

Eastern Riverina Arts

2023 Annual Report





The Art Factory Nightmare Soup Image: ERA



Dr Sam Bowker from the

Green Beetle Company performing shadow puppetry at Work in Progress. Image: ERA



Artwork by Tyrone Hoerler

Wagga Wagga Embroiderers' Guild

Exhibition Marking Time



Image: ERA



Linzie Nardij
Lenon Gum (2023)
Acrylic on canvas



Jez Swan performing at Work in Progress. Image: ERA

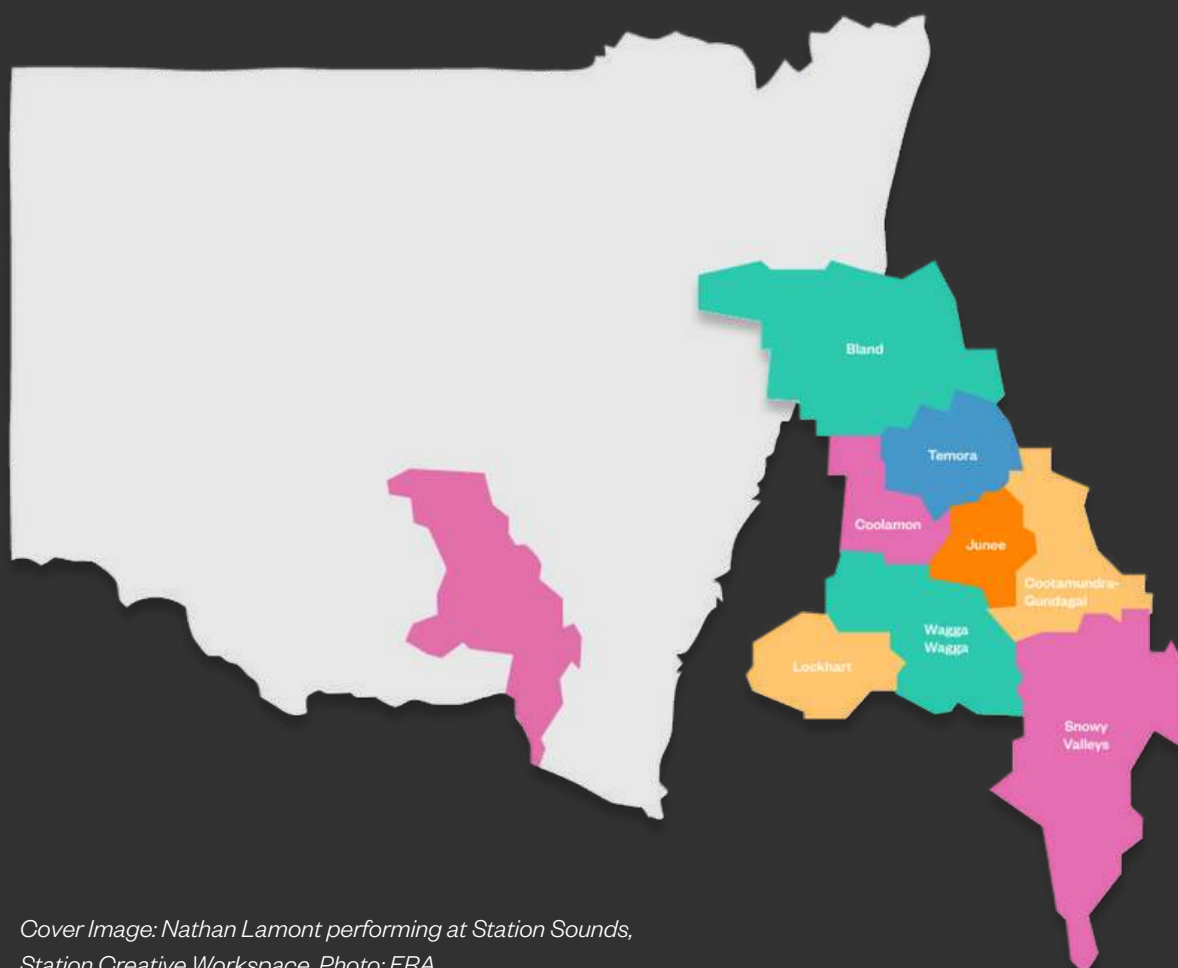
About Eastern Riverina Arts

Eastern Riverina Arts (ERA) is a small organisation providing big opportunities to artists and creative people in our region.

