ARTSTATE LISMORE

FINAL REPORT

PROMOTING THE VALUE OF THE ARTS AND DEMONSTRATING REGIONAL EXCELLENCE IN NEW SOUTH WALES
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FOREWORD

FROM STEPHEN CHAMPION
CHAIR, REGIONAL ARTS NSW

To me the energy in Lismore was very much about the opportunities that creating in a regional setting offers rather than the obstacles. There are many things about a shared sense of place that influence regional practice and also accommodate it. There was a tangible excitement about international, national and regional creators gathering in a regional setting. Being able to walk so easily from accommodation to the Lismore City Hall, to the Conservatorium, the Gallery and the Quad.

For those in Lismore there was a real buzz about having so many creative friends visit. For those from outside Lismore there was a buzz about gathering in such a creative region.

The opening of Artstate set the tone. It was an amazing celebration and spectacle despite the rain, which stopped for the most important performance section. With ease the opening set rain, which stopped for the most important performance section. With ease the opening set the tone for the rest of Artstate, with Aboriginality central in an unforced and natural way. This was carried through to the hand over from Bundjalung to Wiradyuri.

All through the event new connections were being made, new partnerships being formed such as between RADO ED’s and Performing Lines, between so many of us and Karoline Trollvik, and between arts practice and young people inspired by Nick Mahmat. We were also inspired by the partnerships formed between film makers and artists with disabilities which highlighted their incredible abilities.

It isn’t all seen through rose coloured glasses but events like Artstate reinforce the surplus of regional practice rather than the deficit.

FROM ELIZABETH ROGERS
CEO, REGIONAL ARTS NSW
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, ARTSTATE

Lismore made us very welcome. It was amazing to see the city buzzing with delegates and the community so engaged with Artstate – young and old, artists and the local community. The Aboriginal opening, 'Djanda Mandi Gingerlah', directed by Rhoda Roberts, set the scene beautifully for the subsequent days of discussion, performances, exhibitions and installations. The finale performance by the talented musicians from all over regional NSW making up Regional Youth Orchestra was a fitting conclusion to an exciting four days. Not a lot of sleep was had.

TOPICS EMERGING FROM THE ARTSTATE LISMORE RAPPOTEURS’ SUMMARY

• That the 'tyranny of distance' is not always a deficit but can be an immense benefit in providing creatives with space to grow, experiment, and collaborate with communities. Opportunities arise in regions.

• The need for mutually beneficial exchanges with metro areas to involve city artists, arts workers and audiences visiting the regions.

• The need to respect expertise in Aboriginal arts – no one artist or arts worker is a cultural attaché and shouldn’t be expected to be a consultant.

• The importance of knowledge sharing.
NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

SPEAKERS PROGRAM

Plenary Sessions
- 4 Keynotes: Soumik Datta (UK), Rhoda Roberts (NSW), Karoline Trollvik (NO), Nick Mahmat (USA)

Parallel Sessions
- 17 afternoon sessions
- 3 performance showcases (9 performers)
- 1 demonstration
- 44 presenters
- 10 Moderators
- 12 Aboriginal speakers in attendance (including 1 plenary speaker)

Delegate Attendance
- 85 from regional NSW
- 5 from Western Sydney
- 77 from Sydney & Central Coast
- 11 from interstate

ARTS PROGRAM

- 34 Events
- 23 performing arts events
- 6 visual art exhibitions
- 2 film screenings
- 4 family/youth programs
- Over 100 professional performing artists, plus around 90 non-professional performers
- Around 70 visual and multi-media artists
- 22 organisations took part in Creative Lismore
- Over 8000 people attended one or more events from the Artstate Lismore Arts Program

Delegate & Audience Response
- Inspiring
- Engaging
- Invigorating
- Useful
Lismore rocked and everyone has been so impressed! It has helped enormously putting the arts front and centre of our community’s minds, including our civic and political leaders.

— Patrick Healey
General Manager, NORPA

Great sessions, great conversations and some really impressive work.

— Esther Anatolitis
Executive Director, NAVA

I thoroughly enjoyed all the sessions I went to on the Friday and Saturday… I thought Lismore was glowing in Artstate shine.

— Edwina Johnson
Director, Byron Writers Festival

What an amazing weekend. It was an absolute pleasure to play some small part in something so amazing.

— Kristin den Exter
Southern Cross University

We had such a fabulous time, and really enjoyed our performance space. Congratulations on a brilliant event for Lismore - the place was buzzing.

— The Ironing Maidens
Artstate festival artists

I found the day fantastic and the attendees very respectful and keen to learn more.

— Chris Spencer,
Director, Saltwater Freshwater Alliance

Both Artlands Dubbo and Artstate Lismore have been crucial in my development as a professional regional artist in the past 12 months.

I have developed regional cross art-form collaborations as a way of working that would not have been possible without attending these conferences. As a regional artist I work in isolation, partly because of the type of work and partly because I know so few artists, and also personal circumstances as a carer. The opportunities to meet up with other artists are few and far between but have an enormous impact in terms of peer support and peer developed opportunities.

