

# ANNUAL REPORT

2021 – 2022

PP&VA





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Cover: Window Stories.  
Right: Community Textile  
Workshop, Studio Notanda.  
Photos by Garry Trinh



# VISION

Penrith Performing & Visual Arts (PP&VA) will be a dynamic force in the creative evolution of the Penrith region.

## Statement of Recognition

PP&VA values the unique status of Aboriginal people as the original owners and custodians of lands and waters, including the land and waters of Penrith City. We value the unique status of Torres Strait Islander people as the original owners and custodians of the Torres Strait Islands and surrounding waters. We work together for a united Australia and City that respects this land of ours, that values the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

Top: Sunrise, Sunset, Todd McMillan and Sarah Mosca. Photo by Jacquie Manning  
Bottom: Richard Bonyng Ensemble. Photo by Claire Bernoth



# MISSION

To nurture, make and share great art for all.

We champion creativity and value artistic risk taking and we honour the role of the artist in society to reflect, celebrate and reveal truths.

We celebrate the centrality of lifelong learning to our programs and its importance to our community.

We respect diverse peoples, practices and cultures and acknowledge that we operate on unceded First Nations land.

We exercise an agile and responsive professionalism, valuing the assets which we hold in trust from the community and their role in shaping our shared identity and our future.

# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

## ACHIEVEMENTS



**107**

**PERFORMANCES  
WENT AHEAD**



**\$91,517**

**TICKET VALUE  
HELD IN CREDIT**



**\$1,076**

**TICKET VALUE  
DONATED BACK**



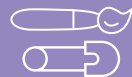
**8**

**CREATIVE CARE  
PACKS SENT**



**870**

**BOOKS AND JOURNALS  
CATALOGUED**



**8**

**ONLINE BUBS CLUB  
WORKSHOPS  
SOLD OUT**



**8**

**ONLINE SCHOOL  
HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS  
SOLD OUT**



**71%**

**RETENTION RATE FOR  
ONLINE STUDIO Q  
WORKSHOPS**



**190**

**ONLINE MUSIC  
STUDENTS PER  
WEEK AVERAGE  
IN LOCKDOWN**



**230**

**ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES  
CREATED**



**3**

**PROMOTIONAL  
VIDEOS CREATED**



**1**

**BOARD STRATEGIC  
PLANNING DAY  
UNDERTAKEN**



**\$86,224**

**IN SUBSIDY FOR COMMUNITY  
HIRERS APPLIED**



# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

## COVID IMPACTS



**61**

**PERFORMANCES  
CANCELLED**



**5,709**

**TICKETS  
RETURNED**



**\$170,808**

**TICKET  
REFUNDS**



**107**

**DAYS OF  
CLOSURE**



**PATRON  
NUMBERS DOWN**

↘ **44%**  
from pre-COVID

↘ **28%**  
from 2020/21



**PERFORMANCES  
DOWN BY**

↘ **45%**  
from pre-COVID

↘ **16%**  
from 2020/21



**GROSS BOX  
OFFICE DOWN**

↘ **70%**  
from pre-COVID

↘ **13%**  
from 2020/21



**SEASONS  
DOWN BY**

↘ **51%**  
from pre-COVID

↘ **32%**  
from 2020/21

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL: ADVOCACY

PP&VA will be a leading advocate for the arts and creativity in the region.



**18,532**

**NEWSLETTER  
RECIPIENTS**



**238,881**

**WEBSITE VISITORS**



**19,350**

**MONTHLY AVERAGE**



**FOLLOWERS  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**19,365**



**CREATIVE  
PARTNERS**

**15**



**INDUSTRY GROUP  
MEMBERSHIPS**

**15**



**STRATEGIC  
MEETINGS AND  
ATTENDANCES**

**8**



# STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL: CREATION

PP&VA will be a catalyst for creation – making, learning, capacity building and sharing.

**283** 


**ARTISTS ENGAGED**


**7** 

**COMMISSIONS**

**10** 

**NEW WORKS**

  
**\$680,305**  
**ARTISTIC  
EXPENDITURE**

**75** 

**PERFORMANCES  
OF JOAN  
PRESENTED EVENTS**

**19** 

**PERFORMANCES  
OF COMMUNITY  
EVENTS**

**13** 

**PERFORMANCES  
OF COMMERCIAL  
EVENTS**

**40** 

**COLLECTION  
WORKS EXHIBITED**

**14** 

**EXHIBITIONS ACROSS  
FOUR GALLERY  
SPACES AND ONLINE**

**5,995** 

**CREATIVE LEARNING  
PARTICIPATION**

**4** 

**ARTISTS-IN-  
RESIDENCE**

**1** 

**YOUTH ORCHESTRA  
-IN-RESIDENCE  
YOUTH ENSEMBLE  
-IN-RESIDENCE**

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL: AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

PP&VA will deliver great audience experiences that enrich and extend the human condition.



