



arts



MARGARET RIVER

Annual Report
2024-2025



PLACE

The town of Margaret River is firmly situated in the South West Boojarah region in Noongar booja (country). Noongar have lived in this part of booja since the Nyittingy – creation times.¹

Arts Margaret River acknowledges and pays respect to past and present Traditional Custodians and Elders of Australia. In particular, we deeply respect the Wadandi 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.

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



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD JULY 2024 TO JUNE 2025

I am proud to once again present the annual President's Report for Arts Margaret River.

For over 50 years, we have supported and nurtured the work of artists across all disciplines. We bring to life a beating heart within the community, nourished by the stories of our people that remind us of the past, celebrate the here and now, and give us hope for the future.

Our purpose is to enrich lives through the transformative power of the arts, fostering talent, and building a vibrant and inclusive community – with, for and by our community. We do this with the assistance and support of a dedicated group of volunteers, sponsors, donors and of course our small but brilliant staff.

2025 has been another positive year for Arts Margaret River. A year of vibrant growth and deepened community engagement with our small but dedicated team and invaluable volunteers delivering results that surpass even those of last year. Our capacity is further increased by the added support of a growing number of donors and sponsors.

Underpinned by so many people in our community, we continue to be a beacon for culture, creativity, and connection.

2025 IN SUMMARY

Our programming in 2025 was more ambitious and diverse than ever, something the team is very proud of.

Our success measurement metrics were impressive:

- the total audience was 47,225, representing a 22% increase.
- the total number of events hosted was 404 – 34% more than in 2024. 193 of these (48%) were community-based events, many of which were on a no-fee basis.
- total revenue reached \$1,326,715.
- membership grew to 429, a small improvement over 2024.

These results were recognised by our peers with the award of *Presenter of the Year* at the Circuitwest 2025 State Conference.

Our Readers and Writers Festival enjoyed another stellar year and is now firmly entrenched as the pre-eminent literature festival in WA. With the help of our members and supporters we have engaged with an increased number of recognised international authors and look forward to an even stronger festival in 2026.

Volunteers remain the lifeblood of Arts Margaret River. Their tireless support—from ushering and ticketing to helping run events, exhibitions, and outreach—has been critical to our success. We celebrated our volunteers with a special end-of-year gathering, acknowledging their invaluable contributions.

PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL IMPACT

We are particularly proud of the strong partnerships we've cultivated across the region. Our collaboration with the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, Margaret River HEART, local businesses, and funding bodies such as Lotterywest and Creative Australia has enabled us to take on larger, more ambitious projects while maintaining accessibility and affordability for the community.

Regional touring continues to be a key focus, and 2025 saw us extend programming into surrounding communities, including Cowaramup and Augusta. These satellite events not only expand our audience base but also foster regional cohesion and cultural equity.

Our partnership with the Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association has also grown, with shared goals around promoting cultural tourism and highlighting the unique creative offerings of our region to visitors.

FINANCIAL HEALTH

Financial stability remains a core strategic goal, and I'm pleased to report that Arts Margaret River is in a strong financial position. We ended the year with a surplus, thanks to a combination of careful budgeting, strong ticket sales, grant funding, and generous community donations.

This allows us to continue to expand our programming by underwriting more ambitious projects such as *Romeo and Juliet*, and to provide support across a variety of disciplines and community activities.

STAFF

As our role expands, so too does our group of people. This year we welcomed Jane Kerr to the team as an additional support across all areas.

Our current staff count is 6.7 FTE. The Christmas Party was a much larger affair last year! Our staff consists of:

Full Time

- General Manager – Michelle Wright
- Artistic Director – Sian Baker

Part Time

- Community Development Support Manager – Stephanie Kreutzer
- Finance Manager – Trevor Brannan
- Marketing Manager – Christopher Young
- Volunteer & Event Support Manager – Ian Smith
- Project Assistant – Jane Kerr

Activations

404

↗ 34%

Community Activations

193

48%

Community Activations (FOC)

86

21%

Attendance

47k

↗ 22%

Revenue

\$1.3m

↗ 6%

Membership

429

↗ 7%

Cinema Screenings

67

Cinema Patrons

8,341

Art Exhibitions

19

- Customer Service Officers – Dawn Rybicki, Gilly Reid & Pam Townshend

Casuals

- Mechelle Bernhardt, Sam James, Hilary Metcalfe, Sherie Read, Rachuel Knapinski, Michel Bayens & Joshua Yates

GOVERNANCE

Good governance underpins our organisation, and the board has continued to provide thoughtful, strategic leadership throughout the year.

This year also saw a renewal of key board positions, with Karen MacDonald, Moira Rutherford (Treasurer) and Brigid Terry being inducted.

Continuing members – Kerry Mather (Vice President), Jeanette Sangmeister (Treasurer), Galatee Underwood and Heath Kelly all continued to make valuable contributions.