Eastern Riverina Arts supports creative practitioners, stimulates creative activity and enterprise, and increases participation in the arts. We work in collaboration with the eight Councils of Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Lockhart, Junee, Snowy Valleys, Temora and Wagga Wagga.

We believe that arts and culture contribute to the vibrancy, prosperity and wellbeing of communities across our region.

Eastern Riverina Arts is funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW. We are part of a statewide network of Regional Arts Development Organisations and are a member of Regional Arts NSW.



Cover Image: Nathan Lamont performing at Station Sounds, Station Creative Workspace. Photo: ERA



Chair of Eastern Riverina Arts Board Anne Lowe.
Image: Eastern Riverina Arts

Chair's welcome



Among the major achievements of 2023 are two aligned to the future direction of Eastern Riverina Arts – the launch of The Station Creative Industries Hub and the partnerships network we continue to build. Establishing a creative industries hub as a regional resource has been on ERA's strategic plan for some years; the ambition became a reality in 2023 and is providing a

new platform which we are exploiting to elevate our profile, tap into additional resources, expand our reach, and explore additional programs to service this region's arts sector. While the physical appearance of The Station will transform over the coming years, it is the networks we establish that will be pivotal to our services in the region. We will strengthen the cohesion between the arts and creative industries sector and regional business and tourism interests.

In 2024 ERA will undertake a planning process that will set the course of the next 5 years. This future view will be created in the context of two major policies, 'Revive', Australia's 5-year Cultural Policy and 'Creative Communities', NSW's Arts, Culture and Creative Industries policy, released in 2023. In them we see a common theme - the importance of multi-faceted partnerships in building a vibrant, creative, and sustainable arts and cultural ecosystem. We have a part to play in bringing these policies to life; we will advocate for support and recognition of regional creativity as we foster a local arts sector that is accessible and rich with opportunities for our artists and creatives.

After nearly 7 years, my term as Chair of the Board finishes midway through 2024; I would like to thank our member Local Government Areas – their support and trust ensures ERA's services are targeted and aligned to regional priorities. My thanks to the Board members who are very generous with their time, wisdom, and experience in providing governance and guidance to ERA. Scott Howie held the role of Executive Director till early 2021, and I am grateful for his knowledge and support. At the core of ERA is a group of talented individuals whose capabilities shine because they are part of this team; I thank them for making the magic happen! Tim Kurylowicz's leadership and vision have raised ERA's profile and expanded its service delivery. His knowledge of regional arts and creative industries is extensive, widely recognised and valued. I thank him most sincerely for this leadership and his commitment to the artistic and cultural landscape of this region.

Anne Lowe

Chair of the Eastern Riverina Arts Board of Directors



Marking Time: 50 Years of the Embroiderers Guild in Wagga Wagga Exhibition at The Station Creative Workspace. Image: ERA

Executive Director's Report



2023 was a watershed year for Eastern Riverina Arts, with the initiation of bold new projects that increase our impact, and transform the ways we deliver for our region.

We established the Riverina Touring Network – a collaboration between 5 community and council-run performing arts venues in the region. It's a strategic investment supporting sustainable venues, profitable tours and affordable tickets for towns across our region.

By transforming the historic Wagga Wagga Ambulance Station into The Station Creative Workspace, we've embarked upon a venture that takes our impact and capacity to new heights. The Station enables collaboration between our region's creatives and cultural institutions across the country. Through a growing focus on the Creative Industries sector, we are growing robust economies and vibrant communities across our region.

ERA led a range of advocacy efforts in 2023 as the NSW Government formulated its Creative Communities arts and creative industries policy. Our calls for increased support for regional touring, and for regional creative hubs, were rewarded with firm government commitments in both areas, and as we develop our next strategic plan we will proudly continue to take risks and lead creative projects that respond to the opportunities of our amazing region.