The conferences are crucial to me to develop ways of working outside a conventional exhibition space environment and to contribute to a bigger pond of ideas. I believe it is increasingly necessary to support artists to link with each other to generate new ways of working and to develop skills. In my eyes there is increased value supporting individual artists to attend the conference and being supported to meet with each other.

— Artstate Delegate

Thank you for the opportunity to share - it was a massive week and I feel proud of the work and its impact on the regional art making landscape. It was a pleasure to be a part of the festival, congratulations to you and your team on a wonderful gathering here in Lismore.

— Kirk Page
Director, 'Djurra'
ECONOMIC IMPACT

VISITATION AND ACCOMODATION

Evaluation from the Artstate Lismore event shows that the majority of the 200 registered delegates stayed for a minimum of 3 nights in the host town in accommodation including hotels, motels, Air B&B, Bed and Breakfasts, holiday rentals, and caravan park cabins. 60% extended that stay by another night and also brought at least one other person with them to the host region. The event increased overnight visitation to Lismore from those participants and visitors to the Artstate Festival such as the regional youth orchestra, visiting artists, members of the public. In-region attendees staying overnight stayed mostly with friends and family in the region with non-region attendees predominantly staying in paid accommodation of the types mentioned above.

TOTAL SPEND

Expenditure reviews and surveys of local spend of delegates conservatively put the total local spend at $300,000. Data gathered as part of Artstate Lismore indicate that the average delegates spend per day in the region's local business environment is $350. The event itself uses local suppliers and businesses as part of its event management. This includes but is not limited to: venue and equipment hire, catering & restaurants, transport, production and technical staff. Artstate works with local and regional partners to showcase the value of good quality cultural infrastructure in regional NSW as a catalyst for driving not only excellence in regional arts outcomes, but community well-being and economic development through increased visitation of high yield cultural tourists and for attracting new programs and events which benefit local businesses.

TICKET SALES ANALYSIS

Most Artstate Lismore registrations were purchased as part of the ‘Early Bird’ discount, with ticket purchases occurring before the 23rd of October. The highest performing registration category was for Individual Artists & RANSW Members, with a total of 117 tickets (or 64.64%) being purchased. 152 tickets (83.98%) were paid for in full, and 29 tickets were comps (16.02%) for media, keynote speakers, staff and guests.

Significant spikes in ticket purchases were observed on the 23/10/2017 (the last day for early bird registration) and on the 23/11/2017 (one week prior to the event). The majority of the Eventbrite pageview traffic came from direct link sources (69%), such as the Register button on the Artstate Lismore webpage. 16% of traffic arrived from the Artstate Lismore Facebook event with Eventbrite’s ticket purchase system integrated, and 10% of traffic arrived due to the sharing of the event via Eventbrite’s share tools.
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) received four years of funding commencing 2017 to develop a state based version of the national regional arts conference and festival ARTLANDS it delivered in Dubbo in 2016. The aim of this event is to deliver a regional conference/arts festival that demonstrates regional excellence and continues to build on the conversations, partnerships and opportunities for regional artists and arts organisations that were an outcome of ARTLANDS.

This new event, Artstate NSW was held in Lismore from 30 October to 4 December, 2017 in partnership with the local Regional Arts Development Organisation, Arts Northern Rivers. Artstate Lismore was a two day arts conference examining the themes of Creative Practice and Creative Partnerships encircled by an arts program open to the local community to demonstrate the diversity and excellence of arts practice from that region. Underpinning the event is a commitment to include Aboriginal artists and arts leaders in both the projects streams. Artstate will be driving a positive agenda to build metro-regional partnerships that are innovative, have mutual benefits, have longevity, are strategic and contribute to sector growth. RANSW delivers this event with an experienced team complemented by a local artistic director.

Each Artstate will be delivered in partnership with the Regional Arts Development Organisation and requires multiple partners including financial and in-kind support from the host council. The event engages regional and metropolitan artists and arts organisations around the key themes and concerns that emerge from the preceding conference that also reflect the diverse landscapes of regional NSW. Underpinning the event is a priority to engage with First Nations and Aboriginal Arts, Regionalism and Principles of Practice.

PARTNERS

Partners are critical to the delivery of Artstate. In Lismore, RANSW partnered with Arts Northern Rivers and worked closely with the leading arts organisations in that region including Screenworks, Northern Rivers Conservatorium, NORPA and Lismore Regional Gallery. The timing of Artstate Lismore 2017, 30 November - 3 December aligned with the opening of the new Lismore Regional Gallery, the activation of the new Quadrangle space and the opening of the world premiere of NORPA’s new production Djurra. The event showcases the value of good quality cultural infrastructure in regional NSW as a catalyst for driving not only excellence in regional arts outcomes, but community well-being and economic development through increased visitation of high yield cultural tourists and for attracting new programs and events which benefit local business.