I appreciate their combined wisdom, experience, and passion, which keep Arts Margaret River in good hands.

IN CONCLUSION

I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been part of this journey—our incredible artists, volunteers, audiences, partners, donors, staff, board members, and friends. Your support, creativity, and belief in the power of the arts continue to inspire us every day.

In a world that often feels fragmented, arts and culture remain powerful forces for connection, reflection, and hope. Arts Margaret River is proud to play a central role in enriching the cultural life of our community, and we move forward with energy, enthusiasm, and a deep sense of purpose.

Here's to another vibrant, inspiring year ahead!

David Shelton

President

TREASURER'S REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD JULY 2024 TO JUNE 2025

OPERATIONAL RESULTS

The Financial Year 2024/25 was another successful year for Arts Margaret River as joint manager of the HEART. Overall the organisation made an operating surplus of \$38,776, for the year, exceeding both prior year results and 2024/25 budget.

The HEART venue capacity continues to expand, with notable growth in community venue hire and another strong year for the Readers & Writers Festival ticket income. Contract income increased due to extra fees generated over this final year in our role as HUB co-ordinator with Regional Arts WA and due to income received for the upcoming Gathering Ground Art Exhibition. However other event income declined, largely due to cost-of-living pressures affecting attendance.

Despite grant funding becoming an increasingly competitive space, Arts Margaret River maintained its high success rate with grant applications. Grants totalling \$340k were received in 2024/25 and this is a tribute to the organisation's strong programme of events and its growing reputation in delivering quality projects to the local community and visitors. Funds were awarded by State Government, Local Government and, for the first time, Federal Government. Main contributions were: 3-year operational funding from Regional Arts WA (RASI) and from DLGSC (RAVS); 3-year event funding from DLGSC (RAVS, for general events); and funding from Tourism Western Australia and the City of Busselton for the Readers & Writers Festival.

Operational overheads were \$773,664 this year (an increase of 7.6%) largely reflecting the further increase in staffing hours required to service the HEART. The Board, in conjunction with the executive team, continually review and monitor overhead expenditure to ensure effective control of outgoings while maintaining appropriate staffing levels.

In light of the surplus for the year, the Board of Management has set aside a further \$29,465 to the Program Fund to

support future programming/artist support – including *Romeo & Juliet* this year and continuing to develop a Youth and Elders Program from 2026/27 onwards.

As noted last year, with the ATO assuming oversight of Designated Gift Recipient status for cultural organisations, arrangements for our Public Fund have changed. We no longer need to manage/report a separate Public Fund for gifts and donations: the Gift Fund may now be managed within Arts Margaret River itself and this year's financial reports reflect this change.

Net current assets at the year-end increased to \$287,823 (reflecting the surplus for the year).

Cash on hand at the end of the period was \$732,750. This includes unexpended grants of \$62,400 already received for 2025/26 events and \$73,165 in ticketing income payable to venue-hirers for events not yet held. Progress was made over the year towards maximising return from the organisation's cash assets through use of a low-risk, higher-interest bank account. This will generate income that will further support our goals and further cash management refinements in 2025/2026 should see an ongoing increase in return on cash assets.

OUTLOOK FOR 2025/26

Our main focus for 2025/26 is maintaining our joint-management role at the HEART: balancing financial stability with increasing the level and number of community events and artist/event support.

Finally, the support from our patrons, membership, volunteers, partners and sponsors continues to be 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.

Moira Rutherford

Treasurer



FINANCIAL SUMMARY*

Income	Year to June 2025	Year to June 2024
Grants	\$340,102	\$326,082
Memberships	\$15,751	\$14,965
Events	\$274,644	\$303,976
Cinema	\$77,573	\$83,697
Bar/Kiosk	\$107,346	\$96,809
Venue Hire	\$200,711	\$164,044
Other (Contracts, fundraising, sponsorships)	\$77,938	\$31,817
Shire Co-Management Fee	\$232,650	\$225,000
Total Income	\$1,326,715	\$1,251,685

Expenditure

Operational Overhead	\$773,664	\$718,691
Events and HEART activities	\$444,121	\$473,498
Total operating expenses	\$1,217,785	\$1,192,189
Operating Surplus	\$108,930	\$59,495
Allocation to Program Fund	\$29,465	\$30,000
Allocation to Gift Fund (Public Fund 2024)	\$40,689	\$19,079
Net Surplus	\$38,776	\$10,415

ASSETS/LIABILITIES SUMMARY

	30 June 2025	30 June 2024
Non-current Assets	\$4,919	\$6,559
Current Assets	\$805,039	\$542,549
Current Liabilities	-\$522,135	-\$300,062
Assets net of Liabilities	\$287,823	\$249,047
Note: Gift Fund (separate Public Fund FY24)	\$72,229	\$31,540
Note: Program Fund	\$109,465	\$80,000

* Subject to final audit

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN STATEMENT (RAP)

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 organisation'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

1. RELATIONSHIPS

- **Acknowledgment and Welcome:** We will start all organisational 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 organisations to foster positive 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 organisation.
- **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 our progress on RAP initiatives annually.
- Regular consultations with our local 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, positive and equitable future.

