

# TUGGERANONG ARTS CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Supported by





# CONTENTS

<b>4</b>	<b>WHO WE ARE</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>PRESIDENT'S REPORT</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>TREASURER'S REPORT</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>YEAR IN REVIEW</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>COMMUNITY ARTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>FRESH FUNK</b>
<b>34</b>	<b>MESSENGERS</b>
<b>38</b>	<b>WODEN ARTS</b>



Image: Pachamama performing at Mawson, for the Woden Arts Program. Photo by Martin Ollman, 2021.

## WHO WE ARE | OUR MISSION | OUR VISION

### Tuggeranong Arts Centre

---

#### **Our priorities**

Are to invite the community to practice and appreciate art and its relevance to local and global social issues, to collaborate with the arts and community sectors across the A.C.T, and to develop active audiences for art beyond the Arts Centre, whilst shaping cultural and community identity.

#### **Our Mission**

To be a dynamic and innovative arts organisation that is essential to the Tuggeranong region and the A.C.T.

#### **Our Vision**

To be a vibrant, connected and creative Tuggeranong community.

#### **2021 Board**

Don Cumming, President  
 Jenny Hargreaves, Vice President  
 John Hargreaves, Treasurer  
 Annika Romeyn, Secretary  
 Hamish Sinclair, Member  
 Karl Maftoum, Member  
 Lorena Quinlivan, Member  
 James Tylor, Member  
 Marina Talevski, Member  
 Rebecca Selleck, Member  
 James Mallet, Member

#### **2021 Patron**

Aunty Agnes Shea,  
 Ngunnawal Elder



Image: House Planet the Musical, Tuggeranong Theatre. Photo by Martin Ollman, 2021.

## WHO WE ARE | OUR PEOPLE

### Tuggeranong Arts Centre

---

#### 2021 Staff

Rauny Worm/Karena Keys, Chief Executive Officer  
 Leah Blakendaal, Operations Manager  
 Cassidy Richens, Communications Manager  
 Caroline Wall, Fresh Funk Director  
 Kristy Griffen, Creative Producer, CACD Program  
 Karena Keys/Lily Platts, Visual Arts Manager  
 Penny Stott/Roger Jillard, Messengers Program Manager  
 Kelsey van der Tuin, Messengers Support Worker  
 Peter Jordan, Finance Officer  
 Blaide Lallemand, Woden Arts Officer  
 Dana Castle, Lily Platts, Rebecca Drew and Tom Buckland, Front of House, Events  
 Jacqui Malins, Project Officer

#### 2021 Funding Support & Sponsors

##### ***Funding was received from:***

Arts ACT  
 ACT Government  
 Australian Government Regional Arts Fund  
 Transport Canberra and City Services  
 Vision Australia  
 Woden Community Services

##### ***Sponsors:***

Lerida Estate Wines  
 Capital Brewing.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There was no room for complacency by the TCAA Board in 2021.

From the outset, 2021 was a year of necessary challenges that have tested the resolve and endurance of the Tuggeranong Community Arts Association (TCAA) Board and staff. These challenges have led to enormous change within the organisation, that will ultimately result in a stronger and more capable organisation.

Changes include: new committee members, staff changes, improvements to working conditions, a policy review, and a review of the TCAA Governance Charter.

Early in the year, two long standing staff members, Amanda Pollock and Aiden Delany, resigned from the organisation. This coincided with the decision of the TCAA Board to conduct an independent review into the workplace culture.

The resignation of team members, alongside this review, created instability within the organisation that was amplified by the decision of the CEO Rauny Worm to leave the helm of the organisation mid-year. In July 2021, the TCAA Visual Program Manager, Karena Keys, began the role of Acting CEO.

The Board took the opportunity provided by this change, and the feedback given in the review, to reflect on its governance processes and to invest in improvements within the organisation. This led to a review of the

TCAA Governance Charter, the diversity of its members, as well as other developments across staffing pay and conditions and management processes. In addition, another COVID-19 lockdown led to the Board and staff working through a lot of these challenges remotely.

Despite all this, the TCAA has proven its resilience and strength as an organisation and team by continuing to offer engaging opportunities for the community and artists throughout 2021.

Further to this, it was announced in the ACT budget that the TCAA's submission for a theatre upgrade was successful. This is an incredibly positive development in the life of the Tuggeranong Arts Centre (TAC) and the TCAA. The upgrade will ensure that the TAC theatre is fit for purpose as we move forward. The upgrade will include improvements to accessibility, sound, lighting, safety and furnishings. These are much-needed upgrades to increase the usability of the theatre to meet community need, as well as it being viable as a vehicle for increasing revenue for the organisation.

Don Cumming, President  
Tuggeranong Community Arts Association  
Inc.



Is this what our  
future looks like?

# TREASURER'S REPORT

## Tuggeranong Community Arts Association 2021 Financial Year.

2021 was another year of challenges globally and for the TCAA. On a macro level, the world was still contending with the challenges of a global pandemic, travel was restricted, and we endured another lockdown. At the micro level, the Tuggeranong Community Arts Association was going through significant change within this unstable environment.

