



arts

MARGARET RIVER



Strategic Plan
2024-2027



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 Nyittiny – 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 Boodja (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.

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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WHO WE ARE

Arts Margaret River is a community arts organisation which exists to support and nurture the work of artists across all disciplines, and fosters engagement with the Arts in our community. For five decades the organisation has offered the opportunity for a multiplicity of creative endeavours under the auspices of a vibrant creative team and now holds a unique position in the WA regional and Australian landscape of being based within the state-of-the-art facility called Nala Bardip Mia/Margaret River HEART.

Our aim is achieved through a variety of programs: music of all forms, theatre and dance performances, cinema screenings, 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: *Newlywed's Dream*. Ben & Jody Loaring.



WHY WE EXIST

Purpose:

Our purpose is to enrich lives through the transformative power of the arts, fostering talent, and building a vibrant and inclusive community.

Our Constitution cites our purpose as being to

1. Act as a co-ordinating agency and as spokesperson for the performing and fine arts of Margaret River and surrounding districts, also 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.
4. Encourage the provision of facilities for all kinds of artistic expression and the study and appreciation of artistic expression in all forms.

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.

Above: Margaret River Readers & Writers Festival



OUR VALUES

Inclusivity: ArtsMR welcomes people from all backgrounds, cultures and abilities. This ensures that diverse perspectives are represented and appreciated, cultivating a vibrant community.

Creativity: Curatorially creative in works that we source. We encourage and foster originality, expression and new projects. We make clear our intentions to nurture our own in this community and give them a platform.

Innovation: Embracing innovation in programming. We aim to find ways to tell new stories and the new realities that we are living through now and for our emerging artists and audiences.

Sustainability: Prioritising sustainability both environmentally and financially. We are environmentally responsible, ensuring financial health through diverse funding sources and continue our policy of future proofing our decisions.

This will require Art Margaret River to explore new ways to develop projects that are by, with and for our community.

Above: Cowaramup Sunday Sundowners



OUR FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Arts Margaret River has proven itself to be a resilient and well-managed organisation in the financially challenging arts and culture sector for the past 50 years.

- Sound financial controls, focused planning of events and ceaseless searching and application for grant funding have enabled a small build-up of reserves resulting in strong financial stability. In addition, we have established a Program Fund of \$50,000 to support new and emerging events as well as the development of our renowned Readers & Writers Festival.
- We currently have a 5-year co-management agreement with the option of another 5 year extension with the Shire of Augusta Margaret River (SAMR) to manage the programming at the HEART venue in Margaret River.
- Our grant funding providers are also offering multi-year support Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), Tourism WA, SAMR Major Events Grant, City of Busselton which provides some stability and allows us to support more artists, events and community development in the Region going forward.
- Many of our other funders continue to provide consecutive annual funding (including DLGSC and Lotterywest) and we have an on-going annual contract with Regional Arts WA to provide regional HUB service
- As an organisation largely supported by volunteers (our Board of Management are volunteers) we have over 130 active volunteers working over [3,600] hours annually. We continue to achieve far beyond our limited funding and resources.
- Our Membership of over 400 annually and growing, together with our current 8 hard-working permanent staff (5.9 FTE) as well as 9 part-time casual staff ensure our ongoing financial stability.
- We have no loans or other financial arrangements in place and are therefore debt free.

Above: Artwork by Kay Gibson



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our **Three Strategic Pillars** defined our objective and achievement goals.

1. Support
2. Create
3. Present

Support (Community Engagement): Tailoring arts events and programs to the interests and cultures of the local community ensures relevance and resonance. By involving community members in the planning process, we can create offerings that directly reflect and celebrate the unique identity of the area. This approach not only increases engagement but also fosters a sense of ownership among residents, deepening their connection to the arts.

Create (Local Artists): Prioritizing opportunities for local artists to exhibit, create new works or perform enhances community pride and supports the local creative economy. Initiatives like local artist spotlights, new works development support, and resident artist programs not only provide valuable exposure for emerging talents but also draw attention to the rich cultural resources within the community itself.

Present (Diverse Artistic Experiences): We select programs or pieces which stimulate and engage people – a program of events and activities that are original and innovative which connect to different groups within our community. Engaging diverse age groups (from children to seniors) in arts experiences fosters lifelong appreciation and participation in the arts, enhancing overall community well-being and cultural literacy.



STRATEGIC PILLAR #1 – SUPPORT

Supporting our community means we will develop opportunities for engagement and education in the Arts. We aim to foster pride and increase audience access, satisfaction and inclusion.

How will we achieve this:

1. Support events for a wide audience base
2. Support local Artists & Arts Workers
3. Support low-cost arts experiences

Support Events for a wide audience base

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 will:

- Foster collaboration and networking within the arts community
- Facilitate resource-sharing and innovative projects
- Actively promote and support arts programming that is accessible to people of all backgrounds, abilities, and socioeconomic levels.
- Support the sustainability of the arts by expanding our reach and relevance.

Support local Artists & Arts Workers

We aim to increase the capability of the local Arts community and allow it be responsive to emerging trends and challenges, ultimately strengthening the overall vibrancy and resilience of the local arts scene.