ACCESS BELONGING INCLUSION DIVERSITY & EQUITY STATEMENT (ABIDE)

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 organisation. We are dedicated to embodying these principles in every aspect of our work.

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.

BELONGING

Our aim is to create a space where people feel 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.

INCLUSION

Inclusion is woven into the fabric of our organisation. 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.

DIVERSITY

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

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 organisation and in the larger communities we serve.



MARGARET RIVER READERS & WRITERS FESTIVAL

The Universe is Made of Stories and from 2–4 May 2025, Western Australia's South West came alive with a celebration of literature, ideas, and community. The 17th annual Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival (MRRWF25) and sister event, the Busselton Book Festival (BBF25), brought together more than 50 international, Australian, and emerging authors for 57+ events across Margaret River, Busselton, Dunsborough and Augusta.

FESTIVAL OVERVIEW

As WA's largest literary festival, MRRWF25 delivered main stage conversations, writers' workshops, panel discussions, book launches and family events. The program extended across regional venues with hubs at Nala Bardip Mia (Margaret River HEART), Shelter Brewing Co and satellite events across the Margaret River region.

Despite significant challenges, including the rescheduling caused by the Margaret River Pro, clashes with the Busselton Festival of Triathlon and the Federal Election, and wild weather across the region, the Festival drew strong audiences and reaffirmed the power of stories to connect community.

AUTHORS & HIGHLIGHTS

Headline guests included Samantha Harvey (2024 Booker Prize winner), Marian Keyes (*My Favourite Mistake*), A.C. Grayling, Peter Godwin, Markus Zusak, Hannah Kent, Julia Baird, Jane Caro, Charlotte Wood, Tasma Walton and Stan Grant.

Standout sessions included sold-out events with Stan Grant (*Murriyang: Song of Time*), Hannah Kent (*Always Home, Always Homesick*), Marian Keyes (*My Favourite Mistake*) in both Margaret River and Busselton, and a 20th-anniversary celebration of *The Book Thief* with Markus Zusak. Opening Night, hosted by Jane Caro, featured reflections on the Festival's theme from A.C. Grayling, Samantha Harvey and Chris Flynn and a rousing Welcome to Country from Dr Wayne Webb and Ingrid Cummings.

WORKSHOPS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Workshops remained a festival strength, nurturing writers at all levels. Sell-out sessions included Peter Godwin's *Memoir Masterclass*, A.C. Grayling's interactive *Philosophy of Life*, Charlotte Wood's *Writing Fearlessly* and Molly Schmidt's *Life Story & Non-linear Storytelling*. Events on screenwriting, nature narratives, and manuscript speed dating also attracted full houses.

A major 2025 innovation was The Discovery Tent, offering free and low-cost family activities on sustainability, neurodiversity, First Nations knowledge, STEM storytelling and visits from a host of cuddly reptiles from Discovery Deadly.

Key satellite events in Augusta and Vasse Felix included Chris Hammer at the filming location of *Silver* and an exclusive talk by Marcia Langton AO and Judith Ryan AM on their book, *65,000 Years: A Short History of Australian Art*.



BUSSELTON BOOK FESTIVAL 2025

BBF25 expanded regional reach with events at Busselton Library, Shelter Brewing, and ECU Learning Hub. Highlights included Marian Keyes and Markus Zusak in conversation, Jane Caro's launch of *Lyrebird*, Chris Flynn's *Orpheus Nine*, and a dinner with Charlotte Wood. Free community workshops covered genres from romantasy to historical fiction.

YOUNG READERS & WRITERS PROGRAM

The 2025 YR&W Program was disrupted by the date change of the Margaret River Pro, pushing it too close to Easter. Instead, 11 schools hosted visiting authors, reaching 1,092 students through sessions with Lee Constable and Corey Tutt.

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEERS

The Visual Stories exhibition returned, showcasing artworks inspired by Margaret River. Volunteer contribution remained central: 89 volunteers gave 587.5 hours of service, valued at \$23,500 in-kind.

The festival continued its commitment to access and affordability, presenting a wide range of free and low-cost events.

ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT

MRRWF25:

- 636 patrons purchased tickets (1,167 bookings)
- 6,427 tickets sold / 8,505 total attendance including schools and exhibitions
- 1,665 books sold (1,441 MRRWF, 224 BBF)
- Average 10.9 tickets per patron (up 79% from 2024)

Total Attendance in 2025

8,505

BBF25:

- 160 patrons (vs 263 in 2024)
- 539 tickets sold (vs 608 in 2024)

Overall, patron numbers dropped 40% due to scheduling clashes, but engagement deepened, with significantly higher tickets purchased per patron.

