

ARTS MARGARET RIVER 2019 ANNUAL REPORT





OUR ORGANISATION

Arts Margaret River Inc. is the leading provider of the arts and related entertainment in the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and the broader Cape-to-Cape region of Western Australia. Founded in 1974, it is a not-for-profit association incorporated in Western Australia.

During the redevelopment of the Cultural Centre Arts Margaret River moved office to the Community Centre (April 2018) and continued to present shows and events at various local venues in Margaret River.

At the beginning of 2019 our staffing comprised of 2 full-time employees:

Andrew Frith - General Manager and **Phil Bebb** - Technical & Facilities Manager and six part-time employees:

Stephanie Kreutzer—Marketing & events, **Kaye Campbell** - Finance & Administration, **Tanya Perdue**—RW Festival Creative, **Michelle Wright**—RW Festival Events, **Daniela Tommasi** - Receptionist/Box Office, **Ian Smith** - Volunteer Coordinator plus 1 casual employee: **Michael Bayens** - Cleaner & Handyman.

The number of our staff was equivalent to approximately 5.5 FTE.

Our staff are supported by a Board of Management comprising of 9 volunteer board members. In addition, a strong volunteer force of whom 125-150 are active at any time, are a vitally important part of our association providing a range of services. Funding bodies including Lotterywest, Regional Arts WA, Tourism WA and many local sponsors and donors provide valuable financial resources.

Arts Margaret River's contract to manage the Margaret River Cultural Centre was extended for a second 3 year term and was due to expire at the end of 2019.

2019 IN SUMMARY

The redevelopment of the Margaret River Cultural Centre to the new HEART (Hub of Entertainment, Arts and Regional Tourism) venue was scheduled for completion of stage 1 (small Studio multi-purpose venue with retractable raked seating for 160) in February 2019. Stage 2, the large auditorium, foyer, bar, servery, sound shell, courtyard and commercial kitchen was scheduled for completion in June 2019.

A full program of national touring shows was booked in 2017/2018 taking into account these completion dates advised by the builders.

It is pertinent to note that in the second half of 2018 the CEO and Director Corporate and Community Services of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River both ceased employment. Both positions were 'Acted In' and a new CEO did not commence until mid July 2019 with recruitment for the other position only occurring in 2020.

Redevelopment went mainly to schedule and on Monday 25 February Arts MR staff attended a safety and evacuation procedures induction training to enable us to access the venue. Whilst the Studio was mostly completed, the entire area was still a building site and as such barriers surrounded it and public access was only allowed after hours and on weekends.

Inevitably, initial problems were encountered with the space including leaks, alarm issues, raked seating safety concerns and plumbing issues. The raked seating design flaws raised major safety concerns and after two incidents in June, the Shire banned its use and enforced strict seating criteria. This meant that seating capacity was drastically reduced and viewing was greatly compromised. In an attempt to alleviate these problems, Arts MR purchased a number of bar stools and hired bar tables for various events that were suited to cabaret style seating.

We continued to present cinema and events and erected temporary staging, a portable box office and kiosk and a temporary bar as required. As the commercial kitchen was not completed, this area did not have any kitchen facilities and all catering and bar service required staff to transport glasses etc offsite for cleaning.

Building and access delays to stage 2 of the redevelopment meant that a number of events that were intended to be held in the large auditorium had to proceed in the Studio instead. This venue change and subsequent large reduction in audience capacity greatly affected our budgets and the touring show *My Robot* scheduled for July, had to be cancelled due to the Studio not meeting technical and staging requirements.

On the 28 August the Augusta Margaret River Shire Councillors voted for the Shire to have full management of the Margaret River HEART at the end of Arts MR's management term.

This decision came as a great blow and staff and board members grappled to come to terms with what it would mean for our organisation.

After consideration it became obvious that we would have to cut back on staff and that we could no longer afford to employ a full time technician. Phil Bebb was encouraged to apply for the HEART's Technical Supervisor position and he ceased employment with Arts MR on 3 October.

Amidst this upheaval we were advised that stage 2 would be accessible on Friday 11 October, in time for the Strings Attached Festival. Arts MR declined to manage this festival as we did not have the staffing and most of the venue hire negotiations were done directly with the Shire. **Consequently, the Shire took over management of the HEART as of the 1 October.**

All Arts MR cinema and events were permitted to proceed with ticket and bar income to be retained by us.

In November, as a requirement for our gallery exhibitions, an Arts MR staff member assisted with front counter enquiries and sales Monday to Friday, as requested by the HEART. Our last event for the year was held at the HEART on the 19 December and Daniela Tommasi and Ian Smith ceased employment with us at the end of that month.



My fellow members, volunteers, members of your Board of Management and our small but very productive management team. I would like to give my very sincere and wholehearted thanks to the outgoing and continuing fellow members of the Board of Management. It has been a 'hard gig' for the past two years, but together our valiant staff we have succeeded in keeping our vitally important community organisation alive and looking to more success in the future.

Before I say a very few words about the year that was – 2019 – let me provide you with a little background. Our 'ancestor' the 'Margaret River Arts Council' was set up in 1973, and ten years later moved into our former venue of fond memory, the Margaret River Cultural Centre. In the 1990s the Arts Council changed its name to Arts Margaret River, which was incorporated as a not-for-profit association in Western Australia. It was, is and for as long as it remains, will be a community-focused and community-based organisation. Many of those here in the early days remain active members, and five continue as living Life Members: Anne Shepherdson, Heather Locke, Joan Barber, Jack Knudsen and myself.