The TCAA Board, like many of us during lockdown, decided it was time to look inward to seek improvement. Enlisting external experts, we reviewed the workplace culture, pay rates and duty statements along with all organisational policies and financial processes.

This has been a momentous undertaking for all involved, requiring a substantial financial investment from the organisation's reserves. However, with a new funding policy from ArtsACT just around the corner, it is integral that the TCAA is in the strongest position possible to secure our core funding to take us into the future.

As a response to the 2021 COVID-19 lockdown, the A.C.T government provided financial support schemes for businesses. This support

provided TCAA with \$40,000 to subsidise some of the revenue losses incurred in Fresh Funk class fees and venue hire due to the lockdown. In 2022, these revenue streams have still not reached the pre-COVID figures of 2019 and are continuing to impact on our bottom line.

Looking ahead to 2022 we are confident that revenue will recover as the community adjusts to living with COVID-19.

As a result of our review of pay rates, the Board was pleased to be able to increase pay rates for our staff during 2021. The increases will be accompanied by budget adjustments into the future, and further work to enhance funding support for them.

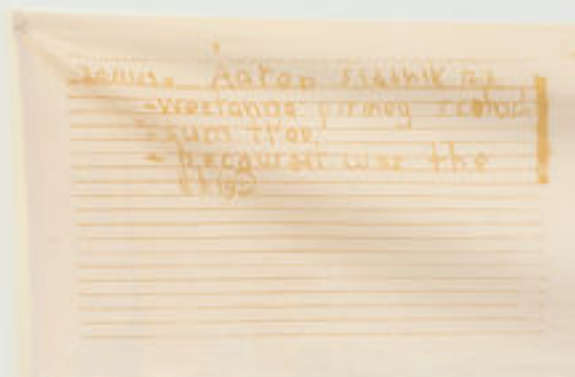
Our reserves are still substantial, despite the use of some of them for the review activities during 2021.

John Hargreaves, Treasurer  
Tuggeranong Community Arts Association  
Inc.

**For financial statements please go to:  
[www.tuggeranongarts.com](http://www.tuggeranongarts.com)**



*Fraxinus angustifolia*, Narrow-leaved Ash — Karoola Park, Watson, ACT, Ngunnewal / Ngunawal, Ngambri Country



Some of the things that  
- were found in the  
- were the  
- because of the  
- the



SALON

Sheak—Tuggeranong Park, ACT—EAN, ESA



Some of the things that  
- were found in the  
- were the  
- because of the  
- the

# YEAR IN REVIEW

A stronger and more resilient team after 2021.

As with all organisations, especially arts organisations, TCAA was deeply affected by the 2021 COVID-19 lockdown and continued pressure on resources with frequent staff absences due to quarantine requirements. In addition, we had several staff resign: Operations Manager, Amanda Pollock, Community and Cultural Development Producer, Aiden Delaney, Messengers Program Manager, Penny Stott and CEO Rauny Worm prompting a review into the workplace culture and conditions. Despite these challenges, the organisation and the staff team were able to deliver a rich program of activity in the first half of the year, were able to pivot program content online to engage audiences during the COVID-19 lockdown and were able to warmly welcome new staff members

Our new TCAA team members are: Kristy Griffin, Leah Blankendaal, Roger Jillard and Dana Castle.

Kristy Griffin is employed as the Community and Cultural Development Officer. Kristy's experience across education and the performing arts has proven a great attribute to the organisation. Leah Blankendaal, Operations and Event Manager, has diverse experience with arts administration roles and has generously shared her knowledge across all aspects of the organisation. Roger Jillard, has joined us as the Messengers Program Manager and has instantly made himself accessible to the youth he works with and brings a dynamic energy to the program. Dana Castle has provided a friendly face as Front of House Co-ordinator and has excelled in providing efficient support to all program managers and TAC visitors.



## YEAR IN REVIEW

After Rauny resigned from the position of Chief Executive Officer, the TCAA Visual Arts Program Manager, Karena Keys stepped up to act in the role, and Lily Platts (previously Front of House) stepped into Karena's, metaphorical, Visual Arts Program shoes. Karena and the refreshed TCAA team worked hard together to build trust and to establish working methods that encouraged collaboration, prioritised the artists that we work with and connected with the community that we serve.

As a result the team were able to deliver innovative programs, such as *Unwine-d* and *Chats with Mum* during lockdown and innovative exhibitions that engaged with the community, both locally and interstate. These included *Dark Euphoria* by S.A Adair and Meredith Hughes and *Embracing the Familiar* by Rebecca Mayo. The Woden Arts initiative delivered support for artists through the *Lockdown Commissions*. Our long-standing art and mental health program, Messengers, was held afloat during lockdown by our dedicated Support Worker, Kelsey Van Der Tuin, while the recruitment for Penny's replacement occurred.

Because of the challenges presented to the organisation in 2021, we have emerged stronger and more resilient. We are united as we stride into 2022, ready to face whatever is thrown our way. If it is lemons — we will make lemonade.

Thank you to the entire TCAA team.

