



arts

MARGARET RIVER

Annual Report  
2022-2023





## PLACE

The town of Margaret River is firmly situated in the South West Boorah region in Noongar booja (country). Noongar have lived in this part of booja since the Nyittiny – creation times.<sup>1</sup>

Arts Margaret River acknowledges and pays respect to past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of Australia. In particular, we deeply respect the Wardandi people's ongoing connection to Country and the continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this region. We acknowledge over 75,000 years of living culture and knowledge and the country on which we create new stories through the arts.

As the major arts umbrella organisation in the stunning southwest Australian region of Augusta-Margaret River, Arts Margaret River proudly contributes to the sense of place through a rich and varied program of arts and creative events.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.noongar.org.au/noongar-protocols> South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council





## CONTENTS

<b>President's Report .....</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Community Engagement .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Treasurer's Report.....</b>	<b>6</b>	School Holiday Prehistoric Animals Activities .....	16
<b>Reconciliation Action Plan Statement (RAP).....</b>	<b>8</b>	Creative Leadership Program .....	16
<b>Access Belonging Inclusion Diversity &amp;</b>		Young @ HEART .....	16
<b>Equity Statement (ABIDE) .....</b>	<b>8</b>	Paint Play Intergenerational Workshops.....	17
<b>Performing Arts.....</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Art Exhibitions .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Erth's Prehistoric World.....	10	Stitched & Bound Exhibition.....	17
Australian Chamber Orchestra – A String Celebration.....	10	Pilbara, Kimberley and Beaches .....	17
Sydney Male Choir .....	11	Printmaking Exhibition .....	17
Julia .....	11	Bowls for Soupie.....	17
Backstories Margaret River .....	12	Visual Stories Exhibition .....	18
The Rivoli – Dance Makers Collective.....	12	New York City Glow Exhibition.....	18
Sundowners in Cowaramup (Free) .....	12	Now and forever, a lasting connection .....	18
Michael Shafar – Stand-Up Comedy .....	13	Weaving Stories of Boodja .....	18
The Stars Descend.....	13	<b>Additional Support.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Cicada – Spare Parts Puppet Theatre.....	13	Hot Desking .....	18
Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow .....	13	Shakespeare in the Park @ Leeuwin Estate .....	18
Possum Magic.....	13	<b>Margaret River Readers &amp; Writers Festival 2023.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Eaters Pub Quiz.....	14	Out of Season Events.....	21
Black Sun/Blood Moon .....	14		
<b>Cinema Screenings .....</b>	<b>14</b>		
<b>Venue Hire.....</b>	<b>15</b>		
<b>Community Hire .....</b>	<b>15</b>		
<b>Fundraising .....</b>	<b>15</b>		
<b>Heartbeats – Free Community Event .....</b>	<b>16</b>		

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## REPORTING PERIOD JULY 2022 TO JUNE 2023

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Once again we have had a very strong and successful year. Following the agreement with the Shire of Augusta Margaret River to take over all programming and front of house responsibilities at the Margaret River HEART our management team and staff have worked tirelessly to reactivate the facility and expand its community accessibility.

The past year can be considered as one of two halves.

From July to December the focus was on negotiating details of the co-management agreement with the Shire. A Heads of Agreement was signed on 2 September and the full co-management agreement was signed on the 1st December.

Michelle Wright, our General Manager moved into the HEART in September to commence the transition and the rest of the team moved in in early December.

The co-management agreement allowed a six month “settling in” period over the first six months of 2023, with the first five year term commencing on 1 July 2023.

The focus from January to June was the bedding down of new procedures and bringing the HEART team together as one. Working closely with Shire personnel, a number of new operational procedures have been established to not only integrate the two teams, but to improve efficiencies and ensure an improved customer experience.

The Shire's HEART Technical team provided training and staff time to ensure Arts Margaret River staff and volunteers were inducted correctly and able to hit the ground running.

It was recognised that a critical element of future success for the venue would be to integrate staff from both organisations. A number of team building and joint staff development workshops have taken place to ensure a ‘one team’ approach based on a greater sense of cohesion and a shared understanding of the community's aspirations for the HEART. These are reinforced through a weekly joint team meeting.

I am particularly grateful to all personnel and volunteers at the HEART, but especially to our General Manager Michelle Wright, who has worked closely with Jason Cleary and Phil Bebb from the Shire to make the HEART a welcoming and vibrant venue.

During a free community event in March (Heartbeats) to celebrate the venue's re-invigoration, the HEART was named Nala Bardip Mia (Our Story House) as part of Council and Undalup's Walking Together strategy.

The focus on building community connection is at the forefront of our thinking and operations. A number of community initiatives have been implemented, including “hot desking” opportunities for local creative organisations such as Creative Corner and WA Guitar Festival, as well as activation of the Studio Theatre space for community groups and artists. We have also hosted a number of community fundraising events.

The focus on community usage to regain the venue's place at the centre of our community has been remarkably successful.

The year has also been financially rewarding – with a notional surplus of \$133,074. I say notional as we have allocated \$50,000 to a program fund in anticipation of reduced grant funding next year.