2019 was the last in a series of six years in which our organisation had the important responsibility of being 'managers' of the Cultural Centre, enabled by a 'management fee' paid to us by the Shire of Augusta Margaret River. For four of these years we had unconditional use of the Cultural Centre, and lifted audiences to Arts Margaret River events from 7,600 in 2013 to almost 25,000 in 2017, the last year in which we had full access to the venue. This included our Readers & Writers Festival, for which audiences grew by ten times in these years. We employed a professional staff of nine people, all but two of whom were part-time. This outstanding and dedicated group managed the development and presentation of our broad-based program – of theatre, music, dance, cinema, comedy, visual arts and literature, more than doubling our financial turnover. I cannot go farther without mentioning their names, very ably – I would say brilliantly – led by General Manager Andrew Frith: Stephanie Kreutzer, Phil Bebb, Kaye Campbell, Daniela Tommasi, and our Readers & Writers team Tanya Perdue and Michelle Wright. Our success was looked up to across the State and beyond, evidenced by grants and donations from many sources – the life blood of all arts presenters. From 2018 our program was curtailed by closure of the Cultural Centre and commencement of construction of the new HEART. In spite of our restricted ability to present our 'normal' level of programming during 2019, the number of members of Arts Margaret River reduced only a little. At the end of 2019 we had 354 family members and five corporate members. Very importantly, there were also 144 active volunteers, who worked for a total of 3,533 hours. The work we provide to our volunteers is a very important part of our community building and sustaining mission.

Since our inception four decades ago, the Board of Management has performed a vitally important role in this organisation. Being a member of the Board of Management has never been a free ride, or just for the glory. All its members are volunteers and their roles can occasionally be noticeably time-consuming. Its formal roles are spelled out in our Constitution. The Board of Management sets the annual and on-going policies, strategies and budgets for Arts Margaret River. It hires our employees, and dismisses them if necessary! In my time there have been two – not a pleasant duty but occasionally a necessary one. The Board of Management describes the duties of each employee, and provides for checks and balances to ensure probity regarding payments, banking and the like. Importantly it assesses risks and prescribes risk management policies and actions. That aspect of our 'governance' role has been foremost during the past two years, and has become acutely important in the past few months of the 'corona virus'. The Board of Management also makes strategic decisions about new business initiatives, based on its own assessments and information provided by management. And it carries the can when strategies are ill-judged. It is the guardian of our precious *financial* solvency, without which we cannot continue.

On that topic, solvency, you will be aware that many many arts bodies, which create and present what we all come to see and hear, will not survive the current Covid-19 crisis. I can assure you that Arts Margaret will not be among them. We are currently on-track to stay solvent – alive and ticking – for the foreseeable future. We know this because we manage our money, in and out, in detail, and not just as it goes through, but as we carefully forecast it a year or more ahead. So we can pick signs of risk and danger, and take corrective action in time to avoid fatal injury. Presenting the Arts is inevitably also a 'business' – like it or not, it lives or dies at the 'bottom line'.

Since 2013, the year before our role ramped up with responsibility for managing the former Cultural Centre, a total of twenty-five people have been members of the Board of Management¹. I would like to thank all of these people for working with me, our Board colleagues and our staff while I have been President and chairperson of the Board of Management since 2013 when I began in this role. It has been hard work, but at all times, good and bad, very worthwhile.

The way has been opened up for new talent to be a part of the Board of Management, and take up one of the office-bearer roles – President, Vice-President, Treasurer or Secretary. I congratulate all have decided this year to take this challenge and volunteer your talents and experience – by nominating and being elected. We need you to undertake this hugely rewarding public service. I congratulate new members of the Board of Management, and welcome you to a rewarding year or more of work for our community. This is also the place in this meeting to recognise and thank our brilliant staff, who have done the day-to-day work of creating and delivering our program, found the allimportant grants and audience income and produced the financial outcomes which have enabled us to continue through the past six years. One of these (Stephanie Kreutzer) has also been in here since 2013 and before.

Thank you for attending this Annual General Meeting, in our 46th year, and I look forward to seeing you at our events in this new venue through 2020.

Fred Affleck AO
President, Arts Margaret River Inc.

¹ Anne Shepherdson PHM, Jack Knudson, Marg Sharp, Shelagh Benson, Paula Baker, Jenny Redman, Rosemary Moore-Fiander, Mignon Birch, Dee Laming, Tracey Tyler, Rob Rumble, Heather Locke OAM, Joan Barber, Janette San

PERFORMING ARTS

SUNDAY SUNDOWNERS—FREE COMMUNITY CONCERTS

3 & 11 February—Cowaramup, Pioneer Park
Audience: Approximately 1500 (total)

The Sundowners were held over 2 Sundays in February. The change to 2 events instead of 4 was due to a lack of staffing resources as the new HEART redevelopment required greater staff input and preparation for upcoming shows.



To compensate, the Sundowners were extended to 4 hours duration instead of 2 hours, 3 bands performed and additional children's activities were offered such as a bouncy castle, face painting, kids entertainer and story telling. Lighting was set up to cater for the extended finish time of 8pm. New Sundowner branding and promotional banners were created which can be used in future years.

