



Annual Report 2024

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Kiama Highschool Mural, Stephanie Quirk (CASP2024).
Photo: Amanda Mellor.



From the Chair

South Coast Arts covers an area with the highest population density in regional NSW. Yet as a new organisation we are surrounded and enriched by one of the oldest regional cultures on earth. The people of the Dharawal and Dhurga language groups have lived regional culture, managed Country and practiced community on the South Coast for over 40,000 years. They were the first regional creatives. In 2024 population growth, catastrophic climate change, the pressures of housing supply and cost of living all impact the vitality and sustainability of regional culture. We are living in a time of volatility where culture is too often a contested landscape. The capacity of regional culture to support, heal, imagine, create dialogue and build resilience is critical for us all.

Our Region is complex and diverse. 2024 has seen our Strategic Plan in action responding to regional culture with projects, partnerships and platforms targeted to meet the needs of the artists, communities and creative organisations we support. Whole of career support and training for creatives has been a strong delivery area. Country Arts Support Program, Creative Pulse and Creative Edge delivered real outcomes.. The Weave Directory is linking creatives and enabling promotion. Creative South powers cultural tourism through and beyond our region with our partners Southern Tablelands and South East Arts. Supporting participation in the First Nations Arts Fair, CASP funding for Indigenous artists and resourcing First Nations creative industries continues to be a central role for SCA.

Culture is an economic driver. More people are engaged in creative industries than ever before. Creativity activates town centres, attracts regional visitors and employs locals. New regional infrastructure increasingly has a cultural focus. SCA has played an energetic role in resourcing creative businesses, supporting arts inclusion in the 24-hour economy and cultural led economic development. From partnerships with Music NSW, and Shoalhaven and Shellharbour Hospital developments to the planned Creative Business Summit in August 2025, this is an energetic part of our remit.

Local government is the core of our funding with Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven Council's continued commitment to regional culture reflected through their financial support. Equally important is our funding from Create NSW which forms part of state government support for the arts in regional NSW. Despite Create's challenging new competitive tendering model we look forward to a well-funded, productive partnership in the years ahead.

SCA's staff put our vision into practice. Our amazing Executive Director Louise Croker continues to work with cultural intelligence, skill, sector knowledge and business acumen. Communications and Fundraising Officer Paul Ducco's work is already shaping how SCA is experienced in the region and beyond. Our SCA Project Officers have provided specialist focus and expertise, enabling our delivery areas. Thanks also to our capable bookkeeper Fiona Wilson and accountants Booth Partners who support good financial management.

South Coast Arts is managed by a hard-working Board with Council representation by Cr Robert Petreski (Shellharbour), Cr Imogen Draisma (Kiama) and Cr Peter Wilkins (Shoalhaven) and arts and creative industries representation by members Kingston Anderson (Deputy Chair), Nick Guggisberg (Treasurer), Patrice Wills (Secretary), Jaz Corr, Ros Moffat and Amy Lavry. As Chair I would like to thank all for their commitment over the last year. Thanks is also due to Cr Tonia Gray (Shoalhaven) who stood down from SCA Board after the Local Government Elections.

I am stepping down as Chair after an energetic, creative four years with SCA. Ros Moffat who has provided invaluable legal expertise is also ending a hardworking time with SCA Board. Over the last months SCA called for applicants to the Board and a skilled group of regional creatives are eager join us in 2025 and beyond.

Regional culture enlivens the spaces and places of everyday life with creativity, imagination, and innovation. It values artists and cultural organisations. It strengthens and creates resilient communities at a time when this is vitally important in the regions. We look forward to continuing to support, activate and partner a powerful, representative South Coast culture in the year ahead.



Marla Guppy
Chair, South Coast Arts

Our Board

Marla Guppy – Chair

A leader in cultural planning and public art strategy, Marla has championed creative practice in regional Australia for decades. Her work began at Garage Graphix as Artist in Community and grew through her role as a founding member of the Australia Council's CEAD Committee. Recognised nationally, she received the Ros Bower Memorial Award from Prime Minister Paul Keating for her contribution to community cultural development. Marla now leads Guppy Art Management, a Shoalhaven-based consultancy working with artists, designers, planners, communities and government agencies. Her work consistently foregrounds cultural sustainability and the integration of art into civic life.

Kingston Anderson – Deputy Chair

An arts leader with more than 30 years' experience, Kingston is Executive Director of the Australian Guild of Screen Composers, representing over 500 members nationwide. His career spans theatre direction, regional arts management and film production, with credits including State Theatre Companies and multiple screen projects. He sits on the boards of the Culburra Beach Festival and SACSA (Service and Creative Skills Australia), a national initiative focused on training the next generation of creative workers. Kingston brings strong advocacy, strategic leadership and a commitment to expanding arts access across the South Coast.