This financial strength came from 3 areas – our strategic commitment to production/administration contracts with other organisations to expand our revenue streams; the most successful Readers and Writers Festival to date; and the carefully stepped on-boarding of additional personnel with commencement of the HEART co-management contract allowing us to restrict staffing cost blow-outs.

Clinton Truman's Treasurer's Report provides more details on our financial performance, and I want to thank him for his insightful questioning and support during the year.

Our team has been expanded to facilitate our role at the HEART, and as usual they have been delivering in spades. Steph Kreutzer has taken on the position of Community Development Support and her impact is being widely lauded by all community groups, while Trevor Brannan continues to provide financial monitoring and advice of the highest level. Ex Board member Christopher Young has moved into the marketing role – with immediately visible impact. We miss his contribution at the Board of Management meetings but are very glad to have him in his new role. Ian Smith is our Volunteer and Event Support Manager without whose endeavours we would not be able to stage the number of events we do. Dawn Rybicki and Pam Townshend have also joined the team, rotating through the front desk as Customer Service Operators.

No Annual Report would be complete without reference to our flagship product – the Margaret River Readers and Writers Festival. Once more the remarkable Sian Baker put on a show to eclipse previous events. This was truly a “coming out of Covid” program, widely embraced by our local and visiting literary lovers.

**We see our role as having three elements –  
Presenter, Creator and Supporter.**

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## **PRESENTER**

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

In 2022/2023 we presented 202 events and 52 Readers & Writers ticketed events.

Total attendance was 26,185 compared with 6,998 the year 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 three concerts in February.

In January our Art in the Garden event – this year at the Howard Park winery – raised approximately \$17,000.

Our signature Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival is our biggest event of the year. The addition of Busselton events has built a strong beachhead for further expansion in future years.

## **SUPPORTER**

An expanded Supporter role was a key element of our growth in 2023. 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.

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

## **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

We are fortunate to have a number of individuals who give freely of their time and expertise in helping to guide your organisation forward. With Christopher Young resigning from the Board and moving into the marketing role it was important for us to replenish our numbers and we were fortunate to have two new talented people join us:

- **Di Drew** – Di has enjoyed an illustrious and award-winning career in Australia as a film and television drama Director and Producer. She is a recipient of the Australian Director's Guild Award (ADG) "in recognition of consistent excellence in the art screen direction in feature film and television"
- **Galatee Underwood** – Galatee has a legal background in mediation including a long association with international human rights.

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), Clinton Truman (Treasurer) and Kerry Mather 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 2023 we had 367 members. This is a slight improvement over the prior year's 213.

I am pleased to announce that membership fees will remain unchanged in 2023/24.

## **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.

## **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, Shire of Augusta Margaret River, Regional Arts WA, Rotary Margaret River, Doral Mineral Sands and Edith Cowan University.

To all of our members, volunteers, staff, Board, funders and sponsors, as well as the Council and staff of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River, I again thank you all for your patronage and positive support.

**David Shelton**

*President*



# TREASURER'S REPORT

## REPORTING PERIOD JULY 2022 TO JUNE 2023

### OPERATIONAL RESULTS

The Financial Year for 2022/23 was very much a year of two halves. From the 1 January 2023, the operating results of Arts Margaret River were significantly influenced by the new contract with the Shire of Augusta Margaret River to co-manage The Margaret River HEART venue. The key changes to our operations were: an increase in the number of events; the running of the cinema and bar/kiosk at the HEART; managing the external hire of the venue; a significant increase in staff costs (to be able to deliver the above); and receiving an increased contracted payment from the Shire of Augusta Margaret River.

The Financial year 2022/23 was also significantly impacted by: a best ever financial performance by the Readers & Writers Festival; the contract to manage the Regional Arts WA (RAWA) Hub in the South West (which will continue in 2023/24); the contract to co-direct the West Australian Guitar Festival (WAGF) (in October 2022); and the end of the contract to produce the final stage of the (South West) Stars Descend performance (April 2023). In total these existing activities alone contributed over \$110,000 after allocating staff costs and overheads.

Grant funding received and expended in 2022/23 continued at a high level of \$363,678. A number of grants for the Readers & Writers Festival are now 3 year contracts (including Tourism WA, The Shire of Augusta Margaret River and The City of Busselton) however RISE (Federal) funding (\$94,000 in 2022/23) will not continue in 2023/24 as it was only available for 2 years.

Combining all of the above factors, Arts Margaret River made an operating surplus of \$133,074 during the period (which was significantly better than originally budgeted for this year). In light of this surplus, The Board of Management has set aside \$50,000 in a Program Fund to support our future programming (including particularly the Readers & Writers Festival and other HEART events).

Net current assets at the year-end increased to \$229,886 (reflecting the surplus for the year) and provide a solid start to 2023/24. The revaluation of non-current assets of \$14,246 included in previous years has now been removed as it is no longer considered appropriate.

Cash on hand at the end of the period was \$518,118. This includes unexpended grants of \$84,429 already received for events to December 2023 and \$61,518 payments to make to venue-hirers for ticketing income received for events not yet held.

