

# ARTS MARGARET RIVER 2021/2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Excellence, Engagement,  
Creativity and Sustainability



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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REPORTING PERIOD JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022

The past year has been very positive for Arts Margaret River. Our small but dedicated and energetic team put together a full program of events, with the diversity and range a testament to their ability and focus. Covid issues continued to cause chaos, and programming problems persisted. While event numbers were up attendances were down.

In September we reached an agreement with the Shire to take over all programming at the HEART. It now seems appropriate to review our strategic progress over the past three years.

*Throughout the period we remained focused on our purpose - to support and nurture artists of all persuasions, and foster a love of the arts within our community.*

In an early strategy session our past General Manager, Andrew Frith, laid the foundation of our emergent strategy. He declared that we address our purpose through three roles – Presenter, Creator and Supporter. This has become a central tenet of our strategy.

The first is reflected in the program of events from theatre, comedy, opera and children's events. The second is our Cowaramup Sundowners and Readers & Writers Festival. The third is more subjective and less obvious publicly.

The Board has been resolute in wanting to expand our range of programs and impact for our community. It rejected the notion of scaling down and focusing on a small number of larger events.

Arts organisations typically live on a financial knife's edge. We regularly look to our forward sustainability and watch costs closely. To embrace an expansion strategy meant generating additional income - something of a leap of faith.

Our funding comes from two main sources – grant funding and ticketing/event income. A smaller amount comes through fundraising/donations and membership. Optimistic targets were set for additional grant funding and fundraising.

Our team delivered on both – especially by being more aggressive in our grant applications. The (now) Annual Art in the Garden has matured into a key event on the Margaret River social calendar and been an important fundraiser.

In 2021 we were asked by Annette Carmichael to act as local producer for her Distributed 15 project. This led us to create a new income line in our accounts – Production Fees. We have since explored similar opportunities, which are now an important financial element. Recent engagements include administrative support for the Strings Attached Guitar Festival, appointment as Area Hub Coordinator for Regional Arts Western Australia, and as artistic programmer at MR HEART.

These use our core strengths of community connection and organisational skills.

While the HEART co-management agreement provides additional financial security, it is important to recognise that other initiatives had already built a stronger organisation.

Our role at the HEART is to re-engage with community groups and make the venue more accessible and valued as a community centre. The agreement is in addition to our existing program, and is not intended to replace it.

There is much work to be done, but the team is excited and energised about the prospect. Our staff will be relocating to the HEART from December this year.

### **Presenter**

As Presenter we focus on strengthening our community through the arts.

In 2021/2022 we presented 21 events and 42 Readers and Writers ticketed events- seven more than the previous 12 months.

Unfortunately, persistent COVID pressures meant attendance numbers at Readers & Writers were down. They were limited to only 3,157 compared with 9,537 in 2021. Ticketing income was down 20%.

Other attendances were up 3,841 compared with 3,458 before.

### **Creator**

As Creator we provide employment and exposure for local artists and others whilst promoting and fostering the arts in our community.

This was our 20th Anniversary of the free Cowaramup Sundowners, with four concerts in February.

Our January Art in the Garden raised \$21,762, and the April Birds, Bees, Flowers and Fish Art Exhibition raised \$5,297.

The Readers & Writers Festival is the biggest event we create. The addition of Busselton events and a Fringe Festival has built a strong beachhead for expansion in future years.

### **Supporter**

An expanded Supporter role was a key element of our growth in 2022. We provide assistance to other creatives and artists.

Our reputation and history of successfully navigating the myriad issues that arrive in putting on an event has led many to our doors seeking support. These include the Strings Attached Festival in October, for Regional Arts Western Australia and HEART.

Some smaller auspicing arrangements have also been implemented, and we continue to pursue partnerships and collaborations with others.

### **Board of Management**

In May we were disappointed to have Euan Smith resign as Treasurer due to personal reasons. I wish to thank Euan for his perspective and contribution to our rebuilding process. Two new appointments were made in July:

Clinton Truman – Clinton has had a successful career in retail management at senior management level in both Australia and overseas. He is now the owner of Country Focus on Bussell Highway in town (next door to Cotton On) and has accepted the role of Treasurer;

Kerry Mather – Kerry is an experienced educator and long-serving Principal with strong administrative and financial skills.