Overall the children loved the free entertainment but the longer concert time did not work as most people still left before 7pm as the evenings got chilly as it got darker. A lot of locals complained about only having 2 events and the additional lighting and kids activity set up ended up being very labour intensive.



SPIKE THE ECHIDNA PUPPET SHOWS

Sat 2 March, 10.30am & 2pm
Tickets: \$10 each
Total Paid Attendance: 112
Performance Fee: \$1500 plus accommodation

This was meant to be the first show to be held in the new Margaret River HEART studio venue. Unfortunately venue access delays meant that we had to shift the performances to the MRSHS auditorium at the last minute.

Jenny Ellis from Little Wing Puppet Theatre had previously performed *The Owl's Apprentice* at the Margaret River Cultural in 2016. This show combined shadow puppetry and physical comedy and was followed by a Q & A and puppet demonstration after each show.



IN BETWEEN 2

Saturday 9 March, 8PM
Tickets: \$35 adult, \$30 member/conc, \$20 youth
Paid Attendance: 38
Performance Fee: \$5,800

In Between Two comprised of two half-Asian performers telling their stories through live music performance and spoken word against a backdrop of photographs, graphics, video and home movie footage.



The show cost included a Hip Hop workshop run by the performers which was offered free of charge to the MRSHS Indigenous boys after-school group. The show was widely promoted to contemporary music and theatre lovers but unfortunately did not attract a large audience. It was the first event to be held in the HEART. A temporary bar was established in the foyer for pre and post show drinks.

SONGBIRDS OF THE SOUTH WEST

Friday 22 March, 8pm

Tickets: \$25 Adults, \$20 members, \$22 conc

Paid Audience: 105—SOLD OUT

Performance Fee: \$4,000

A collaboration of 14 musicians from the South West of WA performing well know jazz songs. Six vocalists were supported by 8 well known professional musicians. The Songbirds previously performed at the 2018 Sundowners and received glowing feedback.



Due to the size of the band, the capacity for this event was limited to 110 seats which was sold out prior to the evening. A temporary bar was set up in the foyer for drink sales pre event and during intermission.

ANGRY OLD MEN

Friday 5 April, 8pm

Tickets: \$35 adult, \$28 members, \$30 con

Paid Audience: 108—SOLD OUT

Performance fee: \$4,912 plus accommodation

Featuring more than 20 songs interwoven with stories behind the music of Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Tom Waits, Jim Morrison, Nick Cave, Johnny Cash, John Mellencamp, Neil Young and many more.

This event was held in the studio and set up with cabaret table seating for 110. Tickets were sold out prior to the event and many more could have been sold if we had larger capacity.



BAROQUE BY CANDLELIGHT

Saturday 13 April, 7.30pm

Tickets: \$45 Adults, \$38 Members, \$40 Conc, Youth \$25, Family \$110

Paid Audience: 111

Performance fee: 6,885

Perth Symphony Orchestra presented an evening of stunning Baroque music. Local children were cast to provide the narration and tell the stories of the composers, bringing the great masters to life, introducing each piece and providing rich stories behind the music.



This event was set up in unreserved theatre mode with raked seating to maximize capacity of 160.

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL ROADSHOW

Saturday 25 May, 5pm & 8pm

Tickets: \$50 Adults, \$42 Arts Hub Members, \$45 Conc
Paid Audience: 267 (127 -5pm show & 140 -8pm show)
Performance fee: \$10,200



This was the first time that we held two performances of the Comedy Festival due to reduced capacity in the HEART studio.

The two performances allowed us to sell as many tickets as we have usually sold for one performance in the old auditorium. Whilst seating comfort and viewing was compromised, the audience were understanding and still enjoyed the event. Having a second show meant that people had to leave straight after the first show and bar sales were much less than previous years due to the limited temporary bar and space restraints.

BURRBGAJA YALLIRA BY MARRUGEKU

Wednesday 12 June, 7.30pm

Tickets: \$35 Adult, \$28 AH Member, \$30 Conc, \$20 youth
Paid Audience: 63
Performance fee: \$12,100

Marrugeku is dedicated to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together to develop new dance languages that are restless, transformative and unwavering. Working from their bicoastal operations in Broome and Carriageworks, Sydney, Marrugeku harnesses the dynamic of performance exchange drawn from remote, urban, intercultural and trans-Indigenous approaches to expand the possibilities of contemporary dance.

Arts Margaret River received 'Raise the Roof' funding through the Department of Culture and the Arts which allowed us to present this unique performance in Margaret River. Members of the Undalup Association were invited to the performance to meet the performers and open with a 'Welcome to Country'.

The audience loved the performance and applauded Arts MR for bringing the work to Margaret River.



THE SAPPHIRES

Saturday 9 August, 7.30pm

Tickets: \$40 adult, \$32 member, \$35 conc, \$25 youth, \$100 family
Paid Audience: 114—SOLD OUT
Performance fee: \$10,550

The acclaimed musical play *The Sapphires* by Tony Briggs was intended to be the first production performed in the new auditorium at the HEART. Unfortunately due to building access delays this show had to be performed in the small studio instead.

The large set was difficult to fit into the small venue so a stage could not be used. This meant that the performance had to take place on the flat floor which led to audience viewing issues. To minimize viewing and comfort problems the audience numbers were limited to 130 seats.