### OUTLOOK FOR 2023/24

Our main focus for 2023/24 is the continued development of our co-management role at the Margaret River HEART – balancing financial stability with increasing the level and number of community events and support. Fundraising and grant assistance will also need to be a continued focus to allow us to support our events schedule and increased operational costs.

Needless to say, the support from our patrons, membership, volunteers, partners and sponsors in the period of transition to the Margaret River HEART has been exceptional and this will be critical to the continued financial stability of our organisation. Thank you to all concerned. We look forward to your continued support.

**Clinton Truman**

*Treasurer*

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## INCOME/EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Income	Year to June 2023	Year to June 2022
Grants	\$363,678	\$329,758
Memberships	\$13,481	\$8,962
Events (including fundraiser event)	\$197,269	\$160,210
Cinema	\$57,648	\$ –
Bar/Kiosk	\$45,475	\$ –
Venue Hire	\$28,875	\$ –
Other (Contracts, fundraising, sponsorships)	\$122,058	\$28,337
Shire Management/Administration Fee	\$139,335	\$50,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$967,819</b>	<b>\$577,767</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Operational Overhead	\$501,128	\$342,051
Events and HEART activities	\$333,617	\$234,761
Allocation to Program Fund	\$50,000	\$ –
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$884,745</b>	<b>\$576,812</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>\$83,074</b>	<b>\$955</b>

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## ASSETS/LIABILITIES SUMMARY

	June 2023	June 2022
Non-current Assets	\$8,745	\$22,992
Current Assets	\$554,615	\$398,643
Current Liabilities	-\$274,729	-\$251,832
Less: Program Fund	-\$50,000	\$ –
<b>Current Assets net of Liabilities</b>	<b>\$229,886</b>	<b>\$146,811</b>

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN STATEMENT (RAP)

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## INTRODUCTION

At Arts Margaret River, we acknowledge the importance of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commit ourselves to take meaningful action to advance this cause. This Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) outlines our organization's commitment to building respectful relationships, fostering mutual respect, and creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our RAP is based on the core pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities and reflects our dedication to promoting economic equity and supporting First Nations self-determination.

## AIM

To foster a community of inclusion, creativity, and understanding where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are celebrated and respected, and where opportunities for collaboration and growth are available to all.

## RAP CORE PILLARS

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### 1. RELATIONSHIPS

- **Acknowledgment and Welcome:** We will start all organizational events and meetings with an acknowledgment of the traditional custodians of the land and a welcome to country. This will promote respect for the culture and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Cultural Competency Training:** All staff and volunteers will undergo cultural competency training to deepen their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.
- **Engagement:** We will actively seek partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organizations to foster collaborative relationships.

### 2. RESPECT

- **Artistic Expression:** We will create and support opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to showcase their work through exhibitions, performances, and workshops at our organization.
- **Representation:** We will strive to ensure that our programming and promotional materials represent the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures accurately and respectfully.
- **Cultural Protocols:** We will adhere to cultural protocols and seek permission for the use of Indigenous knowledge, art, and cultural symbols in our projects.

## MEASURABLE OUTCOMES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- We will track and report our progress on RAP initiatives annually.
- Regular consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will inform our actions.

## CONCLUSION

At Arts Margaret River, we are committed to advancing reconciliation through meaningful and sustainable actions. Our RAP outlines our dedication to building respectful relationships, fostering mutual respect, and creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We believe that through these efforts, we can contribute to economic equity and support First Nations self-determination, while celebrating and preserving the rich cultures and histories of Australia's Indigenous peoples.

This RAP is a living document, subject to regular review and improvement as we work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities towards a more inclusive and equitable future.

# ACCESS BELONGING INCLUSION DIVERSITY & EQUITY STATEMENT (ABIDE)

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## INTRODUCTION

At Arts Margaret River we are committed to fostering vibrant and inclusive creative community that celebrates the richness of human experiences. We believe in the power of art to connect people, challenge perspectives, and transform lives. Our commitment to Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (ABIDE) is at the heart of everything we do.

## AIM

To foster a community of inclusion, creativity, and understanding where all individuals are celebrated and respected, and where opportunities for collaboration and growth are available to all.

## ABIDE CORE PILLARS

"Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (ABIDE) are fundamental principles that guide our organization. We are dedicated to embodying these principles in every aspect of our work."



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## ACCESS

We are committed to providing equal access to opportunities, resources, and experiences for all individuals. We strive to remove barriers that may hinder anyone from participating fully and reaching their potential.

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## BELONGING

Our aim is to create a space where everyone feels a deep sense of belonging and acceptance. We foster an environment where diverse voices are not only heard but also embraced, contributing to a stronger sense of community and unity.

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## INCLUSION

Inclusion is woven into the fabric of our organization. We actively seek out and value the perspectives, talents, and contributions of every member. By fostering an inclusive environment, we harness the power of differences to drive innovation and growth.

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## DIVERSITY

We celebrate the richness that diversity brings to our organization. We recognize and appreciate the variety of backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and identities that each individual brings. By embracing diversity, we broaden our horizons and enrich our collective understanding.

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## EQUITY

Equity is the cornerstone of our approach. We acknowledge that historical inequities persist in our society. We are dedicated to addressing these inequities by ensuring fair treatment, representation, and opportunities for all, irrespective of their background.

