

SWELL: the art of being well

Arts & Health Regional Strategy

What is Arts and Health?

Arts and Health is the *practice* of using the arts to improve health and wellbeing, as well as enhancing health care experiences for patients and their support networks. **Arts** refers to *different ways of being creative* (for example music, storytelling and writing, painting and drawing, dance, performing). **Health** relates to *physical, mental and social health and wellbeing*, both for individuals and communities.

The arts can play a significant role in promoting the health and wellbeing of patients, staff, clients and visitors to health services and within the broader community. The incorporation of the arts in the delivery of our health services provides an opportunity to promote healthy living and illness prevention, provide support in the management of illness and chronic disease, aid rehabilitation and recovery and provide comfort as part of end of life care.

Purpose of SWELL: Arts and Health Regional Strategy

The purpose of *SWELL: Arts and Health Regional Strategy* is to:

- Provide South East Arts with a framework to support the growth of arts and health activities in the region.
- Identify ways for regional arts professionals to collaborate in the development and delivery of projects and activities that facilitate important health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Build alliances between arts and health organisations and individuals to respond to the *NSW Health and The Arts Framework*.

South East Arts covers the three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Bega Valley, Eurobodalla and Snowy Monaro located within the Southern NSW Local Health District (SNSWLHD). The scope of the strategy is considered across a range of service sectors and program areas including hospitals, community health centres, multi-purpose services, mental health and drug and alcohol services.

Strategic Vision

By 2022 there will be a diverse range of arts and health initiatives across the South East region of NSW which assist to build stronger, healthier and happier communities, supported by strong networks, resources and opportunities for participation and learning.

Objectives for South East Arts

South East Arts aims to:

- Support the development of arts and health approaches and initiatives in health care settings across the region
- Facilitate connections and alliances between the arts and cultural community and health services
- Build the capacity of arts and health practitioners to make meaningful contributions to both artistic practice and health and wellbeing goals.

Key Goals for South East Arts

1. Expand core business to include a strategic focus on Health and The Arts over the 5 years 2017-2021.
2. Play an active role in supporting the implementation of the NSW Health and The Arts Framework in the constituent health services of the SNSWLHD that falls within South East Arts boundaries.
3. Offer a range of consultancy services to its principal Health Service Manager stakeholders, the principles, elements and key activities of which will:
 - Align with the NSW Health and The Arts Framework
 - Enable collaborative partnership
 - Be supported initially through existing resources and as a result of internal integration of projects to take a greater health and arts focus.

In particular, South East Arts will offer Health Service Managers a range of policy, programmatic and operational supports in the areas of:

- *Governance* - support and participate in the regional governance framework for arts and health
 - *Promotion and Advocacy* - raise the profile of arts and health across the region
 - *Resources and information exchange* - build the knowledge, resource and social capital of the arts and health community across the region
 - *Training and capacity building* - develop the practice and partnership capacity of the creative sector and health professional working in the field of arts and health
 - *Partnerships and funding* - build the funding base and resource development opportunities for arts and health approaches in the region
3. Seek funding to employ an Arts and Health Project Officer to engage in a range of strategic, best-practice regional arts and health projects. These projects will *align* with a range of state and locally determined health priorities, *focus* particularly on the social determinants of health and *target* specific priority populations.
 - The cultural integrity, health and wellbeing of **Aboriginal communities**
 - Mental health, wellbeing and resilience amongst **young people**
 - Creative ageing for **older people**

Strategic Regional Projects

South East Arts will seek funding to support and project manage new regionally based arts and health approaches and projects in the following areas:

<p>Aboriginal Communities</p> <p>To creatively transform health service spaces to embrace cultural healing needs and practices</p>	<p>Aboriginal history and heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop visual and educative stories for health service sites, focusing on Aboriginal heritage, history and health, exploring the engagement of aboriginal people with hospitals and health services. <p>Places of Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists, health workers and the wider community in the creation of artworks to create 'spaces of welcome' in health services. Outcomes could include Indigenous wayfinding and signage, public art installations, healing gardens, gathering spaces, exhibitions and performance pieces.
<p>Young People</p> <p>To connect young people to creative arts experiences that build resilience, connection and support on life's journey</p>	<p>Rhythm Nation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Music program that uses hand drumming to foster improved levels of personal and social confidence and develop social skills. Based on the Holyoake DRUMBEAT program which was originally designed to engage Aboriginal young people and used by organisations and schools working with alienated and socially dislocated individuals. <p>Theatre of the Edge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A mix of play, circus, magic, gritty drama and performance. Arts and health workers would 'embed' creative, mental and general health messages in group devised pieces, poetry slams and other contemporary performance forms for young audiences.
<p>Older People</p> <p>To support vital and creative engagement with life at any age</p>	<p>Dance your Heart Out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local musicians, dance teachers, artists, arts and health workers collaborating to offer a range of dance experiences such as partnered and formation dances, musical era dances, curated music for dance parties, Dance-a-thons and festivals. <p>Music and Memory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A personalised music program for people with dementia specifically but also for people who are in pain, feeling depressed or isolated. Delivered in partnership with the Arts Health Institute.