

# ARTS MARGARET RIVER 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Excellence, Engagement,  
Creativity and Sustainability





## ARTS MARGARET RIVER 2021 (6 MONTHS TO JUNE) IN REVIEW

Arts Margaret River is a not-for-profit cultural community organisation. 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 Nyittingy – 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 a vital lifeline for our community, and is the heart of our artistic community, 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 including free outdoor concerts and activities and the largest regional Readers and Writers Festival in WA.

### **Management Team**

Our office staff includes Michelle Wright (General Manager), Stephanie Kreutzer (Marketing/events), Trevor Brannan (Finance & Administration) and Sian Baker (Readers & Writers Festival Director). A large, dedicated number of volunteers also assist with many tasks.

### **The Board of Management**

The Board of Management steers the not-for-profit business of Arts Margaret River. Its volunteer members are elected for terms of two years at Annual General Meetings held each year. The current Board of Management comprises eight members including a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

The key task of the Board is to ensure there are adequate financial and other resources needed to sustain Arts Margaret River's programs. This involves employing our small professional staff, careful control of all our expenditure, income and community relationships. It also involves overseeing our compliance with the Licence Contract between the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and Arts Margaret River (see below), and with the legal requirements of the State's Department of Commerce and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission.

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## **FOR SIX MONTHS TO JUNE 2021**

Although the last six months have continued to be difficult, we have in many ways been fortunate. We presented a strong program from January through to June, with attendances of 12,413.

Over the full financial year, Arts Margaret River events accounted for 29% of all audiences visiting the Margaret River HEART.

We held eleven events, despite the difficulties of Covid related program and schedule changes.

We have completed the move to financial year reporting (July to June). This better aligns us with funding bodies and government agencies. It requires a change to our Constitution, and we have taken the opportunity to review it for your consideration.

Our external visioning is now stronger. New Branding was implemented for Arts Margaret River and the Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival which included logos and upgraded websites to improve our messaging. We are no longer "venue manager" at the old cultural centre and are building our role as an independent, community focussed arts organisation.

A new ticketing system was installed which required integration, data transfer and staff training. It was fully operational in time for the Readers & Writers Festival and provides us with greater flexibility and improved functions.

Our purpose is to support and nurture the work of artists across all disciplines, and to foster a love of the arts within our community.

We are active in three key roles – as a Presenter, a Creator and Supporter of the arts.

### **PRESENTER**

As Presenter we act as event Promoter –bringing national touring acts to Margaret River. Our focus is on diversity and to cater to all ages and interests. The shows we present range from entertainment such as the Melbourne Comedy Festival and Pete The Sheep to high profile Cultural events such as Opera Australia's Carmen to community-focussed insightful theatre such as Grace Under Pressure and Follow Me Home.

What we don't do is compete with the local music venues or bring shows to "keep the venue booked".

Our focus is on strengthening our community through exposure to the arts. Engaging all parts of our community by presenting challenging and impactful shows is important.

### **CREATOR**

We have for many years been a successful Creator of events. Established examples include the Readers & Writers Festival and Arts Margaret River Sundowners in Cowaramup. This year we had two extra fund-raising events - Secret Garden Soiree and Take A Seat Exhibition.

These events provide employment and exposure for local artists, musicians, caterers and others. They also promote and foster the arts in our community and provide opportunities for engaging with our volunteers.

Expanding our creative role is a priority for us. As an example, the next Readers & Writers Festival will be larger and include a Fringe Festival.

The Secret Garden Soiree event in January was well received. It was our most successful fund-raising activity with \$17,921 raised. This format will now be an annual event. We aim to grow the art auction as a destination event on the annual calendar for people from Perth as well as locals. The commercial success of Open Studios demonstrates demand for this type of activity.

We will be asking you all to help promote this event through your networks. The Art -in-the Garden 2022 event will be held at Tanah Merah in late January.

## **SUPPORTER**

We assist local artists in many ways. One is by direct employment and exposure through the events we create.

We have also started to act in a producer role as a fee-for-service. This provides another source of income, and our skills help other organisations.