Featuring a talented young ensemble of first nation performers in all the Indigenous Australian roles as well as multicultural performers totalling 7 cast plus 3 musicians. Additional makeshift change rooms had to be set up as well as a special stage entry area. It was disappointing that this production could not be staged to its full requirements and potential but our audience were understanding and still enjoyed the event.



ROMAN RUDNYTSKY CONCERT PIANO RECITAL

Wednesday 14 August 7pm

Tickets: Adults \$25, Members \$20, Conc \$22, Youth \$10, Family \$50

Paid Audience: 71

Performance fee: \$1500 plus accommodation

Roman Rudnytsky is an American concert pianist who graduated from the Juilliard School, winner of many national and international piano competitions, who performs around the world. He performed at the Cultural Centre in 2017 and was well received and attended.

The concert was held in the studio and a special piano mover was hired to transport the grand piano from backstage of the auditorium to the studio. The piano could not be raised onto a temporary stage so video of the piano playing was projected onto the back screen to enable the audience to see Roman perform.



VALENTINE PUPPET SHOW

Friday 6 September (school show) & Saturday 7 September 11am & 2pm

Tickets: Adults \$15, Members \$12, Youth \$10, Family \$40, School \$7.50

Total Paid Audience: 118 (86 –school, 9—11am & 23 –2pm)

Performance fee: \$5500 plus 3 nights accommodation

Designed for families and children aged 6+ Valentine combined shadow puppetry, animation and physical theatre that sensitively explored what it means to love and lose somebody.

This show was booked at short notice to replace the show 'My Robot' which had to be cancelled as the production could not fit into the small studio venue.

Valentine was a hard sell as the subject matter was not suitable for children under 6 years who usually attend puppet shows. As we had puppet shows 'Spike the Echidna' in March and 'Beep' and 'Digby and the Dragon' scheduled for October, this may have effected ticket sales.

Overall a disappointing result for the Saturday shows.



BEEP BY WINDMILL THEATRE CO.

Thursday 10 October 10am, 12pm & 2pm

Tickets: \$10

Paid total Audience: 234 (92 –10am, 70 –12pm, 73 –2pm)

Performance fee: \$4950

A playful and highly interactive production aimed at children aged one to seven that celebrates friendship through puppetry, whimsical staging and lots of laughs.

This production was promoted to Day Care Centres, schools and home schoolers and a colouring competition was featured in the Margaret River and Busselton Mail to drive awareness.

The shows had to be held in the studio venue and large carpets were placed on the floor for young children to sit on, with chairs provided for adults.

The show was wonderful and delighted the children and adults. There were many interactive audience participation moments and the shows were well attended by local day care and school groups.



Festival Creative Director: Tanya Perdue
Festival Event Manager: Michelle Wright
TICKET Sales: 5005
Free event attendance: 1200
Young RW: 1772



The 11th annual festival was held in the picturesque grounds of Voyager Estate with the theme 'Wild, Weird & Wonderful'. With the major redevelopment of the Cultural Centre being undertaken in 2018/19 the decision was taken to again create the festival hub at Voyager Estate as it provides a picturesque festival atmosphere at a venue that attracts visitors to the region.

The festival ran to a similar format to 2018, however, the dates were changed to not conflict with Jazz by the Bay & Margaret River Surf Pro (both being held on the long week-end in June). The Festival Hub included two large marquees for author talks and panel discussions, a bookshop, ABC broadcasting area, ticketing marquee, a food and coffee marquee along with two main feature events in Voyager Restaurant. In addition, external events were held at 9 venues within the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River across the 3-day festival.

The headline international author for the 2019 Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival was Professor Germaine Greer, Australian writer, academic journalist, scholar, widely regarded as one of the most significant feminist voices of the 20th Century. Australian headline authors included Michael Leunig, Anna Funder, William McInnes, Kim Scott and Chris Hammer. There were plenty of Australian headliners who were a huge drawcard to this year's festival, resulting in **11 sold out sessions**.



The 2019 Margaret River Readers and Writers Festival achieved a high attendance with 5005 seats sold across the 3 days of the festival. Ticket revenue represented 28.9% of all event income and met the Festival's targeted budget. Due to the requirement of the festival location being at Voyager Estate again in 2019, seating capacity was once again impinged but a last minute 'ticket rush' on available seats helped to increase sales and fit more patrons in to sold out talks.



The Visual Stories Art Exhibition/Competition was an important part of the Readers & Writers Festival. Each year this competition offers a unique visual opportunity for Southwest artists to enter their perspective on the festival theme. The exhibition was well received with many community members visiting the exhibition prior to the festival. (see Visual arts report for more details)



LITERARY ARTS—READERS & WRITERS FESTIVAL CONTINUED

In addition to the main program we offered a range of free entertainment both within the Festival Hub and various locations. At the Festival Hub free talks, live radio broadcasting from the ABC, children's art workshops, a storytelling tent, food market stalls, Sculptural Exhibition and live music were provided. A free courtesy shuttle bus was also provided to transport patrons from town to Voyager Estate and return. Free tickets were also offered to Pensioners for Friday sessions.



A large number of volunteers were tasked with roles in the lead up to, during and post festival. 50 Arts Margaret River volunteers contributed 558 hours of their time plus an additional 200+ volunteer hours was clocked up by other community groups in support of the festival.

The Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival continues to grow and is supported by many sponsors, either in cash or in-kind. Tourism Western Australia & Country Arts WA has recognised the value of the festival by committing to 3 years of festival funding, providing financial security and enabling us to expand the festival. The level of cash sponsorship from local businesses and grant/funding bodies remained similar to last year, at 63.8% of the total festival income.

