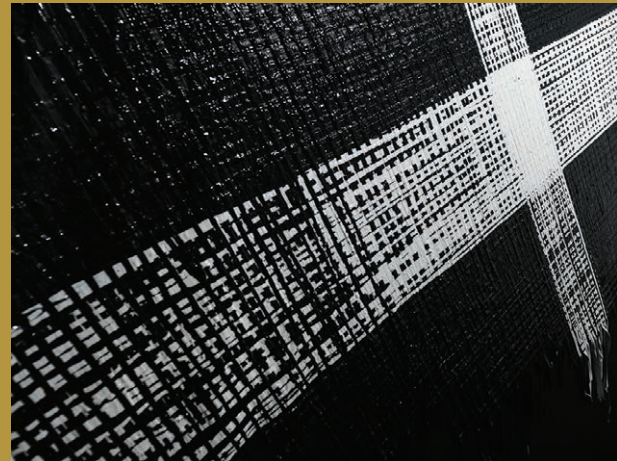


**ORANA ARTS** ANNUAL REPORT 2017

*Thank you for inviting me to this fabulous event. I felt so thrilled and thankful for the opportunity to learn about the lives of Aunty Ruth Carney and Uncle Dick Carney. I felt that the format was intimate and welcoming; entirely appropriate for the subject. The vibe was wonderful and the venue perfect.*

*The event gave me an important and extraordinary insight into the hardships experienced by Aboriginal people in rural Australia through the voices of those who had lived it. It also spoke to the dignity, integrity and strength of Aunty Ruth Carney and Uncle Dick Carney, and their love for each other. They have brought a special light to me personally.*

– Karen Hagan, WPCC, responding to the Staging Stories reading presented as a special community event at the Black Box Theatre in November 2017.



Cover: Georgie Pollard's 2017 HomeGround exhibition, *Lines are Drawn*, image by Alex Wisser.

Photo credits: Ben Williams Photography, Neesh Photography, Paris Norton, Portia Lindsay

Photos throughout this report are of both Orana Arts and independent arts and cultural projects.

Design: Rachel Williams

Contact [communications@oranaarts.com](mailto:communications@oranaarts.com) for individual photo or artwork details; we would be delighted to put you in touch with creatives across the region.

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# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Orana Arts has many projects and programs - here are just a few from our successful 2017: the Faith Exhibition at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Soup Sessions for community-based micro-funding, the continuation of Staging Stories, the commencement of the CETA program with the Ukerbarley project and Creative Exchange events bringing communities together.

In May, Orana Arts hosted Create NSW, Screen NSW and the Australia Council for an arts funding roadshow through Mudgee, Dubbo and Nyngan. This gave Orana Arts the opportunity to discuss funding opportunities and to raise issues and concerns faced by the arts in regional NSW. As a regional arts development organisation

we aim to create collaborative partnerships and opportunities for our communities to participate in the arts.

I wish to thank the board members, whose contributions to the region are immeasurable. I thank them for their time and dedication as they travel across the member local government areas, share their knowledge and passion and promote the board's initiatives in their areas. Thank you to the six contributing councils for their support — to their staff and councillors for the ongoing engagement.

Our Executive Director, Alicia Leggett: thank you for your hard work, enthusiasm and passion for



regional arts, creating and facilitating new creative partnerships and projects, developing and maintaining established projects and services across the Orana Region.

In 2017 we have been focusing on moving the Orana Arts board to a skills-based board and engaging with our stakeholders on this topic. The new structure will be adopted in 2018 and I look forward to the organisation's continued development.

**ANNE-LOUISE CAPEL**

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Our mission is to support regional artists and communities to participate in and engage with the arts. As a small team, we need to deliver this mission strategically to obtain the best outcomes. And through this process it is inevitable that we encounter challenges – that we take risks and we learn – because after all, that is the nature of the arts. Without contemplating these factors as necessary components of our industry and society, one can become apathetic to the strength and influence of the arts. So how did we do in 2017?