Patrice Wills – Secretary

Living and working on Jerrinja Country in the Shoalhaven, Patrice is a visual artist and educator with a background in teaching and mental health. She holds tertiary qualifications in both visual arts and counselling, with a career shaped by a focus on access, wellbeing and creative expression. Patrice has worked with diverse audiences through regional arts organisations, First Nations-led programs, and urban health services. Her work has been exhibited widely, including in the 2023 Archibald Prize, and is held in public and private collections. Her practice explores resilience, connection and the lived experience of place.

Nick Guggisberg – Treasurer

From touring with Aboriginal band Amunda to performing major festivals like Womadelaide and Corroboree 2000, Nick's early years were grounded in music and cultural connection. He later trained in social work and went on to lead community initiatives across regional Australia. As Manager of Community & Cultural Development at Kiama Council for over a decade, Nick helped shape inclusive policy and programming. His governance experience spans more than 20 years, with roles at Kiama Community College, Illawarra Legal Centre, and Central Illawarra Youth Service. He continues to advocate for cultural participation and community voice.

Rosalind Moffatt

A dual-qualified solicitor in Ireland and NSW, Ros is part of the legal team at Arts Law, offering expert guidance to artists across Australia. Her focus includes contracts, licensing, copyright, consumer law and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. She holds a Master's from Queen Mary, University of London. Deeply engaged in creative communities, Ros also runs a small South Coast business and is dedicated to helping artists navigate their rights. She brings sharp legal insight, strategic thinking, and a strong belief in the role of the arts in cultural empowerment.

Jaz Corr

A Dharawal woman and visual artist based on the South Coast, Jaz brings deep cultural and creative insight to her practice. She holds a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Fine Art and Visual Culture from Curtin University and a Master of Education in Visual Arts from the University of Wollongong. Her work explores social, political and environmental themes, with a focus on visual storytelling and cultural truth-telling. Jaz has exhibited nationally and internationally, including at Shoalhaven Regional Gallery, the ABC, and in Sapporo, Japan. She is an advocate for contemporary Aboriginal art and its place in public discourse.

Amy Lawry

Amy is a designer, illustrator and arts advocate who also works in student support at the Country Universities Centre Southern Shoalhaven. Raised in Adelaide by a working musician, she developed early awareness of the challenges artists face. That perspective drives her commitment to nurturing emerging talent and supporting creative careers in regional areas. Since moving to NSW in 1998, she has served on numerous arts boards and event committees. Amy's background in hospitality and award-winning venue management, informs her belief in the interconnectedness of arts, culture and place-based enterprise.

Council Representatives

Cr Imogen Draisma

Kiama Municipal Council

Imogen Draisma is the Deputy Mayor of Kiama Municipal Council. She grew up in the region, attending local public schools in Kiama and Minnamurra before completing her secondary education at Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts. Imogen is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws at the University of Wollongong. Alongside her studies, she has been active in student advocacy, particularly around pandemic-related impacts on education and support services. She has worked for both NSW and Australian parliamentarians. As one of the youngest elected representatives in the country, Imogen is a strong supporter of diversity and inclusive public representation

Cr Robert Petreski

Shellharbour City Council

Robert Petreski is a long-time Shellharbour local and a councillor at Shellharbour City Council with a background in education and design. He works as a high school teacher with the NSW Department of Education and holds an Honours Degree in Design & Technology, along with additional qualifications in IT, electro-technology, and training and assessment. Robert began his career as an electronics apprentice and has received several awards, including the Apprentice of the Year and a national World Skills Gold Medal. He later ran a successful electronics business in the region. His experience across education, design and small business informs his approach to local community needs.

Cr Tonia Gray

Shoalhaven City Council

Tonia Gray is a councillor for Shoalhaven City Council and has a long-standing connection to the arts and education. With a background influenced by her mother's work as a landscape artist and potter, Tonia integrates creative approaches into her role as a university lecturer. She holds a Master's in Community Health and a PhD in Education, with research focusing on human-nature relationships and wellbeing. Tonia has worked with Bundanon to evaluate its 'Touched by the Earth' arts program and has presented on arts-based education at national and international conferences. She is an advocate for creative and community-led initiatives.



CASP 2024 Presentation, The Pavillion, Kiama
Photo: Drummerboy Pictures.



Soul Clay Studios, Gerringong.
Photo: Drummerboy Pictures.



Executive Summary

2024 was an extraordinary year of growth and connection for South Coast Arts. Throughout 2024, our organisation strengthened its vital role as a catalyst for creative development across our beautiful region.

Our achievements included expanded creative industry support, deepened First Nations partnerships, enhanced creative digital presence, and strengthened regional collaboration, creating a solid foundation for future growth.

\$559,000

additional funding
brought into region

93%

increase in
people served

First Nations
Population 6%
Engagement 7%

SCA Region
State-wide—NSW
Population 3.4%

\$18,000

distributed in
micro-grants

As I reflect on our achievements, I'm struck by the remarkable resilience and innovation of our creative community.

Our Creative Pulse business development program was a cornerstone of our industry support in 2024, delivering outstanding results for participating creatives. We saw significant improvements across all measured competencies, with particularly strong growth in sales capabilities and digital marketing skills. The program's success is evidenced by participants' progression from initial monthly sales in the \$0-1,000 range to achieving monthly returns of up to \$10,000, demonstrating tangible economic impact for our creative community.