We welcome both and are grateful for the additional skills and insights they bring.

I again thank all our other Board Members – Anne Shepherdson (Life Member), Heath Kelly (Vice President), Jeanette Sangmeister (Secretary) and Chris Young, for their time, passion and commitment. Our organisation is stronger for their generous contributions and suggestions.



## **Members**

We are appreciative of the continued support of you, our members. As of June 30 2021 we had 213 members. This is a slight improvement over the prior year's 199 but still below the 2020 number of 230.

I am pleased to announce that membership fees will remain unchanged in 2022/23. With less overhang of COVID uncertainty and renewed enthusiasm following our appointment at the HEART, we look forward to an expanded membership in 2023.

## **Volunteers**

Without the support of our volunteers, we would not be able to put on the number and variety of events. Over the past twelve months we had 1,212 volunteer hours recorded. But we think that is understated.

I wish to thank all volunteers for their tremendous and continued support.

## **Staff**

I can't speak highly enough about our small but dedicated team. They are the lifeblood of the organisation and have been exceptional in driving growth and creating a stronger organisation.

Michelle Wright (General Manager) is relentless in her drive and pursuit of opportunity. Not only that, her personal capacity is remarkable.

Sian Baker (Readers & Writers Festival Director) promised a bigger, better Festival, and delivered it in spades. Unfortunately, the pandemic priests pushed against it, and attendances were down. The bones of future expansion are well and truly in place now and 2023 promises to be exceptional.

Stephanie Kreutzer (Marketing Manager) is the quietly spoken powerhouse behind the scenes who makes everything fall into place. Her experience and commitment are vital.

Trevor Brannan stepped into the role of Finance and Administration Manager in June last year and has proven to be a real asset. With new relationships, he has produced many "what if" scenarios and analyses which have allowed us to venture more widely.

This small team (3.3 FTE) achieves a remarkable amount with very little support, and I cannot thank them highly enough.

## **Funding Bodies**

Without the support of our various funding bodies we simply wouldn't exist. These include Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund – an Australian Government initiative, The State Government as part of its Regional Events Program (Tourism WA), Regional and Remote Festivals Fund as part of the Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program (RACIP) and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, LotteryWest, Australian Government through the Festivals Australia program, Augusta Margaret River Shire, Regional Arts WA, Rotary Margaret River and Doral Mineral Sands. To all of our members, volunteers, staff, Board, funders and sponsors, I thank you all for your patronage, patience and positivity.

David Shelton  
President

## TREASURER'S REPORT

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Reporting period July 2021 to June 2022

### OPERATIONAL RESULTS

With the COVID pandemic continuing to impact events and demand (and therefore competition) for funding, the financial year 2021/22 has required an exceptional effort from the AMR team. Despite these challenges and reduced ticket sales, most events were able to proceed (including the important Readers & Writers Festival).

Grant funding received and expended in 2021/22 was also at an exceptional level of \$329,758. In addition, grants for 2022/23 of \$158,200 have already been secured and received (including \$94,000 of RISE funding for the Festival and \$25,000 of LotteryWest funding rolled-over from this year's Festival as it was not used).

AMR made a small surplus of \$955 during the period (which was significantly better than originally budgeted for this difficult year with JobKeeper and ATO assistance no longer available).

Net current assets at the year-end were \$146,811 and provide a solid start to the 2022/23 financial year.