Karena Keys  
Acting CEO

BLAK N DEADLY

BLAK DEADLY

BLAK DEADLY

BLAK DEADLY



# VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM

2021 was a year of change and adaptation, both anticipated and unexpected.

The Tuggeranong Arts Centre galleries showcased twelve successful exhibitions, each one held under evolving restrictions and circumstances. The artists were both local and interstate, from diverse backgrounds and at differing stages in their art careers. It was also the year that we began engaging local arts writers to work with exhibiting artists on long form essays or reviews that could be pitched to local and interstate publications. This initiative resulted in TAC exhibitions being featured in Art Monthly Australasia and the Canberra Times.

The first exhibition of the year was *Jack, John and Kempsey*, a retrospective of paintings by Jack Featherstone. *Jack, John and Kempsey* was Curated by Visual Art Program Manager, Karena Keys, it included paintings created over the last 70 years. Sourced from local art collectors and from the artist himself and was a celebration of Jack's contribution to Canberra's art community.

*Embracing the Familiar*, by Rebecca Mayo followed in April. *Embracing the Familiar* was a community engagement project, conceived in 2019 by Rebecca Mayo and Karena Keys that sought contributions from the public. The exhibition was put on hold in 2020 due to the first lockdown but work continued in the background with a shift from in-person contributions from the community to a mail out version. As a result of this pivot *Embracing the*

*Familiar* was able to reach a national and international audience, with more than 150 participants.

In July, Canberra was plunged into its second and most prolonged lockdown of the pandemic to date. The lockdown occurred amid the installation of the exhibition, *Dark Euphoria* by Meredith Hughes and S.A. Adair. As with *Embracing the Familiar*, this forced the artists and TAC staff to consider a way to display the work and connect with an audience through the screen. By combining imagery of the exhibition with words created and performed by artist Zsuzsi Soboslay, TAC Marketing and Communications Manager, Cassidy Richens; cut together an immersive representation of the exhibition. This screen-based version of the exhibition was successfully launched online and is a poetic reflection on the uncertain times we are living in.

Lockdown lifted and in November, the Arts Centre was able to round the year out with two shows by 2019 and 2020 Australian National University, School of Art and Design, Emerging Artist Support Scheme (ANU, SoAD, EASS) recipients Alexa Malizon and Rory Gillen. Alongside this solo exhibition, Gallery 2 was filled with work from the Messengers program in their exhibition . Messengers participants still managed to be prolific regardless of the interruptions to their year.



OUR CONNECTION WILL REMAIN

STILL BLAK & QUEER

PROPS + COUTURE

NEVER NEEDED YOUR APPROVAL

STILL HERE

THIS IS

WE WILL NOT GIVE UP

QUEST & TRANSLATION

WE ARE WORTHY



Images: Dark Euphoria: Meredith Hughes and S.A. Adair, installation view, Tuggeranong Arts centre, 2021.

## DARK EUPHORIA

Responding to megafires despite the pandemic.

*Dark Euphoria* was created by Meredith Hughes and S.A. Adair in response to the 2019-2020 megafires. The artists filled Gallery 2 with domestic objects cast from charcoal; collected from burnt trees, during several trips by the artists to burnt landscapes in southeast Australia. These objects were placed on the floor of the gallery that had been covered in scattered, broken eggshells. The white of the shells enhanced the depth of the black objects, and from a distance looked like a universe of stars. The shells reflected the fragility of the world and the homes that we create for ourselves.

Two days before *Dark Euphoria* opened, Canberra went into lockdown and the exhibition could not open to the public as planned. As restrictions eased slightly, and staff were allowed back in the building, we were able to adapt to this scenario by recording the exhibition in situ and share the filmed experience with the public. The footage of the installation was coupled with text written and recited by Zsuzsi Soboslay. Creating an ephemeral experience that was able to retain the integrity of the artists' work.

"The Carpet of broken eggshells illuminates the life of each cast, but also pays respect to the original object's demise. The

casts are activated mnemonics of events that ravaged the New South Wales south coast, during the Black Summer bushfires." Zsuzsi Soboslay 2021

Alongside the exhibition, the artists sought to collaborate with the community. The community were sent packs with black and white silhouettes, pens and charcoal and asked to respond and share their stories and experiences of the megafires. This community work, culminated in an exhibition of the responses that followed *Dark Euphoria*.







Image: Alexa Malizon: *Diversitea Talks*, Ningning (still) 2020, digital video colour and sound, 1.51min.

## DIVERSITEA TALKS

“I have experienced two vastly different cultures”

2020 Emerging Arts Support Scheme (EASS) recipient Alexa Malizon used comedy and pop-culture to engage with her personal history and experiences of ‘difference’ or ‘otherness’ in her exhibition *Diversitea Talks*. Through a series of video works displayed in the TAC Foyer Gallery, Filipino-Australian, Malizon explored her feelings of diaspora by using humour, video layering techniques and the language of the social media video post as visual strategies to challenge Asian stereotypes portrayed in mainstream media. She questioned the ideas and the expectations of being an ‘Australian’ while also exploring

the conflict she faced growing up between two distinct cultural worlds.