**94,041**

**AUDIENCE AND VISITORS**



**3**

**STAKEHOLDER  
CONSULTATIONS**

**37%**

surveyed say

**PP&VA connects them to their  
community** (up from 32%)



**24%**

surveyed say

**PP&VA's events make them  
change the way they think about  
themselves or the world  
around them** (up from 22%)

**43%**

surveyed say

**PP&VA makes them feel more  
positive about this community's  
future** (up from 40%)

**92%**

surveyed

**would be likely to give a  
positive recommendation  
for PP&VA**



# STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL: WELCOME

PP&VA will provide open and welcoming creative environments.



**53%**

surveyed say

**PP&VA makes them  
very proud of Penrith**

# NEW



**BOX OFFICE**



**GALLERY AIR CON**



**GALLERY FLOORING**



**WIFI AT THE JOAN**

**54**

**CANCELLATION  
COMMUNICATIONS**

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL: SUSTAINABILITY

PP&VA will be sustainable and responsible.



**3**

**AUDIENCE  
OUTLOOK  
MONITOR  
STUDIES**



**129%**

**STAFF  
RETENTION**  
17 left, 33 hired



**83%**

**FUNDING  
TO EARNED  
INCOME RATIO**



**526**

**COLLECTION  
ARTWORKS  
DIGITISED**

**\$250,000**

**CREATIVE CAPITAL  
GRANT**

for upgrades to seating  
and lighting

**\$400,000**

**CREATE NSW  
GRANT**

for Annual Program

**\$75,900**

**CULTURE UP LATE  
FUNDING**

for Twilight and Open Fridays

**6**

**ART  
ACQUISITIONS**



# REPORT FROM CEO

When we budgeted and planned programs for this period, it's fair to say that we were focussed on a 'post-COVID' recovery phase.

This year was in fact another 12 months of proving just how flexible we could be, how quickly we could adapt to new conditions as they arose, and another year of looking to government support to offset lost earnings. With that mixture of earnings, our much-appreciated Council support, and emergency COVID relief funding through the State Government as well as special initiative funding and a Create NSW program – we managed to perform financially much better than anticipated.

Audiences were unpredictable – and slow to return, but once again, the diversity of our business and the ability and dedication of our team stood us in good stead.

Business recovery at The Joan through both commercial and community hires bounced back. Pre-pandemic we reached a record number of commercial hires with 19 performances. This year, in the few months post-lockdown and audience restrictions, we had 13 performances. Our regular community hirers returned – and new ones have sought our services. This business turnaround is not only good for local audiences and community groups but critical to our employment offer and our bottom line.

There is still capacity for further growth in line with the growth of Penrith. Investment in the team, in systems and in opening up our calendar earlier and prioritising

responses and quotes as well as building the capacity for the marketing team to provide services have all been contributing factors – as is our reputation.

Towards the end of the period, as we conducted audience research in order to be able to fulfil KPI reporting (and to maintain the currency of our understanding of our audiences), the fact that our perceived value and importance had risen by a couple of percentage points since the last survey undertaken in 2019 prepandemic, was the greatest parting gift any CEO could hope for. In these difficult times, PP&VA remained a trusted friend and continued to beat strongly as the arts and cultural heart of its community.

The program details and business trends in this report clearly show the incredible adaptability and dedication shown by the team in this second difficult year of the pandemic – and the incredible artistic opportunities created.

I extend my thanks to the team and the Board for their supportive leadership. Much has changed since I joined PP&VA in 2013, not the least the growth and vitality of the company and its offer and services to the region. With this being my final report as CEO, I look forward to seeing the exciting developments in store for PP&VA and the arts in Western Sydney in the future.

**Hania Radvan**  
Chief Executive Officer

1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

# REPORT FROM CHAIR

The last twelve months at PP&VA has been characterised by challenges and opportunities. It has been a year of change and growth, and of innovation and resilience.

It has been a great pleasure to welcome our new Board members Brett Farrell, Adam Porter, Dale Maxwell-Smith and Don Church. The energy and enthusiasm of our new members has helped drive our ambitious agenda for the future.

Sadly, we also bade farewell to some long-standing Board members. I acknowledge the significant contributions of Tony Lackey and Kath Presdee to both PP&VA and the arts in Western Sydney.

Our Strategic Planning Day in June brought together experience and new ideas to develop a plan that will ensure our viability and enhance our position as a leading arts institution in Western Sydney. I am confident that as an organisation we can deliver our short, medium and long term goals and inspire future generations of audiences and artists across all genres.

The staff of PP&VA are the heart and soul of the organisation and once again they have stepped up and delivered against the backdrop of COVID and natural disasters. I thank them for their ongoing commitment, resilience and dedication.

In particular, I acknowledge the work of CEO Hania Radvan. Hania has been a steady and calming influence through a difficult period and has ensured that we remained viable during shutdowns and restrictions that reduced our audiences dramatically. In her ten years in the role, Hania has delivered significant improvements to operations, overseen the completion of major projects and works and has ensured that PP&VA is fit for purpose and ready for the challenges of our new world. Hania will be greatly missed as we farewell her at the end of the year.

We are in the process of finalising the recruitment of a new CEO who will lead the organisation into 2023.