This report highlights just a few of the many activities, events and projects that occurred throughout our council areas, all of which presented as opportunities to achieve our mission as an arts organisation. Worthy of note was our final LFP2 outcome, which saw our

team travel to Casula to present the Faith exhibition and manage the risks of curating a show in partnership with others. Our team saw this exhibition as testament to the fact that 'regional artists are real artists'. Congratulations to the OA team and the artists for a very successful – and professional – exhibition.

It is also worth noting the value of continued investment and funding for the arts in the region, providing opportunities like the one received by young Mudgee theatre-maker Jayden Muir. Jayden's successful Young Regional Artist Scholarship application gave her the opportunity in 2017 to push boundaries in practice and location and to create a program which will greatly benefit her career.

As a team, we learned that our work and the strength of our projects is built on integrity, on our beliefs that we must always seek innovative approaches, to always aim at producing excellent work and to overcome obstacles that jeopardise those outcomes. This thought is always in the forefront of what we do as an organisation and how we operate individually. Without the entire team supporting these ideals we wouldn't be cultural leaders in our communities. Thank you to the very smart and passionate team, who work tirelessly in their roles.

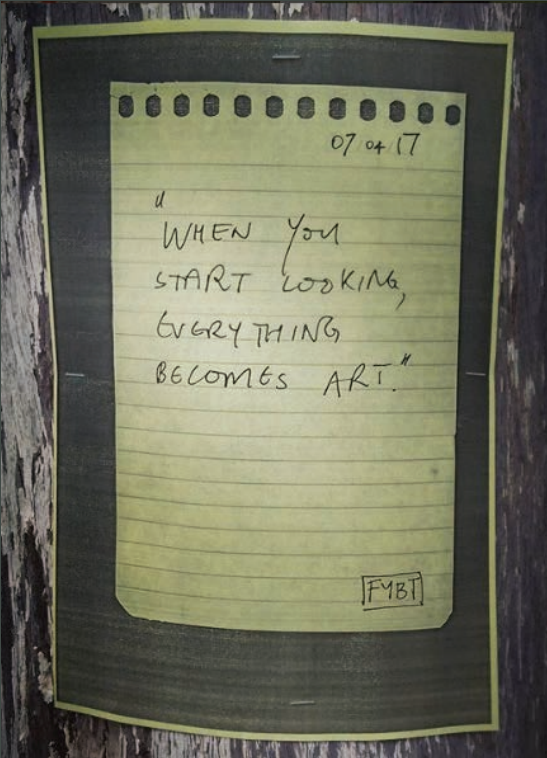
The OA Board has always been a supportive body for our vision and I'm grateful for their support as we look towards an exciting 2018.

**ALICIA RODRIGUEZ LEGGETT**

An aerial photograph showing a white car parked on a dirt road in a forest. The road is reddish-brown and runs vertically through the center of the image. The surrounding area is filled with dense, dark green trees and undergrowth. A person is visible on the road near the car. The text 'ABOUT ORANA ARTS' is overlaid in a white box at the bottom of the image.

# ABOUT ORANA ARTS

Image: CETA Ukerbarley




Orana Arts is the peak body for arts and cultural development in the Orana region of New South Wales. Orana Arts supports and advocates for arts and culture in the region through programs and projects that help communities participate in the arts and provide opportunities for artists.

We are part of a statewide network of 14 regional arts boards, dedicated to building positive futures for regional, rural and remote communities throughout New South Wales through arts and cultural development. An independent not-for-profit organisation formed in 2004, we receive our core funding from Create NSW and the six local governments of the region – Bogan Shire, Dubbo Region, Gilgandra Shire, Mid-Western Region, Narromine Shire and Warrumbungle Shire.

The Orana Arts board is comprised of representatives from our local governments areas and 3 co-opted members that bring specialised skills to the board. The board meets four times per year, in March, June, September and December.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on 10 March 2017.

A person with a beard, wearing a red t-shirt, a dark blue baseball cap with three white stripes, and a patterned vest, is seen from behind, drawing on a bright yellow wall with a black marker. The wall has some faint pencil sketches. The person's left arm is raised, and they are holding the marker. The background is a solid, textured yellow.

