



Regional Galleries Association of SA Annual Report 2020/2021

The Regional Galleries Association of South Australia is the peak body for not-for-profit galleries in South Australia.

As a united voice our mission is to advance and protect the interests of public galleries within regional communities.

We do this with great enthusiasm through visibility, advocating for the role galleries play in healthy communities, professional development for members and enticing collaborators with mutual interests to join us.

We aim to have a vibrant network of regional galleries enriching local communities, artists and the arts across regional South Australia.

2020 -21 has been challenging for the association. COVID 19 forcing the closures of galleries in early 2020, but opening up again in the middle of the year only to be swamped by an influx of visitors who, no longer able to jump on a plane and travel overseas visited regional Australia. Regional SA benefitted more than many other states because it was not impacted by a succession of lockdowns. Visitor numbers increased for most SA Tourist regions in the range of 90- 120%.

Strategic Priority One: Maintain and Grow Membership

WHY: to maintain financial stability, to increase the skills base across regional South Australia and to increase the visibility and impact of our work.

HOW: We will do this by building and maintaining a cohesive collaborative network of regional galleries, building support for members and broadening the membership base.

Membership

The financial year 2020-21 saw RGASA's membership grow to 30 with 5 new member, and Gawler and Onkaparinga galleries showing an interest in joining as well. This growth is surprising in an environment with limited fact-to-face engagements and activities. This has been primarily driven by the high level of uncertainty that has been created by the ongoing pandemic. We have also had an unprecedented number of people from non-membership organisations engage with our activities demonstrating a need and desire to connect more broadly with the visual arts, university and local government sectors.

RGASA continues to see that it has an important role within the not-for-profit sector in South Australia and still sees an opportunity to lead a state-wide association sometime in the future.

Strategic Priority Two: Professional Development and Networking for Members

WHY: to increase the capacity of members to deliver high quality, valued outcomes in their communities.

HOW: We will do this through targeted training and networking opportunities for members, relationships with the broader public gallery sector.

Hot House

The Hot House was planned as a two-day intensive in the city working with organisations such as the Art Gallery of South Australia, ArtLab and Ku Arts. COVID delayed the delivery of this program and it was ultimately delivered as a series of fortnightly online forums.

PROGRAM

Show Me the Money: Funding and Grant Writing 27 August 2020

Three speakers presented for this workshop including:

- Di Gordon – Country Arts SA
- Monica Hart – Country Arts SA
- Maz McGann – Play Your Part - What's the Story

Exhibition Design and Public Programs 10 September 2020

Two speakers presented for this workshop including:

- Megan McEvoy – Art Gallery SA
- Erin Davidson – Art Gallery SA

Increase Your Reach: Digital Marketing for Galleries 24 September 2020

One speaker presented for this workshop including:

- Jessica Costello

Holding Your Own: Collection Management + Handling Artworks 8 October 2020

Two speakers presented for this workshop including:

- Kristin Phillips – ArtLab
- Tansy Curtin – Art Gallery SA

Respect + Relationships: Working with Aboriginal Artists + Organisations 22 October 2020

Two speakers presented for this workshop including:

- Marie Falcinella – Ku Arts
- Robert Wuldi – Aboriginal Artist

Summary of the most common takeaways:

The Hot House program was very well-received and the overall feedback provided has been positive. There definitely an appetite for ongoing PD for the sector and whilst face to face is always desirable, the accessibility of presenting online provides opportunities for people to participate more easily. Moving forward RGASA will aim to incorporate both online and face-to-face PD.

The session on working with Aboriginal Artists and Organisations was very well-received but it really only scratched the surface – conversations with more Aboriginal artists and organisations is definitely an important part of what RGASA will continue to do into the future. RGASA 2018/2019.

Online Forum

In addition to the Hothouse and outside of our scheduled program, we also presented an online forum called Cultural Conversations at a Distance. This session directly responded to the need for our members to connect with others at the height of the pandemic. We were able to provide an opportunity for members to gain some practical knowledge about digital engagement for others working in the space. They were also able to talk to other members and share ideas and connect – which was very important at the time.

