



**South
East
Arts**

Annual Report 2015

*South East Arts operates in Yuin and Ngarigo country and respectfully acknowledges
the traditional owners whose cultures and customs have nurtured,
and continue to nurture, this region.*

Cover image: *Breaching Whale* by Natalie Bateman

Introduction

South East Arts is the regional development organisation for arts and culture in the Bega Valley, Bombala, Cooma-Monaro, Eurobodalla and Snowy River shires. We actively assist the ongoing development of, and participation in, arts and culture throughout the South East region of NSW.

South East Arts is regarded as one of the leading Regional Arts Boards in the NSW State network, with innovative projects, sound governance practice, experienced staff and supportive local council members.

South East Arts works across various art forms within the regional cultural sector, connecting with individual artists, arts organisations, communities and audiences. Our artistic program acts as a catalyst to build on existing cultural practice and activity.



Mikelangelo and friend celebrating as part of Project Cosmopolitana in Jindabyne.
Image: Rose Ricketson

Our Vision

The south east of NSW is celebrated as having a vibrant culture of excellence and innovation that gives expression to the unique qualities of our region and its people.

Our Mission

South East Arts aims to increase the social, cultural and economic wellbeing in the south east region of NSW. We provide leadership in the development of a culture of excellence and innovation in our region and support vibrant creative activity through partnerships with our communities.

We seek, provide and promote opportunities for artists to explore contemporary arts practices, giving expression to the vital connections between us as individuals and communities, in response to the world around us.

Summary

This year was the culmination of a significant advancement in the organisation's programs, audience reach and financial achievement. In the three years of the 2013-15 Strategic Plan, South East Arts secured \$1.35 million through funding and commercial operations and engaged directly with over 36,000 people in our projects as participants and audience members.

In 2015 our projects and services reached 16,230 people as audiences and participants (up from 14,500 in 2014). South East Arts secured \$186,000 in additional funding to support projects in our key focus artistic areas. Our programs and projects continue to support the development of individual artists and organisations, establishing strategic partnerships, supporting new and existing festivals and enriching the cultural calendar of the region.



Screen Locations Workshop, Jindabyne. Pictured L to R Rose Ricketson from Big hART, Andrew Gray from South East Arts, Matt Carroll from Screen NSW, Colin McDougall from Auslocations. Images: Paul McIver

Projects & Programs

53

creative
development
workshops

40

exhibitions
performances
concerts

connect
create
CELEBRATE

1,248
participants

audience
14,982

23

partnerships
local & state govt
community
cultural institutions

\$128,700
to
artists &
consultants

40
artists
employed

26
local

Chair's Report

There have been many outstanding highlights for South East Arts during 2015, from the final delivery of exceptional ongoing projects to our burgeoning work in innovative new areas.

This year our 2-year partner project with Big hART *Project Cosmopolitana* in the Cooma Monaro and Snowy region reached its climax. Inspired by local stories of one of the biggest engineering feats the world has ever seen, a mesmerizing theatre work *Ghosts in the Scheme* premiered at the Canberra Theatre Centre.

Our project with internationally acclaimed Erth Visual and Physical also came to a fabulous finale with a spectacular immersive pop-up museum at the Moruya Showground for the Eurobodalla River of Art Festival. Animated by the future of water, this was a powerful collaboration with young people and artists from the Eurobodalla.

Expand, our skills development and mentoring project guided by Lindy Hume (Artistic Director

Opera Queensland) and Caroline Stacey (Artistic Director The Street Theatre), for performing artists in the South East region also came to a close in 2015, challenging participants to hone their craft and dare to embrace big sky thinking.

Supporting and developing Indigenous art and culture in the South East is a priority for South East Arts. Significant highlights of the year include the success of the Grow the Music initiative and culminating community concert, our professional development support for Apma Creations gallery in Central Tilba and the Djaadjawan Dancers, who were placed third in the nationally celebrated Dance Rites competition at the Opera House.

This year South East Arts is moving into exciting new arenas. With the support of Screen NSW, we launched a Screen Industry Strategy for the region which focuses on building and supporting a solid community of local screen professionals and film projects, and also encourage external commercial and film opportunities in the region.

