





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

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

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

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Above: Image by HIT Productions
Cover: Image by Jon Green



WHO WE ARE

Arts Margaret River is a not-for-profit community organisation delivering cultural and artistic programs for the people of the Margaret River region.

“Whether it is health, education, economy, or faith, the arts improve our communities and our lives, and they lend themselves to practical, solution-oriented philosophies to bind us socially and improve the world in which we live.”

ROBERT L. LYNCH

As the major arts umbrella organisation in the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River for more than four decades we aim to involve all members of the community in all forms of the arts.

Based in the South West Boojarah region in Noongar booja (country). Noongar have lived in this part of booja since the Nyittiny – creation times and we share in over 75,000 years of living culture and knowledge of the country on which we now create new stories and art.

Arts Margaret River is an essential service for our rural community; and plays a key role in helping to connect, support and elevate the arts regionally, nationally and internationally. We advocate for our artists and community and create a space where people can come together from all walks of life and share in the positive effects that the arts has.

Our aim is achieved through a variety of programs: music of all forms, theatre and dance performances, visual art exhibitions and events, workshops, community celebrations such as free outdoor concerts and activities. Our premier event – the Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival – is the largest regional event of its kind in WA.

Above: Performing Lines



WHY WE EXIST

Arts Margaret River was established, and still exists, to improve the quality of life of people in the Margaret River region through the provision of cultural and artistic programs.

Our Constitution cites our purpose as being to:

1. act as co-ordinating agency and as spokesperson for the performing and fine arts of Margaret River and surrounding districts and for those organisations engaged in extending cultural appreciation, through the presentation of performing and fine arts;
2. promote and develop public interest and family participation in performing and fine arts;
3. work in close collaboration and liaison with all bodies interested in the presentation of performing and fine arts; and to
4. encourage the provision of facilities for all kinds of artistic expression and the study and appreciation of artistic expression in all forms.

The positive impacts and benefits of arts and culture are well documented. Social benefits in the community are generated through participation or attendance at artistic and cultural activities. They encompass different impact domains (economic, social, civic, cultural and environmental).² Our purpose recognises these benefits.

When people interact with artistic activities, they have experiences, thoughts and feelings such as increased self-belief, self-empowerment, sense of belonging and other outcomes that contribute to the improved social wellbeing of a person.

These interactions provide are important elements of community well-being, as recognised by the State Government of WA, which assessed that “for every dollar of funding provided by the department to funded organisations, there is approximately \$5 of social ... benefit in the broader community”³.

² Cultural Development Network – www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/outcomes (<http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/outcomes>)

³ Social Impacts of Culture and the Arts WA, 2019 Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Above: Readers and Writers Festival. Image by Michelle Troop



WHAT WE STAND FOR (OUR VALUES)

Excellence

We pursue excellence in all aspects of delivering our creative program.

Engagement

We are deeply committed to overcoming barriers of distance and equity in connecting people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in the creative arts.

Creativity

We foster creative freshness and innovation through our partnerships and collaborations.

Sustainability

We prioritise ethical and responsible management of our environment and financial resources.

“Ocean film festival was fantastic made me feel so inspired, well done to all.”

Above: Howling Onshore.
Image by Tony Warrilow



WHAT WE DO

We bring artistic programs to our community to promote cultural, social, economic, environmental and civic benefits for all people in the Margaret River and surrounding regions.

We do this in three ways, as:

1. **Presenter** of artistic programs;
2. **Creator** of artistic programs and events; and
3. **Supporter** of other arts related organisations in our region.

We refer to these as our three strategic pillars, aimed to leverage our resources for maximum community benefit.

“Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival (MRRWF) is pleased to announce the Governor of Western Australia, the Honourable Kim Beazley AC as the new patron of the annual literary festival which is set to take place again from 15-17 May next year.”

Above: Birdhouse Workshop



Sundowner crowd. Image by Tony Warrilow

OUR FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Arts Margaret River has for the past 46 years proven itself to be a resilient and well-managed organisation in the financially challenging arts sector.

Strong financial controls since 2014 enabled a build-up of reserves to provide financial stability. Our current reserves are \$102,660, with additional working capital of around \$143,844.