The number of businesses offering in-kind sponsorship increased this year. Close to 90% of author accommodation was supplied by in-kind sponsorship.

There were many diverse offers of sponsorship, from IGA funding volunteer lunches through to five star accommodation provided by Cape Lodge for Germaine Greer and Geraldine Doogue.

The Young Readers and Writers Festival ran after the main festival from the 6th May - 17th May 2019. The festival toured five authors across 9 primary schools and one high school in the City of Busselton and the Shire of Augusta Margaret River. Across the program, 1772 students participated in the Young Readers & Writers Program. This year saw a decrease in participation by schools from all shires. This was due to the change in the festival dates and the festival being in conflict with NAPLAN, A new children book festival created in Busselton Shire (occurring prior to May) and the introduction of a children's' Scribblers festival at the same time as MRRWF.

Professional photography of the festival has assisted with the marketing of the event, in particular, on social media. In 2019 for the first time, the festival engaged a professional videographer to capture footage of the festival for a promotional video.

2019 MRRWF promo video: <https://www.facebook.com/mrrwffestival/videos/414014209444627/>



READERS & WRITERS PRE-FESTIVAL EVENTS

IN CONVERSATION WITH GRAEME SIMSION — THUR 18 APRIL 6.30PM

After almost five million copies of *The Rosie Project* and *The Rosie Effect* sold in more than 40 countries, *The Rosie Result* by Graeme Simsion is finally here. TICKETS \$10. Drinks and books available for purchase. The talk was held in the studio and a temporary stage was set up to accommodate limited flat floor seating.

Paid attendance 75 plus sponsors, totalling 94. This event sold out.

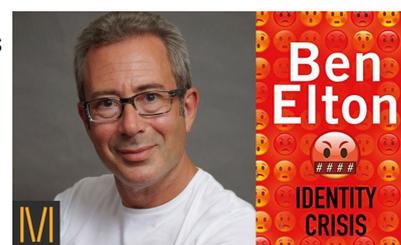


IN CONVERSATION WITH BEN ELTON — MON 27 MAY 6.30PM

Comedian, screenwriter & bestselling author Ben Elton talked about his new book *Identity Crisis*. The talk was held in the studio and a temporary stage was set up to accommodate flat floor seating.

TICKETS: Adults \$15. Drinks and books for purchase.

Paid attendance was 118 people plus 16 sponsors, totalling 134.



ALL IS TRUE MOVIE FUNDRAISER — FRIDAY 26 JULY 7PM

William Shakespeare's story starring Judi Dench, Kenneth Branagh & Ian McKellen.

TICKETS: \$18 Adults | \$15 Arts Hub Members | \$18 Youth and Included a glass of wine for adults on arrival. The movie screened in the small studio venue with flat floor seating and was attended by 84 people.



SPEAKING FRANKLY: CLARE BOWDITCH IN CONVERSATION WITH CONSTANCE HALL — SAT 9 NOVEMBER 8PM

ARIA Award-winning singer and actress Clare Bowditch discussed her new memoir with writer & blogger Constance Hall and performed a couple of songs.

This event was held in the auditorium and was well attended by music lovers, Constance Hall followers as well as regular Readers & Writers Festival goers. Total paid attendance was 173 people plus 18 sponsors, totalling 191. TICKETS: Adults \$15 | Concession: \$10 and drinks and books available for purchase.



THE GOLDFINCH MOVIE FUNDRAISER — FRI 22 NOVEMBER 7PM

The Goldfinch is the film adaptation of Donna Tartt's globally acclaimed bestseller of the same name, which won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and spent more than 30 weeks on The New York Times Best Sellers list. TICKETS: \$18 Adults | \$15 Arts Hub Members | \$10 Youth and Included a glass of wine on arrival. The movie was attended by 59 people.



VISUAL ARTS

VISUAL STORIES ART EXHIBITION COMPETITION: 16 APRIL—5 MAY

Each year, the Visual Stories Art Competition and Exhibition forms an exciting part of the Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival with works displayed before and throughout the event, adding a unique perspective on the festival theme for all to enjoy & contemplate. The 2019 Festival theme was 'Wild, Weird & Wonderful' and artists were asked to respond to the theme with a 3D artwork in the form of a sculpture which were exhibited at the Festival site in the Voyager Estate Gardens.

The Visual Stories official opening was held on Wednesday 1st May 5pm-7pm in the Main Stage marquee at Voyager Estate. Artists and the public were invited at no charge and the competition winners were announced with prizes awarded. Around 120 people attended this launch. 21 entries were received, ranging in price from \$400 to \$4,200.



No exhibitions were booked in the first half of the year due to the redevelopment of the HEART venue.

The foyer of the small studio (SP1) had hanging facilities installed soon after opening but this space was accessed by tradesmen during the day and was not secure enough to warrant exhibitions.

The first exhibition was Leon Pericle's **Retrospective** which accompanied the premiere of his documentary 'Storm in a Teacup', screened as part of CinefestOz over 4 days in August.

As the large foyer and exhibition space could not be used, the exhibition was displayed on Arts MR's portable display panels in the Shire Council Foyer and in the studio foyer. This exhibition was curated and hung by Leon Pericle's staff and Arts MR did not charge any commission on sales.