Malizon states “I have experienced two vastly different cultures throughout my life as I was born in Australia and I was raised in a Filipino family. It made me question where I belong, what my morals and values are, and my authenticity of being Filipino or Australian – or even both.”

This solo-exhibition opportunity provided by the ANU, SoAD EASS program, provided Malizon with the opportunity to exhibit in a gallery for the first time, as

her graduation year exhibition was moved online due to the pandemic. Due to the quality of Malizon’s work, her ability to engage an audience through humour and the relevance of her work to the Australian community (a community primarily built on diasporas since colonisation and its devastation of the First Nations populations) the exhibition attracted much media attention. TAC commissioned an article about *Diversitea Talks*, by emerging arts writer Zeta Xu, which was published in *Art Monthly Australasia* and the *Canberra Times*, and Alexa was interviewed by ABC radio Canberra.

Image: Jack Featherstone: Jack John and Kempsey,  
Berrima Now 1991, „Acrylic on Canvas, 78 x 108cm. .

## ARTISTS WE WORKED WITH

### Allsorts

- Alex Parrinder
- Kate Buerckner
- Margot La Fontaine
- Annie Marshall
- Sasha Maniov
- Julia Hughes
- Malyan Gilbert

### Jack, John and Kempsey

- Jack Featherstone
- Nigel Featherstone
- Anna Georgia
- Karina Harris and Neil Hobbs
- Lily Withycombe
- Nigel Lendon and Pam McGrath
- Brenda Croft
- Katy Mutton