South East Arts is looking to connect with some of the issues at the heart of humanity, with the development of a new Arts and Health Strategy for the South East, which has been generously supported by our local health sector. Arts and Health is a major focus for government with the recent announcement of a NSW Taskforce on Health and the Arts to explore how the arts can benefit health and wellbeing.

South East Arts now has Deductible Gift Recipient and Charitable status and engaged a fundraising consultant to prepare us for the launch of our Public Fund. Watch this space!

Our 2016-18 Strategic Plan was delivered to Arts NSW with a new plan focusing on innovation. The plan promises stellar years ahead with project partnerships with the likes of Crimson Rosella and Erth, our new focus on Arts & Health and Screen and terrific new initiatives in the disability and tourism sector.

I would like to thank the General Manager Andrew Gray for everything he does for South East Arts, and all staff for their high performance, passion, enthusiasm and commitment to South East Arts in 2015.

Finally, to my fellow board members - thank you for your contribution of intellect, time, big picture thinking and just for rolling up your sleeves and getting the job done. In particular, I would like to honour the late Fergus Thomson who sadly passed away in 2015, and who was an inspiration to many. Also, a special thanks to Penny Bonnell whose longstanding relationship with South East Arts finished in April 2015, and whose lasting contribution oversaw many achievements including the creation of a new Constitution and our Disability Action Plan.

Bettina Richter
Chair, South East Arts



Sculptor Brett Martin of Congo's *Shark* at Erth's *Waterway Museum*, Moruya. The sculpture is constructed of hundreds of recycled food tins, a swivel chair, recycled timber, sunglass lenses (the eyes) and a clutch bearing from a Kombi van.

Artistic Focus

South East Arts' Artistic Statement identifies four focus areas for the organisation:

- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- Local Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Expression
- Creative Industries and Audience Development



Top to Bottom: Detail from painting by VASE Artist Stan Squire, Merimbula. Shirley Barrett - screenwriter, author & director in conversation with SEA Screen (Image: Karl Schwerdtfeger). Djaadjawan Dancers at the Opening of Apma Creations, Central Tilba.

Project Cosmopolitana

Exploring the stories of the Snowy Scheme through music and performance with Big hART, Cooma-Monaro Shire Council and Canberra Theatre Centre.

This partnership project engaged the community of Cooma-Monaro in a creative development process of music, storytelling and performance based workshops, culminating in the creation of an original theatre performance, *Ghosts in the Scheme*, which premiered at the Canberra Theatre Centre in September 2015, with six shows for a total audience of 2,880.



The cast of *Ghosts in the Scheme* worked closely with the Cooma community for Project Cosmopolitana. Photo: Greer Versteeg

As a legacy of this project, the musical components of the show, developed and performed by Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen, have formed the basis of new performance, *After the Flood*, touring regional Australia in 2017. South East Arts secured \$150K funding from the Regional Partnership fund (Arts NSW) to support development of the project.

Erth's Dinosaur Zoo

**Internationally acclaimed theatre tour
for children and family audiences**

Following the success of the 2014 tour, South East Arts brought back this internationally acclaimed production for general public shows in Moruya and Bega in September 2015, during the school holidays. Audiences flocked to the show with a total of 846 children and adults attending.

The performances were part our strategy to engage particularly with family audiences, many of whom have limited opportunity to attend professional live productions.

A follow-up survey indicated high levels of audience engagement and satisfaction and a desire to engage further with performing arts.



Performing Arts

Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen in *Ghosts in the Scheme*, with Bruce Myles. *Ghosts in the Scheme* was the best-selling new production at the Canberra Theatre Centre in 2015.



Battlebird, the time-travelling, space-hopping, pop-rocking kids band from Wallaga Lake, rocking the Waterways Museum, Moruya.



Expand

Giving regionally based artists the chance to develop and hone their theatre-making skills.

Expand was a skills development and mentoring project that provided 10 regionally-based artists with an interest in performance, the opportunity to connect with professional mentors whose body of work makes them leaders in their field.