The significant achievements of the last year are highlighted in the pages to follow. I am proud of how the organisation adapted to the challenges of COVID and is adapting as we move into the post-COVID world.

I look forward to the next 12 months as a period of renewal and growth.

**Alison McLaren**  
Chair



# CREATIVE PARTICIPATION

Building bridges and confidence in artistic engagement through active participation.

In response to the closure of the Gallery, the programming team pivoted the scheduled holiday workshops and **Bubs Club** to online delivery – workshops were fully booked, and all term programs subsequently moved to online delivery. Individual material kits were packed and prepared for contactless collection from the Gallery. In term three, we welcomed new students from locations as far away as the Central and South Coast, indicating the audience for online programs.

Face to face learning resumed for the Summer School Holidays.

A suite of new engagement initiatives was developed, in lieu of in-person programs, targeting existing audiences. Largely free of charge, or by donation, these programs were for participants of all ages and levels of experience. **Art After Work** was a by donation mindfulness and art making activity for adults. Three fully booked sessions were delivered.

A series of curated audio walks **Art Walks** was devised and produced. The free program supplied guided activities that encouraged participants to explore and keenly observe their environments, which fitted in well as walking had become essential to health and well-being during lockdown.



Bubs Club at Penrith Regional Gallery,  
Home of The Lewers Bequest.

A series of four panel talks was devised and developed by the New Work team, starting online and ending the series in the Q Theatre as restrictions relaxed. These free events enabled the exploration of ideas and engaged artists, academics and community members as speakers. Audiences huddled around their computers, phones and TVs of an evening to pause and ponder the questions arising from **Big Green, Binge and Will You Marry Me Alexa?. Good Neighbours** was presented as the first post-lockdown event in November.

**Studio Q** theatre training for participants aged 5 – 19 and people with disability returned to the online format for terms three and four, retaining 71% of enrolments, with good feedback about the content and teaching within the courses. Our community choir, **Inspire Choir**, and seniors dance group, **Agile Not Fragile**, worked together online before resuming face to face once lockdowns lifted and risk reduced.

The second iteration of the **Window Stories** project was developed for presentation at The Joan. Western Sydney artist, Garry Trinh, ran two workshops for local photography enthusiasts to create iconic images of the local area. A selection of the works, along with Garry's own images was then displayed on the exterior windows at The Joan.

On 9 April our **Women Out West** panel discussed the types of bias that women face due to their race, sexual orientation, citizenship status, disability, or other aspects of their identity and what happens when they intersect.

Contemporary artist Sairi Yoshizawa, included in **A Tangled Bank**, ran two booked out adult workshops developing textiles with natural dyeing patterns. Participants explored the gardens before using plants they had foraged and vegetable scraps, to observe how different chemical mordents can be used to create a range of colours. Sairi also shared Shibori stitching and knotting techniques to create a variety of relief patterns.



A Tangled Bank Exhibition at Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest.  
Photo by Silversalt



**Meet & Make**, a new accessible art class for adults living with disability, sold out at the Gallery. Led by artist Clare Delaney, the group worked together to express and explore their creativity, taking inspiration from the exhibitions and garden.

One participant wrote **'The teacher was very adaptive & was very inspiring. She saw value in every technique and artwork produced.'**

Led by artist Liam Benson, a team of local makers and beginners met under the banner of **Studio Notanda** over eight weeks to transform waste clothing material into art.

In each session, the group shared techniques and experiments inspired by the exhibitions and garden.

The program brought together 20 local women to grow in their creativity, socialise with people from different backgrounds, and build a deeper connection to the Gallery and exhibitions. One maker commented **'Every time I come here I think differently. It has changed the way I'm thinking and has made a big difference to my life.'**

The group took inspiration from the garden, heritage buildings and exhibitions, investigating techniques such as embroidery, appliqué, beading, dyeing and free stitching, while building friendship and connections to this place. The large picnic mat was dyed collaboratively, while the cushions, created by individuals, show diverse approaches to making, but were connected by references to the local natural landscape and ideas of home and pride in Western Sydney.

**'This was a wonderful, magical series of classes. I made some real connections with people, learned so much and discovered a new medium and passion. It was honestly a little life changing!'**

As part of the **Archibald Regional Tour**, the Gallery ran a children's portraiture competition, the **Young Archies**. The Gallery received over 120 submissions across four age categories and was able to display winners and runners up in each category.



Liam Benson, Community Textile Workshop, Studio Notanda (2022).  
Photo by Garry Trinh



# CATALYST FOR CREATION

The commissioning and supporting of new artistic works of relevance and daring.

The New Work team, well versed at reimagining the theatre experience, reached new heights in innovation. Following a 2020 season that saw a shift to online delivery; and the development of digitally-led works including the highly successful **Short Message Service**, a series of short plays delivered to audiences direct to the palm of their hand, via text messages – Q Theatre once again enhanced the theatrical experience through innovative digital programming.

**Kangaroo**, an inspired new co-commission by Miranda Gott, a first time playwright based in Bathurst NSW, was originally planned for the stage before lockdown necessitated its reinvention as an audio experience.