### Embracing the Familiar

- Rebecca Mayo

### Dark euphoria

- S.A. Adair
- Meredith Hughes

### After

- Dylan Mooney
- Charlotte Allingham

### Diversitea Talks

- Alexa Malizon

### Uncalibrated Space

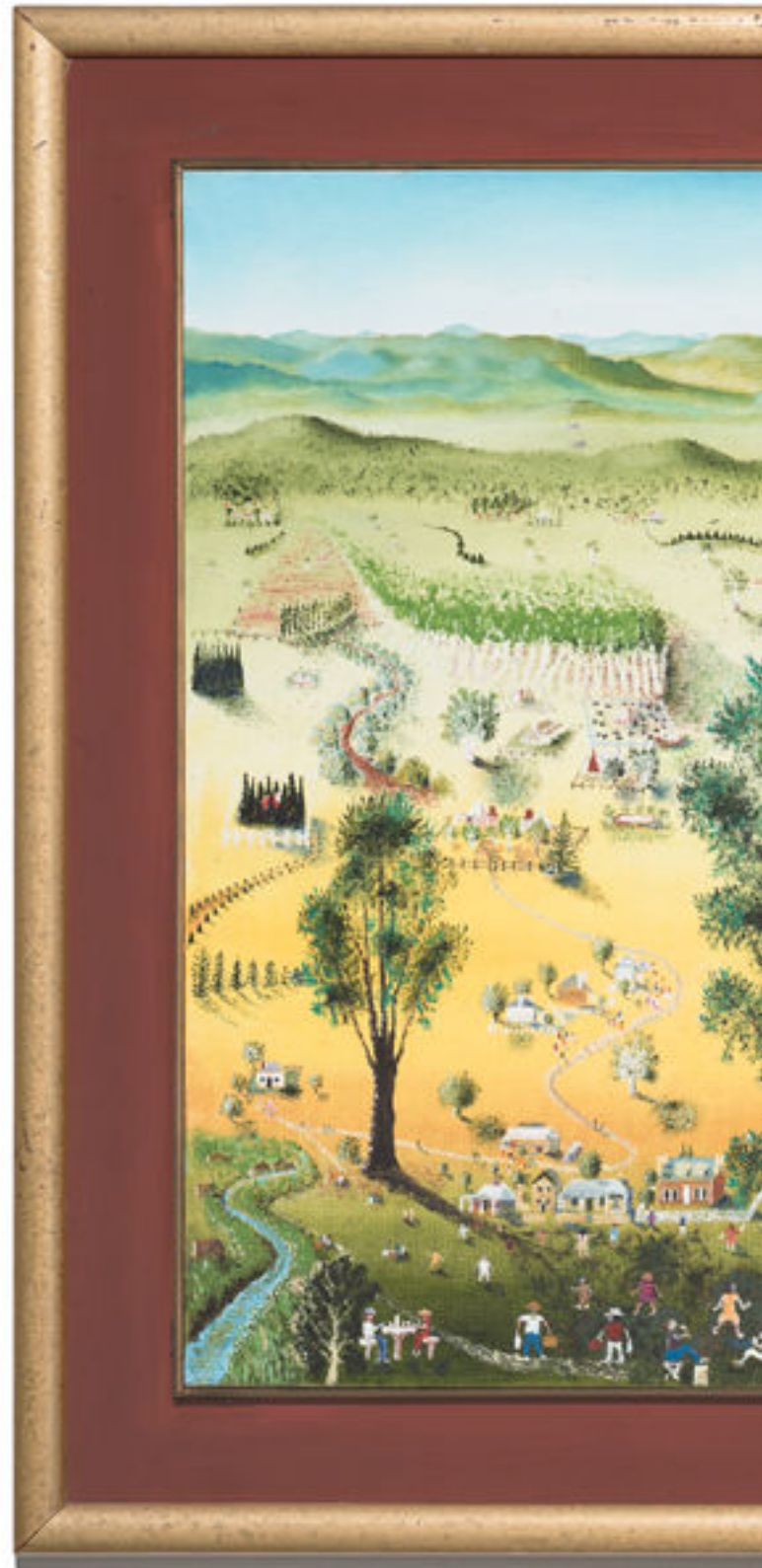
- Rory Gillen

### Photographers

- Martin Ollman
- Brenton McGeachie

### Installation

- Tom Buckland
- Riley Beaumont





# COMMUNITY ARTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The 2021 Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) program underwent changes in staffing, focus and relationships.

With a changeover in program management staff in May, the 2021 CACD program looked to solidify Tuggeranong Arts Centre's artistic commitments and existing relationships before setting out to imagine new networks and programming possibilities. Shortly after this a three-month lockdown began in response to the growing COVID-19 cases in the Canberra community. The strain of lockdown didn't only impact live events, but relationships with artists and the Arts Centre's community. As we attempted to postpone and save programming outcomes, the need to pivot to the online space became increasingly evident. The 2021 CACD program was required to cancel one opportunity – *Throttle*, a collaboration with Perth live performance company, Performing Lines and postpone several others; *After the Glitz & Glam*, *Wilding* and *Valley of the Molls* until 2022. Some of these programs had previously been postponed from the 2020 season, and

the artists involved once again had their resilience challenged and their projects prolonged under unprecedented conditions.

The pivot to online programming came with many challenges, but also new successes. Public programming took place under the banner of *TAC TOK* – a social media and website platform for arts and cultural programming. *TAC TOK* worked in collaboration with four artists: comedian Chris Ryan, foraging expert Diego Bonetto, visual artist Ed Radclyffe and First Nations Drag artist, Shawnah Cady. The case studies below feature three other successful programs from the 2021 online season; *Unwine-d*, *Stand Up Comedy for Beginners* and *The Children's Musical*.





Image: House Planet the Musical, Tuggeranong Theatre. Photo by Martin Ollman, 2021.

## THE CHILDREN'S MUSICAL

A third iteration of a successful program.

*The Children's Musical* saw its third iteration during 2021, supervised by performing artists Nathalie and Tim Bevitt. The program was supported by local comedian and musical theatre performer, Chelsea Heaney, and Fresh Funk alumni, Daniel Streatfield. The program comprised twenty local children working with staff every weekend to devise and stage an original musical. The writing was completely led by the chorus of young performers and participants. Equal parts

challenging and successful was the young people's collaboration with design staff — Ed Radclyffe (set and props) and Johanna Hoyne (costuming). They were part of the conceptualising and making phases of all design elements. The final result was an abstracted, almost Brechtian, interpretation; of the impacts of climate change, revolving around the theme of 'recovery'. The program's biggest challenge was, without a doubt, continuing online during the extended lockdown period. Demonstrating

the utmost dedication to their craft and hope that their program would not fall victim to COVID-19, the staff and participants navigated the ups and downs of an evolving community crisis with professionalism. They were able to successfully stage a full length production, despite losing nearly half of their face-to-face rehearsal hours. The performance weekend saw two sold-out performances, highly acclaimed by local theatre reviewers and with local media in attendance.



Image: Chris Ryan, (provided by the artist)

## **CHRIS RYAN - STAND UP COMEDY FOR BEGINNERS**

### Stage skills devised online.

The 2021 lockdown began one-week before the commencement of TAC's second educational collaboration with acclaimed comedian, Chris Ryan. With support from TAC staff, Chris and her eight participants were able to transition into learning and performing online. Chris' course worked with participants to find their voice as comedians and develop the basic techniques for

holding a comedy audience for a five-minute stand-up set. The course took place over four weeks, concluding in a public zoom performance. An added layer to this experience was both Chris and the performers developing their craft to work at its best for an online stage, and making the technical adjustments needed to adapt to this performance world.

The final show was hugely successful, with online audiences reaching the same capacity as a successful face-to-face event. Our ongoing relationship with Chris Ryan has been strengthened and TAC looks forward to building on this in future seasons.



Image: Unwine-d event. Photo by Martin Ollman

## UNWINE-D & TEA-TOTAL

A feel good lockdown experience.

Born from a collaboration between the CACD and Gallery programs during lockdown, *Unwine-d* was the feel-good lockdown experience and opportunity for connection that the Canberra community were seeking. *Unwine-d* was a multi-faceted event that brought together the rituals of painting, attending a live gig, eating and drinking and community connectedness. It took place by way of a zoom painting class. Whilst participants were following their painting steps, a

musician would perform to them live from his living room. In the hours leading up to the event, TAC worked with Tuggeranong-based caterer The Lazy Grazer; to deliver wine, grazing platters and all the materials needed for the class. The focus of the painting was the iconic 1970's Canberra Bus Stop, with the intention that future iterations of *Unwine-d* could hone in on the quirks of living in Canberra and repeat participants could create a body of work that was connected in theme and to the world that they

live in. An alcohol free version of *Unwine-d* was created called *Tea-Total*, to make the event more inclusive of families and non-alcohol consuming audiences. *Unwine-d & Tea-Total* were so successful that they have resulted in commercial opportunities for the Arts Centre and have been included in the Gallery and CACD programming for the 2022 season.