This year also saw the successful launch of The Creative Edge program, which enhanced public art capabilities across our region through targeted skills development for local creatives.

Our commitment to First Nations engagement deepened this year as we proudly supported four First Nations artists in attending the National Indigenous Art Fair (NIAF), providing valuable exposure and professional development opportunities. We also funded three First Nations projects through our CASP funding program and provided sponsorship support to the 2024 Local Government NAIDOC Awards.

Our project evaluation processes have additionally shown increased engagement with First Nations communities, reflecting our ongoing commitment to meaningful collaboration and cultural respect.

Regional collaboration flourished through several significant projects this year. We made substantial progress in integrating arts into healthcare spaces through our work with Shellharbour and Shoalhaven hospitals, while the state-wide Horizons youth mentoring project created valuable opportunities for our young emerging artists.

2024 also saw us supporting creatives through creative tourism projects and addressing the wellbeing of our creative community through safeTALK training and the Self-Care for Creatives workshop.

Partnership with Music NSW broadened our capacity to support music practice and the successful launch of the Weave platform, supporting 116 active members by the end of 2024, marks a significant milestone in our digital strategy.

Our social media presence grew substantially, with Instagram followers nearly tripling and Facebook following increasing substantially. This expanded reach has enabled us to connect more creatives with opportunities and audiences across the region. Email engagement also strengthened, with our subscriber base growing by 27%. Notably, we achieved this growth while reducing advertising spend by 70%. This efficiency in digital outreach reflects our commitment to sustainable and effective community engagement.

2024 saw a significant advancement in our organisational capacity and governance. We successfully obtained charitable status and secured Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. The establishment of our casual Project Officer pool, comprising five skilled professionals, enhanced our ability to deliver diverse programs and initiatives.

A key operational change was Create NSW's shift from negotiated multi-year funding to contracted competitive tendering for all Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADO). South Coast Arts, along with all 15 RADOs within the state, now compete for contracted 2, 4 or 8-year funding.

While this has increased funding instability, it allows each RADO to seek more appropriate funding levels for their region. South Coast Arts submitted an application for the four year funding round in 2024 seeking increased funding to secure two additional part-time positions and expanded project funding.

None of what South Coast Arts has achieved in 2024 would be possible without our dedicated staff and board members, alongside our partners across local, state and federal government (Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven Council's and Create NSW) fellow RADOs, our sector project partners and most importantly, our community of passionate creative practitioners.

Looking to 2025, we face both challenges and opportunities and our commitment remains steadfast: to enrich, inspire and create connective pathways across the South Coast.

Thank you for your continued support of South Coast Arts.

Together, we're building not just a creative economy, but a more vibrant, connected and resilient community.



Louise Croker
Executive Director, South Coast Arts





The Memphis Three at Filmore's, Kiama.
Photo: Drummerboy Pictures.



Strategic Plan Goals

First Nations First

South Coast Arts continued to work closely with First Nations creatives, ensuring equitable access to all our projects and programs. Statistics gathered throughout 2024 show a 12% participation rate of First Nations creatives in our initiatives, double the 6% representation of First Nations peoples in our South Coast region's demographic profile.

This strong engagement in our program reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting and amplifying First Nations voices and creative practice across our region.

First Nations were also represented on our Board of Management with Jazz Corr

NAIDOC Awards

In 2024, South Coast Arts was proud to be able to support the annual Local Government Regional NAIDOC Awards held in Shoalhaven through the sponsorship of one of the Elders tables.

National Indigenous Art Fair

South Coast Arts provided support and assistance to four First Nations artists to attend the 2024 National Indigenous Art Fair (NIAF) in Sydney on 29 and 30 June.

Following their participation in the inaugural Huskisson Blak Markets in April 2024, Uncle Steven Russell, Aunty Phyllis Stewart, Amanda Reynolds and Amethyst Downing McLeod were invited by NIAF organisers to participate as market stall holders at the 2024 event.

The artists were also invited to attend two days of professional development workshops held on the Thursday and Friday prior to the Fair.

To support the artists' attendance at both the NIAF and the professional development training, South Coast Arts:

- Secured and auspiced \$5,000 funding through the Create NSW Small Project Grants (Quick Response) to cover accommodation and travel costs for the 3-4 night stay in Sydney
- Developed promotional flyers and posters for the stall
- Hired professional photography and videography services to document the market stall

Building Creative Industry

Creative Pulse: The Art of Business

The Creative Pulse: The Art of Business program, funded through Create NSW, was developed and delivered throughout 2023/24, engaging 10 creative business practitioners, 3 creative business mentors, and 4 creative business workshop facilitators.

The comprehensive program included workshops covering marketing and promotion, sales, self-care, photography and social media.

Participants also benefited from six months of one-on-one coaching tailored to their specific creative business needs.

Data was collected throughout the program with initial benchmarking, mid-term, end-of-program, and post-program evaluations. These assessments demonstrated a discernible increase in business income as a direct result of participation, along with significant improvements in skills development and audience engagement.

