two-week study tour to Jakarta.

**National Local Government Cultural Forum**

The Australia Council works collaboratively with the National Local Government Cultural Forum (NLGCF), delivered by the Cultural Development Network. The Australia Council has supported the NLGCF since its inception, and continues to provide funding for the Forum.

NLGCF aims to increase the capability of local government to support cultural development in their local jurisdictions. The Forum commenced in 2013, and is a meeting of state and territory local government associations, cultural policy and planning representatives from capital cities, the Australian Local Government Association, the Ministry for the Arts and the Australia Council. The Forum shares information to create stronger cultural development practice in local government.

Local government in Australia is the fastest growing government sector investing in arts, heritage and cultural development. With 565 local councils in Australia, total investment is estimated at over $1.4 billion in arts activities and infrastructure.

The Cultural Forum provides a clearing house for the arts activities that are shaping communities, their cultures and creativity. It generates ideas and projects that contribute to informed advice for State, Territory and Commonwealth governments on the cultural impact of arts policies.

**Engage**

The Australia Council delivers a range of strategic projects designed to support regional organisations to develop new methods of engaging and building audiences. An example of this work is Engage, a strategic project providing funding and program support for a group of regional presenters of performing arts to develop market and audience development strategy and capacity, to build the capacity of regional arts centres to reach, build and engage their local communities with their arts programs.

The Engage program came out of a national research and consultation process with the Australian performing arts touring sector in 2012 that identified the need for presenters in regional and remote areas to develop marketing and audience development skills.
Engage was delivered from 2012 – 2014 and was a competitive program providing successful regional applicants with a $30,000 grant and additional specialist marketing support from the Australia Council. It directly invested $480,000 and specialist support to 16 regional performing arts centres, theatres and galleries in regional Australia including Port Hedland (WA), Kalgoorlie (WA), Rockhampton (Queensland) and Wangaratta (Victoria).

The following theatres received $30,000 grants to develop their activity through the Engage program:

- Northern Rivers Performing Arts in Lismore NSW developed a marketing and audience development plan for its artistic program from 2013 - 2015.
- Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre in Queensland engaged a contractor to work as an engagement officer and build on educator relationships from 2013 - 2014.
- Terrapin Puppet Theatre in Tasmania engaged a marketing professional from 2013 - 2014 to develop strategies to support Terrapin's three year marketing plan. Terrapin Puppet Theatre are based in Hobart but present productions in regional and remote areas across Tasmania.
- HotHouse Theatre in Wodonga, Victoria engaged a part time Audience Development officer for 2013, whose aim was to increase non-subscription attendance to the Theatre’s mainstage productions. This led to a growth in overall box-office revenue, new audiences, and also growth in attendance at other works and activities of the theatre throughout the year. They created a comprehensive database and capacity to undertake direct marketing campaigns to reach and maintain their audience, growing revenue and enabling them to retain the staff member in 2014.

APACA Conference

The Australia Council has supported the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association (APACA) Conference over the past four years, with strategic funding provided towards each conference. APACA plays a key role in the performing arts ecology, shaping what is being presented to Australian audiences. APACA collectively represents over 53,000 events, with over 11 million attendances across Australia each year.

The APACA conference is a leading national sector event bringing presenters and producers together to discuss how they can work to build the performing arts sector and professional and creative practices. Council’s contribution to the APACA conference is designed to increase the connections and dialogue between presenters and producers. APACA embraced this objective with the 2015 conference introducing the Performing Arts Exchange and over 170 producers and artists attending the conference.

In 2015 the Australia Council also supported the attendance of eight emerging Indigenous producers at the APACA conference in partnership with Arts NSW. Council has been pleased to be part of realising a priority of the 2014 APACA conference, to increase Indigenous arts representation.
National Indigenous Arts Awards

The Australia Council delivers the National Indigenous Arts Awards, which celebrate outstanding achievement by Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander artists from urban, regional and remote locations. These awards play an important role in raising the profile of Indigenous arts and supporting the continuity and dynamism of contemporary Indigenous cultures. The awards stand apart from other Indigenous arts awards as they are selected by a panel of highly respected Indigenous artistic peers from the sector.

Cultural Places initiative

To deliver on Goal Three of the Australia Council’s Strategic Plan: The arts enrich daily life for all, the Australia Council planned to roll out its Cultural Places initiative, which involves partnerships between government, community, arts and business sectors to deliver benefits to artists, venues and audiences.

