

Strategic Plan 2025-2028



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We acknowledge the Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti, Biripi, and Worimi Nations, the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and create. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging, and recognise their enduring connection to land, waters, and culture.

Image: Joey Leigh Wagtail, MiNi digital Concerts. Photo: Elize Strydom

Executive Summary

Arts Mid North Coast (AMNC) is the peak body for the arts and creative industries in the Mid North Coast of NSW, on the traditional lands of the Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti, Biripi, and Worimi Nations. Our reach spans six Local Government Areas: Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca Valley, Kempsey, Port Macquarie-Hastings, and Mid Coast.



Olivia Parker, Executive Director

Our vision is to make the Mid North Coast a *regional creative capital*. We advocate for the arts, amplify the region's creativity, and provide meaningful, inclusive opportunities for our communities to engage with the arts, culture and creative industries.

This 2025–2028 strategic plan is designed to expand our capacity to meet the needs of a rapidly growing region – one of the largest in the Regional Arts Network.

It focuses on four key areas:

- Amplifying the arts through the delivery of key services
- Activating creative spaces to foster artistic and cultural development
- Promoting diversity and building capacity in the sector
- Ensuring long-term organisational sustainability.

Informed by our 2024 Creative Futures research, which engaged over 350 local artists, creative workers, and stakeholders, this plan addresses critical needs and opens pathways for future growth.

Our priority is supporting young, emerging and midcareer artists in their career development. The range of programs we will deliver will build the capacity of our diverse creative community while deepening connections with broader audiences. We will also address the growing need for affordable creative spaces for artists to create and showcase their work.

To support our organisation's sustainability, we are diversifying our funding sources through partnerships, philanthropy, and fee-for-service offerings. We will also grow and diversify our workforce and provide career pathways into the creative sector. With this strategy, AMNC is ready to lead the region into an exciting new chapter for arts and culture.



Our Vision

Making the Mid North Coast a regional creative capital.

Our Purpose

Arts Mid North Coast empowers artists, builds capacity and creates inclusive opportunities for the arts and creative industries.

Our Values

We believe the arts brings people together in meaningful ways and creates resilience in regional communities.

We pursue our vision and mission in ways which are:

Responsive Sustainable Collaborative Inclusive Innovative Accountable

Shared Values Of The Regional Arts Development Organisations

Arts Mid North Coast is part of a network of 15 Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADOs) across regional New South Wales. Each RADO provides strategic direction for sustainable arts and cultural development in its region. The network operates across the state, offering region-wide perspectives on the needs and opportunities for arts and cultural development and its benefits.

In regional NSW we stand by:

- Recognition and support of First Nations arts and cultural practice.
- The professionalism of arts and cultural practice.
- The right of people living in regional NSW to participate in, and contribute to, arts and culture.
- Genuine connection to place, as expressed through the works of artists and creative communities.
- The role of the regions in providing pathways and mechanisms for sustained creative practice and experiences.
- The strength of collaborative partnerships within and across sectors to deliver arts and cultural development.

'Banjo' performance by Got Ya Back Productions. Photo: Cal Howard.

Our Points Of Difference

We live and work in one of the fastestgrowing regions in NSW. We cover a

vast area of 21,377 km² and serve a growing and diverse population of over 320,000 - the largest in the RADO Network. Our region is enriched by a thriving First Nations community (proportionately higher than the NSW average), represented by the Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti, Biripi, and Worimi nations. We also have a growing community of migrants and asylum seekers from Europe, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, adding to our region's vibrant cultural tapestry.

Our creative sector is diverse and rapidly

expanding. It is estimated we have over 3,000 artists and creatives living in our region. The recent influx of artists relocating from major cities and other areas has fuelled the growth of our creative sector, resulting in a 23% increase in employment and creative businesses since 2016. We have a significant proportion of visual artists and musicians, as well as writers, theatre makers, performers and screen professionals. The development of new cultural infrastructure in our region such as the Pacific Bay Film Studios, TAFE Creative Industries Centre, Gumbaynggir Keeping Place and the Bellingen Arts Precinct is set to make a major impact.

Our region attracts high visitation rates of both tourists and touring artists.

Geographically blessed with stunning beaches, mountains, rivers, and rainforests, the Mid North Coast attracts nearly 4.9 million visitors annually, drawn to its natural beauty and eclectic townships. As a halfway stop between Sydney and Brisbane, we offer essential local knowledge, connections, insight and support for touring artists.