AIMS

- Develop and deliver an inspiring arts conference building on the skills and lessons from the national event, ARTLANDS Dubbo to providing significant professional development and networking opportunities for delegates to Artstate up until 2020.

- Develop and deliver a multi-genre arts festival complementing and surrounding the conference program to celebrate regional creativity and quality.

- Promote the value of the arts in regional communities.

- Attract an audience of artists and arts workers from across metro and regional areas of NSW.
• Ensure that both elements of the event have a strong Aboriginal component recognising the strength and values of culture in the regional sector.

• Demonstrate the importance of local government investment and contribution to the arts in regional NSW.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

• A local advisory committee established in partnership with the local Regional Arts Development organisation to scope the local artistic components of the event.

• A separate conference committee meets to discuss and recommend plenary speakers and panelists.

• A call for papers from the arts sector distributed nationally.

• A local festival director will be appointed to develop the festival program.

• Production, event management, design and PR teams are engaged to cover all four planned events.

• Conference coordination, ticketing, digital media and all financial management including grant writing, reporting and evaluation done in house.

• Artstate NSW is overseen by the RANSW Board with the CEO in the role of Executive Producer.

FUNDING

Funding and support for Artstate Lismore came from Lismore City Council, Create NSW, Department of Regional Development through the Building Better Regions Community Investment Stream and Southern Cross University with RANSW underwriting the event.

Initial investment by RANSW for Artstate Lismore for items such as website, signage and other collateral can be re-used and amortised over the four years of the project.

Ticket sales and registrations contributed to income.
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ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Regional Arts NSW Board

ADVISORY GROUPS
- Stakeholders
- Lismore city Council
- Arts Northern Rivers
- Create NSW

Regional Arts NSW CEO/Executive Producer

Regional Arts NSW Team

Grants & Contracts
Financial Management
Ticketing & Admin
Marketing

KEY

Volunteer Positions
Staff
Contracted Positions
Hierarchical Relationship
Service Relationship

Contractors

Production Liaison
Arts Program Director
Opening Event
Event Management
- Conference
- Volunteers
- Catering

Production Crew
The Speakers’ Program committee was chaired by RANSW Deputy Chair, Ben Roche with Peter Wood, ED Arts Northern Rivers, Tracey Callinan, ED Arts OutWest, Grainne Brunsdon, Create NSW, Stephen Champion, Chair RANSW and Elizabeth Rogers, CEO RANSW.

Meetings were held during the early planning stage to develop the themes of Creative Practice and Creative Partnerships drawn from the many themes identified by the rapporteur from Artlands Dubbo. It was felt by the committee that these themes were most reflective and demonstrative of the creative sector in the Northern Rivers region. They also identified possible speakers and panellists for the plenary sessions that would include Aboriginal arts leaders. Suggested contacts were followed up by the Executive Producer in the first instance, then all travel, visa and other arrangements for international speakers were managed by Jane Kreis.

The same curated process applied to the development of the plenary sessions, as it was vital to have a high quality program to attract the delegates to travel to Lismore. A call for papers for the afternoon sessions was circulated widely through all the Artstate and RANSW communications platforms with a simple application form to be returned to RANSW for assessment. Applications closed 4 September and applicants advised 19 September.

As they were confirmed, Speakers were featured on the Artstate website and through all digital platforms. Speakers’ names, images and biographies were listed on the site.

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**AT A GLANCE**

**Plenary Sessions**
- 4 Keynotes

**Parallel Sessions**
- 17 afternoon sessions
- 3 performance showcases (9 performers)
- 1 demonstration
- 44 presenters
- 10 Moderators

**Delegate Attendance**
- 85 from regional NSW
- 5 from Western Sydney
- 77 from Sydney & Central Coast
- 11 from interstate

12 Aboriginal speakers in various sessions
KEYNOTES

1. Tuning 2 You: Lost Musicians of India

Soumik Datta travelled to remote corners of rural India in search of extraordinary musicians to make his first film on the fading heritage of folk music hidden from the mainstream. His film, 'Tuning 2 You', has exposed rarely seen communities on the brink of extinction. This keynote presentation discusses his journey discovering ancient melodies and polyrhythmic systems and its impact on his creative practice. This is accompanied by photographs and footage from rural India. Soumik Datta is an award winning contemporary British musician and sarod virtuoso.

Soumik Datta, Musician (UK)

2. Aboriginal Creative Practice - A cultural narrative, but why do I also have to be the consultant?

Our Widjrabul oral chronicle, of country, clan and custodial responsibility shapes us, guides us and encourages knowledge, values and fosters a cultural narrative that is all encompassing. Our cultural legacy comes with a real national responsibility. Is it an Aboriginal duty for those engaged in the culture sectors or is it a concern for us all in the creative industry? In this presentation Rhoda Roberts examines the current policies relating to grant funding and questions the methodology of measuring the value of our First Nation’s artists, performers and companies. There is a disconnection between the evaluation requirements and the rhetoric that consistently speaks of treasuring and nurturing. She suggests we should encourage tenacity, allow the practice to germinate with a values based dialogue that has a long - term narrative, that enables risk taking and failure as part of the process.