The performance was made available to audiences free and on-demand from 23 August through to 13 September 2021. It was produced and presented by Local Stages at Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre in association with Lingua Franca, and was supported by ROUTES – a regional partnership between Lingua Franca, Local Stages and Q Theatre.

The experience included links to the SoundCloud audio files, program notes, the Gentileschi images and notes about the characters. 304 people booked tickets to the show, which is a large audience for a new form.

**Kangaroo** received great press coverage and reviews, including a 4-star review from John Shand, in the Sydney Morning Herald:

**'As a work of aural theatre, Kangaroo stirs the imagination over a high heat, sharing with Wake in Fright an ability to depict a deeply disturbing outback, as the characters lay out their saddening lives for us.'**

And from audience members:

**'Hi there, We just watched Kangaroo and thoroughly enjoyed it, (it was so helpful to look at the paintings when the dialogue was on). We know today was the last day to be able to listen and are so pleased that we managed to experience Kangaroo before the link expired!'**

Kangaroo by Miranda Gott – The Audio Experience held online and on demand 23 August – 13 September 2021.



The Gallery welcomed patrons back onsite in October with the launch of a new suite of exhibitions that included ***Line Work: Rivers of the Basin***, and ***From the Collection X Abdullah M.I. Syed***, both of which featured commissioning of new bodies of work that were directly connected to the site and legacy of Margo Lewers. *Line Work* was accompanied by an e-catalogue featuring an essay by Julie Ewington, while Abdullah Syed also published a text alongside his collection display.

New commissions by artists Linda Brescia, Todd McMillan and Sarah Mosca for their respective exhibitions. Linda's solo exhibition in the Main Gallery will feature an extensive new body of work focussing on portraits of female authors throughout history. Linda is also working with Western Sydney based animator, Robert Polmear to develop an animated video portrait of Grace Tame.



A Girl Like You Exhibition at Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest.  
Photo by Jacquie Manning



Sue Pedley, Line work: Rivers of the Basin #6(2021), casuarina seeds, mandavilla seeds, mandavilla pods, willow leaves, bananaflowers, glass containers and platters. Courtesy the artist. Photo by Silversalt