OUT OF SEASON EVENTS

Seven out-of-season events extended the festival's impact, including conversations with Dr Tracy Westerman AM (*Jilya*), Bernice Barry (*Sarah Evans*), Vicki Cramer (*The Memory of Trees*, in partnership with Nature Conservation), Grace Koelma (*ADHD Focus Friend*), and Peter Lane (*A Short History of Earth's Changing Climate*), hosted by Chief Scientist of Western Australia, Professor Peter Klinken AC. Two major sold-out book launches included Tim Winton (*Juice*) and Gina Chick (*We Are Made of Stars*).

LOOKING AHEAD

Despite unprecedented scheduling challenges, MRRWF25 and BBF25 delivered strong outcomes and world-class literary experiences. MRRWF26 and BBF26 will return 15–18 May 2026. Save the date!



PERFORMING ARTS

UWA CLASSICAL GUITAR CONCERT

Date: Wednesday, July 17, 2024

Attendance: 100

The UWA Classical Guitar Studio was proud to partner with Just Home Margaret River on their sixth annual concert tour of WA's South West.

FROM BE-BOP TO HIP-HOP

Date: Friday, August 9, 2024

Attendance: 77

We experienced the extraordinary connection between jazz and hip-hop with Noongar rapper Zero Emcee and the WA Youth Jazz Orchestra (WAYJO).

STITCH POETRY

Date: Saturday, August 10, 2024

Attendance: 64

Sari Bennett performed 'Stitch Poetry' joined on stage with special guests Amy Hastie and Dave Mann.

ARC

Date: August 13 & 14, 2024

Attendance: 728

Showcasing exquisite puppetry, an enigmatic host, audience interaction and a world of rare and exotic animals, 'ARC' was a profound experience that embraces the natural world and the creatures that cohabit this place we call Earth.

SOUL KITCHEN STUDIO SESSIONS

Date: Started Friday, August 16, 2024

Attendance: 56

Studio Sessions included a band where Tilly Kay guided participants through everything they needed to know to sing the chosen songs.

ARJ BARKER – THE MIND FIELD

Date: Saturday, September 14, 2024

Attendance: 417

All of reality, as we can ever possibly know it, exists exclusively in our minds. Armed with this knowledge, Arj Barker set out to answer some of Life's Biggest Questions: Why are we here? Are we alone in the Universe? Why does it hurt when we pee?

YARNING SINGING

Date: Thursday, September 19, 2024

Attendance: 84

The Phil Walleystack Indigenous Arts Foundation showcased some of WA's best Indigenous talent at a performance in Margaret River.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK – A PANTOMIME

Date: September 28 & 29; October 4 & 5, 2024

Attendance: 1503

Young Jack, his 'daft-as-a-brush' brother Silly Simon and his long suffering mother, Dame Trott, live in a tiny cottage in the shadow of the terrible giant, Blunderbore.



VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS

Date: Sunday, October 6, 2024

Attendance: 288

We stepped back in time to the era of Vivaldi himself with Australian Baroque's captivating performance of the iconic 'Four Seasons', presented on baroque instruments. Led by the visionary Artistic Director and virtuoso violinist, Helen Kruger, we were transported to Vivaldi's Venice, complete with Vivaldi's own poetry that inspired the works themselves.

MARGARET RIVER CONCERT BAND & FRIENDS

Date: Saturday, October 12, 2024

Attendance: 166

The band, under the direction of Geoff Ogden, was supported by a number of professional musicians from the Southwest, and featured Internationally acclaimed clarinettist Craig McLaren as well as renowned local vocalists.

CELTICA

Date: Friday, October 18, 2024

Attendance: 220

A high octane modern Irish Dance show, starred an elite troupe of dancers, including stars of 'Lord of the Dance' and 'Celtic Illusion'.

THE HYPOTHETICALS

Date: Friday, November 1, 2024

Attendance: 60

Winner of the 2020 NT Literary Award for Theatre and a sell-out 2021 World Premiere at Brown's Mart in the Darwin Festival, The Hypotheticals was both a deeply personal story

and a work of imagination for the writer-performers Jeffrey Jay Fowler and Sarah Reuben, as they contemplated their futures and the future of their (yet to exist) children.

ELODIE PIANO STUDIO – END OF YEAR CONCERT

Date: Monday, November 11, 2024

Attendance: 200

FOREST FEVER CABARET

Date: Friday, November 15 & Saturday, November 16, 2024

Attendance: 208

Forest Fever united the region's most talented performance companies: Kingdom Choreography, Rapture Arts, Suspensions Aerial Arts & Burlesque, Core Dance Collective and Tutu Dance Company. Together, they wove a thrilling journey of dynamic dance, aerial artistry, and burlesque flair, bringing the forest to life on stage.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MONEY

Date: Saturday, November 23, 2024

Attendance: 469

Blackwood Dance's local students & teachers from Augusta to Cowaramup performed their end of year dance concert.