The departure in 2024 of Anne Lowe marks the closing of a hugely significant chapter in our history. In her capacity as the organisation's chair, Anne successfully steered ERA through a constitutional change, the implementation of a skills-based board and the succession of a long-serving Executive Director. Her assured leadership enabled ERA to drive successful projects such as Artstate 2020, Platform, the Arbour Festival, Renew Wagga. Under her leadership, ERA has operated with confidence, integrity and panache, forging a reputation for innovation and leadership. I'm personally indebted to her for countless hours of mentorship and advice during my 4 years in this role. Anne, your legacy will be felt across the Riverina for a very long time. Thankyou!

I'm immeasurably proud to lead a team who work with diligence and care, to serve a generous and committed board of directors, and to support a region that overflows with incredible creativity.

Tim Kurylowicz
Executive Director



*Courtney Barron performing at Station Sounds,
Image: ERA*

Connecting a vibrant and creative region

Our core services in 2023

Every day, Eastern Riverina Arts staff are in the community, supporting the growth and development of our region's arts and creative industries. Here is a snapshot of some of that core activity.

During 2023, we provided 774 separate instances of advice and support to artists, community groups and councils, and wrote 32 letters of support. We supported or partnered on more than 42 council and community projects.



Workshop in Temora. Image: ERA

We supported 30 projects through our auspicing service, with 24 active auspicees and 6 new auspice agreements.

We contributed to regional forums including business gatherings, and roundtables led by organisations like the Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC) and the Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD).

We promoted over 414 opportunities and events and funding news for creatives in our region across our social media and monthly newsletter. Over 200 of these were events and projects created by artists and organisations in our region. We published 26 artist 'spotlight' features within the Creative Riverina social media platforms, promoting artists and creative practitioners from our region and across the service areas of Western Riverina Arts and South West Arts.



2023 Highlights

Partnership

We were a key partner in the [Regional Futures project](#), an initiative of the NSW Regional Arts Network funded by Create NSW. Presented at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, the exhibition and artist-led symposium 'Artists in Volatile Landscapes' was the culmination of 18 months creative research undertaken by 30 artists from across NSW, responding to the question, 'What does the future look like in your region?'. Juanita McLauchlan was the artist representing the ERA region.

We hosted 22 women at the Station to participate in a face to face session with industry leaders for Work of Art, a state-wide project led by Regional Arts NSW. The cohort included 6 women from the ERA region, plus program participants from across the Riverina Murray region receiving presentations by Tracey Callinan (Regional Arts NSW) and Monica Davidson (Creative + Business).

We supported the Aboriginal Regional Arts Alliance's inaugural Here Now & Always project, celebrating and showcasing Aboriginal arts and culture from New South Wales to a global audience through an online festival program and art market.

We hosted the 2023 Art Auction Fundraising Dinner with Friends of Wagga Wagga Art Gallery with funds raised to support local artists, events and acquisitions by both organisations.

Professional Development

In May Milk Crate Theatre's Artistic Director Margot Politis presented a day of active and dynamic workshops covering inclusive and collaborative material making for our first workshop at the Station.

In April we hosted a unique opportunity to learn from the writer, director, and producer of the award-winning film "Evicted! A Modern Romance". They shared the process of self-funding, making, and selling independent films in Australia.

In June Creative + Business presented three workshops - Pricing for Creatives, Pitching for Creatives, and Networking tips for Creatives.

We also held a mobile office in Temora which included 1-on-1 meetings and a workshop for local creatives to up-skill in areas such as social media, selling creative work, and grant writing.

Presentation

Alongside the first exhibition program at the Station, we launched Work in Progress at the Station, a regular event in which artists and creatives show a piece of unfinished creative work (visual, performative, experimental and more), within a context of supportive critique and collaborative networking.

We delivered the Country Arts Support Program (CASP), funding a range of projects and professional development activity for creatives to level up their practice and present their work. The projects ranged from visual arts and writing workshops, script development, product research and design, residencies and exhibition development.

Country Arts Support Program (CASP)

Eastern Riverina Arts' Country Arts Support Program (CASP) program in 2023 offered two streams of funding to support arts and cultural activity in any artform. The funding supported the development of ambitious and original creative outputs, projects and collaborations across the ERA service region.