Key objectives of the Cultural Places initiative are to:

- Increase access to and active participation of regional communities in arts and cultural activities
- Increase the use of cultural resources and infrastructure
- Build the capacity of the local arts sector and strengthen arts employment opportunities locally, including through increased creation and production of new works by local artists and arts workers
- Integrate arts and cultural objectives into broader policy areas of local governments to enable sustainability of outcomes past the life of the initial investment through Cultural Places.

Through Cultural Places the Australia Council sought to leverage a whole of government approach to ensure that Australians have greater opportunities to participate in high quality arts and cultural experiences no matter where they live, with a focus on regional and peri-urban areas. This was planned to be achieved through joint investment in targeted arts development projects in partnership with state, territory and local governments. The Australia Council intended for eight Cultural Places projects to be developed over the course of four years from 2015, ensuring that each state and territory has developed a Cultural Place by the end of the overall Cultural Places initiative.

Following the 2015-16 Budget, which included measures that significantly reduced the Australia Council’s annual appropriation from $211.7 million in 2014-15 to $184.5 million in 2015-16, the Australia Council made the difficult decision to reduce the scope of the Cultural Places initiative to only one project following the initial pilot sites for the program which took place in Rockhampton, Queensland and Goolwa, SA.

To illustrate the nature of the Cultural Places initiative, further information on the Creative Capricorn project supported through Cultural Places pilot in Rockhampton is provided below.
Creative Capricorn

Creative Capricorn was a partnership between the Australia Council, Arts Queensland and Rockhampton Regional Council. The Australia Council provided a total of $600,000 in funding over three years from 2011-12 to 2013-14 for the project, which was overseen by a Steering Committee including all funding partners, and received advice from a community reference group appointed by Rockhampton Regional Council.

Over three years the project fostered a locally owned and produced arts and cultural program, including a mix of commissioned and touring exhibitions, performances, workshops, festivals and other events.

Creative Capricorn aimed to:

- build arts and cultural activities into planning processes of the local community and government authorities
- involve artists from across art forms
- create opportunities for both local and touring artists
- make available venues operated by local government authorities
- have an enduring, whole of community benefit beyond the life of the program.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts projects

Goal Four of the Australia Council’s Strategic Plan is for Australians to cherish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures. This goal is delivered in a range of ways across the Australia Council’s programs, including a great deal of activity supported in regional and remote communities. Some examples have already been outlined above, and the following section provides further examples of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts projects supported in regional and remote areas.

Eastern APY Lands Art Centre

An example of an Australia Council grant supporting the transfer of Indigenous cultural knowledge is a $19,500 grant awarded to the Eastern APY Lands Art Centre in SA to support male Indigenous artists from Iwantja, Kaltjiti, Mimili and Pukatja known for creating spears, spear throwers and shields. In the past five years there has been a punu (crafting wood) and kulata (spear) creation renewal, and funding support is key to the continuation and extension of this classic tradition. Senior Indigenous male artists set up the Kulata Tjuta Project, a series of major contemporary art installations stemming from extraordinary depths of heritage, tradition, knowledge and skills. This work is of great significance in building artistic vibrancy, cultural vibrancy, and enabling an intergenerational transfer of knowledge. The Australia Council funding supported the exhibition process, installation, and audience and market development for this work.
A successful Tjala Arts installation of these artists as part of the Dark Heart Adelaide 2015 Biennale won national and international admiration for the power, beauty and significance of the work. Distinctive work from these communities featured in the Art Gallery of South Australia’s presentation of TARNANTHI in 2015, the inaugural Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art.

The Australia Council funding contributed to the exhibition process, installation, and audience and market development for this work.

**Cairns Indigenous Art Fair**

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) is an art fair, audience development strategy and professional development program for artists, art centre staff and industry stakeholders. CIAF was an initiative of Arts Queensland’s Backing Indigenous Arts strategy in 2009, and the Australia Council was the inaugural sponsor. In 2013 the Queensland Government announced that CIAF would transition to an independent company.

Prior to this 2013 transition, CIAF received a total of $352,000 in funding from the Australia Council. The Australia Council has subsequently supported CIAF with a total of $300,000 for three of the events from 2014-15 to 2018-19. CIAF has also received Australia Council support for its International Collectors and Curators Program, with $20,000 provided to CIAF for the Program in both 2014 and 2015.