SEAMTOGETHER

Date: Monday, November 25, 2024

Attendance: 71 (4 performances)

SeamTogether aimed to create connections to our clothing and spark ideas of how to transform garments or fix them to give them new life.





ST THOMAS MORE CONCERT

Date: Monday, November 25, 2024

Attendance: 200

MUNGANGGA GARLAGULA

Date: Wednesday, November 27, 2024

Attendance: 185

A collaboration in music, sound and story by legendary Indigenous performer Mark Atkins and renowned Australian/Finnish composer and performer Erkki Veltheim. Intimate and epic, playful and piercing, Mungangga Garlagula was an evening of rich story telling and virtuosic didjeridu that restored the experience of listening with the whole body.

RISE UP

Date: November 30 & December 1, 2024

Attendance: 750

Tutu Dance Company performers showcased their talent across two end-of-year dance showcases.

MAGIC MOMENTS

Date: Sunday, December 1, 2024

Attendance: 264

Back for their fourth year, the region's leading dance school Tutu Dance Company presented their Tiny Dancer showcase.

BOP WITH BONZO

Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Attendance: 79

A colourful live show for the little ones, full of fun characters and catchy sing-alongs.

AUGUSTA SUNDOWNER

Date: Sunday, January 19, 2025

Artists: Boodji Creek and River Bugs

Venue: Augusta Hotel

Attendance: 400

The Sundowners support local musicians and enable Arts Margaret River to give back to our community, and for the community to be exposed to differing music styles.

HANGING BY A THREAD

Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Attendance: 122

Di Filippo Marionette was created in 2012 by Italian Remo Di Filippo. They have toured extensively in Europe and have won 10 international awards. They performed three puppet shows where each character had their own story told through movement, music, singing and interaction with the actors-puppeteers.

THE 60 FOUR

Date: Thursday, January 30, 2025

Attendance: 311

Hailed as "Australia's leading tribute act," The 60 Four delivered an unforgettable experience, recreating the biggest hits of the '60s and '70s in a spectacular, Vegas-style production.



SUNDOWNERS IN COWARAMUP

Dates: February 9, 16 & 23

Artists: Hey Ramona, Freeway South, Wil Thomas & Dave Mann, Tanya Ransom & Band, Tri Muso, Chris Hawker & Friends

Venue: Pioneer Park, Cowaramup

Attendance: 900

The Sundowners support local musicians and enable Arts Margaret River to give back to our community, and for the community to be exposed to differing music styles.

THE LIGHTHOUSE GIRL SAGA

Date: Saturday, February 15, 2025

Attendance: 321

A sweeping story of ordinary people living in extraordinary times: a tale of courage, resilience, hope and love.

ROSS NOBLE

Date: Sunday, February 16, 2025

Attendance: 431

Ross Noble staged his eclectic show, Cranium of Curiosities, to a packed house.

SUM OF THE PARTS

Date: Friday, February 21, 2025

Attendance: 327

An exciting audio-visual performance where Tony Lane led a creative team for this brave new work.

MARRI TREE GIRL

Date: March 14 & 15, 2025

Attendance: 1029

A magical new work featuring stunning puppets and digital animation, by Margaret River's very own, Folk of the Puppetree. This enchanting ecological sci-fi, weaves worlds of science, music and characters inspired by the South West, to explore connection, care and local Marri Trees.

YOU ARE NOT A DOUGHNUT

Date: Friday, April 11, 2025

Attendance: 105

We joined biology teachers Oesoph A. Gus and Dewey Dean as they embarked upon an utterly brilliant all singing, all-dancing (and all-clowning!) exploration of every twisting tube and remarkable organ – with sketches, songs, and sensational science.

A LITTLE BIT OF BLUE

Date: Thursday, April 17, 2025

Attendance: 247

An Interactive Detective Story, told with Puppetry, Where the kids helped solve the case!

PUPPETRY OF PAPER

Date: Thursday, April 17, 2025

Attendance: 22

This workshop was based on Bunraku-style puppetry, a traditional Japanese form of theatre which involves multiple puppeteers working closely together to operate one puppet.

DOROTHY THE DINOSAUR SPECTACULAR SHOW

Date: Sunday, April 27, 2025

Attendance: 419

Hands were clapping and toes tapping with Dorothy's mega mix of dance hits!

MOMENTS FROM LARAMIE

Date: May 13 & 14, 2025

Attendance: 234

The Laramie Project, a play by Moisés Kaufman and The Members of The Tectonic Theatre Project, speaks powerfully to us of the tragic murder of Matthew Shepard in October 1998, shows us a community's value system that gave rise to his murder and then the subsequent compassion later demonstrated to ward against such a heinous act in the future.

TWO THREAD

Date: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Attendance: 120

A contemporary dance performance co-choreographed and performed by Danni and Karlia Cook.

MOZART BY CANDLELIGHT

Date: Saturday, May 24, 2025

Attendance: 120

A magical evening of Chamber Music was presented by the Philharmonic South West Orchestra.