### INCOME/EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Year to June 22</b>	<b>6 months to June 21 (last reporting period)</b>	<b>Year to June 21 (comparison)</b>
Grants	\$329,758	\$194,980	\$243,293
Events (including fundraiser event)	\$160,210	\$159,230	\$166,801
Other (Membership, fundraising, sponsorships)	\$37,299	\$18,917	\$32,825
JobKeeper & ATO assistance	-	\$58,200	\$141,682
Shire Administration Fee	\$50,500	-	\$50,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$577,767</b>	<b>\$431,327</b>	<b>\$634,601</b>

EXPENDITURE	Year to June 22	6 months to June 21 (last reporting period)	Year to June 21 (comparison)
Operational Overhead	\$342,051	\$173,085	\$352,402
Events	\$234,761	\$197,160	\$210,465
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$576,812</b>	<b>\$370,245</b>	<b>\$568,209</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$955</b>	<b>\$61,082</b>	<b>\$66,392</b>

#### ASSETS/LIABILITIES SUMMARY

	June 2022 \$	June 2021 \$	Dec 2020 \$	Dec 2019 \$
Current Assets	\$398,643	\$202,177	\$237,203	\$188,279
Current Liabilities	-\$251,832	-\$58,860	-\$122,931	-\$103,254
Less: Shire Program Loan	0	0	-\$40,000	-\$40,000
<b>Current Assets net of Liabilities</b>	<b>\$146,811</b>	<b>\$143,317</b>	<b>\$74,272</b>	<b>\$45,025</b>

The cash on hand at the end of the period was \$377,827.

This includes un-acquitted grants of \$158,200 already received for 2022/23.

#### CHALLENGES FOR 2022/23

Despite grant funding already received for the financial year 2022/23, maintaining funding levels to support our event schedule and to cover operational and staff costs will always be a challenge and a core focus. The progress of fundraising will continue to be monitored closely through monthly finance and board meetings.

To reduce the reliance on funding, the Board and AMR team have already been successful in developing other sources of income in 2022/23 including:

- A contract with The West Australian Guitar Festival to provide event management and administration support

- Appointment as the area (HUB) co-ordinator for Regional Arts Western Australia

Needless to say, the support from our membership, volunteers and sponsors is exceptional and continues to be critical to the success of the organisation. Thank you to all concerned. We look forward to your continued support.

Clinton Truman  
Treasurer

## PERFORMING ARTS

### OPERA AUSTRALIA - CARMEN

Thursday 19 August, 7.30pm

Margaret River HEART

Tickets: \$110 VIP, \$100 VIP member,  
\$65 adult, \$55 member, \$25 youth

Attendance: 390

Performance Fee: \$17,500



Opera Australia last performed in Margaret River back in 2013 at the Margaret River Cultural Centre. This highly anticipated production of Carmen only toured to 2 venues in WA, Albany and Margaret River. The travelling troupe comprised of 32 people including cast, crew and a chamber orchestra. The performance fee included free music and singing workshops which were offered to Riversong Choir and various Margaret River music and choir students.

The chamber orchestra performed on the floor below the stage which meant that the 2 front rows could not be sold due to visibility issues. 35 VIP tickets were sold which included Leeuwin Estate Wines and canapes pre show and during intermission on the mezzanine level plus Bettenay nougat and a long stemmed rose.

The event was a great success and all available tickets were sold.

### FOLLOW ME HOME - AUSTRALIAN THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (ATYP)

Wednesday 8 September, 7.00pm

Margaret River HEART

Tickets: \$10

Attendance: 81 (47 paid, 34 comp)

Performance Fee: \$141 (30% of box office)



Follow Me Home was inspired by real life stories. Told with honesty, heart and humanity it reveals the astonishing strength and resilience of young people who have experienced homelessness in NSW.

Due to Covid restrictions, the cast were unable to travel to WA for the performance. A digital version of the show was provided instead, at a reduced cost.

Arts MR worked closely with local homeless charity, Just Home, to create a video of four local people who had experienced homelessness. These moving and insightful stories were presented prior to the Follow Me Home screening to engage the local community and raise awareness of homelessness in Margaret River. Free tickets were given to Just Home members/clients and 50% of ticket income was donated to Just Home. The local stories and performance was widely promoted so it was disappointing that not more people attended. Overall the event was very well received by those in attendance and the local stories footage was supplied to Just Home for their use.

