

Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Mid-term review of
Strategic Plan 2021-2025



Acknowledgement of Country

At Country Arts SA, we live and create on the lands of the First Nations peoples of South Australia and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We embrace the principle of 'First Nations First' and are committed to working together to safeguard, celebrate and present First Nations' living cultures.

Mid-term review

Country Arts SA's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan was finalised just as COVID-19 hit Australia.

Halfway through the current plan's term, the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, climate emergency and economic downturn continue to have a significant impact on our work as a statutory authority, regional producer and not-for-profit cultural organisation, as well as on our practitioners and communities.

While many of the plan's ambitions and strategies remain as relevant and needed as ever, this mid-term review has identified the importance of acknowledging what we've been through over the past few years, and how the nature or urgency of those strategies may have changed.

Our changing context

South Australia's diverse and vibrant regional arts sector was already vulnerable before the pandemic. The coronavirus and economic downturn have since compounded the impact of bushfires and floods – with regional communities at the frontline of much of this change.

Regional arts organisations have suffered from restrictions on in-person gatherings and interstate tourism, and subsequent cross-sector burnout and staffing issues.

Audiences came to rely more heavily on artistic work for distraction, reconnection and recovery, while the livelihoods of South Australian artists and arts workers became more precarious than ever – with some leaving the sector entirely.

And while digital arts offerings increased options for arts engagement for a time, regional communities are now starting to miss out as city-based service providers return to pre-pandemic delivery models (or default to digital-only instead of hybrid activities).

A refreshed Strategic Plan

This refreshed Strategic Plan responds to these challenges and incorporates the various learnings and ways of working we developed in response.

From 2023-24 to 2024-25, our work will focus on recovery and wellbeing through using onsite and online arts engagement as a tool for connection, healing, expression and celebration.

As always, our work will be led by South Australia's regional artists, arts workers, arts organisations and participants, for the benefit of local and international audiences and communities who engage with the regions' unique stories and regional arts practice.

Our vision is for artists and communities of regional South Australia to thrive through engagement with the arts, and be recognised as valued contributors to the nation's cultural voice.

Country Arts SA aims to transform the way the arts are made and engaged with in regional South Australia.

Our values

Place

We keep regional South Australia at our core by being informed, led by and responsive to regional communities.

Impact

We generate local and national legacies by embedding artists in regional communities.

Equity

We embrace experiences and perspectives of regional South Australia's diverse communities and address the barriers that stop people getting involved.

Creativity

We nurture, celebrate and showcase creativity from across regional South Australia.

Respect

We embrace diversity and act with integrity, transparency and generosity.



Our work

Country Arts SA increases access to the arts for regional South Australian communities and shares unique stories through extraordinary arts experiences.

We listen, respond and collaborate.

We produce ambitious and accessible arts experiences.

We present work for people of all ages and interests.

We empower regional communities to create and interact with the arts as audiences, participants, artists and leaders.

Our purpose

Country Arts SA's unique state-wide, multi-artform remit and three decades of experience puts us in a singular position to make art and tell stories that can't be made anywhere else in the world, and to contribute to a national cultural identity that embraces the regional communities at its heart.

Opportunities to experience, participate in and benefit from the arts should be available to all South Australians. The arts are a leading contributor to the strength of our regional communities. They shape our culture, identity and economy, contribute to employment, tourism and education, and support good health, wellbeing and community cohesion.

Our people

The combined strength of the Country Arts SA team, board, partners and collaborators gives us our reputation as a national leader in regional arts practice.

Our Board inspires the leadership of the organisation, builds relationships with strategic stakeholders, and oversees our governance and long-term sustainability.

Our First Nations Advisory Committee guides the Board in its engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, artists and communities, and the implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Our Leadership Team provides stewardship and strategy to lead the organisation, enhance resilience and sustainability, and build a positive organisational culture.

Our Experiences Team produces and presents a diverse program of arts experiences, builds relationships with artists, arts organisations and communities and creates dynamic art spaces.

Our Relationships Team builds partnerships, develops support for our activities, and promotes the impact of our work.

Our Sustainability Team supports and nurtures our team, streamlines our processes, and manages our resources responsibly.



Our communities

When we say 'regional SA', we mean all of the communities of regional and remote South Australia, including Adelaide Plains, Adelaide Hills and Mount Lofty Ranges, APY Lands, Barossa Valley, Clare Valley, Eyre Peninsula, Far North, Far West, Fleurieu Peninsula, Flinders Ranges, Kangaroo Island, Limestone Coast, Mallee, Mid North, Murraylands, Riverland and Yorke Peninsula.

When we say 'artists', we mean anyone doing or making any form of art including choirs, crafters, dancers, designers, digitalists, film-makers, musicians, performers, photographers, poets, singers, writers, visual artists and more, at any level from hobbyists to professionals.

When we say 'arts workers', we mean anyone employed, leading or volunteering in any kind of arts group or organisation at any level, from volunteers to Board members, arts facilitators to independent producers, stage managers to lighting operators, and anyone else who contributes to the regional arts ecosystem.