KWABBA KOORNT

Date: Sunday, May 25, 2025

Attendance: 200

A free, family-friendly event featuring cultural activities, yarnning circles, weaving, ochre face painting, and a collaborative community land art installation.

SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE – PIG THE PUG

Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2025

Attendance: 42

Puppet Playtime, featuring the book "Pig the Pug" by Aaron Blabey. Designed for children aged 3-5 years.



MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL ROADSHOW

Date: Friday, May 30, 2025

Attendance: 412

Bringing together the brightest stars from the 2025 Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

CARNIVAL PARADE – CELEBRATE THE RAINS

Date: Saturday, May 31, 2025

Attendance: 200

Margaret River danced in the streets to celebrate the season of the rains, and dance life back to country after the long dry.

NATURAL WINGS – STILT DANCING WORKSHOP & PERFORMANCES

Date: June 3-6, 2025

Attendance: 29

Stilt dancing workshops, among other aerial and circus arts performances. Elegant dancers who engaged with crowds using skilled choreography and captivating costumes.

MARGARET RIVER REGION'S GOT TALENT – AUDITIONS

Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025

Attendance: 205

Margaret River Region's got so much talent it was hard for a panel of industry judges to decide who to choose to go through to the finals.

OLIVER! THE MUSICAL

Date: June 20, 21, 27 & 28, 2025

Attendance: 1658

The Margaret River Theatre Group proudly presented Oliver!, the acclaimed musical by Lionel Bart, based on Charles Dickens' timeless novel.





CINEMA SCREENINGS

Arts Margaret River's Cinema Program continues to thrive, with 67 screenings throughout the year attracting 8,341 patrons. Our programming once again delivered a diverse mix of blockbusters, documentaries, family favourites, and special events, ensuring there was something for every member of our community.

School Holiday Cinema proved exceptionally popular, with 22 screenings drawing 3,741 attendees. Standout family films such as *Moana 2* and *Paddington in Peru* drew large crowds and reinforced the program's reputation as a reliable highlight for families during the holiday period.

Among the year's biggest events was *The Surfer* starring Nicolas Cage and filmed in Yallingup, which attracted more than 400 patrons at a sold-out fundraiser for Creative Corner. Other strong performers included the much-anticipated *A Complete Unknown* (Bob Dylan biopic), the spellbinding musical fantasy *Wicked*, and the inspiring documentary *Women & The Wind*.

The Cheap Tuesday and Doco Club initiatives continue to prove popular, providing affordable mid-week entertainment and thought-provoking content. Highlights included *No Other Land* (winner of the Academy Award for Best Documentary) and *Anora* (winner of the Best Picture Oscar), both of which drew excellent audiences. These screenings have established themselves as a cornerstone of the program, offering both accessibility and depth.

Audiences also enjoyed exclusive access to special event screenings that were unavailable elsewhere in the South West. Highlights included *Pink Floyd: Live at Pompeii*, *Becoming Led Zeppelin*, and National Theatre Live's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. These events further demonstrated the program's commitment to bringing unique cultural experiences to the community.

Importantly, the cinema program continued to provide a platform for fundraising screenings that directly benefit local organisations. Films shown in partnership with community groups included *The Surfer* (Creative Corner), *The Wedding Banquet* (Margi Pride), *Mighty Ducks* (Roller Derby National Team), *Women & The Wind* (Line In The Sand), *Seen* and *Embrace Kids* (Mindful Margaret River), and *Thelma* (Rotary). These events not only attracted strong attendance but also generated meaningful support for local initiatives.

Overall, the 2024/25 Cinema Program has been a great success, with record attendance at school holiday sessions, popular blockbusters, and unique special event screenings that enriched the cultural life of our region. We look forward to building on this momentum in 2025/26 with more exciting films, new initiatives, and continued opportunities for community fundraising through cinema.



Number of Screenings

67

Total Number of Patrons

8,341

School Holiday Patrons

3,741

DESPICABLE ME 4 (FUNDRAISER FOR RIVER ANGELS)

Date: Friday, July 19, 2024

Attendance: 290

PRISCILLA: QUEEN OF THE DESERT (FUNDRAISER FOR MARGIE PRIDE)

Date: Saturday, August 3, 2024

Attendance: 83

THELMA (FUNDRAISER FOR ROTARY MARGARET RIVER)

Date: Thursday, November 7, 2024

Attendance: 187

MIGHTY DUCKS (FUNDRAISER FOR MARGARET RIVER ROLLER SPORTS)

Date: Friday, January 31, 2025

Attendance: 58

FLY FROM EVEREST (FUNDRAISER FOR ROTARY MARGARET RIVER)

Date: Sunday, March 30, 2025

Attendance: 27

WOMEN AND THE WIND (FUNDRAISER FOR LINE IN THE SAND)

Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Attendance: 291

THE SURFER (FUNDRAISER FOR CREATIVE CORNER)

Date: Thursday, May 22, 2025

Attendance: 419

THE WEDDING BANQUET (FUNDRAISER FOR MARGIE PRIDE)

Date: Saturday, June 14, 2025

Attendance: 71

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community is at the core of what we do and we feel that the community is our employer as we here to serve. Two *Welcome to Margaret River* events were held during the year to welcome newcomers to town. This free and informal morning tea event provided an opportunity for people to meet and to find out about Arts Margaret River and other community organisations. A number of attendees signed up as ArtsMR members and/or volunteers at the end of the event.