The 2023 CASP round gave 11 successful applicants in our region financial support to attend valuable professional development opportunities and produce new work across a variety of art forms, including design, jewellery, theatre, visual arts, photography, printmaking and writing.



Image: Elaine Camlin



Book Page by Julie Montgarret. Photo: James T Farley



Sapphire Pot Plant Ring by Emma Kidson. Photo: Emma Kidson



Rob Candy Workshop Nov 2023 in Tumut with Temora participants



Artwork: Kim Baker

Photograph of the Horsehead Nebula by Jeremy Kruckel



Tumut's CAST presenting A Christmas Carol



Major Project: The Station

In 2023 Eastern Riverina Arts took charge of the historic Wagga Wagga Ambulance Station, with a plan to activate and transform it into a bustling creative industries hub. The Station will support the development of new creative work and enterprise, and enable creative people and organisations to experiment, collaborate and showcase new work.

Minister for the Arts Ben Franklin announced the \$813,000 funding which was made up of \$250,000 from the Creative Capital program, to transform Wagga's former ambulance station into a Creative Industries Hub and \$563,000 under the Stronger Country Communities Fund to fund the 'Open Doors at The Ambo program'.

Commencing our lease on the Ambulance Station in April 2023, we jump-started the utilisation, engagement and community impact of the station with significant project management and systems development:

Works to transform the building commenced in April 2023 and saw the installation of a hanging and lighting track system in the gallery as well as a studio camera, mic, projection screen and speakers in our meeting room and digital studio. These bookable spaces were utilised by the community over 78 times in our first 6 months of operation.



Tranche 1 of the fitout, including renovations of the gallery and kitchen were completed in June 2023, making key spaces operational.

We established tenancies with a host of creative and likeminded organisations including Headstrong Films, Destination Riverina Murray, Regional Arts Australia, MusicNSW and Wagga Wagga Business Chamber joined us as a key tenant and activation partner.

We commenced our exhibition and events program with 4 exhibitions and 16 programs hosted thus far, recording 1089 visitors to the Station between April and December 2023.

We engaged architectural firm Dunn Hillam to commence work on a Heritage Masterplan for the Station - a vision to honour the site's history and transform it into a leading cultural facility.



Major Project: Riverina Touring Network

In 2023 Eastern Riverina Arts set up the Riverina Touring Network, connecting venues across 5 local government areas in our region. As part of the network, venues including The Arts Centre Cootamundra, Montreal Theatre (Tumut), Ganmain Hall, Tivoli (West Wyalong) and The Athenium Theatre (Junee) have the opportunity to collaborate in securing fresh performances and bring national names to their local area.

We employed a Regional Tour Producer to kick start the network, connecting the five venues, most of which are volunteer-run, and negotiating touring content offerings that are cheaper for the venues.

2023 Tours included:

- Riverina Comedy Club - featuring national headliner Daniel Muggleton
- A Little Bit of Blue by Little Wing Puppets

As part of the project, we advocated for the region by presenting at Arts On Tour's Salon event, and led the development of a collective submission to the NSW Cultural Policy on Regional Performing Arts Touring.

We developed and negotiated a substantial tour season for 2025, in consultation with network venues.

Images: Riverina Comedy Club and Little Wing Puppets

We contributed to the audience engagement capacities of network member venues. These included:

- Subsidising touring costs for the first two tours to help the network get up and running
- Coordinating region-wide marketing campaigns for both tours
- Securing an additional \$10K which we will directly contribute towards the purchase of gear and professional services for our venues





animator?

Share your thoughts to grow the local digital content industry.







work in film or TV?

Share your thoughts to grow the local digital content industry.





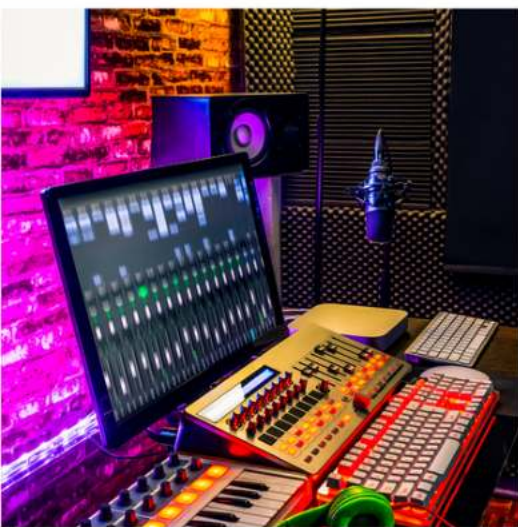


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RIVERINA DIGITAL CONTENT INDUSTRY SURVEY

sound designer?





