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South Australian regional arts projects highlight importance of collaboration, connection and creativity in challenging times

The Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund has provided over \$200,000 in support of nine arts projects across regional and remote South Australia in the March 2026 round of Project Grants. The projects funded encompass a diverse range of artforms including musical theatre, scriptwriting, visual arts, choreography and songwriting.

Innovative, multi-artform projects include the creation of a musical about the algae bloom by a youth arts company on the Fleurieu Peninsula, and an on-Country creative development of a Ngarrindjeri song cycle theatre work grounded in matrilineal knowledge and cultural responsibilities.

Several projects, such as the *Burra Orchestra Project* and *'Kurna Yarta - The Seasons' Regional Tour*, feature collaboration between regional and Adelaide-based musicians and artists to deliver unique events for regional communities.

Support for regional South Australia's artists of the future was another theme of this funding round, with *Bottlebrush Studio 2026-27*, *Portal Festival* and *Kungka Tjuta Music Project* all being recognised as providing wonderful opportunities for young people to develop artistic skills.

Australian Government Minister for the Arts, the Hon Tony Burke MP said,

"There's a place for every story and a story for every place and our regional artists are critical in ensuring Australian stories are told across the country.

"Boosting the cultural infrastructure of those communities means regional arts will go from strength to strength.

"This funding shines a light on projects across the country, helping regional artists reach new audiences within their communities and beyond."

Country Arts SA Chief Executive Anthony Peluso said, "The projects funded in this round highlight the depth of talent across regional South Australia, with artists responding to their communities, their environments, and their culture in powerful and creative ways.

"It's especially encouraging to see young people front and centre in shaping the future of the arts in their regions."

The full list of successful initiatives in this round are listed below.

The Regional Arts Fund is an Australian Government program that supports sustainable cultural development in regional and remote communities in Australia.

The program is managed by Regional Arts Australia and administered in South Australia by Country Arts SA. The next funding round will open 6 July 2026 and close mid-August 2026 for projects that commence after 1 January 2027. For more information about the Regional Arts Fund, visit www.countryarts.org.au.

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REGIONAL ARTS FUND – ROUND 1, 2026
LIST OF PROJECTS FUNDED IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Port Augusta

Juanella Donovan – Knowledge Holder

\$17,972

Juanella will create a new body of work for Nature Machine: The 6th Tamworth Textile Triennial, a major national exhibition of contemporary textile practice at the Tamworth Regional Gallery in 2026, curated by Blake Griffiths. The project grant will support the research, development, and presentation of this new work including: travelling to Country to consult with Elders, collect materials and spend time at the sacred women's waterhole Pungka Pudinha; creating an installation comprising of six works on paper and a sculptural, woven vessel; and participating in the opening and public program of the Triennial in Tamworth.

Encounter Bay

Dr Emiko Artemis – Professional development with movement choreographer

\$3,245

Emiko will work with choreographer Gulsen Ozer to interpret the writings of Christina the Astonishing, a twelfth-century mystic anchoress, into a series of movements for a commissioned performance piece. Emiko will travel to Melbourne for in-person sessions with Gulsen at Dance House studios, North Carlton, and then undertake follow-up sessions online. The work will be presented at ACE Gallery in Adelaide in September and October 2026, allowing Emiko's work to reach a wide audience.

Moonta

Sonya Rankine – Lakun Mi:mini: On Country Creative Development

\$30,000

Lakun Mi:mini: On Country Creative Development is the next phase of a new song cycle theatre work grounded in Sonya's Ngarrindjeri matrilineal cultural connection. Initially conceived during a fellowship with Brink Productions, the knowledge and cultural responsibilities carried through Sonya's family sit at the heart of the work and shape its narrative, visual language and creative process. Integral to this phase of development is creating space to listen, gather and respond directly to Country by immersing the creative team within the living story of Lakun Mi:Mini on Ngarrindjeri Country at the Coorong and Raukkan.

Normanville

Yankalilla Youth Theatre Inc. – Algae Bloom: The Musical

\$30,000

In response to the algae bloom impacting coastal communities throughout South Australia, young people from the Yankalilla Youth Theatre will use song and dance to express how this environmental catastrophe has affected them and their community. The project will see young creatives taking the lead to create an original 30-minute musical to be performed at the Hopgood Theatre in southern Adelaide. Supported by local creatives, the young artists will be mentored in writing, directing, choreography, set and prop design, costume design and marketing.

Umuwa, APY Lands

Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media – Kungka Tjuta Music Project

\$26,220

The Kungka Tjuta Music Project is a six-week program of women-focused music residencies across the APY Lands communities of Amata, Ernabella, Mimili, Indulkana, Pipalyatjara and Fregon. Delivered by PY Media in partnership with NPY Women's Council, the program will engage Anangu women aged 17–25 through culturally grounded workshops in drumming, songwriting, performance and recording. Led by women facilitators and Aboriginal artists, the project aims to build confidence, creative skills and leadership. Each residency concludes with a community sharing alongside senior women, thus strengthening cultural expression, intergenerational exchange, and pathways into ongoing music and media opportunities.

Burra

Jodie O'Regan – Burra Orchestra Project

\$29,102

The Burra Orchestra Project will bring South Australia's Mid North community together in a unique creative collaboration throughout 2026. Led by local composer Jodie O'Regan with support from Chamber Music Adelaide, the project invites residents to help create an original music-and-libretto work using their stories, sounds and handmade instruments. Developed with school and community participants, the project will culminate in a free public performance at the heritage-listed Burra Town Hall, featuring musicians from the Adelaide Baroque Quartet and recorded by ABC. Blending community voices with professional artistry, the initiative will create a lasting cultural record celebrating Burra's identity and creativity.

Cape Jervis

The Bowerbird Collective – 'Kurna Yarta: The Seasons' Regional Tour

\$25,000

The Bowerbird Collective, Jamie Goldsmith and Taikurtinna Dance Group will present the first regional tour of Kurna Yarta: The Seasons, an 80-minute multimedia performance exploring connection to Country, culture and community. Free outdoor performances will be staged across Goolwa, Murray Bridge, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Lincoln in partnership with local councils and communities. This major collaboration will deliver high-quality arts experiences for regional audiences while strengthening partnerships and supporting future creative development and documentation.

Port Lincoln

Emma Fuss – Bottlebrush Studios 2026-27

\$9,600

Bottlebrush Studio, an after-school visual arts program on Lower Eyre Peninsula, is supporting creative development for children aged 7–18 through artist-led classes in painting, printmaking, drawing and sculpture. Delivered by artists Emma Fuss and Katie Smith, the program provides inclusive opportunities for young people, with strong participation from neurodiverse children and those facing barriers to traditional extracurricular activities. An exhibition showcasing the young participants' work will be a part of the 2027 SALT Festival program, to engage new arts audiences and highlight the positive impact of arts participation in regional communities.

Barmera

Part of Things – Portal Festival

\$29,978

Portal Festival is a fantasy-themed storytelling event bringing together the Riverland's diverse creative communities, including writers, gamers, illustrators and theatre-makers. Building on successful iterations in 2022 and 2024, the festival presents a weekend of workshops, performances and events designed to support regional artists and activate the local community. Highlights include a launch night with exhibition and film screenings, tabletop game development, and demonstrations, followed by two days of hands-on creative workshops and collaborative activities. Community-led and locally anchored, Portal encourages artistic growth, creative exchange and celebrates the region's strong connection to imaginative storytelling.

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