Participants from the South East Arts region included Lis Shelley, Gabby Rose, Toni Houston and Gerry Corcoran.

The overall program was guided by Lindy Hume (Artistic Director, Opera Queensland) and Caroline Stacey (Artistic Director, The Street Theatre) and the industry mentors included Mic Gruchy (video artist), Patrick Nolan (ex-Legs on the Wall), Nancy Black (Black Hole Theatre), Kate Denborough (KAGE), Lara Thoms (Aphids Theatre), Chris Kohn (La Boite Theatre) and David Atfield (BITS Theatre Company).

While the project did not include a public outcome, 7 of the 10 participants created a performance project that was supported in some way by the Expand program. Funding for this project was through the Regional Theatre Fund (Arts NSW).



Above: An Expand workshop.
Below: Koori Dancers from Eden Public School (image: Toni Houston).



Erth Waterways Museum

Visual Arts

Bringing a stunning multi-disciplinary project to the region which reaped community benefits

South East Arts brought Erth Visual & Physical to Moruya to partner on a stunning creative project as part of Eurobodalla River of Art Festival, May 2015, that was developed directly with the community.

The immersive museum-style installation was created by Erth artists, six local artists and over 830 students from Moruya Public School, Broulee Public School, Bermagui Public School, Narooma Public School and Moruya High School. Engaging for both children and adults, *Erth's Waterways Museum* educated young people on the issues of water and conservation. South East Arts secured \$33K funding from Regional Arts Fund and Australia Council for the Arts and the installation was visited by 1,050 people.



Erth's Waterways Museum, Eurobodalla River of Art, Moruya was opened by the Hon. Andrew Constance MP.
Image: Toby Whitelaw



Well done! Thank you for bringing this to town. It worked so well – Marie, Moruya Heads

Such a thoughtful insight into a world problem. Hope for our childrens' future. Fun too!! – Lois & Bill, Ballarat

It was fantastic! Gave me lots of inspiration for my own class – Sally, Broulee



Just loved it. Felt like a kid again – Barry, Narooma



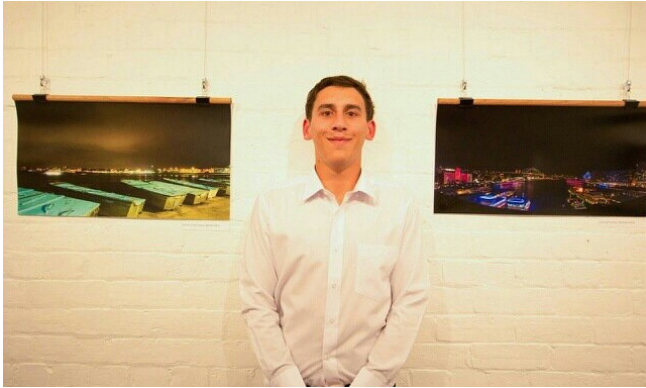
Wow! Amazing how our community can create such an AMAZING show. Educational, fun, interactive and beautiful – Leslie, Batemans Bay



Image: Toby Whitelaw

City to the Sea

Shannon Mason's photographic exhibition City to the Sea featured at the Bundian Way Gallery in Delegate, as well as the Oyster Room in Bermagui.



A showcase of works from indigenous artists from within NSW Correctional Centres.



Walbunja Custodians

'The seven daughters of Gulaga', by Sonya Naylor



Yuraga Bumulaga



'Gulaga' by Cheryl Davison

We are strong women of the southern Yuin sun.
We express ourselves through art to show our
dedication to ancestors, people and country.

Visual Arts

Bundian Way Gallery

Showcasing Aboriginal visual artists from the region

In 2015 South East Arts completed its second year of curating exhibitions for the Bundian Way Gallery in Delegate. *City to the Sea* featured photographic works of Shannon Mason, a young artist from Narooma - this exhibition was also featured at the Bermagui Oyster Room. *Walbunja Custodians and Moodjis* was a collection of works from artists across the Eurobodalla expressing traditional and contemporary art practice. *Art From the Inside II* continued the showcase of artists from NSW Correctional Centres and the year finished with *Yuraga Bumulaga* featured the works of three Yuin women. Over 2,000 people visited the gallery during the year and many artists sold their work.

