

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES & CULTURE

**arts** MID  
NORTH  
COAST



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# 2017 THE YEAR THAT WAS

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With another successful year behind us, it is my pleasure to report that Arts Mid North Coast continues to meet the challenges of positioning the arts as a core activity in the social and economic development of the region as well as its cultural values. In the second year of our 2016-2018 Business Plan 2017 was identified as: A Year of Development and Implementation. It was indeed a very busy and successful year with strong foundations also being laid for other new opportunities.

Major innovations and projects included the successful staging of the Mid North Coast Creative Ageing Festival, the development of a dedicated Creative Ageing section of the website encouraging activities and connections 365 days a year, the development of our new film and screen website and partnerships with Screenwave, our ever expanding work in cultural tourism through our increasing number of Cultural Trails, listings on our Regional Calendar of Events and work with our smaller Creative Communities. It was also a year for positive changes in governance with the Board adopting a new constitution, expanded communication channels, undertaking additional professional development and establishing strong connections to Create NSW (formed in April 2017). All of these actions plus many others and our core activities and responsibilities are summarised in the report which I highly recommend to all to read.

Appreciation is extended to our funding bodies – Create NSW and the six participating Mid North Coast local government Councils: MidCoast, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour. Thanks also go to the staff at Regional Arts NSW. Successful outcomes are a team effort and we are grateful for the ongoing guidance and support so freely given by our colleagues and supporters.


I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the staff who do so much for arts and culture in our community with very limited means. To my fellow Board Members, I thank you for all your time, wisdom, support and friendship.

*Leigh Vaughan*

Leigh Vaughan

Chair, Arts Mid North Coast

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# ARTS MID NORTH COAST

Arts Mid North Coast is the peak regional arts and cultural development organisation for the mid north coast region of New South Wales. The region embraces six Council areas: MidCoast, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour and includes the lands associated with the Woromi, Biripi, Dunghutti and Gumbaynggirr Nations. With 305,000 residents it is one of NSW's most populous regions with a remarkable diversity of creative activity and industry.

Arts Mid North Coast receives triennial core funding from the NSW State Government through Create NSW supplemented with annual financial contributions from each of our Councils. One of 14 Regional Arts Development Organisations throughout New South Wales this network plays an important advocacy role for regional issues and with strong links to Regional Arts NSW further extends the value to our Councils, artists and creative professionals.

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## OUR VISION

The Mid North Coast, a vibrant, diverse region embracing the creation, understanding and appreciation of the arts in fostering economic, community, cultural and environmental opportunities and benefits.

## OUR MISSION

Arts Mid North Coast, the region's peak arts organisation collaborates with individuals, communities, organisations, government and business to build capacity and create opportunities.

## OUR GOALS

- To generate increased opportunities for access, participation, training and education.
- To generate increased visibility for creative and cultural activity and opportunity.
- To develop and foster strategic partnerships, projects and networks that benefit communities and the region.
- To encourage and support regional arts, creative industries and cultural development planning to provide leadership to ensure positive outcomes for local, community and regional initiatives.
- To be a dynamic, effective, accountable and sustainable organisation utilising relevant best practice technology and skills to promote and achieve excellence.

Our work is shaped by a wide range of factors reflecting the particular characteristics of our region, our resources, our stakeholders and broader policies and strategies that seek to increase the capacity of the artists and creatives within our region and to showcase their work and value.

While much of our work builds and consolidates our knowledge and experience to be shared this Annual Report highlights the specific projects and initiatives undertaken in 2017.