An example was our role as co-ordinator for the Cape Care Art Acquisition process in April. Other producer roles are also in the pipeline.

We now also provide an auspicing service for smaller organisations to assist in grant management. This is only a small activity at the moment but has potential to expand and become another small income stream for us.

We are pursuing partnerships and collaborations across a wide number of fronts. These have the potential to provide opportunities across all three strategic directions.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Our short-term financial position benefited from generous financial aid from the Federal Government. This allowed us to book a surplus of \$61,082. Unfortunately our cash funds reduced by \$26,904.

This includes the reclassification of a \$40,000 Program Fund from the Shire of Augusta Margaret River. Shifting this from a liability to the income account resulted a "book profit" of \$40,000. It improves our Balance Sheet and is consistent with Shire minutes when the funds were granted.

The timing of some funding payments also helped improve the half-year results. With the end of JobKeeper support our financial position is less certain in the future. Fund-raising activity is a focal point.

A shifting grants landscape sees more organisations competing for limited funds. The nature of grants on offer is now focussed on community support and capacity building. Our strategic direction is consistent with this, and we remain confident of future success.

## **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

There have been a number of Board changes during the year, with three new Board members welcomed:

- Bu Wilson – appointed in January and ratified at the March AGM. Bu has recently resigned. I thank her for her service and commitment during the year;

- Eاون Smith – appointed in April, and assumed the role of Treasurer – and now seeking election;
- Heath Kelly – appointed in May and now seeking election.

Elizabeth Hogarth stepped down as Acting President following the AGM, and is now in the role of Vice President.

Kat Lombardo is not seeking re-election. Her contribution over the past two years has been significant and we are grateful for her input.

I thank all of our Board Members for their time, their passion and commitment. Our organisation is stronger for their generous contributions and suggestions.

## **MEMBERS**

As of June 30 2021 we had 274 members. By comparison at end December 2020, member numbers were 230. We are appreciative of the continued support of you, our members.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Over the six months to end June, 1,253 volunteer hours were recorded. However, we think that may be understated.

Without the support of our volunteers we would not be able to put on the number and variety of events, and I wish to thank all volunteers for their tremendous and continued support.

## **STAFF**

In June our long-standing Finance and Administration Manager, Kaye Campbell retired. Thank you Kaye for your long service and loyalty.

Trevor Brannan has stepped into the role and I welcome him.

Since stepping into the General Manager's role in October last year, Michelle Wright has been a powerhouse of enthusiasm and energy. We would not have achieved as much without her continued efforts.

Sian Baker had a remarkable first Readers & Writers Festival – with accolades ranging from the Shire President Ian Earl to visiting authors and associates.

The public appreciation and recognition is also highly dependant on the fantastic work of the tireless Stephanie Kreutzer - Marketing Manager.

This small team (3.2 FTE) achieves a remarkable amount with very little support, and I cannot thank them highly enough.

## **FUNDING BODIES**

Without the support of our various funding bodies we simply wouldn't exist. These include the Shire of Augusta Margaret River, LotteryWest, Tourism WA and Regional Arts WA, Margaret River Rotary and Cowaramup and Margaret River Lions. To all of our members, volunteers, staff, Board, funders and sponsors, I thank you all for your patronage, patience and perseverance.

David Shelton

President

# PERFORMING ARTS

## SUNDAY SUNDOWNERS—FREE COMMUNITY CONCERTS

**14 & 21 February**  
**Cowaramup, Pioneer Park**  
**Tickets:** Free community event  
**Audience:** Free event 1200 pax approx.  
**Event costs:** \$7500

Three Sundowners were scheduled but stormy conditions forced the cancellation of the first concert.

All musicians from the first event were paid in full as a show of our support.



**arts margaret river**  
**Sundowners**  
**PIONEER PARK, COWARAMUP.** Free family friendly concerts. Food/drinks from local community stalls & Zumba with fits at interval.

**SUNDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2021**  
**LUCY KOLLMAN:** 5PM - 5.15PM  
 Talented 11 year old singer, songwriter and musician.  
**WILD VIOLET:** 5.15PM - 6PM  
 An acoustic duo performing indie, folk, old school pop (e.g. Dork Day) and jazz covers.  
**THE MOODY COWS:** 6.15PM - 7PM  
 Performing as a 4 piece band and featuring beautifully crafted original songs, with gorgeous harmonies, guitar and double.

**SUNDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2021**  
**ROB & GRAEME:** 5PM - 5.45PM  
 Playing 50% Chicago blues to swing, funk and blues with Rob Bruce (sax harp) & Graeme Dickson (guitar/vocals/stomp).  
**RIVERBUGS:** 6PM - 7PM  
 Performing jazz swing & soul tunes from the 30's to the 60's with Scott Wise, Louise Marsh, Janine Andrews, Wv Booker & Gary Larlin. From Louis Armstrong & Ella Fitzgerald era to the sultry soul music of Etta James and Aretha Franklin.

**SUNDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2021**  
**CHARIS ENSEMBLE & KEVIN McDONALD:** 5 - 5.45PM  
 6-7 piece female a capella singing country, bluegrass, pop folk & gospel. Featuring 4 part harmonies, acoustic instruments, body percussion & drumming.  
**SUNBIRD THREE:** 6PM - 7PM  
 Dore Lawrence, Kay McDonald & Lee Cummings play blues, jazz, rock, swing, ska, latin funk, gospel, folk - guitar, keys, banjo. Put your dancing shoes on!

PROUDLY PRESENTED BY ARTS MARGARET RIVER WITH SUPPORT FROM THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES:

## PETE THE SHEEP

**Thursday 20 May, 6.30pm and**  
**Friday 21 May, 10am and 12.30pm**  
**Margaret River HEART**  
**Tickets:** \$7 to \$25  
**Paid Audience:** 634  
**Event Costs:** \$18,300

A hilarious, award-winning musical about individual expression, for young and old!  
 The story of Pete was told by four performers playing shearers, dogs and sheep and explored the challenges and rewards of being an individual.  
 The shows were well attended (over 300 children from three local schools attended the matinee performances)

PRESENTED BY ARTS MARGARET RIVER  
 a monkey bus theatre company production

**PETE the Sheep**  
 A HILARIOUS, AWARD-WINNING FAMILY MUSICAL

based on the book by Jackie French & Bruce Whatley  
 adapted for the stage by Eva di Cesare, Sandie Eldridge & Tim McGarry  
 Jonathan Biggins, director • Phil Scott, composer & lyricist

Thursday 20 May 6.30pm  
 Friday 21 May 10am & 12.30pm  
 Margaret River HEART

Bookings: [artsmargaretriver.com](http://artsmargaretriver.com) | 9758 7316

SUITABLE FOR AGES 4+ | DURATION 50 MINS



## GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

**Saturday 18 April, 7.30pm**

**Margaret River HEART**

**Tickets:** \$30 to \$35

**Paid Audience:** 124

**Event Costs:** \$11,300

Based on hours of in-depth interviews with doctors and nurses about their experiences of training and working in hospitals, Grace Under Pressure was a surprising, intimate and deeply moving performance that revealed hidden stories of health professionals in their own words.

The show was promoted to health care professionals and trainees at hospitals, Edith Cowan University Bunbury, medical centres and pharmacies as well as the general public.

The small attendance was attributed to the serious subject matter only appealing to a limited audience and audiences wanting light entertainment during Covid times.



## IT'S NOT ME, IT'S DEFINITELY YOU

**Thursday/Friday 18/19 March, 8.00pm**

**River Hotel / Augusta Hotel**

**Tickets:** \$25 to \$30

**Paid Audience:** 60 Augusta, 102 The River

**Event Costs:** \$5,000

This hilarious show explored the ever-evolving world of dating. From swiping right to ghosting, relentless Italian relatives wanting her married off and finding commitment in museums – all set to the soundtrack of Amy Winehouse and Lily Allen.

This comedy production was a late addition to the program as Covid forced the cancellation of two touring shows. The show appealed to a younger demographic and the simplicity of staging it meant that we were able to present it in the Augusta Hotel Function Room and at The River Hotel.