ABIDE is not just a set of words for us – it's a commitment. We are on a continuous journey to create an environment where access, belonging, inclusion, diversity, and equity thrive. Through ongoing learning, open dialogue, and purposeful actions, we strive to make a positive impact within our organization and in the larger communities we serve."



## PERFORMING ARTS

### ERTH'S PREHISTORIC WORLD

**Dates:** 9-10 August, 10am & 12.30pm (school shows)

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

**Attendance:** 990 (including 596 from four schools & two homeschooling groups)

**Performance Fee:** \$13,530 + 12% royalties

Bringing ancient creatures from land and sea together in one show, Erth's Prehistoric World is the perfect combination of theatrical magic and charm.

This was the third Erth show that Arts Margaret River has presented over the past 10 years and they have all been of very high standard and very well attended. Excellent marketing materials are provided for the show as well as a great school education kit.

Initial COVID capacities meant a reduction to 50% audience, but the restriction was lifted and full capacity could be sold.

Attending schools were: Cowaramup Primary, Margaret River Primary, Rapids Landing and Dunsborough Primary. As the first school to make a booking, Cowaramup Primary were also offered a free online puppet making workshop.



### AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA – A STRING CELEBRATION

**Date:** 16 September, 7.30pm

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

**Attendance:** 195

ACO Collective combines Australia's most talented emerging string players with the professional musicians of the Australian Chamber Orchestra to create a high-energy 11-piece string orchestra.

ACO Collective were originally booked to perform in 2020 but had to cancel due to COVID. A special school matinee performance was held at 11am which students from St Thomas More Catholic Primary and Margaret River Primary School attended. A group of elderly residents from Mirrambeena were invited to attend the matinee performance at no charge.

It was the first time that a VIP ticket price was created which A reserve seating and Clairault Streicker wines pre-event and during intermission on the mezzanine level.





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## SYDNEY MALE CHOIR

**Date:** 18 September, 3pm

**Venue:** St Thomas More Catholic Church

**Attendance:** 152

The Sydney Male Choir toured WA in September and performed one concert in Margaret River. They have become an iconic part of the Sydney music scene over the ensuing 109 years and includes over 45 choir members. With musical director Warwick Tyrrell leading the Choir, audiences will delight in the sheer range and variety of the concert program. The Choir's emotional and sensitive treatment of songs will stir the passions and excite you in unexpected ways.

The Choir has spanned generations of singers over its long history and the music is always fresh and relevant as it engages its audiences in a wonderful embrace of energy, soaring harmonies, – and sheer joy; not surprising for a bunch of guys whose mission is to 'Bring Joy Through Song'!

This special performance was held in the St Thomas More Catholic Church with soaring ceilings and wonderful acoustics. Afternoon tea/cakes were available for purchase during intermission.

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## JULIA

**Date:** 14 October, 6pm

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Studio

**Performance Fee:** \$2,200 + 10% royalties

JULIA is a powerful and gripping solo dance theatre work in response to Julia Gillard's time as Prime Minister.

The dance performance was to be held in the Studio theatre as it required intimate seating in the round. Ticket sales were slow to start so we organised a special 'In Conversation' talk with Jane Kelsbie MLA and Fiona Wilkie in the bar prior to the performance and a meet and greet and Q&A to be held after the performance.

Unfortunately the dancer became ill on the day of the performance so the show had to be cancelled. There was no opportunity for it to be re-scheduled as the venue was not available and the dancer was due to go overseas for an extended period of time in 2023.

All ticket holders were notified and refunded.





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## BACKSTORIES MARGARET RIVER

**Date:** Sunday 23 October, 3pm

**Venue:** Private garden

Backstories is a multi-sited storytelling festival located in the suburbs of WA. Spend a lazy afternoon with friends and family in the comfort of your neighbour's backyard to listen to three trained storytellers. Organised in conjunction with Centre for Stories.

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## THE RIVOLI – DANCE MAKERS COLLECTIVE

**Date:** 17 November, 7pm and 19 November, 7.30pm

**Venues:** Augusta Centennial Hall & Cowaramup Hall

**Attendance:** 60 Augusta, 50 Cowaramup

**Performance Fee:** \$9,130 + 10% royalties  
+ Doxy performance fees

A celebration of social life before social media, when to meet was to talk, laugh and move to music together. The Rivoli was an immersive dance hall meets dance theatre performance, featuring seven dancers and local band Doxy. The production had a large engagement component with two free dance workshops for 14-19 year olds held in June. Local dancers that attended the workshops were then invited to participate in a short segment of the show when it returned in November. Whilst there was a lot of initial interest, due to dance school commitments and end of year concerts occurring the week after the show, there were only 4 or 5 participants at the performance.

In addition, interviews were conducted with four locals (Kat Anna, Traudel Weber, Molly Hall and Nadi Haskell) about their dancing experience. These interviews were then incorporated into the show's story and voice over which added a lovely local element.

Despite a concerted marketing push and collaboration between Arts Margaret River and dance schools, attendance numbers were disappointing. We originally scheduled two performances on the Saturday, a matinee as well as an evening performance but cancelled the matinee due to a lack of interest.