ArtsMR supported a variety of community groups by providing low cost venue use and technical support for their events and workshops. Marketing and promotional support was provided via our in-house monitors, social media and EDMs.

Schools that attended live theatre productions were provided with reduced ticket prices, free in-school workshop opportunities and teacher resources for the shows.

A variety of low cost workshops and matinee movies were held during the school holidays to appeal to different age groups.

Four free Sunday Sundowner Concerts were held in February – one in Augusta and three in Cowaramup. These family friendly concerts are highly anticipated each year with up to 700 people attending each Sunday.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

- Andrea Manners
- Barking Gecko
- Bec Schofield
- Cape Naturaliste College
- Cape to Cape MTB
- CinefestOZ
- Concrete Club
- Emily Green

- Creative Corner
- Jacqui Brown
- Josh Yates
- Just Home Margaret River
- Kids' Art Workshops with Bernadette
- Kids' Club Before and After School Care
- Make Music Day
- Margaret River Independent School
- Margaret River Senior High School
- Margaret River Theatre Group
- Margaret River Wine Show
- Maureen Munro
- Mindful Margaret River
- Miranda Plum
- Motiv8ting Boys
- National Roads Congress
- Nature Conservation
- Perth Festival
- Reconciliation WA
- Savage Angels
- Sky River
- Susan Richardson
- The Little Press
- Regional Arts WA
- Rotary Margaret River
- St Thomas More Catholic Church
- TADWA
- University of the Third Age Margaret River
- WA Country Health Service
- WA State Emergency Service (SES)
- Yarning Workshops



TOURING SHOWS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Barking Gecko
- The Seamstresses
- Bop with Bonzo
- Erth Visual & Physical Inc
- Little Wing Puppet
- Spare Parts Puppet Playtime

SHIRE OF AUGUSTA MARGARET RIVER

EVENT SUPPORT

- Seniors Week movie screening
- Festival of Our Age Expo
- Community Services Roundtable
- The Seasonal Kitchen Cooking Classes
- Shire Directorates Meeting
- Recreation Centre Before & After School Studio Use
- Recreation Centre School Holiday Kitchen & Toilets use

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

- Sari Bennett
- Marri Tree Girl
- Two Thread Dance
- Natural Wings

YOUNG @ HEART

Arts Margaret River continues 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.

Most Mondays (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.





ART EXHIBITIONS

ARTSMR 50TH BIRTHDAY EXHIBITION

Date: Wednesday, July 10 – Monday, August 5, 2024

As part of our birthday celebrations, we hosted a 50th Birthday Exhibition in July.

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION TALK – CASSIE SULLIVAN

Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024

Attendance: 20

We hosted an artist meetup together with visiting artist Cassie Sullivan.

PRIMORDIAL DISCLOSURES XIV – CINEFESTOZ

Date: Thursday, August 8 – Friday, 6 September 2024

Primordial Disclosures XIV, 2024 presents selected works from digital media artist and academic Danny Jennings, PhD.

FAIRY QUEEN – SUSIE VICKERY & AMBER LAUNAY (INDIAN OCEAN CRAFT TRIENNIAL AUSTRALIA)

Date: Friday, September 13 – Friday, October 4, 2024

An exhibition of costumes made for Denmark Baroque's production of the Fairy Queen showing the process of making through drawings, photographs and samples along with finished costumes and films.

BOWLS FOR SOUPE FUNDRAISING EXHIBITION

Date: Thursday, October 3 – Thursday, October 23, 2024

Each bowl sold helped fill the bowls of others in our community and facilitate the ongoing provision of essential community services.

MRIS 19TH ANNUAL ART AUCTION

Date: Saturday, November 2, 2024

Attendance: 296

Celebrating the region's amazing prominent and emerging artists, the Art Auction is a major fundraiser for the Margaret River Independent School.

CREATING IDENTITY – MRSHS STUDENTS

Date: Wednesday, November 6 – Thursday, November 21, 2024

This event highlighted the talent within our community and provides the ability for others to aspire or continue to explore one's own creativity.

SHAPED FROM THE EARTH – MARGARET RIVER SCULPTURE ASSOCIATION

Date: Wednesday, November 27 – Monday, December 16, 2024

The ten sculptors who form part of Margaret River's Fragments Association are from diverse backgrounds and all love to work in sculpture as a medium to express life's experience.