Our goals and priorities

From 2023-2025, Country Arts SA's work will be focused on the following three goals:

1. Artists and Communities

We will empower the diverse artists, arts workers and communities of regional South Australia through creative collaborations and developments, high quality arts experiences, and relevant engagement opportunities.

2. People and Partners

We will work together to rebuild connection, resilience and wellbeing post-COVID-19 and support our people and sector to strive and thrive.

3. Assets and Resources

We will continue to improve our sites, systems and sustainable resources to provide a strong, viable and fit-for-purpose organisation and offer across our state-wide Arts Centres, venues and office spaces.

Each of these goals will be measured against:

- **First Nations First**
How we engage and elevate regional Aboriginal Elders, artists and communities.
- **Legacy**
How we support, sustain and develop our team and our work.
- **Climate Responsibility**
How we measure, respond to and reduce our environmental impact.

For each goal we outline high level Key Performance Indicators from which detailed strategies will be developed each year in associated Business Plans and other organisation-wide plans.

Our Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Artists and Communities:

We will empower the diverse artists, arts workers and communities of regional South Australia through creative collaborations and developments, high quality arts experiences, and relevant engagement opportunities.

Throughout 2023-25, we will:

- **First Nations First** | **Legacy**: Work in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders, artists and communities to produce and present work that honours their living cultures
- **First Nations First** | **Legacy**: Increase the number and diversity of people engaging with the arts in regional South Australia, in line with our new Equity Plan
- **First Nations First** | **Legacy** | **Climate Responsibility**: Collaborate with regional artists and communities to produce and present ambitious and accessible new work that uncovers and celebrates local stories, and share those experiences with local, national, international and online audiences
- **First Nations First** | **Legacy**: Provide opportunities for artists and arts workers to build their practice and careers
- **First Nations First** | **Legacy** | **Climate Responsibility**: Innovate new ways for regional communities to connect with our spaces and programs – onsite and online

Goal 2

People and Partners:

We will work together to rebuild connection, resilience and wellbeing post-COVID-19 and support our people and sector to strive and thrive.

Throughout 2023-25, we will:

- **First Nations First | Legacy:** Work with Aboriginal Elders, artists and communities to decolonise our organisation, Art Centres and programs through increased employment, representation and access, prioritising Aboriginal culture and arts practice, and centering Aboriginal ways of learning and doing
- **First Nations First | Legacy:** Increase the diversity of our team, board and decision-makers to make sure we represent the diverse, intersectional communities of regional South Australia
- **First Nations First | Legacy | Climate Responsibility:** Rebuild in-person connections post-pandemic to ensure our work is informed, inspired and led by the needs and ambitions of regional artists, arts workers and communities – ‘nothing about us, without us’
- **First Nations First | Legacy | Climate Responsibility:** Create more regional employment opportunities
- **First Nations First | Legacy | Climate Responsibility:** Embed continual reflection, learning and improvement to develop an open, positive and productive organisational culture that centres team wellbeing, communication and collaboration

Goal 3

Assets and Resources:

We will continue to improve our sites, systems and sustainable resources to provide a strong, viable and fit-for-purpose organisation and offer across our state-wide Arts Centres, venues and office spaces.

Throughout 2023-25, we will:

- **First Nations First | Legacy | Climate Responsibility:** Pursue investment to ensure our Art Centres are welcoming and accessible community hubs and provide appropriate professional resources
- **First Nations First | Legacy | Climate Responsibility:** Develop and support priority programs and initiatives through new funding, business development and partnership models
- **First Nations First | Legacy | Climate Responsibility:** Review and evolve our internal systems and processes (both on and off-line) to improve how we communicate and connect with each other, streamline our workloads, and transform our delivery
- **Legacy | Climate Responsibility:** Actively reduce the environmental impact of our venues and programs
- **First Nations First | Legacy | Climate Responsibility:** Embed ongoing feedback mechanisms to understand, measure and communicate the value of the arts



Dave Laslett and Kasia Tons,
To live deliberately, 2020.
Site based installation/sculpture, Flinders Ranges.
Courtesy of the artists.
Commissioned by Country Arts SA.



To live deliberately

Nestled between wrapping spinifex, enveloped by opposing elements, a vibrant lone artist sits transfixed, all consumed, by a paramount process of discovery and determined expression.

The reality of the regional artist is often filled with traps and pitfalls, coupled with oppressive waves of non-additive elements of distraction, and yet within all of this a quiet calmness remains as the artist searches fervently for pathways and opportunities.

To have arrived at this point of stillness, focus and creation, a plethora of obstacles have needed to be overcome on a regular basis; financial sustainability, access to goods and services and living face to face with the ever-changing weather.

Out of this existence, a resilient fortitude is born, enabling the creation of pathways toward Nietzsche's true worlds. The ability to live within these worlds, requires a deep focus while nurturing an undiluted practice from external noise and distractions of the external fast-paced world.

Throughout the process the figure itself begins to wear the mark of a regional artist, the red dust a mark of endurance, reinforcing the process and the practice instinctively.

— Dave Laslett and Kasia Tons



Government of
South Australia



COUNTRY
ARTS
SA