



ARTISTIC STATEMENT

OUR VISION

The South East of NSW is celebrated as having a dynamic, diverse and contemporary culture 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 Australia. We provide leadership in the development of a distinctive culture in our region by supporting dynamic 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

OUR INSPIRATION

We are inspired by our region's wildness, its diverse natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, a shared sense of place, the creativity within our communities, and by the potential for art and culture to express and celebrate our distinctive, contemporary identity to ourselves, to Australia and to the world.

OUR REGION

To live in the south east of Australia is to live in proximity to extreme natural diversity and beauty. This is a rare and special place – a place of contrasts: diverse coastal character, rugged forested foothills, hidden pockets of rainforest, cool montane reaches, expansive tablelands and snowy peaks. Ours is a contemporary Australian community, global in outlook, with a distinctive sense of place.

OUR AUDIENCE

First and foremost we seek to engage, enthuse and make meaningful connections with our fellow residents of the 5 Local Government Areas embraced within the South East Arts portfolio: the Shires of Bega, Eurobodalla, Cooma-Monaro, Bombala and Snowy River. Beyond our local communities, we seek to engage with the growing number of tourists and visitors to our region, while also seeking a national and international audience for South East Arts projects.

OUR VALUES

All of South East Arts activities will reflect our commitment to values of

- Interconnectedness
- Sustainability and growth
- Relevance and impact
- Community
- High aspirations in contemporary practice

These values underpin and sustain all aspects of South East Arts activity. We aim to support artists, groups, organisations and projects that share and reflect these values in the following creative ways.

Interconnectedness

The concept of Interconnectedness asserts that all communities are complex matrices, ecosystems of interlinked concerns, communications, relationships and events – that no one part of this organism is separate from the whole. We seek connections between our environmental landscapes and our cultural expression.

We recognise that the boundaries between art genres, technologies and creative disciplines have become increasingly fluid. “Hybrid” creations and cross-fertilisation of ideas, and adventures into new creative territories and technologies have become strong characteristics of the contemporary Australian arts landscape (urban and regional). Many of the South East region’s artists work in relative isolation, with little sense of a broader artistic community. We encourage local artists to seek connections with each other, with other art forms and technologies and to explore creative partnerships within and beyond the arts.

Sustainability and growth

We embrace concepts of environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability. By acknowledging that both natural and cultural systems evolve and change through time, we support processes that assist ongoing adaptation to change. We nurture creative practices that give expression and provide insights to these complex and changing relationships, building our resources to secure our future.

Relevance and impact

South East Arts' work and the work of the artists we support matters. It should be rewarding, but also relevant and important to real life in today's world. It should have a positive impact on our community, enriching our emotional, intellectual and spiritual life and the Australian cultural landscape.

Community

The arts – be it a pub band, a chamber music festival or public artwork - bring people together to share human experiences, and can be a rich source of community pride and celebration. South East Arts seeks to increase the social and economic wellbeing of the region through participation in arts and cultural activity. This reflects our heartfelt commitment to an understanding of community that unifies the residents of this vast, diverse region.

High Aspirations in contemporary practice

We have high aspirations and strive for continuous improvement and innovation, whether it is related to the quality of the art or our community engagement processes, both of which we see as being of equal importance.

ARTISTIC FOCUS AREAS 2011 - 2015

The following artistic focus areas will inform and intersect with South East Arts' Strategic and Annual Business Planning processes. These are the four Points of Energy across three Spheres of Engagement toward which South East Arts will concentrate its energies from 2011 to 2015, underpinned by training opportunities where available.

Four Points of Energy

1. Performing Arts
2. Visual Arts
3. Local Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Expression
4. Creative Industries and Audience Development

Three Spheres of Engagement

1. Grass roots and community-focused projects
2. Professional and aspiring-professional projects
3. Projects of national significance

Professional and Skills Development

South East Arts seeks, where possible, to support professional and skills development with training opportunities across all these areas.

OUR FOUR POINTS OF ENERGY

The following four areas have been identified for priority focus and audience development over the 2011-2015 planning period, South East Arts' emphasis on interconnectedness, relevance and impact invites collaborations in these areas across all art genres.

1 Performing Arts

While we celebrate excellence in specialist performing arts practice, we applaud experimentation and collaboration. We encourage local performers and groups to seek partnerships within and beyond the region, and to consider the creative possibilities of:

- Connecting with other performance and visual art forms,
- Drawing on local themes, places, social issues and stories;
- Local Aboriginal stories, creative expression and culture;
- Creative partnerships with communities outside the arts;
- Intersections with digital technologies and/or the natural environment
- Regular access to excellent, relevant and innovative national touring productions in our region.

2 Visual Arts

As in the performing arts, we encourage both excellence and new ideas in areas of particular focus for the future, including:

- Greater engagement with new media, film-making and digital arts;
- Local Aboriginal stories, creative expression and culture;
- Interconnectedness: collaborations and partnerships (as above)
- Work inspired by the local environment, nature and bio-diversity
- Public artworks that reflect the social and natural environment.

3 Local Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Expression

We support the following statement from the NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy 2010: "Arts and cultural expression has always played a vital part in Aboriginal society and continues to be an important element of the social fabric of Aboriginal people and communities throughout Australia."

We seek to build partnerships with local Aboriginal artists and communities in line with the following goal of the NSW Aboriginal Arts Strategy:

"To foster a vibrant Aboriginal arts and cultural sector that affords Aboriginal people greater opportunities to participate in, share and strengthen their culture through arts practise; and develop careers and businesses in the arts and cultural sector".

4 Creative Industries and Audience Development

We will identify the current strength and future potential for the growth of a dynamic, sustainable creative industry in our region and undertake research that will underpin the development of a comprehensive long-term regional creative industry strategy. A sustainable creative industry and thriving arts sector demands that we build, engage with, understand and reward audiences for all South East Arts activity.

OUR THREE SPHERES OF ENGAGEMENT

These three spheres of engagement may be self-contained or interconnected. While we appreciate that the demands and aspirations of each is unique, we also encourage “hybrid” projects (for example a project of national significance with strong community focus, or aspiring and professional artists working with international artists).

Underpinning all three spheres is the drive to identify training and professional development and capacity building opportunities to strengthen the skills of all cultural practitioners and build support from the community.

1 Grass roots and community-focused projects

These encourage community cohesion, pride, creativity and confidence through participation in the arts. The telling of local stories, celebration of regional identity, engaging with local Aboriginal culture, the exploration of contemporary themes, environmental concerns or the creation of public art work are all important aspects of local creative expression.

2 Professional and aspiring-professional projects

These create opportunities to develop and celebrate the talent, skills and experience of our community’s professional and aspiring professional artists. Relationships with mentors and leaders from within and beyond the region are vital.

3 Projects of national/international significance

These are events of scope, scale and ambition that make an impact on the national or international cultural landscape in some way. These projects are often characterised by collaboration and may involve local artists, communities and organisations working with specialists from outside the region.