Digital engagement skills vary considerably but there is more of an appetite than ever, to improve and develop these skills. Gallery personnel are keen to better engage with audiences in creative ways online as well as increase their profile from a marketing perspective.

Funding will forevermore be a challenge and further skills development in this space would be worthwhile.

AGM guest speaker 4 December 2020

Melinda Rankin host the RGASA members at Fabrik, Lobethal, for the 2020 AGM meeting. She provided an excellent overview of the exhibition “-this breath is not mine to keep”. With works by Carl Kuddell, Jen Lyons-Reid, Deborah Prior, Clyde Rigney Jnr, Cedric Varcoe, and Felix Weber

Melinda also took the members for a walk around the extensive site, explaining the redevelopment plans. Melinda also provided an interesting insight into the role and contribution Fabrik had made to the bushfire recovery and the role of art can have in disaster recovery.

At the AGM it was also discussed with the members the proposal to list two new Strategic new projects:

1. ASSEMBLAGE – (working title) is a collections development project that involves the documentation and promotion of art collections currently held within regional art galleries in South Australia.
2. GALLERY CONNECT (working title) is an online connectivity project that increases the capacity of the Regional Galleries Association of SA's (RGASA) to interact online – with each other and the public.

Proposals for each project were developed and grant opportunities have been investigated for implementation in the 2021-22 year.

Road trip

This was postponed due to COVID 19 and is expected to take place in early 2021. Though galleries are open and travel to the regions is possible many local councils have restrictions on staff travelling for work purposes. The road trip is planned to be a regional Port experience: Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Port Lincoln.

The Road trip attracted 21 people starting at the Jam Factory in the Barossa Valley, venturing to Port Pirie Regional Gallery and then onto The Station Gallery in Port Augusta. Day two started with a stopover to see the new Whyalla Jetty and amazing public art work in Whyalla and then onto some

studio visits in Port Lincoln and a tour of the Nautilus Centre in Port Lincoln. Day 3 was, for most, a long trek home. Overall there were eight formal sessions presented on the road during the trip and it was a great opportunity for people to see how other galleries operate – from those that are 100% volunteer run to those who have a team of staff supporting programs.

The highlights included:

- An amazing chance to meet with Marika Davies from Port Augusta - an incredible Aboriginal Artist and new coordinator of Yarta Purtli in Port Augusta
- Checking out the Cuttle Fish Mosaic created by Squashed Cocky AKA Karen Carr
- Port Lincoln Studio Visit with artist Emma Fuss - what a house, what a garden, what an artist!
- Getting to know the other members of the Association - learning, laughing and generally putting faces to names!

Strategic Priority Three: Advocacy, Development and Marketing

WHY: to enable us to function as a highly visible and influential sector and an attractive partner in both the visual arts sector and more broadly as a significant partner in recreation, wellbeing, tourism and economic development within members' communities.

HOW: Clear and accessible distribution of information to members and stakeholders, representation at relevant national organisations and alliances (NAVA, NPGA, AMaGA) and keeping the website current and useful.

An organisation the size of RGASA relies on the strength of partnerships to carry out meaningful work. Our chief partners are the organisations, including many local government agencies who support our members' ongoing operations. As a peak organisation, it is our role to work with a range of partners to assist the sector more broadly.

Locally, we continue a fruitful association with **AMaGA (Australian Museums and Galleries Association)** and maintained our working relationships with galleries and organisations right across the state. Primarily this has been via the attendance, when they have been held, at the monthly AMaGA breakfast forums. Our partnership with AMaGA also provided our members with an opportunity to undertake free online cultural training. Focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture its digital delivery and price made it very accessible.

During 2020-21 year, RGASA was presented with the opportunity to support a number of local arts organisations with funding applications.

The first was for a Project collaboration proposal from the **Adelaide Central School of Art**, by Andrew Pervis. The Arts SA Arts Recovery Fund application was successful and, although outside the reporting period in August the committee met with Andrew and discuss a range of options using the Art Schools existing short course options to creating masterclasses and having Andrew and others make some regional visits to engage with artists directly to understand how best to facilitate access to the Schools courses.