CIAF is an important opportunity to showcase the rich diversity of Indigenous arts practice, connecting Australians with Indigenous art and culture. CIAF also provides the opportunity for Indigenous artists to connect with international industry representatives to develop new international markets and audiences for their work. Art fairs allow access to a wide range of practice and new work by artists, and CIAF enables direct engagement with the art centres and artists.

**Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula**

The Australia Council has supported a number of projects in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula in recent years, for example:

Patrick Mau received a $17,000 grant in October 2013 to undertake a national tour promoting the recorded studio album of Indigenous Artist Mau Power in 2014. Patrick Mau is a lyrical storyteller from Thursday Island in the Torres Strait who performs under the name Mau Power. The grant supported Mau Power to tour his studio album in 2014, showcasing how his unique sound blending both the music and culture of his Traditional Torres Strait heritage with hip hop music and culture. The tour began at the Gab Titui Culture Centre on Thursday Island with live broadcast across the whole region, followed by shows in Cairns, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney and Melbourne.

Queensland Theatre Company (QTC) received a grant of $35,000 in October 2014 in to work with Jimi Bani to create a new theatre work for young people based on stories of Mabuiag Island. QTC worked with Cairns-based artist Jimi Bani to create an exciting, multi-generational performance work for primary-school aged young people and their families based on the stories and cultures of Mabuiag Island, where Jimi’s father, Dimple, is Chief. This work was
proposed to QTC by Jimi Bani, and developed in Mabuiag Island and in Cairns, where Jimi is based.

**Blackfella Films project**

Blackfella Films received a $39,800 Australia Council grant in 2015 for a project developed for over a year, consulting and working with Arrernte women in the Northern Territory. They compiled a list of senior Arrernte women song holders and their female descendants across the whole tribe to participate in the project.

The project involved a camp staged over five weeks, focussing on passing on the songs of Arrernte women on to the next generation. Blackfella Films prepared a schedule to bring each family or 'estate group' to the camp one at a time, and provide them the space, time and resources to teach, rehearse, perform and then record their dreaming songs and dances.

One of Australia’s leading ethnomusicologists and linguists worked in partnership with Arrernte women to comprehensively document, annotate and archive the recordings so they may be available into the future.

**black&write! strategic initiative**

Established in 2010, the black&write! Indigenous Writing and Editing Project was developed in response to the significant and widely acknowledged under representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners in the writing and publishing industry. Designed to address this imbalance by focusing on the development of Indigenous writers and editors, activities in this program include:

- training for editors across the sector
- an annual writing competition – the black&write! Indigenous Writing Fellowship Competition
- an online based training and development program for regionally-based Indigenous Editors.

**Building Audiences research**

An area of focus for the Australia Council research program has been audience development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts. In August 2015 the Australia Council released *Building Audiences: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts*, a report examining the barriers to and the strategies for increasing audiences in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts sector. This research investigates the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of current and potential audiences and included focus groups with members of the public to explore their perceptions of Indigenous arts, what attracts them to engage, and factors that inhibit engagement. Key informant interviews and sector forums explored the current state of play of audience development in Indigenous arts and sector priorities for the future. Phase Two of this work is underway, gathering evidence on how major and regional arts presentation bodies (such as theatres and galleries) program and market Indigenous arts.
### Table 1: Attitudes to the arts by region, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of residents who agree or strongly agree</th>
<th>Major Cities</th>
<th>Inner Regional</th>
<th>Outer Regional</th>
<th>Remote</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People can enjoy both the arts and sport</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Arts are an important part of Australia’s culture</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists make an important contribution to Australian society</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel proud when Australian artists, do well overseas</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts make for a richer and more meaningful life</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is exciting to see new styles and types of art</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts should receive public funding</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists should have total freedom of expression</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts in Australia reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts require understanding to appreciate them fully</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous arts are well represented in Australia</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts are too expensive</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts tend to attract people who are somewhat elitist or pretentious</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts are not really for people like me</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Impacts of the arts by region, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big impact + Very big impact</th>
<th>Major Cities</th>
<th>Inner Regional</th>
<th>Outer Regional</th>
<th>Remote</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child development</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our ability to express ourselves</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping us deal with stress, anxiety or depression</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our sense of wellbeing and happiness</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community pride and identity</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping and expressing Australian identity</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing visitors to our community</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising awareness about difficult issues facing our society</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our empathy for others</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our connections with family and friends</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The economy</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>