We are focused on supporting, developing and advocating for cultural activity in our region. As part of this focus we provide services and deliver programs that offer opportunities for artists and encourage participation in the arts.

# SERVICES



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Orana Arts aims to develop the skills of artists and organisations in our region in a variety of ways. We run 'Level Up' sessions through our This Business Called Art program, focused on funding and communications, Country Art Support Program information sessions, as well as a large amount of calls, emails and one-on-one meetings to provide advice, assistance and connections. Just a couple of success stories from this 'behind-the-scenes' support include: successful Young Regional Artist Scholarship applications by Mudgee's Jayden Muir and Nyngan's Tayla Martin; a NSW Regional Writer's Travel Grant for Sam Paine; and a Mudgee Readers' Festival exhibition tour to Coolah and Dubbo.

## ADVOCACY

As part of our advocacy work we ensure that we remain up to date on local, regional and national arts and cultural issues and maintain solid relationships and partnerships to best represent the creative communities across the Orana region. Part of our role as an advocate for arts in the region is to meet regularly with state and national arts bodies and to connect artists in our region with opportunities further afield. In 2017 we hosted an arts funding roadshow, with representatives from Create NSW, Screen NSW and the Australia Council meeting with arts practitioners, arts workers and local government bodies in Mudgee, Nyngan and Dubbo.



Image: Staging Stories

## COMMUNICATIONS

We are focused on supporting, advocating and developing cultural activity in our region. As part of this focus we provide services that offer opportunities for artists and encourage participation in the arts. One of the primary functions of Orana Arts is the communication and promotion of arts and cultural activity happening in our region. We achieve this via multiple platforms:

### ORANAARTS.COM

The website is geared towards more static content, and interviews and profiles of artists and events from around the region, as well as opportunities and resources. Profile pieces that prove popular on social media – such as CETA project updates and an interview with Jayden Muir – find a permanent home at [oranaarts.com](http://oranaarts.com)

The website received a makeover in late 2017, emerging sleeker

and easier to navigate, with the primary goal being to showcase our projects as well as events and artists across the region.

### OA ARTS BLAST

Our e-newsletter goes out monthly – with special bulletins when necessary – to over 1,200 subscribers. It covers events, projects and opportunities. In late 2017 we tweaked the format to match our rejuvenated website.

### @ORANAARTS

Our Facebook page has attracted 1,339 followers and 1,365 likes. Our Twitter account has 1,134 followers. Orana Arts on Instagram has 964 followers.

Our Communications Officer is always eager to hear about events and activities happening across the Orana Region at [communications@oranaarts.com](mailto:communications@oranaarts.com) or on social media.

**Instagram** receives the highest level of engagement through likes and comments. Two of the most popular Instagram posts for 2017 highlight the importance of regional arts advocacy and our Aboriginal Arts projects.





# PROJECTS

Image: Staging Stories

# STAGING STORIES

In 2015 Orana Arts commenced the Staging Stories project. Funded through an initiative by Create NSW, Staging Stories aimed to develop and provide support for Aboriginal playwrights and performers across the whole of regional NSW. As we developed the project it became clear how important it is to tell Aboriginal stories from Aboriginal perspectives and that regional NSW is rich with stories lived by Aboriginal people.

One such narrative is the life story of Narromine Elders Dick and Ruth Carney. Keen to have their experiences presented on stage, the couple began working with professional playwrights and producers to develop their story into a script. A good deal of script

development – and revising and refocusing the process – took place in 2017, with some exciting project developments.

A reading of the initial script was staged in Dubbo – at the Black Box Theatre in the Western Plains Cultural Centre in November 2017 – to showcase the draft script and process, as well as some special insight into the stories behind the stories. It was an incredibly special event and the response was overwhelming.

In 2018, the creative process continues, with Melbourne theatre professional John Harvey and regional writer/director Sam Paine working with Dick and Ruth Carney to stage a full production. Staging Stories will be performed to a wider audience mid-2018.



Image: CETA Ulkerbarley

# CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT TECHNOLOGY AND ART (CETA)

CETA is a digital arts engagement program of experimental labs with Aboriginal communities across the Orana region. This project is inspired by contemporary arts practice, developed for cultural sustainability and driven by Aboriginal people. Our innovative process works across art forms, disciplines, nature, technology and culture.