We are uniquely placed to drive arts and cultural development on the Mid North

Coast. As the only major arts organisation in our region, we provide leadership and advocacy for the local creative sector. Our programs place artists and creatives at the core of a sustainable practice, helping them grow and showcase their work and expand their markets and audiences.

We are responsive to community needs.

We deliver innovative programs that are driven by the needs of our local artists; are inclusive of our diverse community; achieve results; and meaningfully connect with regional audiences.

We embrace digital technology to expand opportunities for our organisation, artists and audiences Video

and online projects such as our MiNi (digital) Concerts, Mid North Coast Art Files connect and showcase local artists, expand audiences and raise the profile of our region's creative talent. We boost the digital skills of our creative sector through workshops and training, empowering regional artists to harness the opportunities presented by digital technology and networks for economic gain.

We are innovative and entrepreneurial

We are a forward-thinking organisation, driving growth by fostering partnerships and seeking opportunities to diversify our income to include philanthropic support and commercial fee–for– service models.

Areas of Operation

Our organisational activities fall under four areas of operation:

Amplifying The Arts

We amplify the work of local artists and the opportunities available to them by:

- showcasing and sharing local arts, cultural events, news and opportunities
- providing advisory services to creative workers, businesses, organisations and Councils
- building and developing local audiences
- promoting cultural tourism and supporting local arts and cultural activities to attract and engage visitors.

Creative Spaces

We address the critical need for more creative spaces on the Mid North Coast by:

- collaborating with key stakeholders to identify, support and advocate for the activation of creative spaces
- conducting research on business models, private investment opportunities, partnerships, and securing funding for creative spaces
- developing and supporting new partnerships and initiatives to support the activation of creative spaces.

Diversity & Capacity Building

We build the capacity of diverse creative workers to foster innovation and inclusivity by:

- establishing an identified First Nations position within our organisation
- delivering education, training, skills development and internship programs for young, emerging and mid career artists and artsworkers
- facilitating networking and mentorship opportunities
- distributing devolved funding programs to support creative projects
- showcasing the work of diverse artists including First Nations, young and emerging artists and artists with disability
- building cross-sector partnerships and collaborations to strengthen the creative ecosystem for economic benefit.

Organisational Sustainability

We focus on improving our financial and operational sustainability to ensure long-term success by:

- increasing staffing levels and resources
- establishing a physical space to serve as a hub for operations
- diversifying income streams through new partnerships and grant opportunities, feefor-service offerings, and philanthropic funding
- developing new partnerships and collaborations to strengthen our operational capacity and build reciprocal benefits

Future Projects and Programs

Area Of Operation: Amplifying The Arts

Advisory Services

We offer a range of advisory services to individual artists, community and industry groups, arts organisations, and Local Government, including:

- industry and community engagement
- project and funding advice
- referrals, advocacy, and letters of support
- policy development and strategic planning at regional and LGA level
- touring support and network development
- auspicing arrangements.



As a peak body, Arts Mid North Coast represents the local arts sector and maintains an active presence in key sector and industry stakeholder groups. We contribute submissions and discussion for Government planning and policy development, ensuring that the voices and needs of our creative sector are considered in broader regional and national strategies.

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Arts Mid North Coast has provided us with in-kind support in marketing and publicity, as well as practical advice on working in the arts in the area, such as suggestions for venues, and marketing strategies. Arts Mid North Coast also consistently supports us in finding and applying for funding opportunities, which allows us to build a sustainable arts practice.

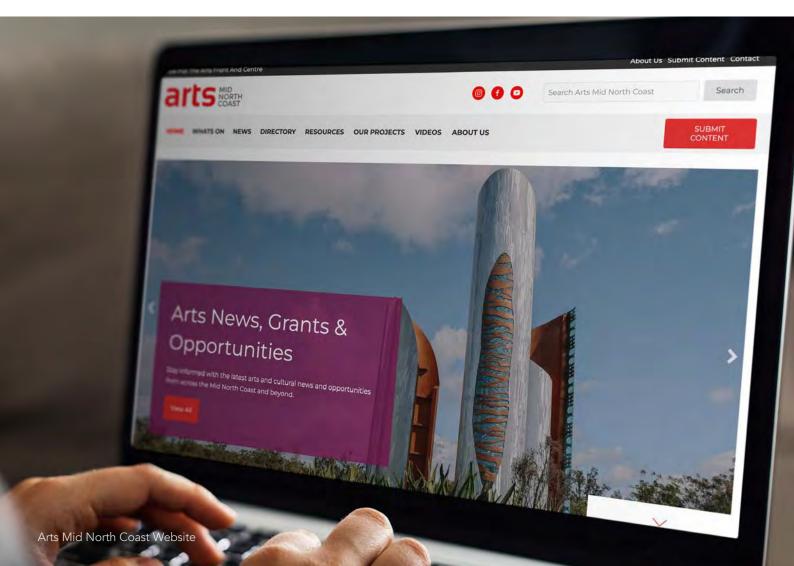
This organisation is dedicated to promoting a healthy and vibrant arts industry and improving the community through meaningful artistic experiences in our area, and is incredibly valuable to artists, arts workers and the wider community".