MARGARET RIVER SHOWCASE: 16 OCTOBER—30 OCTOBER

The first art exhibition organized by the Gallery Team was titled **Margaret River Region Showcase** and featured over 50 artworks by local artists, including paintings, sculptures, photography and textiles. Artists from the Cape to Cape region including Alice Linford Forte, Ella Jackson-Walley, Fi Wilkie, Joanna Alferink, Ian Thwaites, Carmen McFaul, Peter Scott and many more, participated.



The exhibition was originally anticipated to run from early September to the end of October but venue access delays meant that we were not able to hang the exhibition until the 16 October, with the official opening held on the 24 October.

This was very disappointing for all artists as the original two month exhibition period became two weeks instead. After the exhibition opening the Shire advised that the HEART venue would not be open to the public during the week which meant that people could only view the exhibition when Arts MR staff was in attendance for our scheduled cinema screenings and events.



MARGARET RIVER TAFE VISUAL ART STUDENTS: 6 NOVEMBER—28 NOVEMBER

This was the third year that SW Tafe asked Arts MR to present their Visual Art Students' end of year exhibition. 22 artists were featured with over 180 pieces displayed. The large exhibition space was shared with the MRSHS exhibition and Tafe utilized the gallery space on the ground floor, closest to the reception counter.

Arts Margaret River staff manned the exhibition Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm to ensure that the public could access the venue to view the exhibition and purchase artworks. The official opening was held on Wednesday 6 November which was very well attended with strong sales on the night and during the month.



Exhibition opens
Wednesday
6th November
6-8pm



Exhibition closes
Thursday
28th November

You and your friends are warmly invited to attend an exhibition of recent work by Margaret River TAFE Visual Arts and Photography students. Printmaking | Drawing | Textiles | Sculpture | Painting | Photography

MARGARET RIVER SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL: 8 NOVEMBER—27 NOVEMBER

This was the first time that Arts MR presented the Year 11 & 12's **Creating Identity** exhibition. In moving the exhibition from Jah Roc to the HEART, MRSHS wanted to give the students a longer exhibition opportunity (it was only on display at Jah Roc for a weekend), greater space to exhibit more works and a larger area capable of accommodating a big crowd at the opening.

A large number of students were represented and included photography, paintings, drawings, woodwork, metalwork, sculpture and print making.

The official opening was held on Friday 8 November and the exhibition was left up until after the Year 12 Valedictory Ceremony.

As the space was shared with the TAFE, most of the work was displayed upstairs on the landing, with woodwork displayed in the bar area. On review it was felt that the upstairs exhibition space was not prominent enough and resulted in reduced visitation and sales.



Friday
8 November
5.30pm - 8pm

Margaret River
HEART



CINEMATIC ARTS

Arts Margaret River was scheduled to screen the Ocean Film Festival for the 3rd year on Monday 11 March 2019. Unfortunately due to delays in access to the HEART venue, we had to move the Film Festival to Cape Mentelle at short notice. This was the first time that Arts MR screened a movie at Cape Mentelle and we were very grateful for their support in allowing us to do so. The evening was a great success with 198 tickets sold.

Almost one year to the day of the last movie screening in the Cultural Centre, the first movie, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, was screened twice on Friday 15 March in the new Studio venue at the HEART. Amidst much excitement but minimal fanfare, the screenings were well attended by community members who had missed attending indoor movies and were keen to see the new space. Despite restricted access to the studio through a barricaded building site to enter the venue, attendees embraced the new space with its airconditioned comfort, plush raked seating, large cinema screen and state of the art surround sound. Movies were programmed to be screened every Friday, Saturday and Sunday as Arts MR were only able to access the venue for events on Friday afternoon once the tradespeople had left for the week.

A lot of issues were soon encountered with this new space including: The raked seating design was a safety hazard as the backs of the seats folded down when leant on, patrons could not get past a seated person without them having to exit the row first (the seat bottom did not tip up to allow a person to stand in this space to enable someone to walk past), the back 2 rows of the raked seating were in the sight line of the projector, the roof was subject to leaks and the tin roof was very loud during heavy rain.

In early May after two patron incidents on the raked seating, the Shire banned the use of the raked seating due to safety concerns. This meant that loose chairs could only be used on the flat floor, greatly compromising comfort, viewing and reducing audience capacity dramatically.

Arts MR continued to program movies and clearly advertised that seating was on the flat floor. For children's movies we encouraged children to bring their beanbags and left enough space at the front of the chairs to cater for this.

During this year a number of movie fundraisers and documentaries were screened which contained subtitles. It soon became apparent that viewing of the subtitles from the back rows was severely restricted and many patron complaints were received. Attendance numbers started to reduce quite dramatically towards the middle of the year and at the end of September we cancelled Sunday matinee screenings.

The first movie to be screened in the large auditorium at the HEART was *Downton Abbey* on Sunday 20 October. A total of 14 movies were screened in the auditorium, with the final public Arts MR movie screening held on Saturday 14 December, after our Volunteer Christmas Party. This final screening marked the end of an era for our volunteer community cinema as the AMR Shire takes over cinema screenings in 2020.

In total 91 movies were screened, including 3 Fundraiser documentaries and 4 private school screenings. 4005 tickets were purchased for the year compared to 9050 in 2017.