Rhoda Roberts AO, Head of Indigenous Programming, Sydney Opera House. Rhoda is a member of the Bundjalung nation, Widjrabul clan (Northern NSW)

3. Ridd Riđđu – the little storm on the coast

In 1991 a group of Sámi youths with a sense of justice and idealism started an event in Gáiuiçãona/Káifjord that later would turn into the international indigenous festival Riddu Riđđu (little storm on the coast). In time, Riddu Riđđu created an arena where it was safe to be Sámi, but also widened the profile to also celebrate other indigenous communities and artistic expressions of the world. It is a crucial stage for artistic development in Sámi and for cross-indigenous dialogue and cultural collaborations.

Karoline Sofie Tveitnes Trollvik, Director of Riddu Riddu Festival (NO)

4. Connecting Schools and the Arts Community

Through focused partnerships between local school districts and Kalamazoo RESA’s Education for the Arts Program, professional artists and arts presenters are brought together with classroom teachers and students to develop rich experiences around the arts. One community’s approach to deepening arts learning by connecting youth and schools to the professional arts community.

Nick Mahmat, Aesthetic Education Program Coordinator, Education for the Arts Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency, Michigan (USA)
1. Regional Creative Practice

The challenges and opportunities for Northern Rivers creative practitioners.

- Julian Louis, Artistic Director, Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA)
- Cate McQuillan, mememe Productions, creator of dirtgirlworld
- Leigh Carriage, performer, composer and recording
- Moderator: Stephen Champion, Director, Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre

2. Aboriginal Creative Practice in Diverse Art Forms

This panel examined contemporary Aboriginal Creative Practice through the lens of three of three different arts forms and how cultural practices frame their work.

- Kirk Page, Director, NORPA's production of 'Djurra'
- Karla Dickens, Interdisciplinary and hybrid artist.
- Rhoda Roberts AO, Head of Indigenous Programming, Sydney Opera House, Festival Director, Boomerang Festival, Curator of the second annual Parrtijima – A Festival in Light event in Alice Springs and 'Djanda Mandi Gingerlah' Creative Director for Artstate Lismore.
- Moderator: Sharni Jones, Manager, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Collection, Australian Museum

3. The Art of Festivals

- Jessica Ducrou, Co-founder and co-producer of Splendour In the Grass Music and Arts Festival
- Edwina Johnston, Director, Bryon Writers Festival
- Chris Spencer, GM, Saltwater Freshwater Festival
- Moderator: Wesley Enoch, Artistic Director, Sydney Festival

4. Cross-Sector Partnerships in Regional NSW

The fourteen Regional Arts Development Organisations in NSW are experts in facilitating arts partnerships with a range of sectors. In a discussion led by the Executive Director of Arts Northern Rivers, Peter Wood, this panel showcased innovative joint projects that deliver positive outcomes for four regional communities.

- Andrew Gray, Executive Director, South East Arts
- Jamie-Lea Trindall, Executive Director, Outback Arts
- Tracey Callinan, Executive Director, Arts OutWest
- Scott Howie, Executive Director, Eastern Riverina Arts
- Moderator: Peter Wood, Executive Director, Arts Northern Rivers
PRODUCTION LIAISON REPORT

Artstate’s operations require an amalgamation of complex elements and the production of the entire event was only made possible by thorough pre-production with a capable team under the leadership of the Executive Producer. That the key team for Artstate came with extensive industry experience and had worked successfully together at ARTLANDS DUBBO, meant that the regular teleconference and onsite meetings were productive, leading to clear objectives, detailed action plans and innovative solutions across the event. The ‘office’ team at Regional Arts NSW were instrumental in the smooth facilitation of much of the event’s operational detail and provided clear support to all the regionally based Artstate team.

The long term planning phase facilitated multiple aspects that included:

- Developing a high quality production within overall event budget parameters
- Liaison with regional stakeholders to share and present an event to international standard

The Speakers Program production requirements were met by liaison with the Artstate Team, venues, suppliers and presenters. There was extensive pre-production and the formation and management of an AV production team to facilitate:

- Venue and Stage Management
- Microphones for speakers and occasional live music production
- Playback and editing of multiple formats, including PowerPoint, PDFs, photos and videos
- Working with presenters to ensure their production requirements were met and that their presentations went smoothly without technical glitches.

The key to this role was liaising across both the Speakers and Arts Programs with all the Artstate Team during the preproduction phase, during and post event to ensure that technical requirements for both elements of the event were not duplicated and were cost-effective.

- Investigating and booking venues
- Sourcing and communicating with local suppliers
- Securing many of the local production team for both the Arts and Speakers program
- Developing operation logistics in conjunction with the Production and Event Managers

VENUE DETAILS

The major challenge sourcing venues in Lismore at this time was the lack of buildings that met access requirements compounded by some venues still waiting for repairs from the March flood.