The majority of people that attended the shows really enjoyed it, especially those local to Augusta and Cowaramup.

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## SUNDOWNERS IN COWARAMUP (FREE)

**Dates:** 12th, 19th & 26th February, 5-7pm

**Venue:** Pioneer Park, Cowaramup

**Attendance:** Approximately 700 people each week, 2100 over the 3 events

**Event Costs:** \$8,500

It was the first year since COVID that people could attend the Sundowners without any restrictions. The weather was fine for all three events and they were very well attended. Two bands performed each week, including a special first performance by a youth band from the MRSHS.

There were only two stallholders—the Cowaramup P&C and the Cowaramup CWA as the Lions did not run their stall due to a chip shortage. It was the first year that Rita Montgomery was unable to instruct Zumba during intermission as she was overseas.



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## MICHAEL SHAFAR – STAND-UP COMEDY

**Date:** 25 February, 8pm

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Studio

**Attendance:** 38

You might recognise Michael Shafar from his appearances on Network 10's *The Project* and Studio 10, ABC's *Comedy Bites* or his 60+ million views online. It's also entirely possible you don't recognise him at all.

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## THE STARS DESCEND

**Date:** 17 March, 7pm

**Venue:** Performance outdoors on private property

**Attendance:** 500+

Community information sessions/workshops/rehearsals.

*The Stars Descend* unfolded over five locations. Each location was a chapter of a story that was co-created by professional artists and local community members.

Each chapter took place in a regional location that is situated along the Gondwana Link, a natural corridor of land that runs from Margaret River to Kalgoorlie.

Chapter 1 of *The Stars Descend* was a dance and sound performance that happened outdoors on a grassy slope in a Margaret River paddock.

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## CICADA – SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE

**Date:** 12 April, 10am & 1pm

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

**Attendance:** 322

A small story of epic proportions, *Cicada* was an enchanting tale of difference, resilience and the light we all have inside ourselves.

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## MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL ROADSHOW

**Date:** 26 May

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

**Attendance:** 412

Featuring the best and brightest of the 2023 Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

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## POSSUM MAGIC

**Date:** 13 June, 10am & 1pm

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

**Attendance:** 824 including four primary schools and two homeschooling groups

The magical stage adaptation of the beloved Australian story is back to celebrate its 40th birthday!

Using a clever, nuanced palette of live action, stage magic, an original soundscape, elements of puppetry and projected animation, Monkey Baa's award-winning creative team translated the whimsical world of the book to a live experience for audiences.





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## EATERS PUB QUIZ

**Date:** 23 June, 7.30pm

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Foyer

**Attendance:** 59

A home grown performance about food, cunningly disguised as a pub quiz.

*eaters* elevated the traditional pen and paper pub quiz to a participatory game show with the host announcing questions, previews on screen and scores going live using flesh forced software. As teams accrued points and radically rethought their food choices, the ultimate aim of the game was to nourish appetites for change.

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## BLACK SUN/BLOOD MOON

**Date:** 27 June, 1pm

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

**Attendance:** 122

Two intertwining stories – one magical, the other all too real – bring two unlikely heroes to the stage in a new work inspired by the Fridays for Future student-led protests of 2019. *Black Sun / Blood Moon* follows Maddy, a ten-year-old climate champion, and Katie, the underachieving assistant of a climate-denying politician, as they set out to save the planet.

## CINEMA SCREENINGS

The move back into the Margaret River HEART in January 2023 enabled Arts Margaret River to return to cinema programming and screenings. Unfortunately extensive works to the Main Auditorium throughout January to April meant that all events and cinema screenings had to be held in the small Studio Theatre. This venue has a maximum capacity of 120 for movies.

From January to mid April, 30 movies were screened in the Studio Theatre. Whilst many of the movies sold out due to the reduced capacity, a lot of patrons complained that the raked seating was not comfortable, especially for a long screening.

From mid April to July, all cinema screenings returned to the Main Auditorium and 17 movies were screened.

Arts Margaret River focussed on school holiday screenings for children, new release block busters, film festivals such as the *Ocean Film Festival*, Surf films during the Surf Pro and introduced a Cheap Tuesday option. A number of documentaries were screened including: *Black Cockatoo Crisis*, *Fighting Giants (Frack Free)*, *The Giants* plus a Lotterywest livestream of *Carmen*. A special 'Harmony Week' screening of *Hit the Road* was put on in collaboration with the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River.

Arts Margaret River also implemented a Cinema Fundraising opportunity for community groups with a large proportion of ticket sales donated to the group. The first fundraiser screening was *Black Cockatoo Crisis* for the Margaret River Independent School. More fundraisers are planned for the remainder of the year.