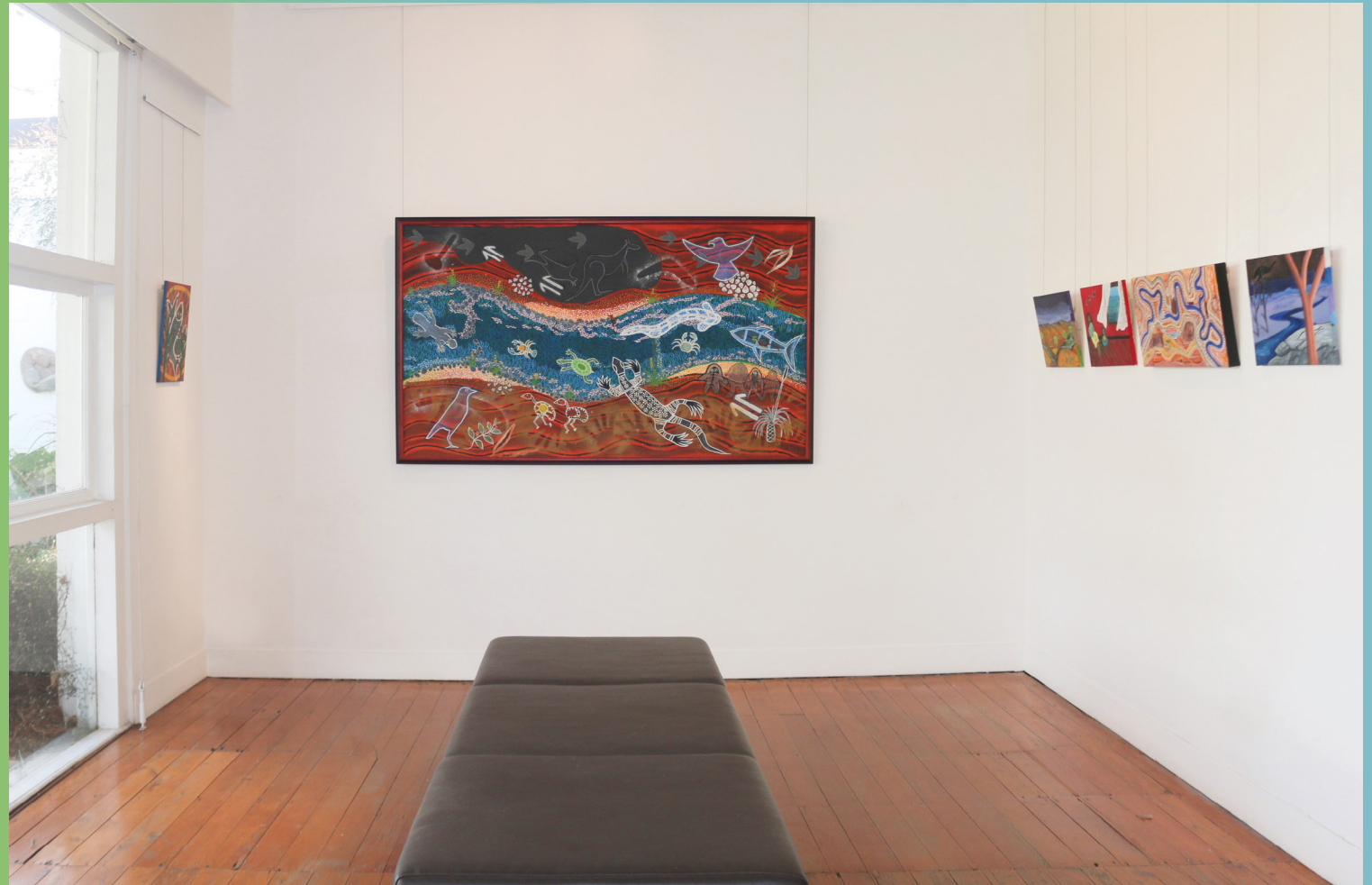
# SHARING

Presenting work  
to audiences.

Prior to the lockdown, Gallery staff facilitated and installed an exhibition of works by the **Painting Up Country** group from Katoomba TAFE. **Painting Up Country** are a group of First Nations participants living in Penrith and the Blue Mountains that meet weekly with Darug contemporary practitioner, Leanne Tobin. While the Gallery was closed to the public, the exhibition was shared through images on the Gallery's Facebook and Instagram accounts.

The exhibition **Barbara Cleveland Thinking Business** was transformed into a digital experience accessed from 27 September – 3 October 2021.

Painting Up Country Exhibition at Penrith Regional  
Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest.



When lockdown lifted, the Gallery reopened to the public while adhering to strict health and safety guidelines. Three exhibitions followed – ***Painting Up Country, From the Collection x Abdullah M. I. Syed and Line Work: Rivers of the Basin.***

Artworks from the collection travelled for inclusion in national exhibitions; including the Art Gallery of NSW touring exhibition ***Margel Hinder: Modern in Motion*** and the Art Gallery of South Australia ***Dušan and Voitre Marek: Surrealists at sea.***

In November 2021, the Gallery was thrilled to finally host the rescheduled ***Archibald Prize 2020 Regional Tour*** – and Deaf artist Sue Jo Wright gave a well-received tour for Auslan users, followed by an informal watercolour portrait workshop.

With masks, reduced capacity and social distancing, eager audiences crept back to The Joan in November and December with monthly favourites ***Comedy @ The Joan*** and ***Morning Melodies.***



Auslan Tour of Archibald Prize 2020 Regional Tour Exhibition.



The team worked hard and fast to create an impressive 2022 season and **The Art of Connection** launched in December 2021 with new and rescheduled shows and exhibitions.

The Summer Series of exhibitions for 2022 opened to the public on 15 January. The series included a touring exhibition, **Pattern and Print: Easton Pearson Archive** from the Museum of Brisbane; **A Tangled Bank**, which featured new and existing textiles and fibre works by leading Australian artists; **Studio Notanda**; and **Six Thousand Hands**, a collection display selected by Western Sydney writer Maryanne Taouk.

This series saw a return to whole-site programming with a curatorial thematic of textiles and clothing driving the selection of projects across site. It was encouraging to observe new audiences, with an interest in clothing and textiles, engage with the other exhibitions and displays.

Significantly, the **Pattern & Print** exhibition provided an opportunity for the Gallery to commission local artist Kelsee Rose to create a mural within the exhibition space, forging local connections.

On Sunday 28 November the Gallery hosted the Pop-Up Exhibition and calendar launch for local artist, Susan Oxenham. Susan is a visually impaired artist who makes tactile and multimedia artworks that encourage non-visual means of engagement and connection.

May 2022, the winter exhibition suite opened, with audience numbers exceeding 200, at the Gallery with **A Girl Like You**, newly commissioned and recent works by Western Sydney artist, Linda Brescia, who creates space for misrepresented women to speak for themselves, and **Sunrise, Sunset**,

a rumination on experiences of memory and place by Todd McMillan and Sarah Mosca.

In June 2022, The Joan celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the **Annual Youth Theatre Festival**. The provocation for this year was **The Butterfly Effect**. A total of eight local schools from Penrith and the Blue Mountains participated with 505 tickets sold across two performances.



Annual Youth Theatre Festival.  
Photo by Phyllis Wong





It was the year of the rescheduled performance, with seasons of ***Amphibian***, ***Beep*** and ***The Sentimental Bloke*** moving from the 2021 to 2022 program. Sales remained low due to a reluctance across the general public and education audiences to attend the theatre with restrictions still in place. Thanks to our sponsors, Celestino, we were able to offer local schools and childcare centres subsidised tickets to ***Amphibian*** and ***Beep***. This resulted in new schools in the LGA attending The Joan for the first time.

We also ventured into livestreaming with a fundraiser by the NSW Police Band on 17 December. This was to a live audience but also livestreamed to Aged Care facilities around the Sydney basin.