Morning Keynotes and Panels

- Lismore City Hall

Afternoon Parallel Sessions

- Lismore City Hall Studio:
- Lismore Workers Club:
- Northern Rivers Conservatorium of Music
  Concert Room:
- Lismore Regional Gallery (LRG)

EVENT MANAGEMENT

Belinda King, King Events, Wagga Wagga managed the event with responsibility for volunteers, catering, liaising with and supporting speakers prior to and during the event, providing FOH (front of house) liaison with stage manager and back stage production team for plenary sessions, all registration desk requirements, delegates inquiries on site, managing all FOH staffing across multiple venues and, developing a comprehensive and coordinating volunteer program, arranging all catering requirements including the conference dinner.
OPENING NIGHT VIP DRINKS

This was a pre-event function hosted by RANSW as an informal gathering and preliminary ‘meet and greet’ for all Artstate Lismore stakeholders prior to the official opening. The event was held in the function room of the Lismore Regional Gallery and was attended by the NSW Minister for the Arts, The Hon Don Harwin MLC, the Member for Page, Kevin Hogan MP, the Member for Lismore, Thomas George MP, the Parliamentary Secretary for Northern NSW, the Hon Ben Franklin MLC, the Mayor of Lismore, Cr Isaac Smith, the Chair of RANSW, Stephen Champion, the Chair of Arts Northern Rivers, Cr Ellie Bird, CEO of Create NSW, Michael Brealey and other local, state and federal government representatives, heads of arts organisations.

The Artstate Team staffed this event with local catering by The Bank. It lasted approximately an hour and ensured that all members of the official party were gathered in good time prior to the official opening.

CONFERENCE CATERING

All the catering for the delegates was held at Lismore City Hall. The Bank, preferred caterers for Lismore City Hall, provided coffee, tea and snacks on arrival, morning tea and lunch.

All catering was served in the downstairs foyer and on tables outside the theatre on the Bounty Street entrance. There was excellent feedback on the quality of the catering and their willingness to meet the needs of those with dietary requirements.

A coffee cart was positioned at the entrance for those delegates and staff who preferred to purchase their own coffee, rather than consume that supplied. This proved to be popular. This was not an income generating activity for Artstate, but a service to delegates and a contribution to a Lismore small business.

Afternoon sessions were dispersed throughout the CBD where there were plenty of cafes, so the afternoon tea break was not catered.

THE QUAD

Artstate invited the Lismore Lions Club to conduct a barbeque in the Quad for the three evenings of performances in order that an inexpensive food option was available to the public audience. Funds raised from this were for distribution to the community.

The Slate Café also remained open serving meals and drinks during the day and into the evenings. It was the only licensed venue.

Although not prohibited, byo alcohol consumption at the Quad Stage was not encouraged.

CONFERENCE DINNER

Held at the Lismore Workers Club as there was not another venue. It has its limitations for an event of this type, however, the pre-dinner drinks in a separate room worked well. The main room lacked atmosphere and the food was standard.

The Minister announced the new Regional Fellows and the next host city for Artstate, Bathurst. The mayor of Bathurst encouraged delegates to attend the Bathurst event. There was a ceremonial handover from the Widj-abul Elders (Lismore) to the Wiradjuri Elders (Bathurst) marked by an exchange of gifts.

A performance from comedian Lindsay Webb concluded the evening.
VOLUNTEERS

A call out for volunteers was made through the Artstate website, e-news and social platforms and through Arts Northern Rivers’ communications platforms. A simple application form was developed and rosters allocated according to their availability and interest. We had 11 in total, 5 of who were allocated to the visual arts program. Volunteer roles included: transport (driving presenters to and from the airport), ushering, registration desk, green room/backstage service along with overseeing venues for the afternoon sessions and assisting at the Quad with the VIP function and cultural arts program. They were given distinguishing T-shirts to identify them as volunteers.
Following the confirmation of funding for Artstate by the NSW Government, a locally based Arts Program Director, Marisa Snow was appointed to develop a multi-arts program to demonstrate excellence in arts practice from the Northern Rivers region. She developed a program that included commissioned new work and remounting of existing work. Natalie Bull and Zoe Robinson-Kennedy undertook the curation NORPA’s new production, Djurra, directed by Kirk Page and the opening exhibitions in the new Lismore Regional Gallery, Dreaming Trails curated by Alison Williams and Four Women (I Do Belong) curated by Djon Mundine.

Part of the brief was to activate the new Quad precinct, an outdoor grassed area fronting the gallery. Key elements of the program were opening performance featuring Aboriginal performers directed by Rhoda Roberts AO, the programming of a Festival Club and the free finale concert by the Regional Youth Orchestra made up of outstanding young musicians auditioned from the 17 NSW regional conservatoriums. This new orchestra was created to perform as part of ARTLANDS Dubbo and will be an ongoing feature of all future Artstate events. The Artstate Arts Program was open to the public and mainly free. Artstate delegates were given the opportunity to buy discounted tickets to the three ticketed performances, Djurra, Cheeky Cabaret and two recitals by keynote speaker and internationally renowned Saroud player, Soumik Datta.