**Total cinema attendance:** 5,626 (January-July 2023)





## VENUE HIRE

A number of commercial and community events were held at the HEART including:

- Life on Land's End Concert – Bowerbird Collective – Studio Theatre 21 January
- Aint that Swell Podcast (Surf event) – Main Theatre 17 April
- Snowy and the Seven Cool Dudes – 19 May
- Soundwave Singing Event – 21 May
- UWA Choral Society – 27 May
- Cirque Mother Africa – 2 June
- Henry Rollins – 6 June
- WAYJO – Mambolicious – 30 June

## COMMUNITY HIRE

A number of community events were held at the Margaret River HEART with support from Arts Margaret River in the form of heavily reduced venue hire and ticketing and promotional support. Events included:

- Andrea Manners Singing Workshops held during the January and April school holidays in the outdoor soundshell.
- Margaret River Performance for Kids Musical Theatre Workshops – 23 January 10am & 1pm
- Nature Conservation Sundowner held in the foyer – 7 February
- Margaret River Senior High School Play held over three nights in the Studio Theatre – 2nd to 4th May
- Blackwood Dance Rehearsal – 11 June

- Margaret River Ukelele Club used the outdoor soundshell every Wednesday afternoon for rehearsals until Easter, at no charge.
- The Concrete Club (rollerskating) holds lessons in the Studio Theatre every Thursday and Friday evening. Commenced February – ongoing.
- Artsability Youth Workshop in the Studio Theatre – Mondays 6, 13, 20 February
- Margaret River Theatre Group Auditions – 15 March
- WA Seniors Card Information Session – 15 March
- Margaret River Theatre Group Rehearsals – 27 March, 3, 26 April, 8, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31 May, 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28 June
- Community Parent Education Seminar – Margaret River Independent School – 27 April
- Mindful Margaret River Gate Keeper Workshop – 17, 18 May

## FUNDRAISING

**Date:** 29 January, 2-5pm

**Venue:** Howard Park Wines

**Attendance:** 144 including 22 artists at no charge

Arts Margaret River's annual *Art in the Garden* fundraiser raised \$17,000 to support the presentation of the annual program. It included a garden party, an art auction and a performance by local musicians SI&B.



## HEARTBEATS – FREE COMMUNITY EVENT

**Date:** 10 March, 5-9pm

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

**Attendance:** 1,500+

Featuring local artists, workshops, film screenings, musicians and the amazing Mama Kin Spender performing in the Soundshell, this *relaunch* event had lots to offer our diverse and vibrant community.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### SCHOOL HOLIDAY PREHISTORIC ANIMALS ACTIVITIES

**Date:** 6 & 13 July, 10.30am & 2pm

**Venue:** Margaret River Library

Four free school holiday workshops featuring prehistoric animal activities were held at the library to drive interest in the Erth Prehistoric Theatre Shows.

Suitable for ages 5 to 8 years (10.30am – 12pm) and ages 9 to 12 years (2pm – 4pm).

The workshops were facilitated by a qualified art teacher and all materials were provided by Arts Margaret River.

Thanks to the Margaret River Library for hosting and supporting the workshops.

## CREATIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

**Date:** 8-9 November

**Venue:** Tanah Merah

**Attendance:** 20

Designed for organisations, community leaders, local governments, teachers, artists and creative thinkers in the South West, this intensive leadership program gave participants the theoretical knowledge and practical skills to build and strengthen their creative leadership skills.

The program is delivered in two modules over two days.

## YOUNG @ HEART

Arts Margaret River continued to present the Young @ HEART events on Monday mornings in the foyer. This initiative was developed by the Margaret River HEART to safely encourage participation in the arts among older residents (over 60s) during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to high interest, the free performances have since been opened to people of all ages. Nonetheless, the senior demographic still makes up the majority of the audience.

Every Monday (excluding Public Holidays) between 10am and 11am a variety of performances from classical music, choirs, poetry readings to live bands entertain an every growing audience. Audience age varies depending on the performance and between 60 to 120 people attend. These performances are organised by Ross Goulden on a voluntary basis with support from Arts Margaret River and HEART staff.





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## PAINT PLAY INTERGENERATIONAL WORKSHOPS

**Facilitator:** Annie Bourgault

**Dates:** 17-18 April

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

**Attendance:** 36

Intergenerational painting workshops for anyone who can hold a paint brush!

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## ART EXHIBITIONS

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### STITCHED & BOUND EXHIBITION

**Artists:** Various

**Date:** 5 December 2022 – 20 January 2023

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

This biennial, juried touring exhibition displayed the innovative work of West Australian textile artists challenging the concept of the 'quilt' medium. 45 works were selected for their skillful combination of traditional and unconventional quilted forms, pushing boundaries and making statements using progressive materials, ideas and techniques.

The exhibition was booked by the previous Margaret River HEART management. The exhibition was very well received and attended and included video presentations by some of the featured artists, shown on two television monitors in the foyer. Arts Margaret River arranged a free artist talk and demonstration by two featured artists, after a Young @ HEART performance.

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## PILBARA, KIMBERLEY AND BEACHES

**Artist:** Peter Moir

**Dates:** 30 January to 16 March

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

Peter Moir is inspired by the ever-changing south west beach scapes and forests surrounding his Margaret River home; by the vibrant colours and stark, raw, rugged beauty of Karijini, the Pilbara and our north-west; and the energy, contours and life of the human form and face.