With the impact of both Covid-19 and significant changes in operations, 2020 was a year of refocus and new directions. Although event activity was constrained, we reduced overhead and maintained our operations with the support of JobKeeper and other government support.

The year saw a small Operating Profit of \$27,616 on Total Revenue of \$407,749. This is well down from previous years when we had the management contract for the Margaret River Cultural Centre (which has now been replaced by the new Margaret River HEART building, managed by the Shire of Augusta Margaret River).

Our Operational Overheads in 2020 were \$317,847 (or \$26,487 monthly). The small number of events we did manage to present made a loss of \$32,278 before grant funding.

In 2021 we are shifting from Calendar Year financial reporting to the more common July to June Financial Year reporting, to allow better integration with various funding body reporting requirements. This had been planned for 2020 but was delayed due to the uncertainty surrounding that year. For this reason, we have only budgeted for the

January to June period, with full year budgets to be prepared in mid 2021. Our expectation is that revenues in 2021 will be around the \$500,000 mark, and our objective is to increase this annually.

Our small, but essential pool of equipment allows us the flexibility required to stage events at a range of alternative venues as well as being able to provide assistance to other local arts organisations within our region. These Fixed Assets have a written down (depreciated) value of \$19,247.

We have no loans and our Net Current Assets are \$198,391.

To date the following organisations have provided either consecutive annual funding or two to three year funding.

- Shire of Augusta-Margaret River
- LotteryWest
- Regional Arts Fund

In addition, various sponsors, volunteers and Friends and Members of Arts Margaret River support us. As a hugely volunteer run organisation, we feel we are already achieving far beyond our limited funding.

In 2020 our memberships and fund-raising/sponsorships contributed \$19,620 cash to our operations, and our volunteers contributed 727 hours of their time to support our activities. At a value of \$40 per hour, this equates to an additional \$29,080.