# CAPACITY BUILDING

*Goal 1. To generate increased opportunities for access, participation, training and education.*

## GRANTS SUPPORT

Arts Mid North Coast encourages and supports artists and community groups in seeking funding under a wide range of grant programs delivered by State and Federal Government and other philanthropic organisations. 2017 was a very busy year with over 50 grants and other opportunities brought to the attention of those in the region. We also review and advise on applications as well as provide letters of support. All are important but some examples show the diversity and value of this work:

- Create NSW Annual Funding for the Manning Regional Gallery and the Glasshouse Regional Gallery
- Various grants for Screenwave for both SWIFF and REC Ya Shorts Youth Film Festival
- Kempsey Council for NSW Live & Local Music funding
- Coffs Coast Aboriginal youth dance group to attend the Da Nang Festival in Vietnam
- Coffs Connect & Community for

feasibility study for a LGBTIQ Cultural Festival

Our support also benefits individuals including in 2017:

- Nick Cummins being awarded a NSW Young Regional Artist Scholarship to further his music production and composing skills overseas
- Our successful nomination of Debbie Sommers for the NSW IMAGinE Award for Individual of the Year (Museums & Galleries NSW)

## COUNTRY ARTS SUPPORT PROGRAM (CASP)

The Country Arts Support Program delivers funding to a range of community based organisations, art forms and activities across regional New South Wales. In 2017 the available funding in our region was increased to \$5000 per applicant and three local projects were successful in securing this funding. These were for film in Coffs Harbour, ceramics in Kendall and the Bunker Gallery in Coffs Harbour.



## SMARTART

Recognising the value of digital technology as the way forward in delivering information and training we created in 2014 a new section to our website, SmartART. This provides an ever changing and updated repository of information and tools to increase the business skills and capacity of the artists and creative professionals in our community. Throughout 2017 relevant new material was added to this online resource.

## HOT TIPS

A new feature in 2017 was our direct newsletter to all artists listed with us of a series of Hot Tips on how they could better use social media and digital technology. This proved very popular and Digital Marketing was subsequently added as a category to SmartART as so that others could also access these valuable insights.

## FILM & SCREEN

In 2017 we added a Film & Screen website to our portfolio to recognise the growing screen culture in the region. In addition to this website we supported two major film initiatives in addition to our partnership with the Screenwave International Film Festival.

- We sponsored the formation of a Film Industry Group and its two meetings held in 2017. The inaugural meeting was held during SWIFF while the second showcased five local films to the staff of Create NSW on their road trip to Coffs Harbour.

- We again partnered with the REC Ya Shorts Youth Film Workshops and Festival. Since starting in the region in 2014 it has quickly become the largest youth film youth film program for Regional NSW. In 2017 it delivered 51 workshops to 1021 students and teachers resulting in 8 Festival showings of finalists.

## CREATIVE PATHWAYS

Creative Pathways is a one stop online resource which features the full range of tertiary study options and pathways available for students who wish to undertake or further their studies in the arts or creative industries without having to leave the Mid North Coast. It provides all relevant information from Southern Cross University, Charles Sturt University and North Coast TAFE and cross references by all campuses in the region. A highlight in 2017 was the first graduates completing their three year design course from Charles Sturt University at Port Macquarie.

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# SHOWCASING OUR ARTS & ARTISTS

*Goal 2. To generate increased visibility for creative and cultural activity and opportunity*

## **ONLINE MARKETING**

In 2017 Arts Mid North Coast continued to enhance and expand its regional arts portal, [www.artsmidnorthcoast.com](http://www.artsmidnorthcoast.com). The site provides a comprehensive one-stop shop for artists and audiences across the region. The site offers mapping and search capabilities, making it simple to locate specific tools, events and organisations online. The site also links to a wide range of relevant external information. During the year the website Showcase featured more than 100 major news stories.

## **EVENTS CALENDAR**

Our Regional Events Guide is the most comprehensive arts guide for the region. In 2017 it featured over 600 exhibitions, events and activities. For ease of use, it can be searched by the categories of music & concerts, theatre, workshops, exhibitions, festivals, film, markets, talks and dance. Once listed events are

showcased and further promoted by us in a variety of marketing strategies as outlined below.