Image: Artwork by Lily Platts, for Unwine-d, 2021.  
Photo supplied by the artist.

# FRESH FUNK

We had a strong start but 2021 was another challenging year for Fresh Funk.

Semester one 2021 was our first 'normal' semester since early 2019, with more students returning to the program after the difficulties and uncertainty of 2020 than predicted.

Our hallmark development program for choreographers, *Fresh Faced*, staged three stunning performances and our major end-of-semester production *The Chocolate Factory* held two successful shows at the Erindale Theatre, with full capacity both onstage and in the audience.

However, this return to norm did not last. Another lockdown put a stop to face-to-face classes shortly after Semester two began. Using the experience gained in 2020, we moved immediately to online tutorials to continue the momentum and routines that had begun and moved to Zoom classes when lockdown was extended into Term 4. It was clear that, for all involved, the end-of-year show was viewed as an important goal

that could not be abandoned. This drive to achieve was evidenced by the majority of Fresh Funkers sticking with it, despite the challenges everyone faced.

We worked hard and restrictions eased, allowing us to re-enter the studio with five weeks until the performance date – a seemingly impossible deadline for the scope of our productions. However, the determination and dedication of the students and our team of tutors pulled the performance together despite this unrealistic timeline. A positive development was that audience restrictions lifted just in time for *Mulan* to be performed to a packed theatre in December AND screened as a cinematic experience at Limelight Cinema two weeks later. It was a wonderful way to end the year. It provided affirmation to the dancers as to what can be achieved through love and dedication.





Image: Fresh Funk's BeYOUTiful, Tuggeranong Arts Centre.

## BeYOUTiful

A professional, fast-paced, creative intensive.

After a successful first installment in 2020, Fresh Funk ran another *BeYOUTiful* dance development initiative in January 2021. Led by Fresh Funk talent and tutor, Melissa Markos, *BeYOUTiful* is a holiday project devised for our advanced dancers, designed to expose them to a professional, fast-paced creative intensive, culminating in a performance at the end of the week. Our 2021 edition took the shape of a professionally filmed music video. Twenty-one advanced senior dancers applied for a place, rehearsing for three hours

each night over one week, before filming took place on the Friday evening. The dancers were pushed hard throughout the week, and extended themselves with exercises that explored improvisation, creation of choreography, self-reflection and problem-solving. By using her brilliant skills and extensive experience as a professional teacher and creative talent, Mel Markos drew out the very best in each dancer, resulting in a sense of professionalism, pride and emotional connection to the outcome. The final product

was a layered dance video fusing hip-hop and contemporary dance movement, filmed by Canberra videographer Tim Ngo. The video was published on social media and to date has had more than 1000 views.



Image: Fresh Faced Young Choreographer's Initiative. Photo by Martin Ollman, 2021.

## FRESH FACED

Demonstrating how from little things, big things grow.

Our *Fresh Faced Young Choreographers Initiative* for 2021 took place from 14 – 16 May at the Tuggeranong Arts Centre theatre. The show consisted of nine new dance works, each with striking choreography and creative narratives. Created over eight weeks, this unique opportunity is offered as a professional development opportunity to our top dancers from our Masters and Senior Guys classes. It provides the chance for aspiring choreographers to create their own performance pieces and allow for experimentation

within a supported environment. This experience provides an invaluable introduction to the dance industry. The dancers that choose to take part are privileged to experience a range of teaching methods, tasks and techniques throughout the creation process, by learning from, and working with, people outside of their regular dance classes, developing friendships along the way. *Fresh Faced* is widely regarded by Fresh Funk dancers as one of the best and most-loved experiences in the program. It has also developed over the years to become a

seeding opportunity for our future Fresh Funk tutors to emerge.

It is with great pride that over the last 22 years we have seen generations of Fresh Funk tutors, dancers and choreographers go on to be part of, and greatly influence, the Australian dance industry. This highlights the connection between dance development, the expression of real-life issues and personal resilience, and how from little things, big things grow.

## LITTLES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Our *Littlies* program moved online in Term 3 during lockdown, with tutors immediately pivoting to run existing classes via Zoom. The *Littlies* program includes: *Funk Stars* (4-6yrs) and *Mini Funk* (7-9yrs). In recent years the popularity of these classes had them reach maximum numbers each term. For this age range, parents usually sit and observe classes from the Arts Centre foyer, having a chat and creating their own bonded community as Fresh Funk families.