## PERFORMING ARTS

### UNDER THE SAME SKY - CO3 CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Wednesday 24 November, 7.00pm  
Margaret River HEART Studio  
Tickets: Free  
Attendance: 10 birdmaking workshop,  
12 dance workshop, 59 screening  
Performance Fee: Nil



CO3 presented this free tour called Under the Same Sky to regional venues. The tour was made up of three key elements: bird making workshops, dance workshops and a public screening of ARCHIVES OF HUMANITY dance. It featured an inter-generational cast of 21 dancers plus a remarkable set of over 1500 fabric birds hand-made by members of the WA community.

The bird making and dance workshops were run by three CO3 representatives and were held during the day, with the Archives of Humanity screening held in the evening. All events were free with registrations required.

Thanks to CO3 for this wonderful opportunity and the Margaret River HEART for providing the Studio space for the workshops and screening.

### SUNDAY SUNDOWNERS—FREE COMMUNITY CONCERTS

6, 13, 20, 27 February, 5pm - 7pm  
Pioneer Park, Cowaramup  
Tickets: Free  
Attendance: Approximately 1400 overall  
Bands & Tech Fees: \$10,500

2022 was the 20th anniversary of the Sundowners in Cowaramup. To celebrate, 4 concerts were scheduled and a large community art project was planned for each week. A large amount of craft material was sourced from the local Lions Shed and Woven, a Cowaramup Art Group agreed to man the free art activities each week.

Unfortunately Covid restrictions and mandatory vaccination requirements meant that unvaccinated members could not perform or attend the concerts. This was very disappointing and subsequently meant that attendance numbers were a lot less than in previous years. We also decided to cancel the art project as Woven was no longer able to assist.

The first Sunday was forecast for heavy rain and winds so the Cowaramup Hall was booked as an alternative venue. Whilst the indoor venue meant a much smaller capacity, it was good that the Sundowner could go ahead and that we could still support our local musicians.





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## JESSIE GORDON TRIO - JAZZ

Thursday 17 March, 8pm  
The River Hotel  
Tickets: \$35 adults, \$30 conc,  
\$28 members  
Attendance: 77  
Performance Fee: \$2,420



The Jessie Gordon Trio is based in Perth so we were fairly confident that the performance would be able to go ahead. What with cancellations of the Sydney Male Choir and Backstories Margaret River events in March due to Covid, it was good to have this musical event to bring people together.

The performance was held in the outdoor beer garden at The River which allowed for open air and social distancing. Despite low community confidence in attending large gatherings and vaccination status requirements, 77 people attended the show which was very well received.

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## PERTH INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

Friday 6 May, 7pm  
The Margaret River District Club  
Tickets: \$30 adults, \$25 members  
Attendance: 82  
Performance Fee: 30% of ticket sales (\$652)

The Perth Int. Jazz Festival was touring to Busselton and contacted us to see if we would collaborate on organizing a performance in Margaret River. The Margaret River District Club agreed to host the performance, taking bar income with Arts MR volunteers to assist on bar and door duties. The Gemma Farrell Quintet performed the first set followed by the Lucy Iffla Quartet after intermission.



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## MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

Friday 27 May, 7.30pm

Margaret River HEART

Tickets: \$55 adults, \$50 concession, \$47 members

Attendance: 420 (SOLD OUT)

Performance Fee: \$9920

Thankfully venue capacity had returned to 100% prior to this performance as it sold out.

The audience that attends this event is generally younger and not as fearful of Covid.

Proof of vaccination was required to attend and a large number of Arts MR volunteers were recruited to cite proof and provide wristbands on entry.

Margaret River HEART ran their bar which was very busy pre-show and during intermission. This event was attended by the AMR Shire Social Club and has a loyal following, often attended by the same people every year. It is a very social event which attracts a diverse crowd that may not otherwise attend Arts MR events.



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## CANCELLED EVENTS DUE TO COVID 19

**Dads** – rescheduled from September 2020 to July 2021, then to November 2021, then July 2022 but was finally cancelled permanently in October due to all other WA venues cancelling.