## **ARTS BLAST**

Our fortnightly e-bulletin, Arts Blast, is now delivered to over 1400 subscribers. The newsletter contains a large range of vital information and links to cultural news and events plus training, grants and awards opportunities. Total click throughs increased 88 percent in 2017. An upgrade to our Mail Chimp system in 2017 has now allowed us to tailor additional newsletters targeting specific groups such as artists or by local government areas. We produced eleven additional special editions.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Arts Mid North Coast has become very active on social media. We now have two Facebook pages, (Arts Mid North Coast and Creative Coast) and Twitter. We did no paid campaigns in 2017 but achieved nearly 1000 Total Posts

## ABC RADIO

In 2017 we continued a weekly spot with ABC Mid North Coast and Coffs Coast Radio highlighting arts events in the region. These stations reach a high listening audience for adults in the region especially those aged over 40.

## CULTURAL TRAILS

Our Cultural Trails now features over 430 cultural experiences with links to another 600 events and the active promotion of these across a number of platforms to highlight the Mid North Coast as a vibrant and cultural destination. There is no other set of cultural trails so extensive other than those for the State of Victoria, including Melbourne. The number of Trails increased to 14 in 2017 with the addition of a Heritage Places Trail, especially those of State Significance.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

During 2017 we also produced several special event features. Our Summer Holiday Guide for Kids showcased 41 events supplementing our Top Ten Picks for Summer feature. A major addition was our online program for the Mid North Coast Creative Ageing Festival in March 2017 which showcased over 60 events for the over 60's.

## CREATIVE AGEING DIRECTORY

Arising from the success of our 2017 Mid North Coast Creative Ageing Festival we established a permanent Creative Ageing Directory on our website. Currently we feature nine creative ageing categories detailing

106 opportunities in: Art, Crafts, Heritage, Dance, Film, Lifelong Learning, Music, Voice and Literature. Within some there are links to our general website and even more information but also distinctions between specialist programs e.g. Dance for Parkinson's compared to say Rock n Roll clubs within the Dance section. The Creative Ageing page also features *Four Score Years... and then some* which showcases artists and creatives still very engaged in the arts, regardless of age.

## ARTIST DIRECTORY

We have a comprehensive directory of the many artists in the region. This is self-managed by the artists and creatives and gives them an online presence with up to four images of their work and a detailed description of their practice and work. It now covers 21 categories of arts activities and the number of artists listed continued to increase in 2017.

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# PROJECTS & PARTNERSHIPS

*Goal 3. To develop and foster strategic partnerships, projects and networks that benefit communities and the region*

## CREATIVE AGEING

The inaugural Mid North Coast Creative Ageing Festival was not only the first in the region but in regional NSW. Our target of showcasing 25 events grew in fact to 60. This created a critical mass that generated strong interest in the concept of creative ageing that would not have occurred with a number of disparate and uncoordinated events. It was also important to move discussion from the traditional Seniors Festival concept to the larger view of Creative Ageing as this begins to take traction with all levels of government. The Festival was opened at an exhibition at the Stringer Gallery in Nambucca Heads by the Mayor of Nambucca Shire Council, Rhonda Hoban. The Festival will now be an annual event. As part of the Festival we also delivered funding to four projects:

- Development of an innovative Alzheimer's program for museums by the Port Macquarie Museum
- The iPad art project conducted by Port Macquarie Hastings Council

and featured in the Festival

- The work of the Nambucca Valley Arts Council with the Riverside Gardens Village.
- The work of Kempsey Shire Council with aged care providers.

In 2017 we also developed two pilot projects: Musicians in Hospital and Front Row Seats, a partnership between touring artists and aged care providers. We will continue to seek funding for these in 2018.

## CULTURAL TOURISM

We are active partners with the tourism industry at local, regional and State level. Our Executive Director was invited as the only speaker on Cultural Tourism at the 2017 LGNSW Tourism Conference attended by more than 300 delegates. AMNC was also one of 15 exhibitors at the Conference. In October we were announced as a Finalist in the NSW Tourism Awards in the category of Specialist Tourism Services adding to the nomination we received in the 2016 Awards for Cultural Tourism. Our services through our Cultural Trails and marketing ensures that arts and cultural activities have a strong presence in the experiences that both domestic and

international tourists are seeing as part of the many reasons to visit the Mid North Coast. Our capacity building activities makes our artists and venues more industry ready as does our work with many of the region's Festivals and Events. In 2017 we completed a survey of tourism accommodation operators who incorporated the arts into their marketing or product. This has provided insight in to partnerships that can be developed and which is now being used in workshops we are running in the region

## CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

We have designated eight Creative Communities of the Mid North Coast that further brings to the attention of visitors unique and different destinations where culture is at the heart of vibrant smaller communities. The communities are: Stroud, Gloucester, Kendall, Gladstone, Bowraville, Bellingen, Dorrigo and Sawtell. In 2017 we ran two workshops in Dorrigo to highlight the potential of the town if tourism and the arts worked more closely together. We also supported two communities through dedicated funding from this program:

- In Bellingen we supported the OUTA Weekend of arts events that attracted many to explore the arts across a range of venues and activities.
- In Sawtell we supported the celebrations of the 30<sup>th</sup> Year of the community run Sawtell Gallery with activities also involving the local primary school, a photography

exhibition of local heritage images and a yarn bombing public art project.

## CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Encouraging the development of creative industries is important for stronger and more diversified local economies. In 2017 we funded a research project on future options for the Coffs Creative Network and spoke at inaugural meetings for the establishment of the Mid Coast Creative Connections Group. Our screen website, [www.screenmidnorthcoast.com.au](http://www.screenmidnorthcoast.com.au) was further enhanced by the addition of the filming policies of all Councils and appropriate government departments creating a one stop online resource.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

*Goal 4. To encourage and support regional arts, creative industries and cultural development planning to provide leadership to ensure positive outcomes for local, community and regional initiatives.*

A key role of Regional Arts Development Organisations is to assist Councils and the community where possible with the development of strong and effective strategic cultural planning documents. These are the essential foundations from which so many other initiatives can develop. This role was reinforced in 2016 by changes to the brief of the organisation from the NSW Government. In 2017 Arts Mid North Coast made detailed submissions on or supported the development of the:

- Creative Coffs Cultural Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- Coffs Harbour Heritage Strategy 2017-2021
- MidCoast Regional Economic Development Strategy
- Coffs Harbour Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council Economic Development Plan 2017-2021

- North Coast Destination Management Plan 2018-2021

## INTEGRATED PLANNING

Five of our six Councils were required as part of their Integrated Planning responsibilities to review their Community Plans in 2017. These long term plans must address four key questions for each LGA community:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in ten years' time?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know when we have arrived?

Arts Mid North Coast made submissions to the draft Plans of Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Nambucca and Port Macquarie Hastings. Our submissions varied across a wide range of topics from the importance of Acknowledgement of Country, to the value creative industries and cultural tourism to local economies, to our ageing population and the health and cultural benefits of creative ageing programs.

## CREATE NSW

Create NSW is the NSW Government's new arts and cultural driver, which brings together arts, screen and culture functions in a new integrated entity. Create NSW was established on 1 April 2017, and has responsibility for many of the functions previously undertaken by Arts NSW and Screen NSW. Arts Mid North Coast has worked in 2017 to establish a strong working relationship with the organisation and new personnel. In August we hosted four staff to the region to meetings in Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. They met with artists, arts organisations and the AMNC Board. A highlight was a presentation of five films by local filmmakers at a special Q&A on the screen role of Create NSW.

## REGIONAL CULTURAL FUND

In 2017 the NSW Government announced the Regional Cultural Fund to invest \$100 million over four years to drive growth in arts, screen, cultural and heritage infrastructure for the social, cultural and economic benefit of communities in regional NSW. Up to \$25 million was available for the 2017 round of funding. Although Arts Mid North Coast has no infrastructure to seek funding for it worked with number of our Councils and community organisations to develop and support their applications. We will continue to work with them on their various projects.