The Augusta audience was very happy to have the opportunity to attend a live event locally and encouraged Arts MR to do more events there. Thank you to both the Augusta Hotel and The River for their support with free venue hire.

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## MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

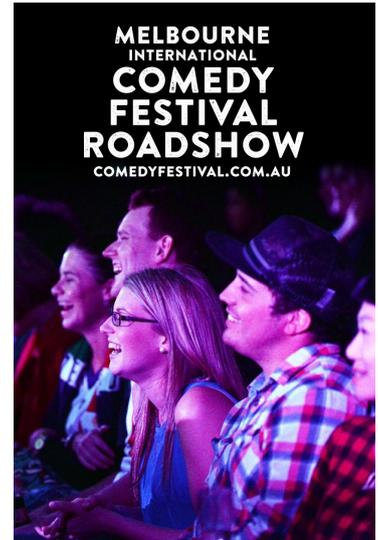
**Friday 28 May, 7.30pm**

**Margaret River HEART**

**Tickets:** \$50 Adult, \$45 Concession, \$42 Member

**Paid Audience:** 407

**Event Costs:** \$11,800



We were happy to have the Melbourne International Comedy Festival after having to cancel their performance last year due to Covid.

This year the tour was also impacted by Covid at the last minute as two of the comedians were confined to hotel quarantine and two local WA comedians had to replace them.

Even though the cast was not as strong as usual, it was a sold out event and most people were grateful that the performance went ahead as planned. We did have a couple of complaints about the last minute line-up change and 4 people requested refunds, but overall the majority were happy. We were very lucky to be able to present this event at all as most Victorian shows were cancelled.

## CINEMATIC ARTS

### OCEAN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR

3 March 2021, 7pm—Margaret River HEART

This was the 5th year that Arts MR presented the Ocean Film Festival. It was booked to screen at Cape Mentelle but due to Covid, Cape Mentelle reduced their audience capacity to 150 which was not viable. We then approached the Heart to host the screening as their reduced capacity was 267.

The Heart agreed to host the screening for a 50% split of the presenter fee. The screening sold out. This was the only movie presented by Arts MR as a lack of venue and equipment makes cinema screenings unfeasible.

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## CANCELLED EVENTS DUE TO COVID 19

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

**Ann Droid** — was re-scheduled from 2020 to June 2021, then cancelled fully

**ACO** – rescheduled from September 2020 to September 2022.

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## 2021 ARTS HUB MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships in 2021 were 302 (up from 230 in 2020)

Memberships for 2022 will not be due until January 2022

## READERS & WRITERS FESTIVAL

**14–16 May 2021**

**Attendance: 9537**

5524 - Tickets sold (incl virtual passes, free tickets)

1290 - attended free activities over the weekend

181 - Authors and guests attended

2542— Young Readers & Writers Program

**Total Income: \$ 248,771**

**Total Expenses: \$ 246,269**

**Total Profit: \$ 2,502**

This year, the 13th annual festival was held from 14th – 16 May 2021 at the Margaret River HEART, our festival hub with satellite venues around Margaret River including The River, Riversmith, Voyager Estate and local libraries in Busselton, Dunsborough, Margaret River and Augusta.

Our creative theme for this year was Written Worlds and looked at how the global pandemic has affected us all. With the cancellation of our 2020 festival, we needed to develop a robust plan to be able to run MRRWF under full COVID-19 restrictions. We created a virtual festival platform that ensured we were able to run the festival remotely and still deliver an exceptional audience and guest experience. Our audience is now very familiar and comfortable with virtual and online events platforms, which has created an incredible opportunity for us. We used this opportunity to harness this new way of consuming events and for the first time offered a Virtual Festival Pass ensuring we opened the festival to a larger national and international audience.

COVID travel and border restrictions meant we could not bring an international headline author in this year, we focused our programming on supporting our Australian authors from 2020 and 2021. Our headliners included, Bob Brown, Jane Caro, Julia Baird, Pip Williams, Craig Silvey, Andrew O'Hagan and Dr Robert Issacs. This year we also brought new mediums of storytelling to the festival as free experiences: The Wilding Stories listening lounge, and JULIA, a solo dance work.