Below: Winners of Visual Stories Competition. Image by Christa Walsh

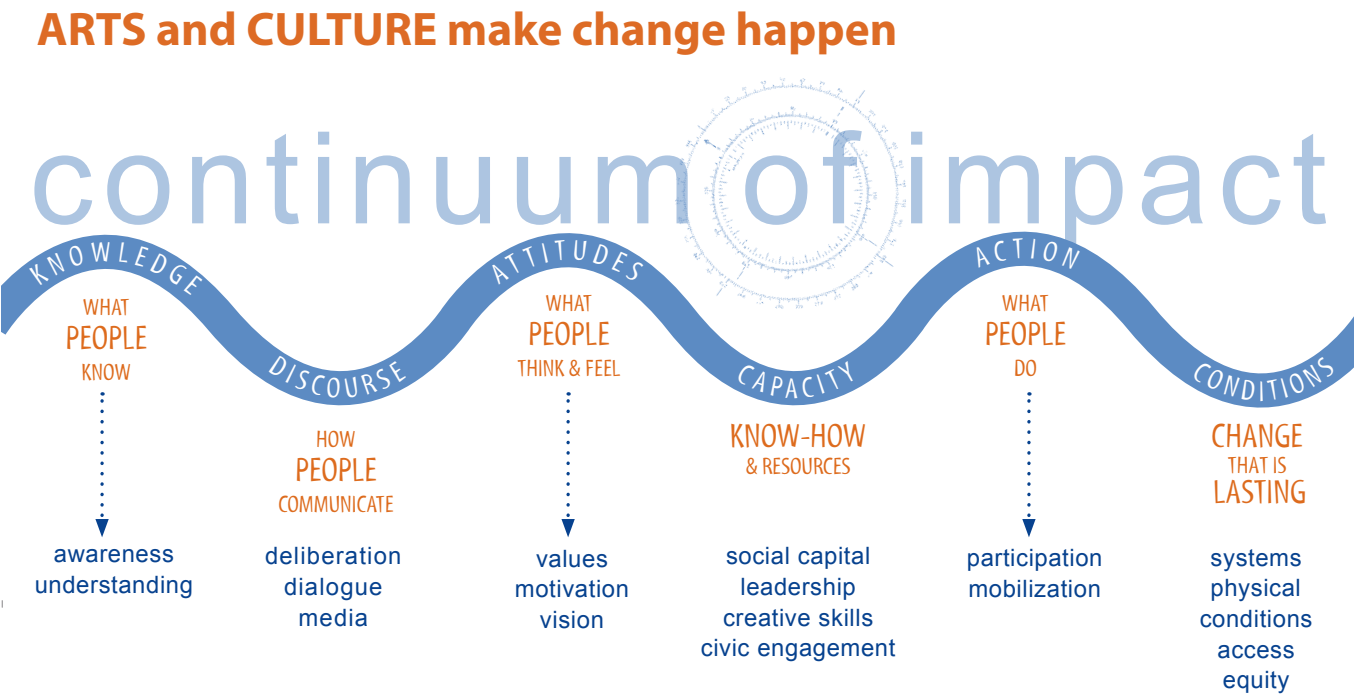


OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & FUTURE DIRECTION

In pursuit of our purpose of bringing a range of cultural and artistic events to the people of the Margaret River region, and to promote the arts, we have defined three distinct operational functions:

- 1. **Presenter;**
- 2. **Creator;** and
- 3. **Supporter.**

We refer to these as our **Three Strategic Pillars**. In each of these we have defined our objective and achievement goals.



STRATEGIC PILLAR #1 – PRESENTER

This is our primary role. It is to provide our community with access to a wide range of artistic experiences.

To do this we act as a conduit for both local and touring arts events. This involves selecting suitable events, negotiating performance contracts, venue hire and arranging all the necessary logistics associated with presenting them to our community.

Objective & Goals

Our objective goals in our role as Presenter is to maximise community benefit and inclusion.

We will do this through three strategies:

1. Providing a diversity of offerings;
2. Encouraging participation in the arts; and
3. Utilising a range of venues.

1. Providing a Diversity of Offerings

We select programs or pieces which stimulate and engage people in our community – a program of events and activities that are original, innovative and which connect to different community segments.

To promote diversity we will:

- Remain focussed on pieces that both captivate and challenge our audiences, are currently relevant or resonate locally;
- Source quality programs of a high standard that contribute positively to our local culture;
- Promote non-commercial offerings that would not otherwise be available to our community; and
- Seek to both expand horizons and to make sure that there is “something for everyone”.

Diversity Targets:

By 2024, we aim to increase the number of people attending our events to 5,000+. In 2021 we have 13 events scheduled, covering a variety of topics and with an expected total audience of over 4,000. We look to build both the number of offerings we can bring to our community and increase the number of people positively impacted by these.

2. Encouraging Participation in the Arts

We support activities which promote both audience and artist involvement.

We have a particular focus on under-represented populations including youth, lower income earners, the elderly, people with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI).

To encourage wider participation, we will:

- Offer complimentary tickets to key disadvantaged groups including Just Home clients, Aged Care Residents, Youth Mental Health groups, and Indigenous Youth;
- Establish benchmarks for audience participation, including specific community sectors, in order to evaluate effectiveness in future years;
- Design and implement initiatives to overcome barriers to participation, such as time, costs, access, lack of awareness;
- Make it easier to find and book tickets; and
- Ensure everybody has access to Art lead events and performances

Participation Targets:

By 2024 we are recognised as a key community contributor to the wellbeing of our under-represented populations.

In 2021 we aim to develop strategic alignments with other Not-for-Profit groups within our region, with the aim of enhancing social cohesion.

3. Utilising a Range of Venues

We will utilise a range of venues to ensure everyone in our community has access to arts-led events and performances.

To provide a wider range of events and allow for increased community involvement, we will:

- Increase the use of multi-purpose or non-traditional facilities such as community or school halls, recreation centres, outdoor soundshells and the natural environment;
- Invest in or upgrade and maintain sufficient technical equipment to enable cost-effective utilisation of alternative venues;
- Compile a comprehensive venue listing of alternate venues, with details of capacity, availability, typical costs, contact details, event suitability;
- Be proactive in establishing and maintaining positive relations with venue owners or managers.

Multiple Venues Target:

By 2024 we will have developed and tested an extensive list of venues so we will be able to remain agile and deliver engaging site-specific performances. In 2020 we developed a working document for all the potential venues and spaces available to us within the region for artistic events and will continue to build on this to ensure it is a living document.

STRATEGIC PILLAR #2 – CREATOR

We believe we have a role within our community to create works that are representative of our community, and that we provide economic opportunities for our broader business community.