We will:

- Give local artists opportunities to show their work or perform. This helps the community celebrate its own talent
- Foster a supportive ecosystem that encourages collaboration and networking among local artists, arts workers, and other stakeholders
- Employ local arts workers to retain regional talent and grow platforms for education and development.

Support low-cost arts experiences

We aim to foster a sense of ownership and creative engagement in our community that minimises the barrier of cost participation and increase community pride.

We will:

- Provide art classes and workshops that are affordable or free so people can join in, no matter their age or income.
- Forge partnerships with educational institutions, as well as local artists, to facilitate the provision of free or low-cost art classes
- Allocate funding to fund free or low-cost arts education or arts experiences

Above: Fi Wilkie Creative Workshop



STRATEGIC PILLAR #2 – CREATE

We will support the creation of new works and new artistic practices with authenticity and relevance for the community. Each artist's story is unique.

How we will achieve this

1. Develop emerging regional artists
2. Foster arts education
3. Grow existing events
4. Expand the resources toolkit

Develop emerging regional artists

We will support the creation of original ideas that bring an authentic regional voice to the work – whether it be performance art, writing, painting, sculpture, dance, music or screen. The myriad of mediums just makes the creative tapestry richer and deeper.

We will:

- Mentor emerging talent which is fundamental to the very existence and future growth of any arts organisation. It is our intention to create a pathway that brings the realisation of these works to fruition.
- Develop pathways for training, educating, mentoring, practice-led workshops and masterclasses all aimed at the level of experience in each skills-set.
- Lead and support innovation in artistic practices

Foster arts education

We support activities which promote and contribute to both audience and artist development.

We will:

- Engage artistic activities that will provide continuous learning opportunities, enhance professional skills, and contribute to future careers.

- Foster arts education as a tool for learning and better academic outcomes. Support the intrinsic development of a lifelong appreciation for the arts.
- Promote learning by doing, training, discovery and curiosity.

Grow existing events

We support activities which promote and contribute to both audience and artist participation.

We will:

- Leverage creative opportunities from existing programs. This creative approach will, by definition, reflect and celebrate the identity of our region and foster a sense of ownership and originality. AMR undertakes to create a performance or exhibition platform for these new works.
- Grow these productions, exhibitions, performances to enhance future opportunities for the artist.

Aim of bring the learning and experience back to the region to contribute to the next generation of creatives.

Expand the resources toolkit

Leverage digital platforms and technology to enhance accessibility, allowing individuals to learn at their own pace

We will:

- Offer recorded online learning assets
- Develop an online library of participating artists, to feature artist bios, interviews and works. The making of these resources also offers further training opportunities for our community.

Above: The Stars Descend Cast & Crew



STRATEGIC PILLAR #3 – PRESENT

We will present to our community a diversity of works that reflect all aspects of the artistic experience.

How we will achieve this:

1. Provide a diversity of offerings
2. Stimulate participation in the arts
3. Utilise a variety of venues and locations

Provide a Diversity of Offerings

We will provide programs or pieces which stimulate and engage people – a program of events and activities that are original, innovative and which connect to different groups within our community.

We will:

- Offer a diverse range of artistic events which ensure that various cultures, traditions and perspectives are represented and celebrated.
- Promote inclusion, allowing people from different backgrounds to see themselves reflected in the arts thus fostering a sense of belonging and community engagement.
- Stimulate creativity and innovation in the arts. Encourage creativity by introducing artists and audiences to new ideas, techniques and expressions. Push the boundaries of traditional forms and contribute to the evolution of the arts.
- Broaden audience engagement by offering a wide array of artistic experiences that will attract a more diverse audience.
- Expose people to different cultures and ideas, promoting empathy, understanding, and appreciation of the rich tapestry of human expression.

Above: Bell Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Stimulate Participation in the Arts

We support activities which promote both audience and artist involvement.

We will:

- Focus on pieces that both captivate and challenge our audiences, are relevant and resonate locally.
- Source high standard works from around the country.
- Broaden our audiences' arts landscape.
- Increase audience participation to support the sustainability of the of the arts by expanding its reach.

Utilise a variety of Venues

Sharing arts experiences across diverse venues significantly enriches cultural life and accessibility.

We will:

- Seek out a dynamic range of works that can utilise all the venues available at the HEART and within the region. In addition, we will present works in non-traditional spaces.
- Share the arts in various venues thus becomes a powerful tool for community engagement, social cohesion and cultural exchange, enriching society as a whole.



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 organization's commitment to building respectful relationships, fostering mutual respect and creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our RAP is based on the core pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities and reflects our dedication to promoting economic equity and supporting First Nations self-determination.

Aim

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

RAP Core Pillars

1. Relationships

Acknowledgment and Welcome: We will start all organizational events and meetings with an acknowledgment of the traditional custodians of the land and a welcome to country. This will promote respect for the culture and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Cultural Competency Training: All staff and volunteers will undergo cultural competency training to deepen their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

Engagement: We will actively seek partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organizations to foster collaborative relationships.

2. Respect

Artistic Expression: We will create and support opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to showcase their work through exhibitions, performances and workshops at our organization.