Showcasing Aboriginal artists underpins the philosophy of Artstate and as well as the exhibitions in the gallery, the NORPA production and the opening performance, other artists engaged for Artstate included Teddy Lewis King, Blackboi and Digby Moran. The outcomes of the Arts Northern Rivers, Balun Gilamahla – River Journey, Bundjalung women weavers project, were installed in the foyers of Lismore City Hall.

There was an opportunity for local artists and arts organisations outside the curated Artstate program to list their activities under the banner of Creative Lismore. Twenty two organisations registered to be listed under Creative Lismore. A link was also provided to the Museums and Galleries NSW website for visitors to explore the Northern Rivers Museums Trail.

**AT A GLANCE**

- 34 events
- 23 performing arts events
- 6 visual arts exhibitions
- 2 film screenings
- 4 family/youth programs
- Over 100 professional performing artists
- Approximately 90 non-professional performers
- Approximately 70 visual and multi-media artists
- 22 organisations participated in the Creative Lismore program
- Over 8000 people attended one or more events from the arts program
THE PROGRAM

1. Opening Night

- Formal official opening, included Chair RANSW, Stephen Champion, Mayor of Lismore City Council, Cr Isaac Smith, Member for Lismore, Thomas George, Member for Page, Kevin Hogan, Widjabil Elder, Uncle Micky Roberts and the NSW Minister for the Arts, The Hon Don Harwin MLC.

- 'Djanda Mandi Gingerlah' – a very special welcome gathering to Artstate Lismore featuring dance clans; Jannawi, eXcelsior, Muggerah and Bundjalung groups Nini Nahri-Gali and the Deadly Bunharms.

- 1920’s Swing Party with the Youth Jazz Orchestra, Cassettes flash mob and Spaghetti Circus acrobats.

2. Performing Arts

- 'Djurra' – new theatre production by NORPA inspired by a Bundjalung creation story directed by Kirk Page.

- 'The Overtopping’ – a commissioned site specific work in response to the Lismore flood created for Artstate Lismore by RealArtWorks Inc.

- 'Bonnywood Rising' – a live cinema performance project remounted from the Arts Cooke.

- 'Cheeky Cabaret' – the signature show from the Brunswick Picture House by the creative team for internationally acclaimed 'La Soiree' and 'Club Swizzle' restaged in Lismore.

- 'Ironing Maidens' – Live electronic music performance exploring domestic items as instruments.

- 'Daughters of the Rum Rebellion' – a music theatre performance about Australia’s female bushrangers with Ilona Harker and Gleny Rae

- 'State of Play' – Showcase of two new works in development by two of NORPA’s Associate Artists. 1/15 Ross St by Kate McDowell and 2 by Darcy Grant.

- 'Share House' – integrated dance theatre project by Sprung!

3. Music

- Fretless Nomad – a virtuosic recital performance by Soumik Datta and the rare 19 Stringed fretless lute known as the sarod.

- Sara Tindley – singer songwriter

- Tralala Blip – inclusive electronica

- Teddy Lewis King – three piece hip-hop act

- Tora – Byron Bay musicians just returned from world tour.


- WHARVES – Lennox Head base indie rock quartet.

- Blakboi – Indigenous singer/songwriter/producer

- Regional Youth Orchestra – concert performance
4. Visual Arts

- 'Dreaming Trails' curated by Alison Williams, Lismore Regional Gallery

- ‘Four Women (I Do Belong)’ curated by Djon Mundine, Lismore Regional Gallery

- ‘We’re Closer Than You Think’ – an exhibition of artists based in the Northern Rivers curated by Natalie Bull & Zoe Robinson Kennedy, the OLD Gallery

- Digby Moran – Site specific installation by Bundjalung artist, Lismore City Hall lawn

- ‘Disruption of Distance’ – site related art, exhibitions and sound installations ‘pop-up’- throughout Artstate precinct.

5. Film

- Createability 2017 – Premiere screening of short documentaries by professional filmmakers living with a disability from regional NSW produced by Screenworks.

- ‘Rumplestiltskin’ – Screening of live performance of SA Theatre and Windmill Theatre production by Australian National Theatre from Play in a Box project

6. Family Program

- Bunny Racket – Kids rock band

- ‘Colours’ – Developed by Roundabout Theatre for Artstate, an interactive theatre piece for 4 – 8 yrs.