**Sydney Male Choir**– rescheduled from March 2022 to September 2022.

**Backstories Margaret River** - rescheduled from March 2022 to October 2022.

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## 2021 ARTS HUB MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships in 2021 were 302

Memberships at 30 June 2022 were 209

At the beginning of 2022 membership prices were increased from \$44 Standard to \$50, \$28 Concession to \$32 per calendar year. This was the first price increase since 2016.

## READERS & WRITERS FESTIVAL

**13—15 May 2022**

**Attendance:**

- 2604 Tickets sold (incl virtual passes, Busselton events, free tickets)
- 450 attended free activities over the weekend
- 103 Authors and guests attended (incl virtually)



We had prepared for COVID and took the decision in early 2022 to go ahead when the majority of public events and Festivals scheduled for the first part of 2022 in the South West chose to cancel. Building on from last year's virtual online platform, this year we extended it to offer a Virtual Festival Pass encompassing all talks in both rooms at the Margaret River HEART.

The WA border finally opened back up in April 2022. Due to this late timing and the need to confirm our talent far in advance of the Festival, we took the decision to limit the number of authors travelling from other states and moved some authors to virtual sessions. The late announcement of the Federal election also meant a number of headliners were unable to travel due to their election commitments. We did however manage to fly in Heather Morris, Claire Coleman and Julia Baird.

We dedicated our Readers & Writers stage to WA emerging and established authors, all of whom appeared in person over the Festival weekend. Our Main stage hosted a combination of in person and virtual hybrid sessions (guest joining virtually and host on stage) with only three sessions moving to fully virtual on the day due to the sessions host contracting COVID. This still worked extremely well, and our audience were very understanding and receptive.

This year we also launched two new initiatives as part of the festival program— the Busselton Special Edition, a new satellite event program and Fringe WORD, a new cultural event supporting new and emerging multi-platform artists from across the South West.

Our Young Readers & Writers Program (YR&W) which was due to run from 9– 20 May had to be cancelled in late February due to COVID.

The rise in community cases of COVID in the run up to the Festival dramatically reduced our visitors and ticketing income this year. Although the borders were open, guests and visitors were extremely concerned about travelling to WA (including our interstate guests and presenters) due to a high number of locally transmitted cases. We received many calls in the two weeks prior to the Festival, that we made the decision to amend our refund policy to offer a full refund for guests who had caught COVID, were in isolation or were close contact cases. We also reduced the price of our Full Festival Virtual Pass three weeks prior to the Festival to ensure that more guests could access the virtual platform and still enjoy the Festival.





## READERS & WRITERS FESTIVAL - PRE FESTIVAL FUNDRAISERS

### HUGH MCKAY IN CONVERSATION

Thursday 23 September 6.30pm - Online Zoom event

Free event - donations encouraged, Attendance: 52

Hugh Mackay presented a 30 minute talk about his book, The Kindness Revolution which asked the questions, What really matters to me? Am I living the kind of life I want? What sort of society do we want to become? The talk was followed by an audience Q&A and raffle draw for 6 of Hugh's books.



### NATASHA LESTER IN CONVERSATION

Thursday 7 October, 7pm - Margaret River Distillery

Tickets: \$15, Attendance: 72

This event was held at the Distillery and attendees were encouraged to dress up. Natasha Lester launched her new historical fiction novel, The Riviera House and was in conversation with Rosi Moore-Fiander. A predominantly female audience attended and the ticket price included a glass of gin on arrival. \$5 per person was paid to MR Distillery towards drinks and a sound technician was employed.



### PETER LANE IN CONVERSATION

Thursday 9 April 2022, 7pm - MR District Club

Tickets: \$10, Attendance: 98

Local geologist Peter Lane launched his new book 'Our Planet and the Evolution of Western Australia's Far South West'. Peter was joined by Professor Ross Dowling in conversation. Tickets included a glass of wine and book sales and signings followed the talk. Peter is very well known locally and the event was well attended.