The return of the ***Wharf Revue***, ***Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow***, the ***Spooky Men's Chorale*** and our own ***Comedy @ The Joan*** series gave audiences a reason to return (albeit slowly and in reduced numbers) for some lighthearted entertainment in the Q Theatre.

Fresh from his acclaimed ABC TV series *Designing A Legacy*, comedian and self-proclaimed 'design nerd' Tim Ross returned to Sydney for two sold out shows at Penrith Regional Gallery's Ancher House in June 2022. ***Tim Ross: A Night in Ancher House*** offered audiences a nostalgic, personal and often poignant journey through our unique relationship with the Australian home.

Tim Ross: *A Night in Ancher House* at Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest.

The Joan presented **Conciertos Destilados** in April and **Simon Tedeschi – Gershwin** in May in the Mullins Studio, reimagined as a Salon, where the music is augmented by the audience experience, reinventing classical and world music.

Q Theatre's presentation of Deborah Pollard's work, **Slow Burn**, in association with Sydney Festival, opened the theatre season for 2022. This work was developed out of a 2021 Q Lab residency. Despite being presented at the peak of the Omicron wave, the season went ahead with a reduced capacity, and achieved modest audiences and generally positive reviews. 117 people attended across seven performances.

The Gallery team undertook significant Collection inventory, and improvement to the Collection Management System through data entry, data cleanse and data management to enhance functionality, while the Collection digitisation project progressed and numerous copyright licenses obtained. Over 100 items, including both contemporary and A-list artworks have been professionally photographed, conservation checked, rehoused and labelled with location data entered into the CMS in preparation for an eventual launch of our Google Arts & Culture site. 115 high resolution scans of David Porter's photographs were completed, thanks to our two Collections volunteers who are researching the artworks as they are scanned and documented.



Deborah Pollard, *Slow Burn*.  
Photo by Heidrun Lohr



# CAPACITY BUILDING

## CREATIVE PRACTICE PATHWAYS

Growing and sustaining a healthy and diverse creative practice in our artform areas.

Ten Penrith Conservatorium Scholarships were awarded in late 2021, supporting young musicians. Offered through an application and competitive audition process, and supported by sponsors, these scholarships recognise talent and future potential and offer pathways for people to pursue a professional career in music.

**'The scholarship has been a motivation for me to practice to become a better musician. My main goal for the future would be proving my worthiness as a scholarship recipient at Penrith Conservatorium, and to become a better musician.'** – James Tjung

**Originate 2021, *Our House***, an interactive online performance, was devised, rehearsed, produced and presented by eight emerging young artists who never met each other in person. Utilising a sophisticated digital framework set in a share house, the entire project was completed during the lockdown and delivered as a 100% digital outcome, with 269 in attendance. Despite technical challenges, the show, performed in September 2021, was original, interesting, genuinely interactive and definitely live and digital.

**'Fabulous innovative concept, cool experiment and great promoting new work from emerging artists in Western Sydney'** – *Our House* audience member

**'Loved the opportunity to engage with other attendees – COVID or not, this event satisfied the audience desire to talk to OTHER audience members, compare notes about the characters, the narrative resolution and share witty remarks without disrupting the performance. I felt connected to performers AND audience members. Fab!'** – *Our House* audience member

Within the same reporting year, in May 2022, **Originate 2022, *Chorus***, brought together a group of young performers – finally in person for the whole process. Led by theatremaker Shy Magsalin, after almost two years of social isolation, *Chorus* was a new physical work that dug deep into the communal experience. It looked at ways groups shift and evolve, and what it means to band together and reclaim the power of the collective.





Originate 2022. Chorus, Q Theatre. Photo by Phyllis Wong



2022 saw the return of the full **Penrith Youth Orchestra (PYO)** with 40 students after multiple lockdowns and space restrictions. The year also saw the growth of available ensemble opportunities for students at Penrith Conservatorium, and emerging local musicians, namely the **Richard Bonyng Ensemble (RBE)** an elite chamber ensemble, comprising some of the finest young talents, and senior students of PYO. The RBE was launched and performed its inaugural performance with Maestro Richard Bonyng AC CBE in attendance in December 2021. It was also the unveiling of the Maestro's portrait, commissioned in 2020 by accomplished Blue Mountains artist, Mathew Lynn.

**The PYO intensive program** was delivered in partnership with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO) led by renowned violinist Aiko Goto in June 2022. Throughout the weekend, PYO students were coached and mentored by ACO musicians and had the opportunity to play as part of a full Symphony Orchestra, and String Ensemble or Wind ensemble, and alongside their ACO mentors at a public concert. When surveyed, 95% of students and parents rated their experience in the PYO incredibly highly and were intending on returning.

**Q Theatre Lab 2022** hosted three artists-in-residence in February 2022 developing two short works. Preview performances were presented fresh off the page in the Allan Mullins Studio – ***Silenced*** by Linda Nicholls-Gidley and ***Kingdom*** by Jamie Oxenbould & Mary Rachel Brown.