The final session of the Creative Pulse program was held on Friday, 14 June, generating outstanding feedback from participants. All participants and coaches expressed high satisfaction with the program, with many participants expressing a desire for the program to continue.

Following the program's completion, we established an online group for Creative Pulse participants within the Weave platform as a way to maintain contact and peer support. We also continued to seek funding to run further rounds of this valuable project.

The Other Side

Developed through Advisory Group consultation, The Other Side has emerged as both a branding campaign and cultural movement highlighting the creative dimension of our South Coast region. Beyond our renowned beaches and beautiful landscapes lies the creative heart of the South Coast, The Other Side.

Initially articulated through a comprehensive style guide explaining The Other Side concept and design elements, this project has laid the groundwork for a powerful approach to identifying and capturing the attention of those seeking to connect with authentic creativity in our region.

The initiative represents an important step in our strategic efforts to position the South Coast as not only a destination of natural beauty but also as a vibrant creative ecosystem worthy of exploration and engagement.

Work of Art Program (State-wide)

Work of Art was a specialised business development program for women working in the creative industries across regional NSW. The initiative was delivered by Regional Arts New South Wales (RANSW) with funding from Women NSW in 2024.

The program brought together an impressive cohort of over 60 women artists (with three participants from our south coast region) and creative entrepreneurs, united by both the unique benefits and challenges of regional practice. Despite geographical distances and diverse artistic disciplines, participants formed valuable connections and support networks. The program culminated in a showcase event that celebrated participants' creative businesses while fostering meaningful dialogue about regional arts practice.

The program's success was strengthened through strategic partnerships with 14 Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADOs), including South Coast Arts, alongside Creative Plus Business, Arts Law, THE Rural Woman Co-operative, the Ladies Finance Club and leading industry mentors.

Horizons: Creative Industries Launchpad (State-wide)

In 2024, the NSW Regional Arts Development Organisation (RADO) Network embarked on a state-wide project for regional youth called Horizons: Creative Industries Career Launchpad.

Horizons was a comprehensive creative industry mentoring and career development program for young people across regional NSW. The 18-month project supported 75 young people from across the state, including three from the South Coast Arts region, to showcase their talents, gain industry experience, build valuable professional networks and launch their creative careers.

Participants were paired with experienced mentors from their chosen fields based in regional NSW. Each mentoring relationship addressed the specific needs and interests of the individual participant, while also connecting them to a network of peers to build strong state-wide connections early in their careers.

South Coast participant Adam John-Clear joined South Coast Arts' CASP presentation evening to share their experiences of the program, providing valuable insights into the impact of this initiative on emerging regional creatives.

100% HomeGrown

In partnership with Southern Tablelands Arts and Music NSW, local Kiama musician Bronte Alva was included in HighlandFM's '100% Homegrown' showcase. The showcase included an interview and profile, with Bronte's music played on air and via the station's website.

www.highlandfm.org.au/news/aotm-october-24

Collaborative Planning

Creative Edge: EOI Workshop Series

In partnership with Shellharbour and Kiama Council Cultural Development staff South Coasts Arts delivered a program to support creatives in growing skills in responding to Expressions of Interest. The program included:

- A panel discussion and networking event that included panellists working in public art creation and public art opportunity and development.
- An online workshop with the National Association of Visual Arts (NAVA) on creative work contracts
- Face to face workshops on
 - Refining your artist CV
 - Writing Artist Statements and Bios

The program engaged 50 creatives across the three areas of programming.

Cultural Tourism Initiative (State-wide)

In 2024, the NSW Regional Arts Development Organisation (RADO) Network commissioned a comprehensive analysis of cultural tourism across regional NSW.

This timely research aligned with the NSW Government's strategic focus on 'experience tourism' and growing coordination between Destination NSW and Create NSW. The resulting report offered valuable insights into the scale of regional cultural tourism and identified key opportunities for its future growth.

Research agency Patternmakers led the analysis through a rigorous approach that included:

- A comprehensive literature scan
- In-depth interviews with cultural tourism stakeholders, including government agencies, industry bodies and operators
- Collation of tourism listings from multiple sources into a centralised database

Data sources included the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), Music NSW's regional venue map, National Parks listings, and regional culture maps. RADOs, including South Coast Arts, were invited to review and contribute additional experiences from their regions.

The resulting database catalogued over 3,200 cultural tourism experiences across regional NSW—providing the most detailed picture of the sector to date, enabling detailed analysis of the sector's scale, component elements, and future direction.

Year 2 (2025) will focus on strengthening connections between the 15 RADO regions and NSW Destination operators, alongside training and support for emerging creative tourism operators. This continued work will help build sustainable pathways for South Coast creatives to engage with the visitor economy.

RADO Network

The RADO Network held two-day, quarterly face-to-face meetings in Sydney during 2024, complemented by monthly online meetings.