This connection became even clearer to us during lockdown. Tutors observed siblings often joining in the class to stay active and entire families eager for the opportunity to log on each week to wave at their friends through the Zoom screen. Without a doubt, these classes were a real highlight during lockdown. Children were visibly excited to take part in dance, and parents sent grateful emails about how important the class was to their schedules at home. To their credit the tutors didn't hold back either. The team went to a lot of effort developing new choreography for each lesson and finding ways to have fun, such as a Halloween themed event where the participants got dressed up to log on. The program provided a positive highlight in an otherwise difficult period.





# MESSENGERS

The challenges faced by the Messengers Program and the young people it supports continued from 2020 into 2021.

Messengers held face-to-face groups up until the implementation of lockdown. The group attendance and participation was strong throughout the first two terms of 2021. Early in 2021 Messengers worked in Gungahlin and Belconnen as well as Tuggeranong, facilitating visual art, dance, theatre, creative writing and music classes across the ACT.

As a pilot, we trialed the *Escape Artists* program. This was a small class for people with high anxiety, designed to act as a stepping stone towards group readiness. While it ultimately was not feasible due to small numbers and high staffing costs, the assisted participants were able to successfully transition to our larger group programs in following term. Prior to lockdown we were also able to run our *holiday drop-in* and *Art Factory* holiday programs.

Penny Stott finished up her role managing the Messengers Program mid-year and the new manager, Roger Jillard, commenced in September. In the intervening period Kelsey Van Der Tuin did an impeccable job managing both her social worker position and that of program manager. This put considerable responsibility and strain on her, particularly given the traumatic impact

of COVID-19 on both participants and staff. Kelsey's ability to successfully hold the program together was admirable. Her ability to remain in contact with the young people made a positive impact as they felt the emotional and mental strain caused by the lockdown.

Messengers was able to pivot online. Although there was some experience with this previously, it was a massive challenge for all concerned. As with previous efforts, inequity in access to technology, internet and suitable study areas all made online engagement difficult for a lot of young people. There are inherent difficulties in trying to teach and facilitate art in an online forum, making for a far from ideal learning environment. Nevertheless, Messengers saw the social benefits the group provided, so continued online groups throughout the year. Tutors persevered in providing content for one class for several young people who were unable to attend face to face sessions. Through the lockdown, consistency and availability were priorities, as well as providing an engagement tool for particularly vulnerable young people.



In addition, Messengers sent out art packs to participants and created special quarantine projects such as the *Cardboard House* project using 3D printed packs and cereal boxes. The *Silver Linings* online programs ran for people who could not access regular classes, and individuals could access more than one group. This provided a higher level of connection during a time of isolation for many with some past participants re-engaging with the program during lockdown.

The lockdown significantly impacted the capacity of the program to deliver services and support to a wide range of young people. Schools were unable to assist students, in attending the program post lockdown, which saw patronage of two of the groups remain small. However, Messengers staff maintained contact with schools, keeping vital connections alive in preparation for Term 1, 2022.

While Messengers was unable to deliver the popular *Parenting Help Seminar* series during lockdown, program staff worked closely with the seminar facilitators to provide an online Q&A video series instead. Parents were invited to submit questions, to which Sarah O'Sullivan provided video answers via our website and social media pages. Sarah provided practical strategies for parents on a range of issues such as depression, anxiety and coping with isolation and lockdown.

When lockdown concluded, Messengers staff actively engaged in rebuilding the groups by contacting referrers/participants and parents/carers and we were able to run three face-to-face groups and one online. Attendance slowly grew as people became more accustomed to managing risk and more comfortable with attending. It was evident to staff that the lockdown, the presence of COVID-19 and lack of schooling had a detrimental impact on the mental health of participants. Once the Arts Centre closed for the end of year break, staff spent time reflecting on the impact of the disruption with school coordinators and youth workers, and developing the program for the following year.

## CARDBOARD JUNGLE

The re-commencement of face-to-face groups was a particular highlight towards the end of the year. This was important to give staff an understanding of the impact of lockdown on the mental health of young people across three distinct age ranges. The impact was significant, and in many cases, exacerbated mental health issues they were already struggling with. Though the groups were small, relationships were rebuilt and engagement levels with participants was very high. Efforts to generate work for the end-of-year exhibition were a motivation for all involved.

All of the artworks created by participants of the Messengers program were curated into the exhibition, in Gallery 2 at TAC, *Cardboard Jungle*. The culmination of a collaborative vision between young people, tutors and staff, each class worked to transform the gallery space into a handmade, art-jungle. A papier mache garden complete with giant red mushrooms, rainbow trees and fairy houses filled the gallery, a giant blue whale sculpture floated above and hundreds of colourful 2D artworks spotted the white walls. Visitors were encouraged to sit in the space and make their own piece of art to add to the walls, so the jungle continued to grow over the time it was on display. The exhibition looked fantastic and tutor/curator; Lily Platts; was tireless in ensuring the artworks were displayed at their best. Some art work found its way to the Tuggeranong Headspace foyer where it remains on display in place of a previous collection of artwork produced by the Messengers Program.



# WODEN ARTS

Generating a buzz in the Valley.