Share your thoughts to grow the local digital content industry.

RIVERINA DIGITAL CONTENT INDUSTRY SURVEY

content creator?

Share your thoughts to grow the local digital content industry.


RIVERINA DIGITAL CONTENT INDUSTRY SURVEY

audio producer?

Share your thoughts to grow the local digital content industry.







RIVERINA DIGITAL CONTENT INDUSTRY SURVEY

game designer?

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RIVERINA DIGITAL CONTENT INDUSTRY SURVEY

digital creative?

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DEADLINE EXTENDED!






Major Project: Riverina Digital Content Industry Strategy

In 2023 Eastern Riverina Arts worked towards the development of the Riverina Digital Content Industry Strategy, identifying infrastructure, programming and service opportunities to grow the existing cohort of digital creatives servicing national and international clients from the Riverina region.

With substantial industry expansion taking place globally, and geography no barrier to industry participation, the Riverina makes a strategic location to focus sector-development activity. Local companies report a strategic advantage to their Riverina locations, being able to conveniently service clients in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, with affordable commercial office spaces in the regions.

In 2023 we conducted a survey across the Eastern Riverina Arts, Western Riverina Arts and South West Arts service regions, collecting over 75 responses from creative companies and freelancers in the Riverina region producing animation, CGI, videography, illustration and graphics - digital creatives that tend to operate out of home offices out of the eye of the public.

Sector mapping initiatives that were undertaken in 2023 included:

- Face to face focus groups with a selection of survey participants

- Consultation with industry groups including Create NSW and ScreenWorks
- Participation in the Griffith Screen Industry Forum

A draft industry development strategy has been created to support the screen and content sector to grow across the Riverina.

This is the first regional film industry development strategy in inland NSW, positioning the Riverina for investment from Film and Advertising Industry partners.



Marketing materials for the Riverina Digital Content Industry Survey in 2023. Image: ERA



Art Auction Fundraising Dinner Image: ERA



ERA Executive Director Tim Kurylowicz

Damon AMB

Vogel at Regional Futures. Image:

Artist Juanita McLauchlan and Creative Director Narelle



First Nation Community of Schools Exhibition Launch

Monica Davidson presenting at Work of Art

Image: ERA

Image: ERA



Dr Lachlan Brown

presenting at

Work in Progress

Image: ERA



Regional Futures Symposium Image:

Financial Performance

Eastern Riverina Arts continues to deliver exceptional value to its member Councils, and to governments. We have kept administrative costs low and increased our service levels through efficiency and good governance.

Eastern Riverina Arts amplifies its members' investments by seeking funding for strategic projects, boosting employment and stimulating the creative economy in our region.

In 2023, ERA delivered more than \$300,000 in grant funded projects over and above our core funding and member contributions. These ambitious regional projects are supporting cultural activity across the Riverina, growing the capacities of cultural organisations and groups, and employing artists and cultural workers across our region.

We traded a small office for a large public building, increasing our costs and our revenue-generation capabilities with The Station Creative Workspace. Grant funding through 2025 will provide staffing and program support as we ramp up the utilisation of The Station. ERA will work to identify a mix of ongoing funding and income sources to sustain this expanded cultural footprint.

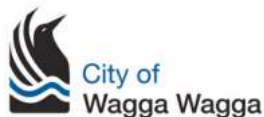
You can read our full audited 2023 financial report at easternriverinaarts.org.au/documents

Acknowledgements

Eastern Riverina Arts acknowledges the financial and in-kind support of its member Councils



TEMORA
The Friendly Shire



Eastern Riverina Arts

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Eastern Riverina Arts is funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW. We are part of a statewide network of Regional Arts Development Organisations and are a member of Regional Arts NSW.