Support for exhibitions

South East Arts supported a range of art prizes in the region, funding the *People's Choice Award for ReVive* exhibition in Moruya, as well as the *Bega Valley Art Prize*. Additionally, South East Arts provided an *Encouragement Award* for a regionally-based artist in the *Sculpture on the Edge* festival and provided financial support for the *Lakelight Sculpture Festival*. Our support of these art prizes has helped to assist emerging and established artists from the region.

Local Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Expression

Grow the Music

Building empowerment, community and connectedness through music at Wallaga Lake Koori Village

South East Arts initiated a partnership with Grow the Music who delivered music development workshops for the Aboriginal community at Wallaga Lake Koori Village, building empowerment, community and connectedness.

The main residency was undertaken in February 2015, with 25 participants and 350 people at the final performance.

High profile Aboriginal musicians Archie Roach and Shellie Morris provided mentorship opportunities.

South East Arts received \$13K funding from Aboriginal Regional Arts Fund and recently received \$45K through the Indigenous Languages and Arts Fund to continue the project in 2016.



Above: The concert at the culmination of the Grow the Music project attracted an audience from across the region — most of whom had never previously been to the Wallaga Lake Koori Village. There was a powerful sense of connectedness and community in the room. Image: Grow the Music



Image: Grow the Music

Djaadjawan Dancers

Professional development and business support for an inspiring Aboriginal dance group who are now achieving national recognition

South East Arts supported the creative and business development of the Djaadjawan Dancers, a project for Sharon Mason and her Aboriginal women's dance group, who have gone on to perform at high profile festivals and events across Australia.

Public performances have included Granite Town Festival, Eurobodalla River of Art Festival, Yabun Festival (Sydney), Cobargo Folk Festival, Candelo Village Festival, National Folk Festival Canberra, Alice Springs Beanie Festival, Narooma Oyster Festival – total audiences of over 3000 people. South East Arts secured \$20K for the group's professional development from ArtsNSW.

Indigenous Cultural Support

Jasmin Williams is our Aboriginal Creative and Cultural Engagement Officer (ACCEO) who has connected with Aboriginal visual and performing artists across the region.

She has supported business development and promotion of visual artists, recording opportunities for musicians and helped performers participate in regional festivals and events.

In 2015, we welcomed Aboriginal artist Natalie Bateman to the team to assist with development of Aboriginal visual artists and performers.



Images: Grow the Music



Creative Industries/**Audience Development**

SEA Screen - Screen Industry Development

South East Arts secured \$30K from Screen NSW to create and implement a regional strategy to support development of a professional screen industry.

The strategy not only seeks to develop skills and opportunities for local screen industry practitioners, but also develop more high profile commercial film shoot opportunities in the region which will reap many benefits for communities, business and tourism in the region.

During 2015 a network of screen industry professionals was established within the region, including an online resource directory.



Hermès' Spring Summer 2016 Campaign was shot at the Thredbo Diggings in Snowy River Shire Council. South East Arts assisted with location scouting. Image: Hermès

Museum Advisors Program

We continued the successful Museum Advisor program in partnership with Museums and Galleries NSW (M&GNSW). The program, supported this year by Bega Valley Shire Council, provides strategic development for museums including the Merimbula Old Schoolhouse Museum and Bega Pioneers Museum. In 2016 we will launch a new website - *Museum of the South East* - that will feature collection items from museums throughout the region.



YOOF Tube

The YOOF Tube short film competition continued its regional expansion this year with entries from young filmmakers entertaining audiences at cinema screenings. The screenings featured 13 short films (65 participants) covering a range of genres from thrillers to documentary, comedy to drama.

We enjoyed continued support from our major supporter J.D. Shaw and the overall prize money was \$5,000. Three cinema screenings at The Picture Show Man in Merimbula, The Kinema in Narooma and Bay City Cinemas in Batemans Bay attracted 298 audience members.