RGASA also had the opportunity to write support one of our members, the **Culture Museum of Kangaroo Island**'s Black Summer Bushfire Recovery grant application. We hope they are successful with their application.

At a national level, we have maintained our relationships with the national not-for-profit gallery sector through the NPGA.

The **Art Gallery of South Australia, Country Arts SA, ArtLab, Ku Arts and the SA History Trust** continue to be supportive partners to the RGASA. In the 2020-21 it was supporting the Hot House Program.

After a very busy year in 2019-20 participating in **NAVA (National Association for the Visual Arts)** forums, contributing to the review of Codes of Practice, Arts Day on the Hill Advocacy program etc, things have been much quilter in the past year.

The **NPGA (National Public Galleries Alliance)** was formed in 2019 with a formal agreement signed between members in 2020. The NPGA is comprised of 2 national networks and 9 state peak bodies and public gallery membership organisations.

The Alliance developed as means for the industry to come together and advocate as a whole. The catalyst for these joint conversations was NAVA's draft New Pay Standards for Artists and Arts Workers. Since its formation, the Alliance has worked together on several projects.

National Benchmarking

The NPGA recognises the need for developing a standardised longitudinal methodology to capture and share with our communities and stakeholders a complete picture of our country's dynamic public gallery sector. NPGA members recently undertook the first-ever National Benchmarking of Australia's public gallery sector. This National Benchmarking first occurred in 2020, and again in 2021.

An agreement between NPGA and AMaGA national was signed to proceed with a joint project. The project description is as below. The project was delayed due to COVID 19 priorities and change in leadership at AMaGA national branch,

Develop a joint project to develop and promote a fit-for-purpose tool to assess the public value of public galleries in Australia, with the twin aims of collecting relevant data, and of developing a useful tool for advocacy purposes.

RGASA member contributed to this benchmarking exercise. An online survey was designed specifically for the Association to assist with the benchmarking exercise. It was distributed to the members, and the responses collected and compiled. The results were shared with NPGA.

Both the 2019 report (released in 2020) and the 2021 report are available here <https://magsq.com.au/publications/>

EDMs – Electronic Newsletter

EDMs continues to be an important tool for RGASA for advocating good news stories, information sharing, Association updates and reporting, tips and tricks, opportunities, and notification of special projects.

EDMs were distributed to members and key industry people in July 2020, December 2020, February 2020 and

In these publications we included two good news stories in each of our EDMS. These good news stories included:

- Australian Public Galleries Snapshot Launched
- After Lockdown – There’s No Place Like Home in Bordertown
- Malka Art Prize Shines Online in Port Augusta

Strategic Priority Four: Exhibitions and Public Programming

WHY: to maintain an active facilitation role in the development of vibrant, challenging and relevant programming opportunities for member galleries and to provide a conduit between curators, artists and regional galleries.

HOW: We will do this by collaborating with AGSA and Country Arts SA; and facilitate and encourage exchanges between member galleries and with metropolitan galleries

RGASA continued our three-way partnership with Country Arts SA, The Art Gallery of South Australia to present Robyn Stacey: Ray of Light for South Australian regional touring from 2018 through to late 2020. To ensure all member galleries equal access to an exhibition of this calibre, RGASA distributed bursaries to those galleries who could demonstrate they would otherwise be unable to participate. In this Financial Year Ray of Light went to Port Pirie and Roxby Downs.

RGASA has taken the decision in early 2020, to concentrate its resources on professional development for members will be a priority. However, our fruitful relationships with partners continue to thrive and we provide a conduit for collaborative programming opportunities through our member networking channels. As noted previously, this decision is in part due to the way in which our funding agreement with DPC – ArtsSA has evolved.

Through EDMs we encourage our members or promote exhibitions suitable for tour and exchange.

Review of Strategic Priorities: The Chair provided an overview of the Strategic Priorities list and two new projects:

3. ASSEMBLAGE – (working title) is a collections development project that involves the documentation and promotion of art collections currently held within regional art galleries in South Australia.
4. GALLERY CONNECT (working title) is an online connectivity project that increases the capacity of the Regional Galleries Association of SA’s (RGASA) to interact online – with each other and the public.