These network meetings were coordinated and facilitated by Regional Arts NSW as part of our membership, which also provides;

- Brokered deals on insurances
- Free access to Hey Mate Employee Assistance Program services
- Facilitated access to State Ministers, government departments and peak bodies
- Access to free training and professional development
- Administration of state-wide projects determined by the network
- **Face-to-face meetings in 2024 included:**
 - State Shadow Minister for the Arts and Heritage – Hon Kevin Anderson MP
 - Create NSW – Creative Communities Empty Spaces Audit
 - Music NSW, CEO Joe Muller
 - Department of Education – The Arts Unit
 - Accessible Arts, Liz Martin
 - Sydney Dance Company, Michael Seiders

- **Training on:**
 - Burnout and mental wellbeing
 - Philanthropy
- **Facilitated discussion of strategic planning, core funding changes, new state-wide projects, and network membership**
- **Updates on current state-wide projects**
- **Launch of the State-wide Cultural Tourism research report**

These strategic engagements strengthened our regional arts advocacy efforts and enhanced our capacity to deliver impact across the South Coast region.

Hospital Arts Development Projects

Both Shoalhaven and Shellharbour Hospital arts development initiatives made progress throughout 2024 and South Coast Art remains an active member of both Arts Working Groups, providing professional advice and support.

The Shoalhaven Hospital Arts Strategy received Health Department approval, with the first major commission focused on the main entrance soffit. This significant piece will be specifically designed to showcase First Nations creativity and storytelling.

The Arts Working Group also reviewed concept designs from three artists for the proposed garden sculpture at Shoalhaven Hospital, demonstrating ongoing momentum in integrating public art within these healthcare spaces.

At Shellharbour Hospital, the Arts Strategy continued to progress through departmental approval processes, with the Arts Group meeting regularly to review and guide its development.





The Otherside of Creativity,
Jervis Bay Brewing Co, Huskisson.
Photo: Samuel Croker.

Regional Projects

Individual Creative Support and Advice

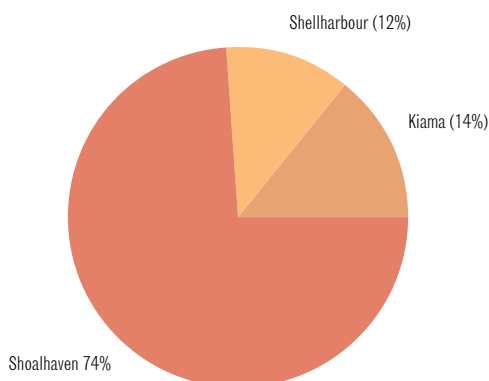
In 2024, South Coast Arts experienced significant growth in our Support and Advice Service, with 29 creatives accessing 15 hours of tailored assistance, representing an 86% increase from our inaugural year.

This service enables creative practitioners throughout our region to book one-on-one consultations with our Executive Director via our online platform. These sessions provide a dedicated space to explore challenges and inspirations along their creative journey.

Support provided in 2024 included:

- Facilitating connections with fellow artists through South Coast Arts' creative network and partner organisations
- Providing pathways to relevant support agencies and resources
- Identifying suitable funding opportunities
- Reviewing draft funding submissions and expressions of interest
- Offering guidance through funding application processes
- Collaborative brainstorming of creative project concepts
- Developing strategic approaches to project implementation

Engagement across LGAs



safeTALK Suicide Prevention Training

Research shows that creative workers face heightened mental health challenges. A Monash University Report (October 2020) revealed that workers in creative industries experience elevated risks compared to the general population; six times higher for suicidal ideation, four times higher for suicide planning, and twice the likelihood of suicide attempts.

In August 2024, South Coast Arts partnered with LivingWorks trainer Margie Jirgens to deliver a safeTALK suicide prevention workshop at Nowra Library. Participants gained valuable skills in recognising warning signs, engaging in direct conversations about suicide, and connecting vulnerable individuals with appropriate professional support services.

This initiative reflects our commitment to nurturing not only the creative development of our regional arts community but also supporting their wellbeing and resilience.

Self-Care for Creatives Workshop

As a follow-on from the safeTALK suicide prevention training and in acknowledgment of Mental Health Month, South Coast Arts facilitated a Self-Care for Creatives online workshop, delivered in partnership with Rebekah Lambert of Unashamedly Creative.

The session attracted participants from both the South Coast region and nationwide. Evaluation results indicated strong participant satisfaction, with particular praise for the program's supportive, inclusive approach and practical tools for creative practitioners.

These complementary initiatives demonstrate South Coast Arts' commitment to fostering strong, resilient, and healthy creative communities within our region.

Creative South Tourism Project (cross-regional)

Creative South is an innovative online platform that showcases creative and cultural visitor experiences across our region, offering interactive mapping and direct booking links. This collaborative initiative represents a strong partnership between South Coast Arts, South East Arts and Southern Tablelands Arts.

Through our newly established casual Project Officer pool, we commenced comprehensive research into creative tourism opportunities throughout our region. Alongside data from the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, our research identified significant gaps between this major tourism database and the rich array of creative experiences actually available in our community.