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## PRINTMAKING EXHIBITION

**Artists:** Shana James, Dallas Perry, P. James Bryans and Francesco Geronazzo

**Dates:** 22 March to 23 April

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

This was a dynamic exhibition with broad appeal, spanning many print mediums including: etchings, screen-prints, drypoints and monoprints.

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## BOWLS FOR SOUPIE

**Artists:** Various

**Dates:** 5-25 April

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Mezzanine Gallery

*Bowls for Soupie* is an annual fusion of art and cuisine that raises funds for the ongoing costs of food and equipment for the Margaret River Soup Kitchen.





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## VISUAL STORIES EXHIBITION

**Artists:** Various. 63 works

**Dates:** 1-30 May

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

Each year, the *Visual Stories Art Competition and Exhibition* forms an exciting part of the Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival.

This year, our creative theme was *Let's Take A Moment* and artists were invited to submit work that brings this theme to life through a mix of mediums and artistic styles.

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## NEW YORK CITY GLOW EXHIBITION

**Artist:** Rachel Coad

**Dates:** 1-30 May

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Bar Gallery

An exhibition documenting Rachel Coad's debut graphic novel *NEW YORK CITY Glow*. Displaying key pages from the book and individual illustrations for an immersive comic experience.

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## NOW AND FOREVER, A LASTING CONNECTION

**Artist:** Shelley McNab

**Dates:** 1-30 May

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Mezzanine Gallery

Multiple-piece installation of wall-hung vases.

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## WEAVING STORIES OF BOODJA

**Artists:** Various

**Dates:** 2 June to 3 August

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART

This colourful exhibition of works was created by the children and families of the Margaret River region, in their exploration of their connection to our natural environment.

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## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

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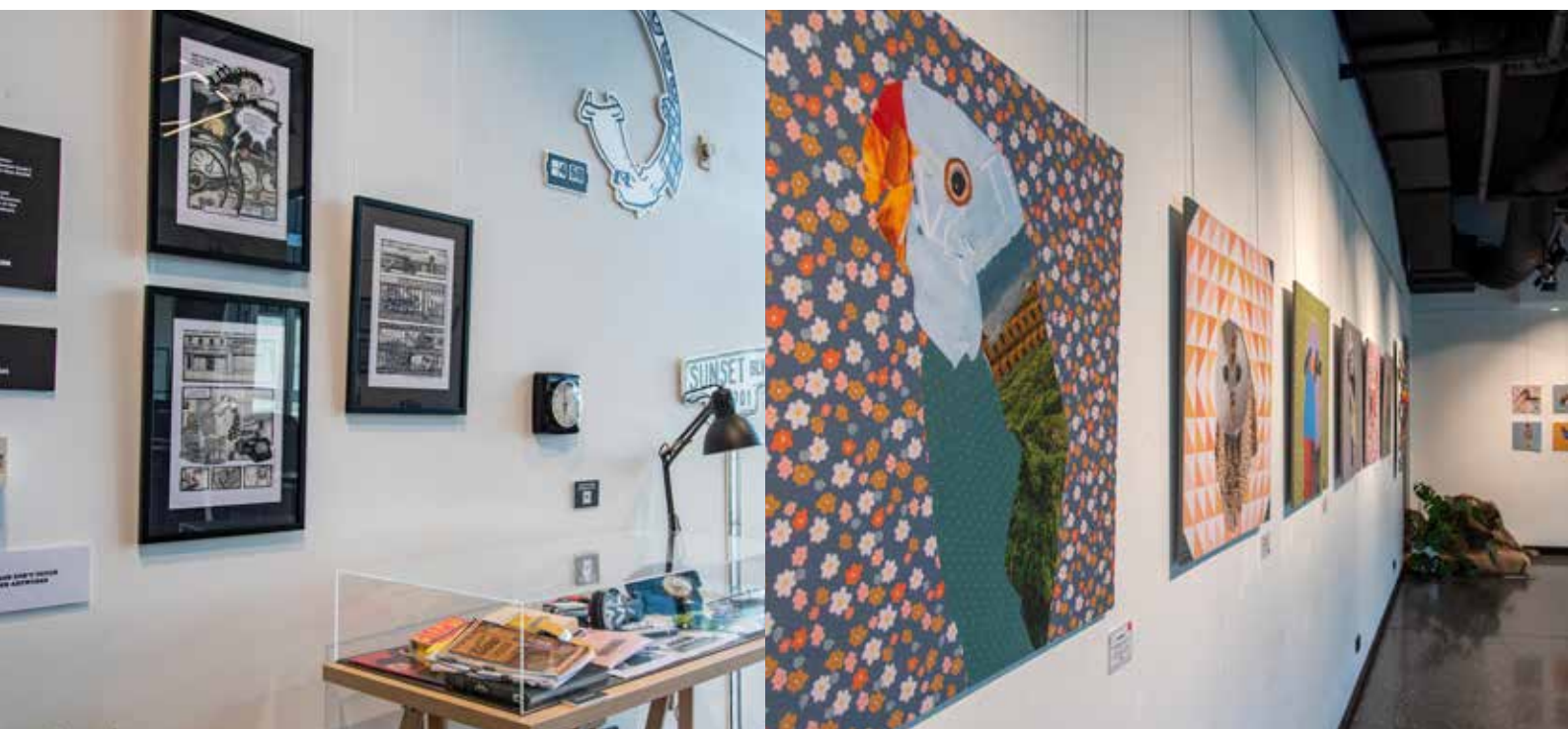
### HOT DESKING

Office space facilitated for Creative Corner, Strings Attached Festival and local choreographer Adelina Larsson-Mendoza.