Detail from the *The Great War: Tales from the Far South Coast* – at Bega Pioneers Museum. South East Arts provided curatorial and content advice for this exhibition.

Core Service Delivery

In addition to the artistic program, which generally has a project-focused approach, South East Arts provides the following ongoing services to our councils and communities:

- Promotion of cultural events and news within and beyond the region through regular e-newsletters, social media and traditional media
- Support and advice on funding and sponsorship, including annual management of Country Area Support Program funding round
- Provide training and capacity building for community organisations and artists with a focus on arts business skills
- Develop and implement strategic regional initiatives to strengthen activity at a local level



South East Arts worked with Battlebird, a father-son-robot trio from Wallaga Lake — assisting in performance, marketing and business development. Battlebird have gone on to record with ABC Kids and ABC Music, and have been featured on ABC 3.

Communications

Our new website, launched in February 2015, led to a significant increase in online interaction with users. There were 21,117 unique visitors to the website (80.43% increase on previous year), the average user visited 2 pages with a 4.4 minute average length of stay (56% increase on previous year).

12 monthly e-newsletters were sent out to an email distribution list of 1220 recipients across the region, as well as 8 special edition newsletters including Sculpture on the Edge, Four Winds Festival, Lakelight Sculpture and Eurobodalla River of Art Festival. The average engagement with the e-newsletter is 30.8%, while the industry average is only 25.6%.

5,000 festivals calendars were distributed throughout the region and beyond, promoting 23 arts and cultural festivals, with support from Eurobodalla Tourism, Sapphire Coast Tourism and Excell Printing.

Social media engagement continues to grow with 1,421 likes on Facebook (up 18%) reaching an audience of 142,402. This 'reach' represents the number of people on Facebook who were served any activity from the South East Arts page, including posts, posts to our page by other people, likes, mentions and check-ins.

South East Arts is ranked second only to Arts Northern Rivers, of all the NSW regional arts boards, in terms of Facebook reach.

South East Arts is growing an engaged list of followers on Twitter, Google+ and Instagram. Our news items have also been picked up by a variety of Facebook groups and distributed online by many other arts organisations.

A YouTube channel has been established featuring videos relevant to the Screen Industry Strategy, YOOFTube and profiling regional artists.

A record 352 news items were featured on the website (increase of 23.5%) and the general manager presented a monthly arts and cultural radio segment on ABC South East Radio.

Along with coverage in regional print and radio of over 25 media releases, South East Arts was represented in print in The Canberra Times, Panorama Magazine and South Coast style magazine. Online coverage included the Sydney Morning Herald, Inside Film Magazine, Regional Arts News, NSW Regional Arts News, Screen NSW, Screen Industry Association Magazine and Social Capital magazine.

Networks

South East Arts staff attended three Regional Arts Development Officer (RADO) meetings in February, July and November. These meetings held in Sydney provide professional development, presentations from key stakeholders and cooperative initiatives. Within the region, South East Arts staff travelled 45,000km and attended 152 meetings including local government staff and councillors, arts organisations, businesses, individual artists and other key stakeholders.

Grants Advice and Support

South East Arts encourages and supports artists and community groups in seeking funding under a wide range of grant programs. In 2015 over 52 grant and other opportunities were promoted in the region. We auspice grants for individual artists and advise on applications as well as provide letters of support. Eighteen groups and individuals were supported in this way during 2015, plus a further 16 with CASP applications.

Strategic cultural advice

In 2015 the general manager continued to provide key strategic cultural advice in the region - highlights include membership of the Bega Civic Centre Advisory Group, the Public Art Advisory Committee for Snowy River and the Cooma Arts and Cultural Activities Committee. The general manager was a peer reviewer for Arts NSW funding assessment panels.



Ghosts in the Scheme received national press coverage for South East Arts. Image: Big hART

Funding Program

Country Arts Support Program (CASP) is an annual, devolved small grants (up to \$3000) program administered through Regional Arts NSW and the state's 14 regional arts boards, including South East Arts. For the 2015 funding round of CASP, we assessed 15 applications, with nine successful projects funded in our region, totalling \$19,420.