This initial data collection phase has laid crucial groundwork for establishing Creative South as a vital platform connecting visitors with bookable creative and cultural experiences in our region. The research continues to expand the platform's offerings and strengthen the visibility of our regional creative economy.

www.creativesouth.com.au

CASP Funding

Micro and small grants funding represent a critical asset to creative productivity, particularly in regional and rural areas. These grants provide much needed initial start-up or research/ concept development funding that allows creatives to take risks in developing innovative ideas and projects.

The Country Arts Support Program (CASP) is devolved funding from Create NSW that South Coast Arts facilitates to nurture and support creative production throughout our region. This program plays a vital role in sustaining our diverse cultural ecosystem and enabling creative practitioners to bring their visions to life.

Country Arts Support Program (CASP) 2024

The 2024 CASP funding round supported six diverse projects across the region, totalling \$18,000 distributed throughout our region. These projects demonstrated the breadth of creative practice being supported across the region, with particular emphasis on First Nations cultural expression and community engagement. The program entered its final year, with 2025 marking the transition to a new devolved funding model.

Ganbi Dancers

Amethyst Downing

A collaboration between Gumaraa and Kyanite Amethyst Creative Co. The program “Dance with Ya Mob” will engage First Nation participants aged 5-16 years. The project will include a curated end-of-year event showcasing cultural performances learnt throughout the year.

Puppetry Mentorship

Nic Nac Theatre Company

Nic Nac Theatre Company will engage in a mentorship with the Sydney Puppet Company for professional development in puppet creation and manipulation. Planned to take place in the Southern Highlands over 30 hours between October 2024 - March 2025 and culminating in a performance visit to Cambewarra Public School.

Jerra

Lincoln Smith

‘Jerra’ (meaning ‘Story’ in Dharawal) is an intercultural theatre collaboration between Lincoln Smith and Jacob Morris, both based in Bomaderry. The work will explore the conversation between three stories: Jacob’s journey to becoming an eminent Dharawal language speaker, the story of Arrawarra, and the colonisation of Dharawal Country.

Blow me a KISS

KISS Arts Festival

KISS will invite Artists in Residence (AIR KISS project) Penny Sudabin and Tim Rushby-Smith to oversee the creation of a community-led pin-wheel wind farm. Community members will make and decorate their own windmills with messages reflecting their thoughts on wind farms.

Songs in Language

Red Shelf

Michelle McBride will write songs in her ancestral languages of Koa, Dhurga and Wiradjuri for recording and public release.

Collaborative Community Mural Workshops

Colour Mountain

Two artists facilitated collaborative design workshops with a local primary school that culminated in a mural being installed on site. The project enabled students to engage in place-making, create a sense of belonging, and connect with the art world beyond the school context.

2023 CASP Showcase

To celebrate the completion of our 2023 CASP funded projects, we hosted a presentation evening on Thursday, 26 September.

Creatives from each project were invited to present their project outcomes at an evening networking event attended by creatives and supporters from across the region. Held at The Pavilion, Kiama the event showcased the diversity and range of creativity on our south coast and provide opportunity for creatives to connect, share and collaborate.

Funded projects, 2023:

TeenTours by Gemma Hart – a series of audio stories focusing on the history and culture of regional towns

Lloyd Rees Revisited by Gerringong & District Historical Society Inc – an exhibition of paintings, prints, drawings, biographical text, and photos illustrating Lloyd Rees’ life in Werri Beach

Rewilding Life: Draw and Explore by Melissa Mylchreest – community walks encouraged discovery, mindfulness, and creativity.

Developing a Performance-Making Model for Older People by Shoalhaven Health & Arts – skills-development and performance-making program for older people.

Perpetual Pottery Project by Soul Clay Studios – repurposed, reused, and upcycled pottery projects to create contemporary works.

Expressive Art Wall Trail by Michelle Springett – independent website development for the Expressive Art Wall Trail

Connected and Informed Creative Community

Weave

The online platform Weave was soft launched in October 2024, delivering to members;

- A directory of creatives
- An events calendar
- A back-end social media style community forum
- A news article feed

The directory quickly gained traction with over 100 members listed by the end of 2024.

The Directory and Events Calendar are both public-facing and will provide an important interface for those seeking to engage with creatives of the South Coast. The back-end community forum space has been developed in direct response to consultation feedback from creatives regarding the need for connection, reducing of isolation and opportunities for creative collaboration. With provision for Facebook style friend connections, news-feed and group and forum discussion this online community provides a user friendly interface.

weave.southcoastarts.org.au

Music Mixer

In July, members of the music community were invited to attend a Music Mixer partnered between Music NSW and South Coast Arts. The event was held at Filmore's, Kiama and attended by 24 members of our local music community.

Participants ranged from emerging young musicians to older well established musicians and those transitioning from other industry work into becoming full-time musicians. The event provided an opportunity for musicians to share their experience of being a musician on the south coast NSW and discuss challenges and opportunities.