We strive to create events that will not only engage our community, but also create interest from intrastate and interstate tourism. We already create a number of our own events – most notable among them being the biggest regional annual Readers and Writers Festival, which has become recognised as a nationally important event; and our Summer Cowaramup Sundowners that have been running for 19 years.

Objective & Goals

Our objective in our role as a Creator of events is to provide locally driven events that meet the needs of our local community beyond the event itself. Our intent is to provide a wider arts base in Margaret River and to generate additional fund-raising opportunities to reduce our reliance on grant funding.

We will do this through three strategies:

1. Expand on existing events;
2. Create an annual fundraising event; and
3. Develop our on-line presence and content library.

1. Expand on the success of existing events through associated programs

To do this we will:

- Develop smaller, self-identifiable and independent ancillary events such as the Fringe Festival is to the Perth Festival. An example is the concept of Story Shorts or Junior Writers aligned to our successful Readers & Writers Festival.
- Expand the Cowaramup Sundowners to locations at Margaret River or Augusta at non-competing times.

Event Expansion Targets

By 2024 we will have added an additional festival event and increased our Summer Sundowners range.

2. Create annual fundraising events

This will follow the successful Secret Garden event of February 2021.

By 2024 we will have established an annual fundraising event.

3. Develop our content library

To increase our contents library we will:

- Develop our on-line presence and material catalogue to extend our reach state-wide and nationally;
- Negotiate with artists for reproduction licences.

By 2024 we will have created an on-line presence with a catalogue of content available.

STRATEGIC PILLAR #3 – SUPPORTER

As the leading Arts organisation in the region, we are pivotal in providing a range of supports to local and regional arts organisations.

We believe that by directly supporting our community and developing opportunities for engagement and education in the Arts will foster pride and increase our access to additional performances and increased audience satisfaction & inclusion.

Objective & Goals

Our objective as a Supporter of the arts is to build capacity and capability to deliver inclusive and relevant arts offerings to an expanded and diverse audience as a priority for our community. We aim to increase the capability of the local Arts community, and allow it be more responsive to emerging trends and challenges.

We will do this through believe in fostering a sense of ownership and creative community that minimises any estrangement from the arts as a sector.

We will do this through three strategies:

- 1. Partnerships and co-production with others;
- 2. Provision of assistance to other local arts organisations;
- 3. Employment of local artists at various events.

1. Partnerships & co-productions

We will work with other arts related or delivery partners to promote the arts in our region:

- Develop Partnerships with others and encourage further investment in the Arts to foster artistic development and community engagement, built on a clear understanding of our community and audience.
- Build relationships with new delivery partners and delivering programs through partnerships across our community e.g. Just Home, Wadandi, MR NDIS, MR YAC (Youth Access Services).
- Work with local schools to provide suitable programs and encourage younger people to be arts aware or arts active.
- Leverage investment in Arts lead events to create more health, social and economic outcomes.
- Generate opportunities for experimental or emerging works (and artists) to be developed and presented through our program and partnerships.

By 2024 we will have entered into a number of partnership agreements and established benchmarks by which we can measure our success.

2. Assistance to Others

We will provide support to other arts related organisations:

- Provide support, feedback and ideas to build capabilities across our community and grow arts participation.
- Provide technical and/or equipment assistance to local groups to reduce the staging costs.
- Increase recognition of Arts lead events and performances as an important contributor to our community's priorities.

By 2024 we will have developed reporting protocols to demonstrate our successful provision of assistance to others.

3. Employment of Local Artists

We will:

- Create employment opportunities for local artists through our own productions to help sustain regionally-based practitioners; and
- Developing opportunities for Artists to support key priorities in education, health, inclusion and social outcomes.

By 2024 we will have developed reporting protocols to demonstrate our successful provision of assistance to others.

Our Supporter Targets:

By 2024 we aim to affirm our position as a recognised regional Arts supporter. We will encourage and support sustainable economic, social, and cultural development in our regional community via continuing to develop partnerships, creating supportive networks, strengthening existing partnerships and encouraging collaboration with the numerous organisations with the region. We will monitor and evaluate our performance on an ongoing basis to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.

PLAN ON A PAGE





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