Batemans Bay Writers Festival – 2015 Festival

Program: Supporting delivery of the festival for a wide range of audience members.

Biamanga Percussion – Manga Drums: Workshops to develop collaboration between live percussion and digital sound technologies.

Merrimans Local Aboriginal Lands Council - Made

by the Ngardi Women of Wallaga Lake: Skills development in textiles and fibre art reflecting the Wallaga Lake community and environment.

Fling Physical Theatre - Socialsize Me

2015: Remount of a dynamic multimedia performance about social media, technology and communication.

Candelo Arts Society – Village Festival Opening:

A free concert featuring local and indigenous dance and music for the Candelo Village Festival.

Eurobodalla Shire Council – Artist in Residence:

A literary program with author Kate Forsyth in Batemans Bay and Moruya Libraries.

Cooma Little Theatre – 60th Anniversary

Production: Supporting production of a 60th anniversary show at Australia's longest running regional theatre.

Bega Valley Regional Gallery – Shot: Short film workshop for young people with filmmaker from the Australian Television and Radio School.

Arts Council of Eurobodalla – Term Program: Artist’s fees to cover a term of classes in Aboriginal art.



Djaadjawan Dancers took part in the Candelo Village Festival opening concert, the Narooma Oyster Festival, the Alice Springs Beanie Festival, Grow the Music and performed at many Welcome to Country ceremonies throughout the region in 2015. They also went on to place third in the *Dance Rites* competition at Homeground at Sydney Opera House — the only women to make it to the finals. Image: Sean Burke

Corporate Governance

The Board of South East Arts is made up of five council delegates and five co-opted skills-based members, with a number of sub-committees focusing on a range of priority areas.

At the end of 2015 the Board comprised the following people and positions:

Bettina Richter (Chair), Co-opt member

Cr Sue Haslingden (Deputy Chair) Council delegate - Bombala Shire Council

Olivia Gesini (Secretary/Public Officer) Co-opt member

Silas Dunstan (Treasurer) Co-opt member

Cr John Shumack, Council delegate - Snowy River Shire Council

Cr Ann Mawhinney, Council delegate - Bega Valley Shire Council

Cr Craig Mitchell, Council delegate - Cooma-Monaro Shire Council

Cr Neil Burnside, Council delegate - Eurobodalla Shire Council

Catherine Andrews, Co-opt member

Mandy Hillson, Co-opt member

In April, long-serving Board member Penny Bonnell, completed her term as a co-opted member and was replaced by Mandy Hillson. In September, Cr Neil Burnside joined the Board as Eurobodalla Shire Council representative following the passing of Fergus Thomson. Catherine Andrews resigned in December and her position will be filled in 2016.

The Board met five times in 2015 throughout the region and in Canberra. Meetings were held in February, April (including the AGM), July, October and December.

Staff

There were some staffing changes during the year and we finished with the following team:

Andrew Gray – General Manager/Regional Arts Development Officer

Alison Vandenbergh – Finance and Administration Officer

Kate Howarth – Communications Officer and Screen Industry Development Officer

Jasmin Williams – Aboriginal Creative and Cultural Engagement Officer

Natalie Bateman - Aboriginal Creative and Cultural Engagement Officer

In 2015 we farewelled Megan Luhrs and Tracy Elton from the team.