CINEMA PRESENTED BY ARTS MARGARET RIVER

<p>A DOG'S JOURNEY Sequel to a Dog's Purpose Friday 4 October 1pm FLAT FLOOR SEATS All tickets \$8</p>	<p>IT: CHAPTER 2 Stephen King horror sequel Friday 4 October 7pm FLAT FLOOR SEATS \$15 Adult, \$12 Member, \$8 Youth</p>	<p>ONCE UPON A TIME IN HOLLYWOOD Saturday 5 October 7pm FLAT FLOOR SEATS \$15 Adult, \$12 Member, \$8 Youth</p>	<p>ANGRY BIRDS 2 Monday 7 October 1pm FLAT FLOOR SEATS All tickets \$8</p>
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MARGARET RIVER HEART arts

COMMUNITY VENUE HIRE

In addition to the use of the venue to present these events, the venue was also hired for many days and/or weeks for rehearsals, technical set up and bump ins.

JASPER JONES: WED 8—FRI 10 MAY 7PM

Total Attendance over 3 nights: 416

The Margaret River Senior High School's drama production *Jasper Jones* was performed in the studio venue over 3 nights. Arts Margaret River managed all ticketing online and in person and assisted with promotion of the event via our website, Facebook page and via our newsletters. Capacity was capped at 140 tickets to allow for a bigger stage area and the last 2 rows of the raked seating could not be used due to interference with projection. 2 of the 3 performances sold out with only 4 seats remaining for the first show. Unfortunately the production was marred by 2 safety incidents related to the raked seating.



SW SHORTS: SAT 18 MAY 7.30PM

Tickets: \$20 Total Attendance: 93

South-West Shorts is an initiative of Western Edge Performance Writers to foster relationships between Perth and South-West writers and to create an opportunity for original West Australian work to be heard. *Changing Landscapes*—An evening of 6 local short plays written by some of the region's finest storytellers and performed by local actors. Arts Margaret River sponsored this event for the first time by providing ticketing and marketing support. A late change to flat floor seating as the raked seating was no longer able to be used. This was a well attended event and the organiser and performers enjoyed having a dedicated performance space to perform the works.



AMNESTY FUNDRAISER - BEHROUZ BOOCHANI LIVE SIMULCAST: 20 JUNE 5.30PM

Tickets: \$25 Attendance: 74

Manus Island Refugee and Award winning author, Associate Professor Boochani chatted live from Manus Island with Bill Bunbury. The ticket price included a glass of wine and a mini Manus meal after the telecast.

MRTG - WE LOVE HOLLYWOOD: 21, 22, 28 & 29 JUNE

Tickets: \$25 Total Attendance: 320

This musical production was set with a portable stage and cabaret table seating to maximize audience comfort and viewing. Gourmet cheese platters were available for pre-order and all 4 shows SOLD OUT prior to the performances.

Attendees enjoyed the show with strong bar sales each night. A forced evacuation during one of the shows caused by excess steam from wet green room carpet, setting off the smoke alarm, did little to dampen audience enjoyment and tested Arts MR evacuation procedures in the process.



RETROSUBURBIA ROADSHOW - SUNDAY 11 AUGUST 2PM

Tickets: \$15 Total Attendance: 110

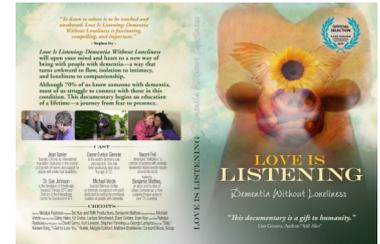
David Holmgren presented Permaculture ideas to inspire and arm attendees with ideas and knowledge to live with lower environmental impact in our modern suburban landscape. The presentation toured to Perth, Bunbury, Margaret River, Albany and Narrogin and was well attended. Catering was provided in the foyer after the talk as well as book sales and signings. Arts Margaret River sponsored this event with ticketing and promotion/marketing support.



LOVE IS LISTENING—DEMENTIA DOCUMENTARY: 26 AUGUST 6.30PM & 27 AUG 10.30AM

Tickets: \$10 Total Attendance: 161

Arts MR was approached by Dementia Friendly Margaret River to host this special screening and Q&A session with international dementia expert Michael Verde. To maximize attendance, 2 sessions were held which also included free catering. Arts Margaret River sponsored this event with ticketing, promotion/marketing support, organising catering and providing tea/coffee. In recognition of our support, Arts Margaret River was presented with 2 certificates from Alzheimers WA.



MRCCI AWARDS PRESENTATION DINNER - WED 21 AUGUST 6PM

The annual awards dinner was intended to be held in the large foyer of the HEART with the presentations held in the auditorium. Unfortunately access delays meant that the event had to be held in the studio. Pre-dinner drinks were held in the Shire Council foyer before attendees walked to the studio for dinner and the presentation. Logistically this small space made food service and clean up very difficult and diners were very cramped.



CINEFESTOZ - WED 28 AUGUST—1 SEPTEMBER

CinefestOz programmed 10 screenings at the Margaret River HEART including 3 premieres and multiple community films. The programming was intended to utilize the studio and the auditorium and the large bar/foyer. Unfortunately access delays meant that all screenings had to be held in the studio with flat floor seating. For the premiere films, the screenings were preceded with drinks in the Shire Council Foyer and Leon Pericle's *Storm in a Teacup* had to be screened twice on the same night due to reduced seating capacity and huge demand (both screenings sold out prior to the night). Patrons were generally very understanding but many complaints were received especially regarding the inability to read the subtitles.