The pilot for CETA is the Ukerbarley project, working with Gamilaroi country in Coonabarabran, before the CETA program is extended across the region in 2018.

CETA Ukerbarley commenced in October 2017 with mentor artist Annie McKinnon and lead artist Paris Norton. Across three labs, Paris and Annie engaged

with local community members and elders to develop a series of creative outcomes inspired by Aboriginal site Ukerbarley. These outcomes have brought together cutting-edge technology and culture, paving a new way in which Aboriginal communities can share their stories.

In 2018 CETA Ukerbarley will launch its outcomes.

# THEATRE CAMP

In July 2017, students from Mudgee, Dubbo, Bathurst and Wellington were brought together for a fun-filled weekend of theatre games and skills development, at Burrendong Sport and Recreation Centre. The young creatives formed new friendships and bonds with like-minded peers across the region and learned new approaches to character development and improvisation from theatre professionals Camilla Ward and Sam Paine. Plans are underway to build on the connections forged at the inaugural Orana Arts Theatre Camp and enthusiasm is high for another camp.



# SOUP SESSIONS

Soup Sessions are community events designed as micro-funding for creative projects. In May a successful Soup Session was held in Wellington, with the Wellington Amateur Theatrical Society receiving a much-appreciated injection of funds ahead of their production of *The Demon Barber*. The benefit of this event went beyond additional funds for one organisation, as all present shared their project plans and pooled resources – a heart-warming example of community arts development.







In October Orana Arts partnered with the Western Plains Cultural Centre to present Soup Sessions: The Alley Gallery, in which artists pitched their concepts for a piece of wall in a Dubbo laneway and the community voted for their favourite street art proposal. This slightly different Soup Session format resulted in new artworks from Stephen Moore, New York artist Nick Rosal (interpreted by local artist Sam Paine), Heidi-Maree Frances and Mark Horton, just off the main street of Dubbo.



# CARVED UP BY DESIGN

Carved Up By Design is a series of workshops for people of Aboriginal heritage.

Inspired by dendroglyphs (carved trees), participants create their own personal designs and apply them to surfaces and objects using various contemporary wood and craft techniques.

This program is based on the understanding of the history of the carved design form and its cultural uses. The carved design represents a unique aspect of Aboriginal cultures in this region and is not widely known outside of the area. Participants gain skills in traditional carving and designing and can implement these skills in contemporary formats such as 3D printing and street art.

In 2017 Carved Up By Design made its way to the Bogan Shire. Working with various techniques a group of inspiring young creators designed works reflecting their identity and connection to their home town of Nyngan. These hand drawn and carved designs were transferred to 3D printing and turned into necklaces and bag tags. As a memento to their time with the Carved Up program, a group design was selected and carved into a pole. Partnerships between Orana Arts and the National Parks and Wildlife Service saw the first discussions of carving back into living trees, which will kick off in 2018 across the Warrumbungle Shire.

# PORTRAITS OF LANGUAGE



Portraits of Language is an emotional insight into the experiences and ongoing relationships that Elders have to language.

Acclaimed photographer Mervyn Bishop was commissioned to take photographic portraits of Elders while The State Library recorded interviews with the Elders about their experiences with language, the importance of language, and its future.

This exhibition took place at the Western Plains Cultural Centre and welcomed a large group of community members to its opening with a moving introduction from WPCC curator Kent Buchanan. This collection is held in trust by the Western Plains Cultural Centre. The exhibition celebrated the significant commitment to and achievements of Aboriginal Elders living in Dubbo today. Funded by Create NSW.

*I used to get very emotional about it because it possessed me. I became totally obsessed with that campaign. There were times when I would take as many as three meetings in a day. And I did things that I would never have dreamed of doing: like going into a pulpit, talking to church congregations, and putting up with people whose ideas were totally foreign to me... you could say the referendum was the result of good team work.*

Faith Bandler



# THE LEFT FIELD COLLECTIVE: FAITH

Faith was a collection of new works created in 2017 and produced by participating artists and mentors of the 2015 – 2017 Left Field Project. The Left Field Project is an Orana Arts intensive program for emerging Aboriginal artists, working individually and as a collective, to explore and challenge their artistic practice. In responding to this challenge, these artists have established a new visual language that expresses their unique perspective on history, culture and identity.