## REGIONAL AND STATE LIAISON

To maximise opportunities for the Mid North Coast we worked closely with other Mid North Coast regional services including Regional Development Australia- Mid North Coast, Mid Coast Chapter- Museums Australia, North Coast Destination Network and National Parks & Wildlife. At a State level as well as Create NSW we worked with Regional Arts NSW, Destination NSW, Ausdance NSW, Music NSW, Family & Community Services and Department of Local Government. We also regularly communicate and meet with the other 13 RADOs in New South Wales, an invaluable opportunity to share and bring further knowledge and leverage to issues of local and regional importance.

# GOVERNANCE

*Goal 5. To be a dynamic, effective, accountable and sustainable organisation utilising relevant best practice technology and skills to promote and achieve excellence*

## **A NEW CONSTITUTION.**

The Board adopted a new Constitution in June 2017. Major changes included:

- Number of Board members reduced from 15 to 12
- Representation to be six council representatives and six community members
- Council members appointed for four years based on their electoral cycle and may serve two terms
- Community members appointed for three years and may serve two terms
- Representatives entitled to stand again after standing down one term or to be considered if no suitable candidates at any time

A number of procedural changes were also adopted from the 2016 updating of the Associations Incorporations Act 2009 and Model Constitution.

## **BOARD ENGAGEMENT**

Although the Board meets formally four times a year Board members are engaged more regularly by Mid Meeting newsletters. In 2017 this was

extended with monthly updates on key issues and matters of interest. The Board also successfully trialled a teleconference in October to discuss and approve the 2018 Work Plan and Budget. This communication channel will be used more often on major issues especially as 2018 will see the preparation and approval of our Three Year Business Plan 2019-2021.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF BOARD.**

The Board saw two new members appointed in 2017. Stephanie Ney was appointed at the June Annual General Meeting. Stephanie has extensive experience in the arts on the Mid North Coast including with Saltwater Freshwater Alliance and the Save the Sawtell Cinema campaign. She now runs a very successful range of music programs and activities. In November we welcomed Cr. Claire Pontin as the representative from MidCoast Council. That Council held its first election in September 2017 after 18 months of administration by reason of the amalgamation of the former Great Lakes, Greater Taree and Gloucester Councils. From January to June 2017 the MidCoast Council had been represented by Leigh Vaughan who at that time was a member of the Local Representation Committee.



## FINANCIAL REPORTING

Arts Mid North Coast has a strong record of fiscal control, with surplus funds transferred to projects. Although no longer a legal requirement to do so but to show good faith with our partners and stakeholders a full set of accounts for the financial year will be audited and available for our AGM in May 2018.



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# OUR BOARD AND STAFF

The list below is the AMNC Board as at December 2017. All served the whole of 2017 other than where their first meeting date is noted. The Executive was appointed at the AMNC Annual General Meeting held in June 2017.

## **EXECUTIVE**

### **Chairperson**

Leigh Vaughan

### **Vice Chair**

Nyaree Donnelly

### **Treasurer**

Cr. Susan Jenvey  
*Nambucca Shire Council*

### **Secretary**

Shelley O'Keefe

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

Councillor John Arkan  
*Coffs Harbour Council*

Alternate. Sian Nivison

Councillor Mark Baxter  
*Kempsey Shire Council*

Councillor Steve Klipin  
*Bellingen Shire Council*

Councillor Claire Pontin (Nov 2017)  
*MidCoast Council*

Councillor Rob Turner  
*Port Macquarie Hastings Council*

Dr Lisa Milner

Stephanie Ney (Aug 2017)

Lorrae O'Brien

## **Retiring Members**

Margret Meagher (April 2017)

David Quinn (April 2017)

Sonia Fingleton. (June 2017)

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## STAFF MEMBERS

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kevin Williams

rado@artsmidnorthcoast.org

### COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Denise Aitken (Wednesday to Friday)

communications@artsmidnorthcoast.org

### CONSULTANTS

Mark Carpenter, Design & Digital

John Stewart, Finance & Administration

## CONTACT US

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## PROUD PARTNERS



**Create NSW**  
Arts, Screen & Culture



MidCoast Council

*Images: Jay Black, OUTA Bellingen & Screenwave*



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