Hayley Egan & Salvatore Rossano, Taranta Arts

Arts & Cultural Promotion

As a key trusted and respected service, we will continue to promote the diversity of arts and culture on the Mid North Coast and amplify artists' reach. Our initiatives include:

- What's On Arts and Cultural Events Calendar. Our comprehensive online calendar highlights the diversity of arts and cultural events and activities from across the region. Our calendar is free for artists and groups to promote their work and reach broader audiences, and for the community to engage with local arts and culture.
- **Creative Coast Directory.** An extensive directory of cultural places to visit, providing a valuable resource for both locals and visitors to discover and connect with the region's creativity. In 2025 we will launch a new Artist Directory, listing individual artists and groups across all artforms, providing a direct link to local talent.
- **Cultural Tourism Promotions.** Showcasing the region's cultural attractions and events to boost tourism and local engagement and support the participation of the arts sector in the tourism economy.
- News and Opportunities. We publish regular arts news and opportunities through our website and promoted via our socials.
- Artsblast E-Newsletter. Our monthly e-newsletter delivers the latest arts and culture news, events and opportunities directly to subscribers' inboxes.
- Mid North Coast Art Files. Launched in 2023, our online video series shines a light on artists and creative projects from the region, sharing stories behind their work.



Area Of Operation: Creative Spaces

One of our key goals is to increase access to affordable creative spaces for artists and creative workers; this includes establishing a physical space for Arts Mid North Coast to strengthen our presence in the community and provide a hub for connection and creative activity.

We will work in partnership with State Governments, Councils, developers, and businesses to identify and activate underutilised spaces for arts and cultural purposes, such as creative retail, offices, studios, residency programs, maker spaces, exhibitions, public art and performances.

We wil support the delivery of this goal, by undertaking research into existing initiatives and business models, and investigate avenues for private and public partnerships and Government funding.

Key Projects:

Bellingen Arts Precinct. Arts Mid North Coast has been actively supporting Bellingen Shire Council in the development of a new arts and cultural precinct in the heart of their CBD. This project includes the potential repurposing of three NSW Government-owned buildings—the Old Courthouse, Ambulance Station, and Police Station—as well as the development of a new outdoor civic space for community events. Arts MNC will work in partnership with Yurruungga Aboriginal Corporation and Council to research funding opportunities, provide advocacy to State and Federal Government, as well as deliver programs to activate the space.

Community Halls. AMNC will collaborate with Councils, artists and groups to activate local halls and other Council venues for cultural activity by providing opportunities through CASP and delivery of key programs.

Empty Spaces. We will work with local businesses and Councils to identify empty commercial spaces for temporary use and to activate CBD activity.



anni Street Bandat Taranta Festival, Bellingen Photo: Jeremy Thomas

Area Of Operation: Diversity & Capacity Building

Professional Development

We will continue to deliver inclusive professional development programs to empower artists at all stages of their practice with the skills and knowledge to thrive in their creative careers. Elements include:

- Workshops and Training. Delivering F2F and online sessions facilitated by artists and creative industry experts. Topics may include project management for events/exhibitions, marketing, grant writing, social media and digital skills for building audiences and sales.
- Networking Events. Facilitating connections between artists, industry experts, and potential collaborators to foster a supportive and vibrant artistic community. We aim to present two networking events annually.
- Artist Showcase Program. Providing artists increased visibility through an online gallery and physical exhibitions increasing both local audiences and online visitors. Participating artists receive a small fee supporting their practice while sharing their stories and creativity.
- Audience & Market Development. Developing opportunities for artists to expand their audiences and markets on the Mid North Coast and beyond.
- **Smart Art Resources.** Our online resources provide artists with essential tools, resources, and information to manage their careers effectively.