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### SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK @ LEEUWIN ESTATE

Volunteers for ushering were provided by Arts Margaret River for a small donation fee from Fremantle Theatre Company. This is the second year that Arts Margaret River has provided this support.







# MARGARET RIVER READERS & WRITERS FESTIVAL 2023

Events in Margaret River, Augusta, Busselton and Dunsborough. The Festival hubs were located at Nala Bardip Mia (Margaret River HEART) and Shelter Brewing in Busselton.

- Tickets sold (attendance): **2,934** (ticket sales, free event tickets, sponsors tickets)
- Children participated in free activities in the Storytelling Snug: **160**
- Authors and guests attended in person and virtually: **176**
- **800+** people participated in the free, non-ticketed activities over the festival weekend – outside, in foyer (monitored by clickers)
- *Because We're Black* free reading performances: **215**
- BSE Free Family Fun Afternoon: **125**
- Visual Stories Artists: **63**
- Young Readers & Writers Program: **2,771**
- **Total attendance: 7,244 (excluded patrons)**
- **Average of 3.4 tickets per patron**

This year saw a return to a fully in person program, with the only exception being author Hugh Mackay, who due to medical concerns around flying was not able to travel and joined us virtually. As part of our 2022 survey, we received a number of responses asking us to move back to a fully in person program and we were very happy to be able to deliver this.

We continued to evolve our workshop series this year building on the success of 2022 with paid writers workshops hosted by Fremantle Press and This is Your Life Story.

In addition, we created a free writers workshops hosted in partnership with Busselton, Dunsborough, Augusta and Margaret River libraries. These library workshops were offered free as part of our community engagement program with registration to confirm places.

We partnered with the Fellowship of Australian Writers WA (FAWWA), WritingWA and YA for WA to provide information for budding writers hosted in our foyer.

We partnered with Undalup Association our Cultural Custodians to deliver the official Welcome to Country as part of the Festival Launch and to co-create a program of cultural events.

In 2023 we continued to create new and exciting mediums of storytelling to the festival and create new paid opportunities for authors and artists to showcase new works.

We worked with emerging Nyul Nyul playwright Melody Dia to create a free teaser performance reading of her new play *Because We're Black*. The teaser was premiered as part of our Festival Launch and performed on Saturday and Sunday as a free event (open to all) and followed by Q&A with Melody Dia and the creative team which included director Rachael Maza, dramaturg Mari Lourey, assistant director Ngaire Pigram and a team of new and emerging Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal actors from Perth and the South West to take part in the readings.





We worked with local artists Michelle Bretherton and Cara Ratajczak from Weaving Stories of Boodja to create a fun and interactive weaving and storytelling sessions. Free guided weaving sessions were offered over the weekend in addition to the weaving being set up for drop ins.

We celebrated storytelling through more traditional art forms with our *Visual Stories Art Exhibition & Competition* and received 63 entries (the highest ever). Works were displayed in the foyer of Margaret River HEART for one month over the festival period.

In addition to our *Visual Stories Art Competition and Exhibition*, we created two additional free exhibitions over the festival period showcasing storytelling through the visual arts.

- *Now and forever, a lasting connection* was created by local artist Shelley McNab
- *NEW YORK CITY Glow* showcased the journey of artist and debut author Rachael Coad documenting the creation of her debut graphic novel *NEW YORK CITY Glow*.

Our **Young Readers & Writers Program** (YR&W) was back with a bang this year after being cancelled in 2022 due to COVID outbreaks in the South West. This year we have **15 schools** take part with **2,771 students** attending creative, illustration and storytelling sessions as part of their school day.

Our **Storytelling Snug** was back over the Festival weekend featuring five children's authors and hosted free storytelling and creative sessions for all the family.

This year we had **65 incredible volunteers** from our local community. Their combined hours were 505 equating to a value in-kind donation of \$20,220 based on \$40 per hour costs.

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## OUT OF SEASON EVENTS

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### IN CONVERSATION WITH EMMA CAREY

**Venue:** Shelter Brewing

**Dates:** 2 November 7pm

**Attendance:** 116

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### IN CONVERSATION WITH CRAIG SILVEY

**Venue:** The River Hotel

**Dates:** 1 December, 6pm

**Attendance:** 83

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### THE COLLECTIVE SPARK

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Foyer

**Dates:** 2 March, 5.30pm

**Attendance:** 63

Martin Ringer Book Launch.

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### A LADY'S PEN

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Foyer

**Dates:** 6 April, 5.30pm

**Attendance:** 84

Bernice Barry Book Launch.

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### THE BOOKBINDER OF JERICHO

**Venue:** Margaret River HEART Studio

**Dates:** 15 April, 2pm

**Attendance:** 125

Pip Williams Book Launch.





## CONTACT

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