- The Block Party – hip hop dance showcase and workshops

OVERVIEW

Considering the reduced time-frame, communications issues with the arts program director and the lack of choice in terms of venues which placed considerable pressure on the production team, both the speakers program and the arts festival were very successful. On the whole both the audiences and artists that the production team communicated with over the event period very much enjoyed not only the event itself, but the connections and networking made possible by holding Artstate their local area. The feedback from the crew in general was positive, both in terms of production execution and audience reaction. In particular Real Artworks ‘The Overtopping’ performance was a highlight on many levels. The support received from both Ben Roche at SCU & Anita Bellman at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium was invaluable, much needed & graciously offered. Both are acknowledged for their practical support.

A big part of the event was the build, look, cost and management of the Quad stage in the new arts precinct bordered by the new Lismore Regional Gallery, NR Conservatorium and the Library. Activating this new area was a requirement of the event. There were challenges in getting the area to look right and in line with the design values of Artstate that were both difficult yet rewarding. The staging area looked great on completion. It had a nice formal look and function when staging the opening ceremony, the production requirements to present a number of live music acts over the following two nights and the space and ability to handle the technical infrastructure involved in staging the Regional Youth Orchestra.

The early contracted start and involvement in planning for Artstate Lismore worked well and should continue for the future events. Although it means an earlier start to the project than would normally be expected for this kind of event, it is it the early conversations around programming and venue usage that are essential to making a nomadic event work.

Artstate requires a slow build in terms of production planning with regular phone conference meetings useful in keeping up to date with the team. It is planned to conduct site visits earlier for Bathurst and future events in finalise production elements and suppliers in good time.

This extended planning period will achieve a more precise and confirmed arts program earlier in the year, understanding that there will be normal program variations to more effectively manage the budget and production delivery.

VENUE DETAILS

Star Court Theatre

This venue required the biggest spend, for an established venue in the tech budget. Mainly this was due to the nature of the primary performance, Cheeky Cabaret, which required a good lighting show to carry the performance meant we essentially hung an entire new rig to facilitate this. In addition, both the Bonnywood Rising and Ilona Harker shows required hire audio gear to meet their show specifications. We were able to use the in-house projection system and the front of house PA. Other challenges included managing access times & having crew on standby for quick crossovers between performers (particularly on Friday evening).

St Pauls Hall

This was a very straightforward venue with an empty room & some power outlets. However, it
was difficult to manage the production requirements for both the Screenworks program and Sprung’s rehearsals and performance. The installation of a semi-permanent AV set up that could be moved to allow for rehearsals did not work as did not meet the Screenworks requirements and another solution had to be found at short notice.

Quadrangle Stage & Precinct

The building, site work and management of this area required the most in terms of staffing and gear to achieve quality results. The entire infrastructure was hired and built over 3 days. Additionally the multi-purpose nature of the space (opening ceremony, bands & the RYO) required the space to be constructed in a way that allowed easy change to the staging set up. The end result of this was a good looking multi-purpose outdoor venue. The difficulties in achieving this mostly derived from the use of available local gear. As an example, the issues around the staging size were compounded by the size availability of the structures we could use. Using the stage owned by the NR Con stage limited stage height. The additional staging needed to be hired meant that a lot of work had to go into marrying this stage with the other (which was at a different height & panel dimensions). The multipurpose nature of the area required the drapes to have moveable positions, the staging to be able to move to provide a workable stage area for the opening ceremony, particularly in terms of dancers’ access.

Transit Centre

Location for the Block Party on Saturday afternoon/evening. This was a pop up event aimed at engaging local youth and in this capacity it succeeded. The event was well attended and had a positive, inclusive feel.

Northern Rivers Conservatorium

The NR Conservatorium provided a number of spaces for the Artstate program, Marion Conrow exhibited work in one of the smaller dungeon rooms, the Ironing Maidens made use of a small area underneath a stairwell at the front of the building, Roundabout Theatre used the larger dungeon space adjacent the carpark for their ‘Colours’ performance and the Concert Room upstairs was used to screen Rumplestiltskin. The NR Conservatorium reception staff received all our incoming and outgoing deliveries as well as providing storage pre-event.

Eggin’s Lane

The Real Art Works project ‘The Overtopping’ required considerable pre-planning and document preparation for council approvals as the performance involved infrastructure and people movement on public roads. All permissions were obtained with the only exception where Real Art Works was unable to secure agreement with one business owner for use of their back alley area as the major performance space. This actually turned out to be an advantage as the second nominated space (Headspace carpark) provided security, undercover work areas and adequate power distribution, elements the previous site did not have.

CREW LIST

- Gabriel Dilworth – Head Tech/ Site Manager
- Mic Neale – Production Assistant / Audio Manager
- Joel Grimson – Production Assistant
- Kate Atkinson – Stage Management
- Troy Schmidt – Audio Supplier / FOH mixer
- Rhys Edwards – Stagehand / Monitors
- Clint Hurrell – Lighting design & Operation
- Max Foggin – St Pauls Venue Manager
- Jono Fae – Star Court Venue Manager
- Harry O’Mera – Star Court Lighting Operator
- Teya Steinberg – Assistant Stage Manager
- Jamie Hunter – AV
- Robert Jazwinski – Technical Production
- Craig Richardson – Audio Supplier
- Sean Latham – Production Supplier
- Richard Morrod – Rigger & Staging Supplier
- Tone Wonderland – Crystal Grid - AV Suppliers
- Adam Biggs – Audio Supplier
- Max & Greg – Lismore Party Hire
- Andrew Woodburn – Bullseye Security
MARKETING ANALYSIS

TICKETING

Considerable thought was given to the pricing of delegates tickets allowing that many arts organisations would not have budgeted for this event but conceding that RANSW also needed to cover many of the costs associated with staging a conference.