Key projects 2025 - 2028

First Nations Artists & Creators Professional

Development. A pilot event in partnership with Saltwater Freshwater Arts, this half-day event will feature panel discussions and presentations from the National Aboriginal Design Agency, as well as First Nations curators and artists. Topics will cover key areas such as working with galleries, licensing and royalties, and sharing real-life experiences as a practising artist.

MiNi (digital) Concerts. In 2025 we will deliver a professional development program for participating musicians in our MiNi digital Concerts, including a youth focused component to showcase young emerging musicians.

Artist Professional Development & Showcase.

Workshop program will cover essentials like business planning, marketing, and financial management, tailored specifically for the arts sector. During the year we will host a Showcase presenting MNC artists from diverse artforms.

MNC: NewGen Creatives. Supporting young people to develop pathways in the arts and creative industries. Components include creative career talks, showcase program and internship providing on-the-job training in areas such as arts administration, marketing, content creation and project management.

Ready Set Go Youth Music Mentorship.

Weekly workshops for young people aged 13 – 18 to develop music performance skills, as well as providing connections to music industry professionals.

Ability Arts Connect. A platform for artists with disabilities to participate in workshops and talks led by artists with lived experiences of disability. These sessions focus on creative careers and offer valuable networking opportunities with peers, mentors, and industry professionals.

Devolved Grants Program

(CASP) funding from Create NSW has been pivotal in launching a wide range of creative projects by artists and groups in our region, including arts workshops, disability arts programs, street parades, youth initiatives, performances, and exhibitions. This program has built the skills and capacity of local artists and creatives, empowering them to successfully deliver their own projects.

We will continue to provide this annual small grant program to foster innovative and inclusive arts initiatives that engage with local communities.

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Arts Mid North Coast have been instrumental in my transition to the Mid North Coast as a working artist. They have supported my visual arts and circus workshop practice and offered fantastic, free professional development opportunities which have been invaluable. I also greatly appreciate the support they have given our regional arts festival Tortuga through the CASP program and highlighting our work in their Art Files video project. Their reach is huge for such a small organisation and vital to our region".

Lucy Gamsby Frost, Artist/ Producer Tortuga Festival

Area Of Operation: Organisational Sustainability

Organisational sustainability is a key priority for Arts Mid North Coast to ensure our long-term success. To achieve this, we will undertake the following activities:

- **Increasing staffing levels**. We aim to have 4 FTE staff by 2028 to better support the breadth of our programs and initiatives, including the creation of a new First Nations identified position.
- **Establishing a physical presence.** We will establish an office for the organisation to enable deeper community engagement and greater visibility across our region.
- **Fundraising strategy development.** We will develop a new fundraising strategy to involve diversifying our income streams and tapping into new opportunities like fee-for-service offerings, donations, philanthropic contributions, and sponsorships for key programs and events.
- **Partnership collaboration and development.** We will build and strengthen our existing partnerships and develop new opportunities for collaboration. Our future direction will also seek new partnerships with our education, business and community sectors to support the delivery of our programs.
- **Prioritise succession planning** within staff and regularly conduct Board skills audits to ensure we have the right mix of expertise to effectively guide the organisation forward.
- **Maintaining modern workplace standards** by regularly reviewing policies to align with legislation and best practices. To increase diversity, we are developing an Aboriginal Employment Strategy and creating career pathways for young people. We prioritise environmental sustainability in our operations for a positive impact on future generations.



Partnerships and Collaborations

Local Councils

We deeply value the support we've received from our six Local Councils over the years as financial members of Arts Mid North Coast. Their ongoing commitment has been essential in enabling us to foster and support the creative industries across the region. We recognise that Local Councils are facing significant financial challenges, and we remain committed to working together through partnership and collaboration to find new, innovative ways to keep supporting local artists and cultural development.

Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance

Saltwater Freshwater Arts (SWFW) is the peak body for Aboriginal arts and cultural development on the Mid North Coast. SWFW represents ten Local Aboriginal Land Councils MNCt, covering the four language areas of the Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti, Biripi and Worimi. AMNC continues to collaborate with SWFW to support First Nations artists and culture in our region. We provide advocacy and promotional support for SWFW and partner on the delivery of programs and projects to amplify First Nations arts and culture.