The Visual Stories Art Exhibition and Competition was an important part of the Festival with 27 entries displayed in the foyer of the HEART for two weeks over the festival period.

We had 64 volunteers tasked with key roles in the lead up to, during and post festival and they contributed 667 hours of their time .

Our Young Readers & Writers Program (YR&W) ran from 10th May – Friday 21st May and toured five authors across 15 primary and high schools in the City of Busselton and the Shire of Augusta Margaret River.



## VISUAL ARTS

### TAKE A SEAT EXHIBITION:

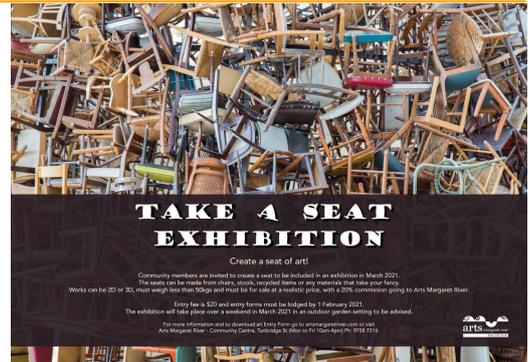
Saturday 13 March 5pm—7.30pm &  
Sunday 14 March 10am—4pm  
Private Residence: 38 Heron Dr, Margaret River

Community members were invited to create a seat to be included in an outdoor exhibition. The seats could be made from any material and had to be for sale at a realistic price, with a 25% commission going to Arts Margaret River. A \$20 entry fee was charged.

32 artists participated and 40 seats were included in the exhibition which was held in a large rural garden. The property was ideal with a large well established garden and a large cleared paddock for parking a large number of vehicles. A portable toilet was hired for the weekend.

The Saturday evening event was ticketed at \$20 adults, \$17 members and included a glass of wine on arrival, nibbles and live music by Little Row of Housez. Each artist was issued with a complimentary ticket and the event sold out (120 capacity). The Sunday exhibition was open to the public by gold coin donation. A tea/coffee/cake station was set up in the outdoor courtyard and manned by volunteers.

Thankfully the weather was fine over the weekend and the exhibition was a success with over 200 people attending and 14 seats sold, earning Arts MR a commission of \$1133.



### VISUAL STORIES EXHIBITION:

3rd – 16th May (Official Opening Wed 12 May)  
Margaret River HEART

The theme of the 2021 Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival was 'Written Worlds' and this years Visual Art Competition and Exhibition will brought this to life through 'Visual Worlds'. Artists were asked to respond to the festival theme with an artwork that portrayed a view of the future, which could be possible, or highly imaginary. The entries were displayed at the Margaret River HEART before and during the Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival.

24 artists participated with 27 artworks entered and 5 pieces sold. Artworks ranged in price from \$285 to \$12,000 with Arts MR retaining a 20% commission on sales.

1st prize \$1000—Eleanor Davies  
2nd prize \$500—Sue Briggs  
3rd prize \$250—Emily Jackson  
Peoples Choice \$100—Mark Heussenstamm



# FUNDRAISING EVENTS

## SECRET GARDEN SOIREE

**Sunday 24 January 3pm—6pm  
Secret Garden**

Patrons were encouraged to frock up and join us for an afternoon of high tea and drinks, live music, art and more in the beautiful Secret Garden setting. Tickets cost: \$65 | \$60 Members and included High Tea and a glass of bubbles on arrival.

20 artworks were donated by local artists such as Leon Pericles, Kay Gibson, Rachel Coad, Ian Dowling, Douglas Kirsop, Mary Lyn Sutton, Fi Wilkie, Sue Briggs, Mark Heussenstamm, Jo Taylor and David Binks, of which half were silent auctioned, and half were live auctioned.

A large number of volunteers assisted with the venue set-up, parking direction, catering, bar and cleaning and pack down. A solo dance performance and live music was performed along with garden tours and artwork viewings prior to the live auction being held.

All artists were offered a complimentary ticket and the event sold out with 207 people attending. The fundraiser was a great success with over \$17,000 raised for Arts Margaret River.