The ticketing plan was developed to encourage early registrations immediately following the Sydney launch coinciding with the announcement of the key note speakers and elements of the arts program. Early bird prices were later given an extension with a strong push through social media and all our communications channels to encourage sales.

Two weeks prior to the event, single day tickets were put on sale. All tickets included GST.

Artstate Lismore Ticket Prices

Early Bird
- RANSW members & independent artists $345.00
- Small Organisations (15 staff or less) $445.00
- Large Organisations (16 or more staff) $645.00

Full Price
- RANSW members & independent artists $445.00
- Small Organisations (15 staff or less) $545.00
- Large Organisations (16 or more staff) $745.00
- Day Tickets $195.00

EVENTBRITE ANALYTICS

Ticket Sales

Most Artstate Lismore registrations were purchased as part of the ‘Early Bird’ discount, with ticket purchases occurring before the 23rd of October. The highest performing registration category was for Individual Artists & RANSW Members, with a total of 117 tickets (or 64.64%) being purchased. 152 tickets (83.98%) were paid for in full, and 29 tickets were comps (16.02%) for media, keynote speakers, staff and guests. Significant spikes in ticket purchases were observed on the 23/10/2017 (the last day for early bird registration) and on the 23/11/2017 (one week prior to the event).

The majority of the Eventbrite pageview traffic came from direct link sources (69%), such as the Register button on the Artstate Lismore webpage. 16% of traffic arrived from the Artstate Lismore Facebook event, with Eventbrite’s ticket purchase system integrated, and 10% of traffic arrived due to the sharing of the event via Eventbrite’s share tools.

ARTSTATE PAID V COMP TICKETS BREAKDOWN

- Rapporteurs 1%
- Media Comps 3%
- Speakers 2%
- Stakeholders 9%

Paid Tickets 84%
DEMOGRAPHIC

Based off Eventbrite data, the average attendee age was approximately 46 years old, with the youngest Artstate Lismore delegate being 20 years of age, and the oldest delegate 66 years of age. 66% of delegates were female according to self-submitted data, while 29% of delegates were male, 1% categorised themselves as ‘other’ and 4% did not specify.

Delegates were also most likely to come from regional NSW (47%) or Sydney (43%), followed by interstate (6%), Western Sydney (3%) or overseas (2%). For interstate delegates, the highest visiting state was Victoria, followed by Queensland, the Northern Territory, ACT and South Australia.

BRANDING

Swell Design Group developed the Artstate brand, logos and colour palette to be used with minor variations over the four years of the event. This was incorporated in all print, display material and digital design. The website was designed as the central information point where all details of the arts program, registrations, local visitor information, speakers’ biographies and latest news updates could be found.

Print

• Artstate speakers/arts program 44 pp booklet with forewords from the NSW Minister for the Arts, Mayor of Lismore and Chairs of RANSW and Arts Northern Rivers with detailed speakers and arts program information. 300 copies.

• Postcards promoting the dates, website and social media tags. 1500 in three runs. 2500 x 5 designs

• Exhibition catalogue for the regional artists exhibition, We’re Closer Than You Think. 20 pp, 100 copies.

• Registration name plates

• A6 foldout maps of Artstate precinct and venues for insertion into delegates wallets.
Outdoor & Display

- Lectern panel
- Pull up banners Artstate generic x6
- Pull up banners supported logos x 2
- Vinyl stage banners x 2
- Vinyl fence banners x 2
- Temporary fencing scrim, 50m x 1.8m
- Freestanding wayfaring plinths x 10

Digital

- Website development x 2 stages
- PDF A3 poster for on-site printing.
- EDM template
- Speakers slide power point template
- Introduction video
- Launch screen
- Artwork for digital advertising
- Artwork for print advertising

Merchandise

- Lanyards
- Conference bags
- T-shirts x 2 styles x 5 colourways

Social and digital media was the main platform for communicating the Artstate story and was supported locally by display advertising in local print including the Byron Arts Magazine, Byron Echo and Northern Star. Additional support came from Lismore City Council who printed and distributed copies of the arts program into all Lismore letterboxes the Monday before the event and incorporated Artstate information in all its outdoor promotional signage and light boxes.

Publicity

- There was an extensive PR campaign undertaken by KABUKU PR and supported by Arts Northern Rivers for local media. For more information see the Communications Report in the Appendix.
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