That \$10,000 be used to implement two new projects: Assemblage (\$5000) and Gallery Connect (\$5,000) and grant opportunities investigated and applied for to enable the projects to be implemented.

Strategic Priority Five: Good Governance

We will maintain a strong and vibrant organisation to fulfil our commitments to members and key stakeholders, ensuring programs, services and advocacy are relevant to the regional gallery sector and holding at least four gatherings a year of members.

Operational Funding remains positive and ArtsSA funding was confirmed for the 2020-21.

Unfortunately, the delivery of some programs has been impacted by the ongoing COVID pandemic. This has been compounded with the sudden resignations of the RGASA chair and deputy chair in close succession in 2021.

Membership Fees

Whilst the Association recognises that it is essential to maintain a tiered system of fees to remain inclusive of all regional public galleries and to encourage membership, members agreed maintain the existing fees.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met electronically throughout the year to manage the affairs of the Association and the directions for professional development and marketing strategies. The executive committee meets quarterly with additional meeting called for special business. The meeting of the Executive committee aligns with the Associations Constitution and met.

With fewer face-to-face meetings with the members because of COVID and to ensure updates to members a summary of key decisions made during executive is sent to members after the Executive meetings. The Executive met 5 times during the 2020/21 year.

General meetings of members will occur twice per annum (August and at the AGM) additional meetings may be called for special business requiring a vote. Members will also gather for events, professional development opportunities, and sharing of successes and challenges. Only one face-to-face meeting was held with member during the 2020-21 year because of COVID risks.

Due to COVID 19 the AGM did not occur until December 2020. For several years the AGM has been delayed and this has created some challenges when there is a change of the executive which is out of sync with the reporting period.

2020-21 Membership

- ART MUSEUM OF KANGAROO ISLAND Kangaroo Island
- BALAKLAVA COURTHOUSE GALLERY Balaklava
- BAROSSA REGIONAL ART GALLERY Tanunda
- BAY DISCOVERY CENTRE Glenelg
- BELALIE ART GALLERY Jamestown
- BURRA REGIONAL ART GALLERY Burra
- CLARE ART HOUSE Clare
- COORONG ART GALLERY Taillem Bend
- FABRIK Lobethal
- FLINDERS UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM
- GALLERY M Oaklands Park
- HAHNDORF ACADEMY Hahndorf

- JAMFACTORY Adelaide and Seppeltsfield
- KAPUNDA COMMUNITY GALLERY Kapunda
- MILLICENT GALLERY Millicent
- MURRAY BRIDGE REGIONAL GALLERY Murray Bridge
- NARACOORTE ART GALLERY Naracoorte
- NAUTILUS ART CENTRE Port Lincoln
- NEWMARCH GALLERY Prospect
- PORT PIRIE REGIONAL ART GALLERY Port Pirie
- RIDDOCH ART GALLERY Mount Gambier
- ROXBYLINK ART GALLERY Roxby Downs
- SOUTH COAST REGIONAL ART CENTRE & SIGNAL POINT GALLERY Goolwa
- VICTOR HARBOUR REGIONAL GALLERY Victor Harbour
- THE MILL Adelaide
- WALKWAY GALLERY Bordertown
- MIDDLEBACK FOYER GALLERY Whyalla
- MCCORMICK CENTRE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT Renmark
- SAUERBIER HOUSE Onkaparinga
- CITY OF HOLDGAST BAY Brighton

2020-21 Executive

- Chair - Georgina Shirley, December 2020 - June 2021, Ursula Halpin August - December 2021
- Deputy Chair – Margaret Hancock Davis, December 2020 - June 2021
- Treasurer – Serena Wong
- Secretary – Dr Helen Macdonald
- Committee Members: Kerry Youle; Rachel McElwee; Ursula Halpin

Georgina Shirley was replaced by Ursula Halpin in the second part of 2021. The Deputy Chair was not replaced. This is an optional position on the executive which Margaret Hancock Davis was elected to undertake as part of an initiative to provide mentor support to the Chair. The RGASA constitution requires members to resign from the executive if they are no longer in the employment of a member organisation.