BOOGIE DOWN SOUTH - SATURDAY 27—30 SEPTEMBER

This was the third Margaret River Lindy Hop Exchange and the first supported by Arts Margaret River. The event included 3 nights of dancing events and 2 full days of workshops, all held in the studio venue. To accommodate dancing, the studio space was used in reverse, with music and lighting set up at the back of the room to allow dancing at the front of the room on the wooden 'stage' flooring.

DIGBY & THE DRAGON - 2 OCTOBER 11AM & 2PM, 3 OCTOBER 11AM & 6PM

Tickets: \$10 Total attendance: 478

Digby and the Dragon was an original puppet show written and created by Margaret River artist Sky River and featuring local puppeteers, musician and digital media support. It was suitable for children aged 4+ and their families. The project was supported by the Australian Governments regional arts program, the Regional Arts Fund and sponsored by Arts Margaret River.



Arts MR offered ticketing, promotion and marketing support and assisted with technical and logistical support. Initially only 3 shows were scheduled during the October school holidays however an additional show was added due to demand.

DIGBY & THE DRAGON CONT

The show was performed in the Studio and tickets were capped at 120 to maximize audience comfort and viewing. A temporary stage was erected and large carpet was placed in front of the chairs for children to sit on. 3 of the 4 shows SOLD OUT, with only 3 seats remaining for the second performance. The show was an overwhelming success and loved by all who saw it.



WILDSTAR - THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER 6.30PM

Tickets: \$20 Adults, \$10 Youth Attendance: 158
Mermaids & Embers was presented by the *Saturdays*, a group of 7-15 year old girls who train in acrobatics, dance and creative movement at Wild Star Studio, Margaret River. The show was sponsored by Arts Margaret River with ticketing and full marketing production and promotion. The performance was the first Arts MR event to be held in the large auditorium. After the show the bar remained open and a music trio performed in the foyer.



MRTG- THE WOMAN WHO COOKED HER HUSBAND: 25, 26 OCT, & 1, 2 NOV 7.30PM

Tickets: \$25 Total paid attendance: 242
A wickedly delicious black comedy featuring 3 actors from the Margaret River Theatre Group. This adult production was presented in the Studio venue over 4 nights. A temporary stage was erected to compensate for flat floor seating.



SHIRE SENIORS MOVIE EVENT - WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 6PM

To celebrate Seniors Week the Shire requested Arts MR screen the documentary *Faces Places* as a free event. The Shire sourced and paid for the movie hire and provided complimentary refreshments prior to the screening. Arts MR ticketed the free event, promoted it and staffed it. It was attended by 102 people who thoroughly enjoyed the documentary.

MRSHS VALEDICTORY - TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 7PM

After a full day of rehearsals the day before, the annual Valedictory ceremony was held with a very large contingent of graduating students. The students were held in the studio before entering the auditorium from the upstairs landing. It was the first time such a large group of students and their families were able to be comfortably accommodated in a large, comfortable venue.



ARTZABILITY 10 YR CELEBRATION - MONDAY 2 DECEMBER 5PM

To celebrate Artzability held a dance party and festive parade to commemorate the group's ten year anniversary. Artzability worked with local artists to develop a short piece of moving street theatre which was paraded from the Zone Room to the HEART. 20 participants, their support workers and family then entered the Studio for a film presentation, disco and food/drinks. Photographs and artworks were displayed on the walls of the studio and in the foyer.



WORKSHOPS

In Between 2 –Hip Hop workshop: 8 March

As part of the *In Between 2* show, presenters were offered a free pre-show workshop. Working with story, narrative and life experiences, the show's performers Joel and James worked with participants to develop lyrics, then added some beats. The workshop was offered to the MRSHS Indigenous Boys After School Group and was held in the Zone Room. The one hour workshop was attended by 14 boys.



Circus Maxima Residency and Workshops: 25–29 March

Circus Maxima were invited to hold a weeks residency in the newly opened HEART venue where they worked on their upcoming circus production "Catch." As part of this residency they provided workshops for local acrobatics and dance students from Wildstar Dance and St Thomas More Primary School.

A special preview of "Catch" was performed for the children and parents who attended the workshops. All workshops and the performance was provided free of charge and was a fantastic opportunity for local children to learn from these professional performers.



COMMUNITY FUNDRAISERS

Arts Margaret River volunteers once again assisted with ushering at the annual Leeuwin Estate Concert, ticket collection at the annual Gourmet Escape Weekend and ushering for Cinefest Oz movie screenings.



VOLUNTEER THANK YOU CHRISTMAS PARTY: SAT 14 DECEMBER 5PM

Arts MR hosted our annual Volunteer Christmas Party in the foyer of the HEART. The party was attended by over 90 volunteers and included complimentary food and drinks. The party was bittersweet as we thanked our dedicated supporters and volunteers and updated them as to our future plans. After the event everyone was invited to stay for the last Arts Margaret River public movie screening in the venue; *Last Christmas*.





Free family friendly Sundowners with live music & Zumba during intermission—17th year in 2019



Projector for cinema screenings



Fundraising



Children's activities



Special dinners pre-event



Themed dress up events



Community art project



Raked retractable seating



Michael Palin 2017 RWF



Melbourne Ballet Co



Volunteer Gallery Team



Volunteet thank you event



Redevelopment 2018