Education and Creative Industries

Partnerships with stakeholders such as TAFE North Coast, Regional Development Australia - Mid North Coast, North Coast Screen Industry Taskforce, Coffs Innovation Centre, Charles Sturt University, Country Universities Centre, and local high schools will support our strategic focus on young and emerging artists and creative sector development. AMNC will work in partnership to deliver programs that address skills and workforce needs, and to ensure approaches are coordinated, interconnected and create genuine and accessible career pathways.

Music NSW

AMNC will continue its partnership with Music NSW to support their Regional Music development program to strengthen our burgeoning music sector. In 2025, we have partnered to deliver Mini digital Concerts: NewGen and a Youth Professional Development program aimed at fostering the next generation of regional musicians.

DanceMakers Collective (DMC)

We have established a new partnerships with Sydneybased Dance Makers Collective to bring their awardwinning Saturday Night Social program to our region in 2025 and 2026. This program aims to invigorate and strengthen our local dance community through a series of inclusive workshops and a social event.

Mid North Coast Disability Art Prize

We will continue our partnership with local disability service provider Nambucca Valley Phoenix to deliver the Mid North Coast Disability Art Prize and Ability Arts Connect forum. This initiative provides artists with disabilities development and networking opportunities with peers, mentors, and industry professionals.

Regional Futures: Regional Arts Network Statewide Regional Projects

Since 2022, the Regional Arts Network has successfully partnered to produce three key statewide initiatives that have amplified and showcased the arts and culture of regional NSW:

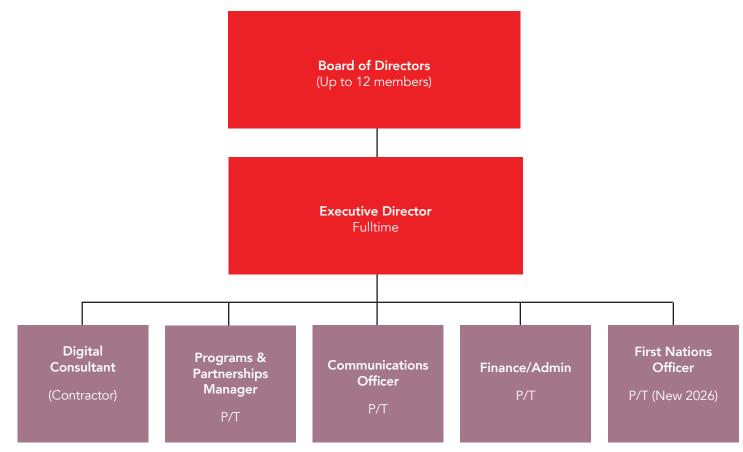
- Artists in a Volatile Landscape brought 29 artists from across regional NSW to collaborate and develop new works, with an exhibition at the Casula Powerhouse in Western Sydney.
- Horizons: Creative Industries Launchpad, provided paid mentorship opportunities to 75 young artists across regional NSW.
- Cultural Tourism Research Project, provided insights and opportunities in regional cultural tourism, and collaborations with Destination NSW and other tourism bodies (to be completed in 2025).

Governance

AMNC operates as a not-for-profit incorporated association. Our Board comprises members appointed by our partner Councils and up to six community representatives. Guided by our Constitution and supported by policies and procedures the Board ensures the organisation operates with integrity and accountability.

The Board includes four office bearers—Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer—who are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Additionally, sub-committees, drawn from Board members and supported by the Executive Director, are formed to focus on specific tasks such as policy reviews, HR, and grant assessments. These sub-committees provide recommendations and report back to the Board for endorsement.

To maintain effective governance, the Board meets quarterly and holds an AGM in the middle of the calendar year to address statutory requirements and elect office bearers for the upcoming year. Community members are elected based on a skills audit conducted annually. The Executive Director provides updates every one to two weeks, to ensure Board members are well-informed and engaged with the organisation's ongoing initiatives.



Organisational Chart

Marketing and Communication

Our marketing and communications strategy is centred on leveraging diverse communication platforms to engage with our audience effectively.

Social Media

We actively utilise social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram to create and curate dynamic content that connects with our community and showcases artistic initiatives. Our social media audiences are made up of artists and creatives, local residents, organisations, businesses and visitors who are mostly based on the Mid North Coast, with smaller percentages from metropolitan areas including Sydney and Melbourne. Content shared through social media is used not only to communicate arts activities and opportunities with our local audience but to promote the strong cultural tourism value of the Mid North Coast region.