Representation: We will strive to ensure that our programming and promotional materials represent the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures accurately and respectfully.

Cultural Protocols: We will adhere to cultural protocols and seek permission for the use of Indigenous knowledge, art, and cultural symbols in our projects.

Measurable Outcomes and Accountability

We will track and report our progress on RAP initiatives annually.

Regular consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will inform our actions.

Conclusion

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

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

Above: Alexander Abbot and Chandler Connell in *The Other Side of Me* by Gary Lang NT Dance Company.



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

Inclusion

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

Diversity

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

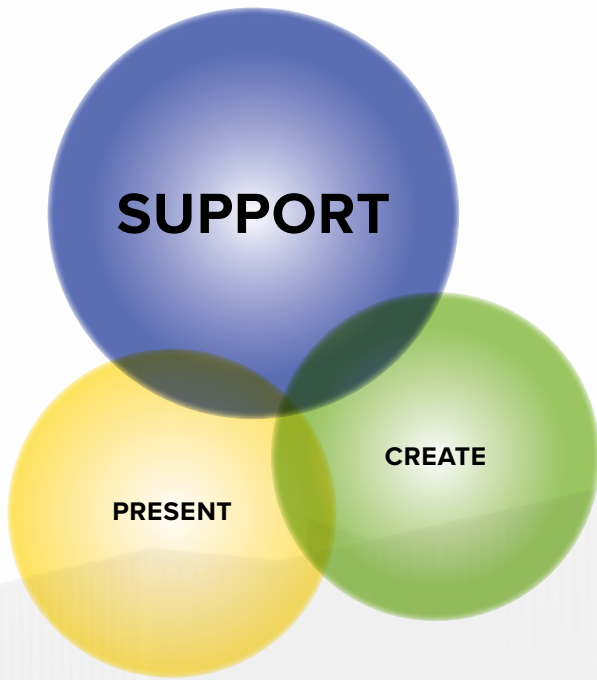
Equity

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

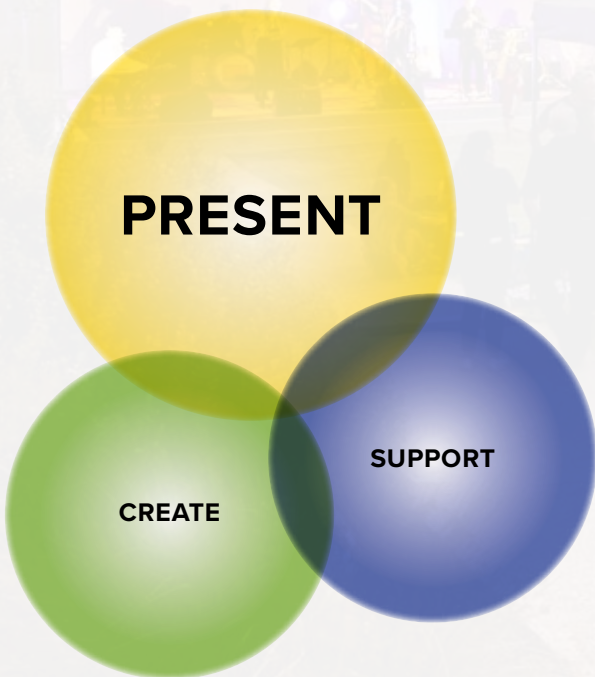
ABIDE is not just a set of words for us – it's a commitment.

We are on a continuous journey to create an environment where access, belonging, inclusion, diversity, and equity thrive. Through ongoing learning, open dialogue and purposeful actions, we strive to make a positive impact within our organization and in the larger communities we serve.”

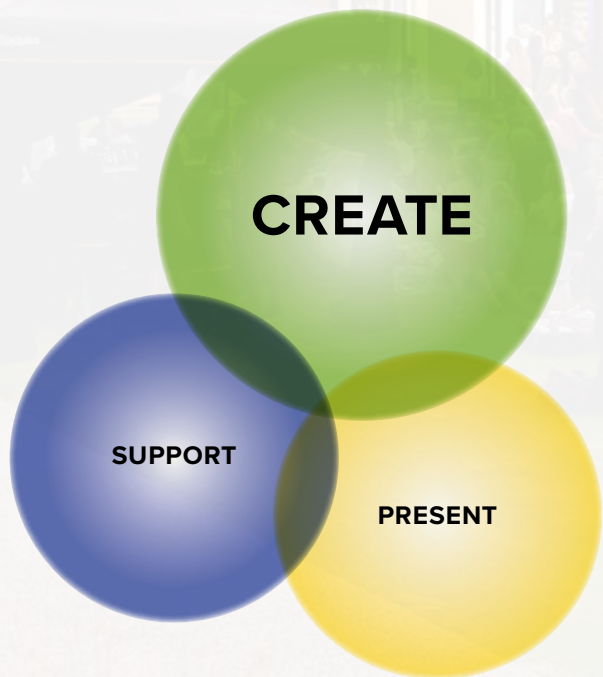
Above: Arts Margaret River Staff



2024-2027



2021-2024



2027-2029



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