The Woden Arts Program continued to deliver a diverse range of creative programs online and in person despite COVID-19. Events were delivered in consultation with Woden residents, artists, Woden-based organisations and community groups. A key goal of the program focuses on establishing relationships and strategic partnerships across the Woden Valley. By collaborating with locals, Woden Arts has been able to pool resources, culminating in the growth of the program's profile as a place for creativity, diversity, cultural inclusivity, and artistic activity within the ACT. Events that were delivered in partnership with local community groups and artists included: *Farrerdise* – a celebration of Neighbour Day, *Music by the Ponds*, *Meet me at Mawson*, *Woden Arts and Crafts markets*, *Urban Sketching* with Leonie Andrews, ACT Community Sector *Heal Country NAIDOC WEEK*, *Heal Country with Dale Huddleston* for NAIDOC WEEK, *Vessel Weaving* with Angela J. Pisciotta, the launch of a community mural at Farrer shops and the *Graffiti time warp*: a self guided site specific exhibition at the Woden drains. Online programs included *Masks Off: Live music from the living Room*, *upcycling of household waste into art workshop* with Rachel Develin for Mental Health month and the *Woden Arts Lockdown Commissions*. The Woden Arts Program is responsive and evolves with the needs, desires and creative imagination of the Woden community.

## WODEN ARTS AND CRAFTS MARKET

A *Woden Arts and Crafts Market* was the outcome of an initiative to assist visual artists to develop sustainable practices, by facilitating an opportunity to connect with audiences, promote their artform and sell their product. Utilising artists from the Woden Arts Register, which currently lists 50 artists, an artist's meetup was organized to explore issues such as visibility and connection with local audiences. The art market was the result of this consultation. The artists who participated in the first *Arts Market* developed new commercial skills, including: securing insurance cover, pricing their work, setting up their stall, cash handling and public engagement. The market was situated in a generous space donated by the established and bustling Southside Farmers Market. All artists sold their wares, connected with new audiences, and are keen to continue and grow together. Southside Farmers Market would like to maintain this relationship by offering space for artists at select times throughout the year.



Image: Artwork by Wiradjuri, Yorta Yorta and Kamilaroi artist Angela Jane Pisciotta, for Woden Arts vessel weaving workshop.

## VALLEY INHABITANTS

### The faces and stories of Woden.

Valley Inhabitants is a multi-arts project that documents the untold stories of residents and iconic businesses within the Woden Valley. Local artists; Martin Ollman (photographer- videographer), and Harvey Welsh (composer) along with podcaster and radio host; Jen Seyderhelm, joined forces to create a suite of video portraits. Each work reveals the story of a local resident who has become part of the cultural

fabric of Woden. The series explores the contribution individuals play in shaping communities, as well as what defines the Woden Valley and the unique micro-communities within in. The final presentation will include a pop-up exhibition of still portraits through Woden suburbs and the town square in late 2022. Viewers will access the associated video portrait through a QR code and as an online exhibition.

Image: Artwork by Erin Stonestreet, Hannah Spinning, oil on aluminium composite board (detail), for the Woden Arts Lockdown Commission project

## WODEN ARTS LOCKDOWN COMMISSIONS

The *Woden Arts Lockdown Commissions* was a quick response project designed to support local artists from the Woden Arts Register, during the 2021 COVID-19 Canberra lockdown. Its concept was specifically targeted at professional, practicing, artists to provide them with the opportunity to continue developing new work during the lockdown. The *Woden Arts Lockdown Commissions* was also viewed as a program that would assist each artist to maintain a sense of possibility, visibility, focus and financial support through their arts practice while in lockdown. In this instance, the priority for the Woden Arts Program was to be proactive, responsive, and supportive to the needs of artists. Artists were contacted directly and invited to write a proposal describing what they would create if they received \$1500. Five artists were selected: contemporary pop folk singer songwriter, Kim Yang; created a music video for her single *Brave*, composer and musician; Harvey Welsh; wrote and recorded three songs, ceramic sculptor; Daniel Leone; made five ceramic pots to house Bonsai forms, realist painter; Erin Stonestreet, produced a diptych entitled *Hannah Spinning* – a portrait of a Woden resident spinning wool, and visual artist Louise Cooke produced a photographic series of her daily lockdown walks in her local nature reserves that included her personal written observations. The project was launched online on TAC's Facebook page, featuring the premiere of Kim Yang's *Brave* music video and conversations with the artists about the creation of the clip. The project currently lives as an online exhibition on Tuggeranong Arts Centre's website with a dedicated webpage entitled; *Woden Arts Lockdown Commissions*.





## FUNDING BODY

Supported by



## GRANTS RECEIVED



## OUR SPONSORS





tuggeranong  
**ARTS**  
centre



**CONTACT US**

info@tuggeranongarts.com  
02 6293 1443  
137 Reed Street,  
Greenway ACT 2901

**WEBSITE**

tuggeranongarts.com

**FACEBOOK.COM**

tuggeranongarts  
freshfunkdancecanberra  
messengersact

**INSTAGRAM.COM**

tuggeranongarts  
freshfunkdancecanberra  
messengersprogram  
wodenarts