Video

We have increasingly used videos to reach a wider audience and provide more encompassing narratives of our artists and creative events. We regularly create social media reels to promote our own projects and other arts and cultural offerings of the Mid North Coast which prove popular in terms of engagement and increase in followers. We have also developed our Mid North Coast Art Files video series to provide more in-depth documentation of local arts and cultural projects, particularly those funded through our CASP grants program, which are shared through our YouTube channel and social media accounts.

E-Newsletter

Our monthly e-newsletter, Arts Blast, serves as a vital tool to share updates, promote events, current funding and artistic opportunities, while fostering a sense of community among artists and creatives. We also send dedicated EDMs as required to promote specific opportunities to our arts community.

Website

A cornerstone of our outreach efforts is our website featuring the only regional and free events calendar on the Mid North Coast and a regularly updated News section, with the latest arts news and opportunities, providing comprehensive overview of cultural happenings in our area. Our website not only informs residents and visitors about upcoming events it also gives artists a platform to promote their work. Our Creative Coast directory lists arts and cultural venues and places of cultural interest across the region. Our SmartArt feature offers essential resources, including the latest information on policies, training materials, and topics related to Business Resources, Events, and Cultural Tourism.

In 2025 we will launch a new Artists Directory section of our website to not only raise the profile of local artists on the Mid North Coast, but also to allow targeted support and communications such as opportunities and artist showcases.

Print Media

We promote specific projects, events and opportunities through press releases to relevant media contacts and book monthly advertising in local print media to increase our audience reach. In partnership with local businesses, we produce printed cards featuring the work of local artists and contact details for our organisation, which are distributed through local venues. We also publish our Creative Coast cultural tourism brochure distributed through all our visitor information centres in the region.

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Words of Support

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Arts Mid North Coast (AMNC) play an integral role in the support and development of arts and culture in regional communities. In the last 12 months, AMNC has provided professional development activities for artists, sector support services, undertaken promotional activities, worked with Council on projects and programs and engaged other levels of government around the needs and opportunities for regional areas like the Bellingen Shire.

Strong advocacy is something that the AMNC continues to do on behalf of the Council and community to ensure that arts and cultural engagement and support are provided at a grassroots level. The work they undertake to support not just activities, programs and events, but individual artists cannot be understated.

We strongly support the AMNC's application for funding and look forward to working with them to continue to build capacity of local artists while increasing engagement opportunities around cultural experiences for our community.

Maxine Compton, Community Partnerships -Bellingen Shire Council

"

Arts Mid North Coast is the go-to for anything arts in this area. AMNC provided coordinated creative recovery training days and had a great impact on local communities. They helped to fund a huge range of arts workshops in disaster-affected communities. This helped so many process very challenging events. I see them as the epicentre of all things arts. When I'm looking at what to do on a weekend I'll go to their website to see what is on. Some excellent exhibitions that have been supported by AMNC have given me inspiration and provide interesting events to attend.

AMNC alert local artists to available arts grants and make sure people know about them. I have been able to organise an exhibition because of these grants. I found the process trouble free and the staff are readily available to provide support if I have needed. We are lucky to have an organisation like this as the cultural scene is richer because of it.

Emma Gentle, Artist



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Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance Aboriginal Corporation is highly appreciative and extremely grateful to Arts Mid North Coast for the support, collaboration and exchange of ideas that has existed between our two organisations over the years.

As the peak body for Aboriginal arts and culture representing the Worimi, Biripi, Dunghutti and Gumbaynggirr nation of the Mid North Coast, Saltwater Freshwater has relied upon Arts Mid North Coast for their advocacy, promotion and ongoing support for our artists and the programs we deliver.

The level of cooperation and collaboration has been significant as well as invaluable to relationship between our organisations.

Rick Gonsalvez, General Manager Saltwater Freshwater Aboriginal Arts Alliance.

"

BANJO was built in the Mid North Coast, produced and performed only by performers/ technical crew from the region and toured the length of the Mid North Coast. From the production's incubation we have felt the consistent support of Arts Mid North Coast - thank you. For us, it was essential we notified/engaged the Mid North Coast Arts community to make the tour viable. We discovered during this process that Arts Mid North Coast truly is at the centre of the arts web for our region. Their assistance in connecting us with suitable venues, marketing providers, arts groups, arts supporters and influential community members across the length of the region was exemplary.

Tim Maddren, Got Ya Back Productions



Proudly Supported By:



Arts Mid North Coast is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW









arts MID NORTH COAST

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