## VISUAL ARTS

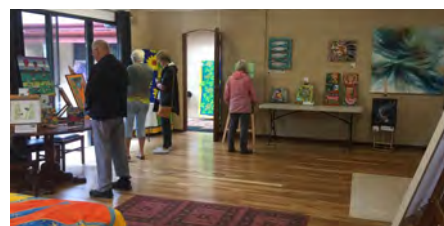
### ART IN THE GARDEN:

**Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd April 10am - 4pm**  
**Private Residence: 29 Mentelle Road, Burnside**

Community members were invited to create an artwork to the theme 'birds/bees/flowers/fish' to be included in an outdoor exhibition. All artforms were accepted and had to be for sale at a realistic price, with a 25% commission going to Arts Margaret River. A \$10 entry fee was charged.

42 artists participated and 67 artworks were included in the exhibition which was held in a large rural garden. The property featured a large well established garden, undercover verandas and a separate guest room that we were able to use. There was plenty of street parking and also a neighbour's large paddock for parking. A portable toilet was hired for the weekend. Nannas of the Forrest has an information stall over the weekend.

The exhibition was open to the public and entry was by cold coin donation. A tea/coffee/cake station was set up on the patio and manned by volunteers. A second hand book sale and raffle tickets were also sold. Intermittent on the Sunday kept a few people away but overall a good turn out with lots of family groups attending and 39 items sold, earning Arts MR a commission of \$3736.



### VISUAL STORIES EXHIBITION:

**3rd – 31st May (Official Opening Wed 4 May)**  
**Margaret River HEART**

The theme of the 2022 Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival was 'No Word Limit'. Artists were invited to submit works that bring this theme to life and communicate the unstoppable power of storytelling at a time where our lives are subject to so many limitations. The entries were displayed at the Margaret River HEART before and during the Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival.

19 artists participated with 26 artworks entered and 11 pieces sold. Artworks ranged in price from \$200 to \$7,800 with Arts MR retaining a 20% commission on sales.



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## VISUAL STORIES EXHIBITION CONTINUED:

**1st prize \$1000** (sponsored by Rotary Margaret River)—**Isabel Ricketts**

**2nd prize \$500** (sponsored by AMR Shire) —**Nirala Hunt**

**3rd prize \$300** (sponsored by ArtsMR)—**Seasaltware**

**Peoples Choice \$100** plus a case of wine (sponsored by MR Art Studio & Watson Family Wines) —**Carmen McFaul**



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## FRANÉ LESSAC EXHIBITION:

**3rd – 31st May**

**Margaret River HEART**

In addition to the Visual Stories Exhibition, we also worked with visual artist Frané Lessac to host her exhibition, The Art of Story, Retrospective Exhibition. This exhibition was displayed in the bar of Margaret River HEART, none of the artworks were for sale.



Frané is an author and illustrator with 50 award winning children's books over 40 years and The Retrospective took visitors on a journey around the world via the characters, communities and places featured throughout Lessac's stories.

Frané was scheduled to appear in the free children's storytelling tent in Margaret River and Busselton which had to be cancelled at the last minute due to her contracting Covid whilst in Margaret River.



## FUNDRAISING EVENTS

### ART IN THE GARDEN—BLANC DE BLANC AT TANAH MARAH

**Sunday 30 January 2pm—5pm**

**Tanah Merah**

**Tickets cost:** \$70 | \$60 Members and included High Tea and a glass of bubbles on arrival.

**Attendance:** 184 tickets sold plus 32 complimentary artist tickets

Patrons were encouraged to dress in all white and join us for an afternoon of high tea and drinks, live music, art and more in a beautiful lakeside setting.

35 artworks by local artists were silent or live auctioned. The Artists nominated a reserve price and retained up to 50% of the auction price, with a few donating the full sale price to ArtsMR. A fabulous array of artworks were auctioned including work by Leon Pericles, Kay Gibson, Alice Linford-Forte, Peter Moir, Robyn Collins, Dea Haddow and many more. In addition, over 50 9x5 boards were painted or decorated by local community members and silent auctioned on the day.

A large number of volunteers assisted with the venue set-up, parking, catering, bar and cleaning and pack down.

All artists were offered a complimentary ticket and the event sold out with 216 people attending.

The fundraiser was a great success with over \$20,000 raised for Arts Margaret River.