Faith Bandler is known for her active role in publicising the YES case for the Aboriginal question in the 1967 Referendum. Of the Referendum she has said:

This sentiment resonated with the Left Field Collective. Using Faith as a central concept – faith in society, faith in government or the role of people such as Faith Bandler in the referendum – they explored their identity artistically. How are they seen by today's society? What was the impact on their families and communities? Are Aboriginal people

seen differently now; has much changed regarding perceptions and policies since the referendum?

Faith marked the first time that the collective has exhibited together; mentors alongside emerging artists, and the overall power of the work was astounding. However, the immense pride that Orana Arts feels in presenting Faith is not just about the collaboration of emerging and established artists, but in the presentation of cutting edge contemporary Aboriginal work from our region in a large urban space. Our regional artists overcame a myriad of challenges – including distance, confidence, effrontery – that could have prevented them displaying their work. They showed their resilience and strength by not only presenting their work but also discussing their work alongside their former mentors, now peers.

Seen by over 2,000 people at Casula Powerhouse Art Gallery, Faith encouraged critical discussion of Australia's recent history from before the referendum to today and the role we all play in creating an inclusive society.



# COUNTRY ARTS SUPPORT PROGRAM

Image: Mudgee Zine-Makers

In 2017 the Country Arts Support Program enabled five projects across the region, which brought information and development across art forms and townships. These were:

## **FRIENDS OF THE WESTERN PLAINS CULTURAL CENTRE**

Friends of the WPCC delivered the Artist Encounters program with the Western Plains Cultural Centre in Dubbo. The program encouraged interaction between the audience and artist in the artist's studio and exhibition space.

## **MASSIVE MUSIC**

A partnership between Music NSW and Massive Music's Lust for Live in Dubbo, provided facilitated digital marketing workshops for regional musicians. Musicians then applied these skills to promote, coordinate and deliver an out-of-town show in neighbouring Mudgee.

## **MUDGE MEN'S SHED**

The Mudgee Men's Shed ran workshops that assisted group members to broaden their knowledge and capability in photography.

## **MUDGE READERS' FESTIVAL**

MRF delivered a series of workshops aimed at high school students creating their own magazine. The workshop featured local artists teaching skills in design, writing, photography and collaboration and the Mudgee Zine-Makers publication was launched at the 2017 Mudgee Readers' Festival.

## **STUART TOWN**

## **ADVANCEMENT ASSOCIATION**

Funds supported the annual Man from Ironbark Festival on Easter Saturday 2017 to engage a professional poet, street performers and musicians.

# OUR STAFF

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Portia Lindsay  
Communications Manager  
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Alicia Rodriguez Leggett and Paris Norton



# OUR BOARD

Orana Arts is a not-for-profit organisation governed by a board made up of representatives from our contributing LGAs and communities. The board – in consultation with Orana Arts staff – fulfil their primary role of overseeing the strategic direction of the organisation.

## Executive

Chairperson: Clr. Anne-Louise Capel, Warrumbungle Shire council representative

Deputy chairperson: Virginia Handmer, Mid Western Regional community representative

Treasurer: Susan Atkinson, Dubbo Regional community representative

## Board Members

Clr. Deidre Naden, Gilgandra Shire

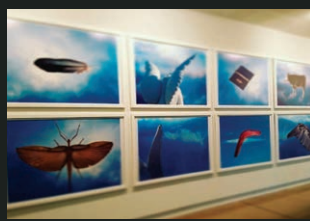
Clr. Sam Paine, Mid Western Regional Council

Clr. Leslie Lambert, Narromine Shire council representative

Ruth Carney, Narromine Shire

Eleanor Cook, Warrumbungle Shire

Jessica Moore, Dubbo Region



## CORE FUNDING PARTNERS




## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



## PROJECT PARTNERS





orana  
arts inc