Future Fit

In 2022, South Coast Arts was established as a Not-for-Profit Incorporated Association committed to fostering creative expression across our region. Building on this foundation, 2024 marked significant organisational growth with our achievement of both Charity and Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. This milestone enables South Coast Arts to access a wider range of philanthropic funding opportunities, receive tax-deductible donations, and hold a fundraising license, ultimately creating greater income diversity to sustain our creative programs.

Our 2024 Annual General Meeting welcomed five new community members to our skills-based board. We also gained new council representatives following the local government elections, strengthening our connection to regional governance.

To enhance our operational capacity, 2024 saw the employment of five casual Project Officers. This expanded team provides South Coast Arts with greater agility to respond to emerging opportunities and a richer pool of creative perspectives to draw upon in our program delivery.



Financial Overview

South Coast Arts maintained financial stability in 2024 with continued growth and a positive surplus of \$19,402. Our revenue reached \$404,560, supported primarily by Create NSW’s core funding (\$217,000) and vital contributions from Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven Councils.

This year we successfully expanded our funding sources, securing new grants including ACFP Small Project Grants and Regional Youth Holiday Break funding. We invested in our team’s growth, increasing our staff capacity to deliver more diverse creative programming across the region.

Strategic Financial Management

Our approach in 2024 balanced long-term sustainability with resources for immediate creative programming. A key achievement was positioning South Coast Arts for Create NSW’s competitive multi-year funding program, which will provide more substantial and consistent support for our work.

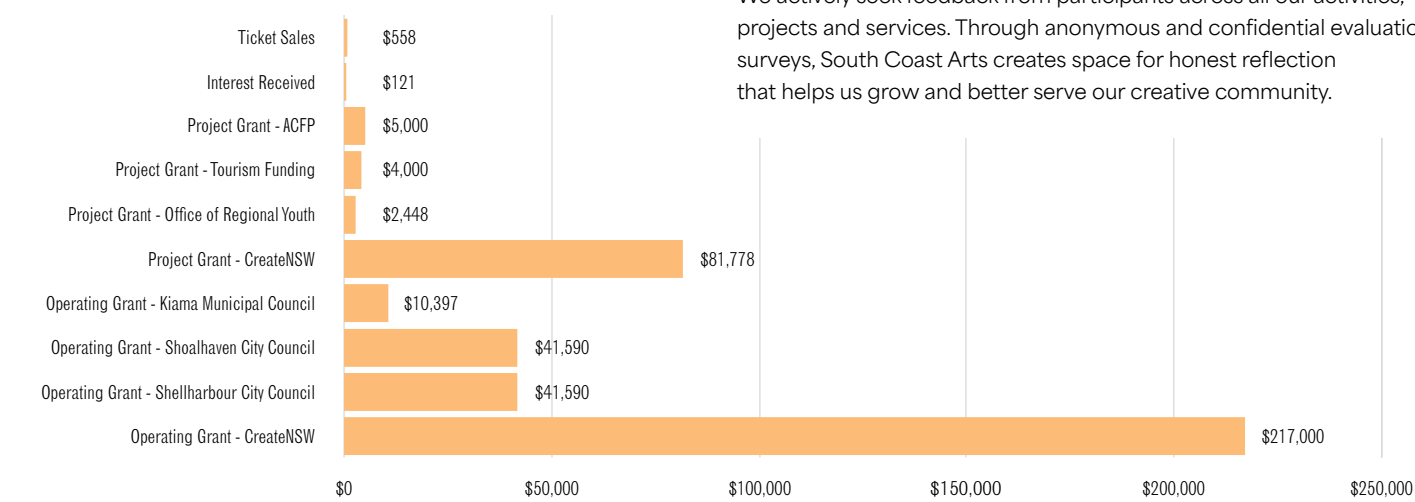
We strengthened our local government partnerships by formalising funding agreements with Shellharbour, Shoalhaven and Kiama Councils. These arrangements provide reliable operational support while fostering collaborative program development with each council’s cultural team.

Throughout the year, we maintained healthy operational reserves while securing additional project funding from Create NSW and the Department of Industries and Regional Development. This diversified funding mix supports our strategic goal of balancing core funding with project-specific grants, ensuring we can respond to creative opportunities across our region.