In October 2021, Sydney-based, Pakistan-born artist, Abdullah M. I. Syed examined the influence of the Bauhaus School on Australian Modernism through Margo Lewers' use of plexiglass to create stunning sculptural forms. And, in May 2022, Christine Dean included her own works from the Gallery's collection derived from artists such as Margo Lewers, and Margel and Frank Hinder.



Left: Penrith Youth Orchestra.  
Photo by Eddy Summers



# ADVOCACY

## WE WILL BE A LEADING ADVOCATE FOR ARTS AND CREATIVITY IN THE REGION

Working with others to amplify the importance of arts and culture.

PP&VA averaged 15 active partnerships per quarter over the reporting period, including Google Arts & Culture, Sydney Festival, Blacklist Productions, Quest Penrith, Penrith City Library, Western Sydney University, Celestino, Nepean News and Penrith Valley Chamber.

Our role within the leadership of the Western Sydney Arts Alliance grew, with PP&VA participating in strategic, coordinated advocacy projects, including meetings with funding agencies, potential project partners, and government representatives and developing videos with artists under the #loveWSArts campaign banner.

Steady growth in our digital following, and audience research revealing that 92% of people would be likely to positively recommend the work of PP&VA, demonstrated our ongoing advocacy efforts achieve their reach and objectives, with our storytelling extending beyond simply promoting our own activities.

It was our pleasure to welcome the Federal Minister for the Arts along with the Federal Member for Lindsay to The Joan on 1 November, and on 10 April, Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of NSW; the Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC, NSW Minister for the Arts; and Peter Coleman-Wright AO enjoyed an evening of beautiful music from Bach Akademie Australia.

Our ongoing relationship with Penrith City Council has informed the development of Council's Cultural Strategy and Action Plan, and we've also participated in workshops for the Visitor Economy and Nighttime Economy strategies, keeping arts and culture firmly on the table in Penrith's vision and goals for growing its visitor economy, challenges and barriers, trends and opportunities for growth.

Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of NSW; the Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC, NSW Minister for the Arts; and Peter Coleman-Wright AO at The Joan.







Game Show, Open Fridays at The Joan. Photo by Tempus Visuals

# SUSTAINABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY

## PP&VA WILL BE SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE

Understanding and responding to audience needs to keep P&VA relevant and robust into the future.

With events moving into the digital space, we formally set up our online platform as a venue, enabling us to ticket, generate event links for patrons, and align our venue services, including front of house, customer service and technical production with the online space.

We upgraded our Zoom account to enable webinar functionality, allowing us to seamlessly present our various talks under the **Talks & Ideas** and **Art & Music Talks** series.

Audience numbers for our digital offerings were solid, with several events selling out, including weekend drawing workshops with David Middlebrook, **Bubs Club at Home**, and Gallery Holiday workshops close to capacity. The first in our **Talks & Ideas Series – Big Green**, attracted 84 bookings (double what was anticipated for the face to face event), and **Kangaroo** attracted 304 bookings.

During the recent pandemic years, research has been vital in understanding the shifting sentiments of our audiences as they responded to and learned to navigate the 'new normal'.

Our ongoing participation in the national Audience Outlook Monitor study, now into its eighth wave, with three waves occurring during the period, enabled us to respond to the changing landscape for audiences as well as artists and presenters through the pandemic. Programming and communicating in response to community attitudes, perceptions, needs and demands was crucial as we emerged from lockdown a second time.

An increasing percentage of audience members indicated a desire for light-hearted work – inspiring, fun, something that makes them feel connected. In addition to COVID-safe measures and constant communication; the research indicated a need to balance a program against the risk of cancellations and ongoing disruption – regularity of seasons and agile programming was warranted.





Morning Makers at Penrith Regional Gallery,  
Home of The Lewers Bequest.

Our **Salon** program introduced classical and world music in an intimate way, getting closer to the performer and the stories behind the music. And programmed into our smallest space, the Mullins Studio, as a regular offer with a moderate price point. The *Salon* was a success.

Financially, the continuation of the Government's COVID Support Package, designed to offset losses to producers and presenters due to lockdown and the postponement/cancellation of shows, created a welcome buffer.

The Government also announced PP&VA's success in realising a \$250,000 Creative Capital grant to replace seating and lighting in the Q Theatre. Along with a contribution from Council the works will be completed by March 2023.

June saw the resignations of The Joan's Technical Team. PP&VA was not immune to the 'great resignation' arising from the pause created by pandemic conditions, with staff moving on to retirement and roles more suited to their stages in life, and a full team recruitment taking place.

The Gallery received funding from the Department of Communities and Justice through its *Reducing Social Isolation in Seniors* initiative, towards the purchasing of tablets for participants to use and an external tutor to facilitate the monthly **Morning Makers** classes for seniors, led by Blue Mountains artist Naomi Oliver.

Community Day at Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest.  
Photo by Jacquie Manning





# WELCOME

PP&VA will provide open and welcoming creative environments for audiences, artists, staff and community.