CAPES CULTURAL CANVAS

Date: Friday, November 29 – Friday, December 13, 2024

An engaging hands-on cross curricula project delivered by Nature Conservation Margaret River.



BUSH TRAILS – DEANNE HADDOW & ELEANOR DAVIES

Date: Wednesday, January 8 – Thursday, January 30, 2025
Dea Haddow and Eleanor Davies both share a fascination with their natural environment; inviting the viewer to join them on an abstract tour of the place they live.

BETWEEN THE CAPES – SHELLEY MCNAB, JACQUI BROWN, JAMIE ROPER

Date: Wednesday, February 5 – Tuesday, February 18, 2025
A deep dive into our beautiful coastal landscape.

TO MARGARET RIVER WITH LOVE

Date: February 7 – Monday, March 17, 2025
A photographic essay by Bryan Timmons.

STORIES THAT QUILTS TELL... HAVE YOU EVER STOPPED TO LISTEN? – MAUREEN MUNRO & QUILTING COMMUNITY

Date: Friday, March 21 – Tuesday, April 15, 2025
For millennia, people have gathered to create; weaving, sewing and painting everyday objects while sharing stories and supporting each other and their communities.

VISUAL STORIES

Date: April 24 – May 30, 2025
Artists were invited to submit works that communicate and showcase the power of storytelling and the unique sense of place that is Wadandi Boodja through their chosen medium.

NATURE'S WINDOW – SASHA CAMERON

Date: Friday, June 6 – Thursday, June 26, 2025
Sasha Cameron is a young local emerging artist with a passion for the natural world.

AUSTRALIA WIDE NINE

Date: Thursday, June 12 – Friday, July 11, 2025
A touring exhibition showcasing the textile artwork of Ozquilt Network members from across Australia and overseas.

RADICAL FUTURES: GATHERING GROUND

Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025
Attendance: 18
In a world increasingly defined by displacement, division, and disconnection, the question of belonging has never been more urgent.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

HOT DESKING

- Office space facilitated for Creative Corner.

VOLUNTEERS REPORT

Active Volunteers

149

New Volunteers

44

Total Volunteer Hours

4,000+



As we reflect on another successful year, one thing is clear: our Volunteers remain the heart and soul of Arts Margaret River. Their generosity not only makes our events possible but also fosters a strong, supportive community we are proud to be part of. Thank you to every Volunteer—you truly make all the difference.

This year, Arts Margaret River was fortunate to be supported by 149 active Volunteers who together contributed an impressive 4,017.25 hours of service. Their time, energy, and passion have been vital in ensuring the success of our events and programs, and we are deeply grateful for everything they give.

We welcomed 44 new Volunteers into our program, with 31 already stepping into active roles across a variety of events. We support our volunteers with opportunity to develop new skills and qualifications. The strength of our

Volunteer community continues to shine, with 21 individuals contributing more than 50 hours of service, and three exceptional Volunteers each contributing over 100 hours. Their dedication forms the backbone of Arts Margaret River and contributes to broader community connections.

Beyond their contributions at events, our Volunteers also came together to celebrate. Our Christmas Party and the post-Readers & Writers Festival celebrations were highlights, offering time to connect, unwind, and recognise the collective efforts that make such a difference to our organisation.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we plan to expand our support and appreciation of Volunteers with dedicated evening and weekend training and refresher sessions, alongside more regular social gatherings and thank-you events. These initiatives will help ensure our Volunteers feel valued, connected, and confident in their roles.

MARKETING REPORT

Facebook Followers

6.3k

↗ 21%

Facebook Reach¹

515k

↗ 52.7%

Instagram Followers

3.7k

↗ 43%

eNewsletter Subscribers²

9.2k

↗ 16%

In 2024/2025, Arts Margaret River placed a strong emphasis on consolidating and strengthening our marketing platforms to ensure a more consistent and recognisable presence across all channels.

We streamlined messaging, design and scheduling to further expand our digital footprint, and developed more targeted campaigns to better connect with our diverse regional audiences.

Alongside this consolidation, we also introduced new initiatives to broaden our reach, including television commercials and posters at Busselton Airport to capture the attention of both visitors and locals travelling through the region.

These initiatives highlighted the richness of our program and the unique cultural experiences available in Margaret River.

We added digital screens to the front windows of Nala Bardip Mia to both reduce production costs and our ecological footprint.

By balancing platform consolidation with sustainable promotional activities, we were able to increase visibility, deepen community engagement, and encourage greater attendance across our events, reinforcing our role as a key cultural provider in the region and strengthening our connection with audiences near and far.

¹ Totals include organic and paid.

² Total subscribers include Arts Margaret River, MRRWFestival and Young@HEART.





CONTACT

08 9780 5294

info@artsmargaretriver.com

Nala Bardip Mia – Margaret River HEART

47 Wallcliffe Road, Margaret River WA 6285

www.artsmargaretriver.com