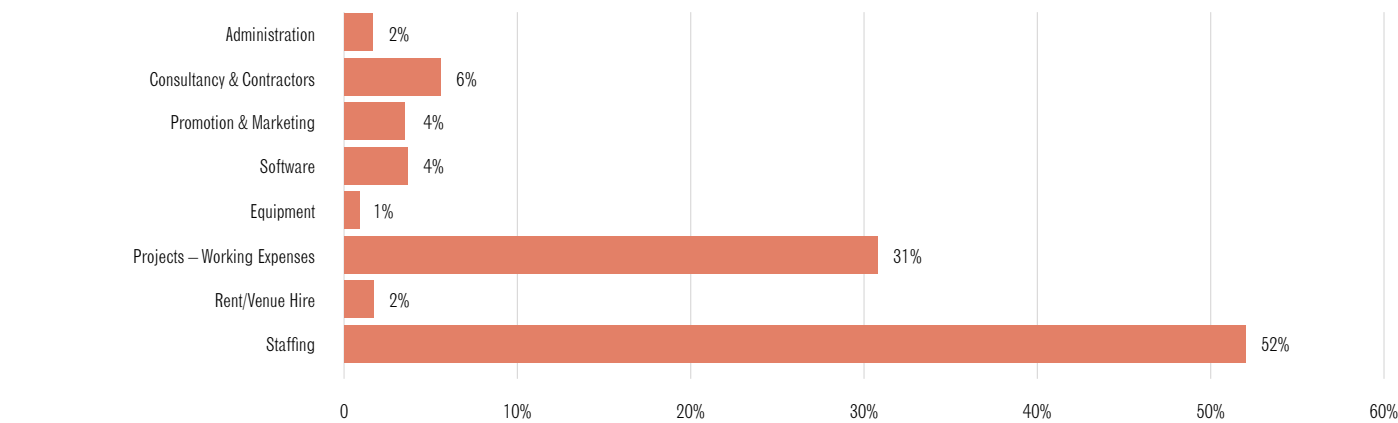
The achievement of charity and DGR status further strengthens our financial foundation, creating new pathways for philanthropic support and donations going forward.

We actively seek feedback from participants across all our activities, projects and services. Through anonymous and confidential evaluation surveys, South Coast Arts creates space for honest reflection that helps us grow and better serve our creative community.

Trading Income 2024 (Jan to Dec)



Expenditure 2024 (Jan to Dec)





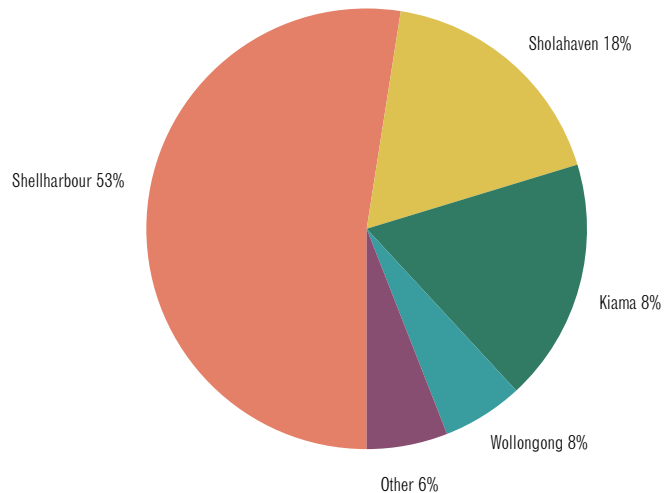
Dance rehearsals, The Sudio Kiama.
Photo: Harry Kielly, Drummerboy Pictures.

Evaluation

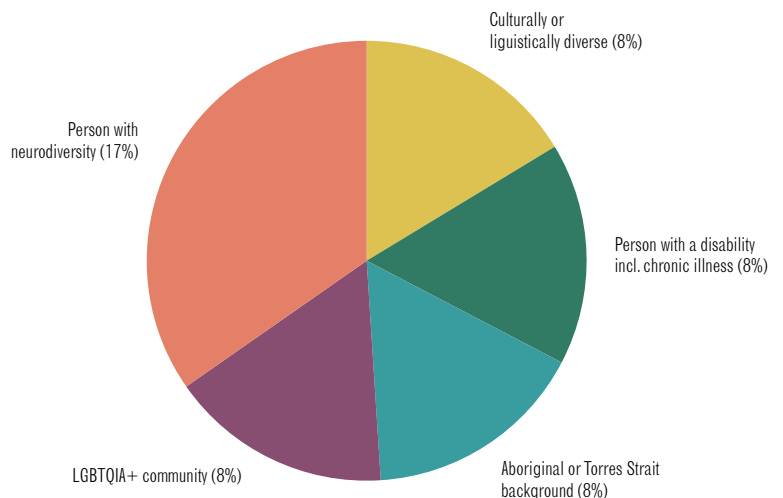
Post program/project survey respondents:

- 70% found the experience Useful
- 70% found the experience Relevant
- 88% were Happy with the experience
- 76% would recommend to someone else
- 76% experienced increased feelings of connection and community

LGA of Respondants



Diversity of Respondants



Acknowledgements

South Coast Arts gratefully acknowledges the ongoing financial support of Create NSW, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven Councils as core contributors. Their investment enables us to deliver sustainable arts programming across our diverse region and build creative capacity within our communities.

We also recognise the critical support provided through our membership with Regional Arts NSW and the Regional Arts Network of RADOs (Regional Arts Development Organisations). This connection provides valuable professional development, advocacy and operational guidance that strengthens our service delivery.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt thanks to our growing network of community partners and the dedicated creative practitioners of the South Coast region. Your participation in programs, attendance at events, and generous sharing of creative expertise enables us to fulfil our mission of enriching and inspiring our regional community through arts and culture. The vibrancy of our creative ecosystem reflects your continued engagement and support.



LOL Comedy Workshop, 2025, with comedian Marty Bright.
Photo: South Coast Arts.







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