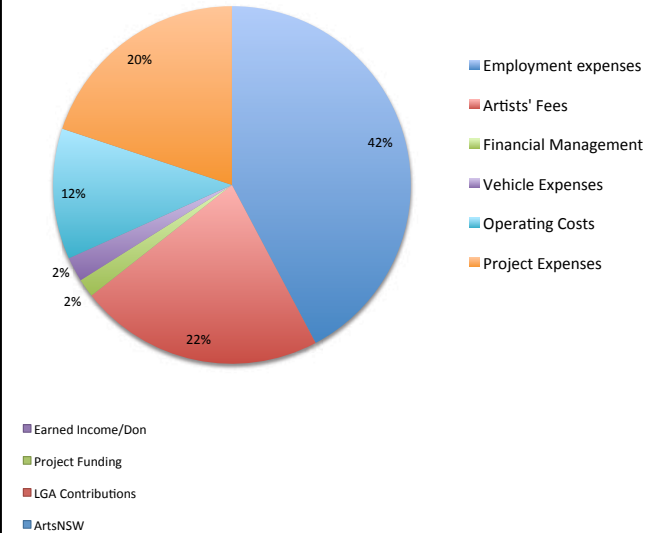
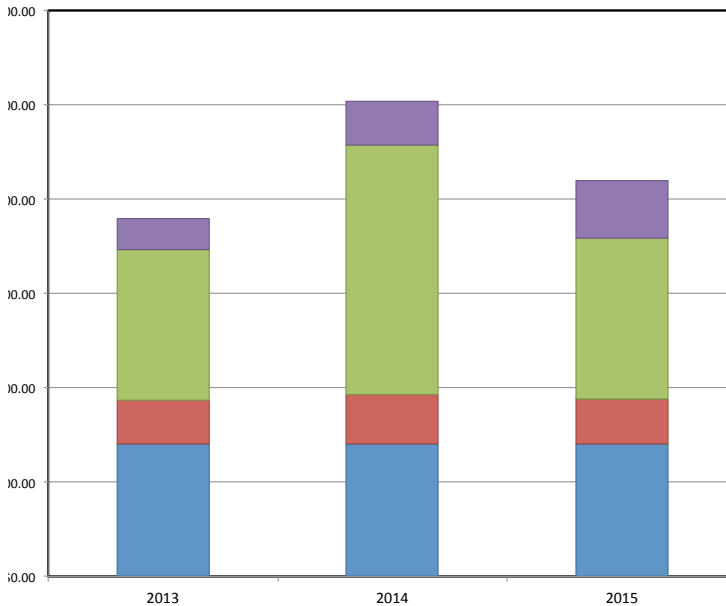
Images L to R:
Jimmy Rix's
Sunken Village
at Lakelight
Sculpture,
Jindabyne. Lex
Marinos and Anne
Grigg in *Ghosts
in the Scheme*,
Canberra. Detail
of painting by
Meryn Apma,
Central Tilba.
Erth's *Waterways*
Museum, Moruya.

Financial Overview

South East Arts recorded a deficit of \$1,481 for 2015, giving the organisation an overall equity position of \$15,565.

Total expenses were \$402,222 of which \$197,589 was project expenditure.

Income totalled \$400,740 (\$503,979 in 2014) and included \$140,000 from Arts NSW, \$48,500 from local government contributions and \$185,390 project funding and commercial operations.



South East Arts would like to acknowledge the following organisations and businesses who helped make 2015 such a successful year:

ABC Open
ABC South East
Aboriginal Cultural Centre Monaroo Bobberrer Gudu
ANU School of Art
Batemans Bay Old Courthouse Museum
Bay City Cinemas
Bega Pioneers Museum
Bega Valley Regional Gallery
Big hART
Bundian Way Project
Canberra Theatre Centre
Crackenback Farm
Cooma Correctional Centre Museum
Delegate Progress Association
Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council
Erth Visual and Physical
Eurobodalla River of Art Festival
Eurobodalla Tourism
Excell Printing
fLiNG Physical Theatre

Four Winds
Grow the Music
Gooseboy Productions
J.D. Shaw
The Kinema, Narooma
Lakelight Sculpture Festival, Jindabyne
Merimbula Old Schoolhouse Museum
Merrimans Local Aboriginal Lands Council
Moruya Museum
Museums and Galleries NSW
National Folk Festival
NSW Correctional Services
Oh'Allmhurain Films
Raglan Gallery, Cooma
Sapphire Coast Tourism
Sculpture on the Edge, Bermagui
Spiral Gallery, Bega
The Picture Show Man Cinema, Merimbula
The Street Theatre, Canberra
Wagonga Local Aboriginal Land Council
Wildbrumby Schnapps Distillery

See back cover for major partners

South East Arts appreciates the support of the following major partners:



REGIONAL
ARTS NSW



BIGHART



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Donations of \$2.00 or more to the South East Arts Innovation Public Fund are tax deductible.