With an extended lockdown a reality, we refreshed and reorganised our collection of digital resources, and issued the first of our Creative Care Packs for 2021. The **Keep Heart Penrith** campaign, that was re-badged **Arts Anywhere Anytime** (in a time of post-COVID optimism), was revived to support, communicate, share – and engage the local community with the arts while our doors were closed.

Crucial for audience confidence, and inherent in our social responsibility as a public venue, was keeping our COVID-safe messaging consistent and strong. We communicated on performances and exhibitions many months ahead, and extended our PP&VA policy defined safety measures – full vaccination, masks, and reduced capacity until 31 March 2022, updating regularly in line with NSW Health advice.

We were thrilled to continue our partnership with Penrith City Library as well as establishing a new partnership with QBD Books Penrith to help promote our season of **Guess How Much I Love You** which ran in the April School Holidays, which resulted in 505 ticket sales.

In the Mondo and The Joan we engaged hundreds of kids and their families with activities including a petting zoo, pop-up library and story readings, an Easter egg guessing competition, a pop-up bookstore, and a dress-up competition. An 'I Spy Bunnies' Easter trail at the library engaged a further 344 participants.

Our bright, cheery and accessible new Box Office now welcomes our patrons from its location in the centre of the building, making way for the building works to begin on our new café Table at The Joan.

As part of our Stakeholder Management Plan, we conducted three Stakeholder Consultations. These included Board and Committee members, **Morning Melodies** audience members and digital audiences. The findings will enable us to continue to shape our programs with our audience top of mind.

'Keep trying new things! We appreciate being given the chance to enjoy arts and culture from a distance.'

In May, an **Open Day** at the Gallery gave audiences an opportunity to engage in fun and creative ways, connecting people with the artists and ideas behind each exhibition through a range of free activities and talks, including drop-in art making stations and a mending workshop with a facilitator, where participants could creatively repair

a well-loved piece of clothing or jewellery.

**Twilight at Lewers** events brought the gallery spaces and gardens to life in the evenings, with free art-making activities, live music, an artisan market and a special Café at Lewers menu to make up the perfect evening out.



Top: Twilight at Lewers at Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest.  
Photo by Pixflix Productions

Left: New Box Office at The Joan.  
Photo by Claire Bernoth

# GOVERNANCE

## Board of Directors

Ms Alison McLaren (Chair)

Clr Kath Presdee  
*(until 10 January 2022)*

Mayor Clr Tricia Hitchen  
*(from 10 January 2022)*

Clr Ross Fowler OAM

Clr Karen McKeown OAM

Mr Warwick Winn

Ms Cathy Jarman

Mr Tony Lackey  
*(until 20 October 2021)*

Ms Dale Maxwell-Smith  
*(from 22 November 2021)*

Mr Adam Porter  
Deputy Chair  
*(from 22 November 2021)*

Mr Brett Farrell  
*(from 22 November 2021)*

Mr Don Church  
*(from 22 November 2021)*

## Committees

### Visual Arts Committee

Clr Karen McKeown OAM (Chair)

Ms Lynda Henderson

Ms Catherine Barcan

Ms Divya Lotliker

Mr Alan Schacher

Mr Adam Porter

Ms Dale Maxwell-Smith

### Performing Arts Committee

Mr Brett Farrell (Chair)

Mr Don Church

Mr Ryan Whitworth

Ms Nicki D'Olympio

Ms Olivia Xegas

## Education Committee

Ms Cathy Jarman (Chair)

Ms Amanda Rudolf

Mr Robert Andrews

Ms Catherine Barcan

Ms Lauren Cullimore

Mr Mark Denny









# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The generosity of our community and supporters is appreciated, especially given the challenges we have faced.

Thank you to everyone who took a moment to send messages of support; to our arts industry colleagues, with whom we stand in solidarity, and the local community, of which we are a proud part.

## Government Partners



## Accommodation Partner



Special mentions also go to our ever dependable piano tuner, Nick Croft; the wonderful women of the Red Cross; Steve at Cafe at Lewers, and the Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest.

## Sponsors and Partners



## Media Partner



Western Sydney University  
Penrith City Library  
Google Arts & Culture  
Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

We went into the financial year anticipating a gradual and cautious rebuilding, but the picture changed considerably when we found ourselves plunged back into a much longer and stricter lockdown, lasting four months and decimating programming; taking audience confidence along with it. Conditions did not begin to ease until the final quarter of the year.

Our Box Office revenue was again dealt a blow, continuing a decline on the previous year, across all areas. While there was some bounce-back in the second half of the period, it was still well down on pre-COVID earnings.

Special purpose government funding replaced earned income, including a Create NSW rescue package for the arts. The federal government's Jobkeeper program ended.

Once again, we have faced a year of upheaval and uncertainty. In addition to the pandemic, we've also faced floods and a cost of living crisis.

Nevertheless, we continue with our mission, to **nurture, make and share great art for all**.



Community Day at Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest.  
Photo by Jacquie Manning



















# PP&VA

ppandva.com.au

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**PENRITH  
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HOME OF THE LEWERS BEQUEST

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