

Western Sydney and Regional NSW Engagement Plan 2026–29



The Art Gallery of New South Wales acknowledges the Gadigal, the traditional custodians of the Country on which it stands. We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of all the lands across New South Wales on which we work and collaborate, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

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From the director



I am pleased to present the Western Sydney and Regional NSW Engagement Plan 2026–29 for the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The Art Gallery has connected art and communities across the state for more than 80 years. What began as an education resource and travelling art exhibition service to regional towns has evolved into a steadfast and wide-reaching commitment to share the Art Gallery's collection, programs and expertise in ways that respond to the changing needs and aspirations of our regional partners, collaborators and audiences, and ensure regional voices are reflected across our work onsite, offsite and online.

This plan builds on the successes of our 2022 strategy and outlines how we will deepen partnerships and expand our reach across NSW. It aligns with key state and national cultural policies, including *Creative Communities* (2023), *Plan for Western Sydney Arts, Culture and Creative Industries 2025–2028* (2025), *Heartland: a plan for regional NSW arts, culture and creative industries 2026–2035* (2026), and the Australian Government's *Revive* policy (2023).

Since 2022, the Art Gallery has engaged over 800,000 visitors, students and community members across Western Sydney and regional NSW through collaboratively developed exhibitions and programs with partners, artists, educators and community leaders. This sustained growth – alongside 2.4 million visitors to our campus in 2025 – reflects our commitment to a truly statewide vision and purpose.

Looking ahead, we will strengthen a cultural ecosystem grounded in First Nations knowledge, audience-centred practice, digital innovation and regional economic contribution. Over the next four years, we will:

- prioritise First Nations initiatives, strengthening programs such as Home and Djamu Youth Justice, and support sustained engagement with artists and knowledge-holders
- grow access and inclusion for families, young people and diverse communities through culturally informed and accessible resources across exhibitions and programming
- advance digital access through expanded programs in the Lewin Media Lab, and improve discoverability of the state collection on our website, enabling audiences to connect with the Art Gallery from anywhere
- strengthen partnerships with Western Sydney and regional NSW cultural organisations, sector bodies and stakeholders to co-design programs, share resources, and support professional pathways for creative practitioners.

I thank our government partners Create NSW, the NSW Department of Education, NSW Health and the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program, and our philanthropic supporters, for their generous support. I acknowledge the artists, cultural workers, educators, partners and communities whose insight and collaboration continue to shape this work.

Through this plan, I reaffirm the Art Gallery's commitment to being a connected, inclusive and responsive state art museum, working in partnership to realise this vision across NSW.

Maud Page
Director, Art Gallery of New South Wales

opposite
Uncle Badger Bates teaching
a student from Wilcannia Central
School in a metal workshop at
Eveleigh Works, Sydney, 2023

this page
Director Maud Page

From our partners

Regional galleries across NSW are having an exciting moment. They are places where ideas take shape, where communities gather, where individuals can respectfully express themselves and where creativity drives genuine social and economic wellbeing.

The regional gallery sector is producing some of the most courageous and inventive work in Australia right now. Trailblazing exhibitions, bold community collaborations and place-responsive projects are emerging from galleries across NSW with growing confidence and reach.

Some recent examples of development in the NSW sector include the revitalised Newcastle Art Gallery, which reopened in 2026, marking a key moment of regional investment and innovation, as well as Gosford Regional Gallery's foyer redevelopment project in 2025, which has delivered a refreshed entrance experience. These are among many more investments and improvements to regional gallery facilities across NSW that demonstrate the ongoing importance of these venues as hubs for creativity and community.

There is a palpable sense of ambition and possibility across the sector, with notable projects being shaped in genuine conversation and collaboration with the

Art Gallery of New South Wales. The relationship between the Art Gallery and the regional gallery sector is at its most exciting when it becomes a moment of true exchange. *Bush Lines*, a recent exhibition developed jointly by Tamworth Regional Gallery and the Art Gallery, drawing from both institutions' permanent collections, is a compelling example of what becomes possible when a regional and state gallery work together towards a shared vision.

Similarly, the Art Gallery's collection-sharing initiative – led by partner institutions responding to the specific needs of their own audiences and supported by philanthropic funds that remove financial barriers – reflects a model built on reciprocity rather than prescription. Collaborations between the Art Gallery and regional galleries such as Penrith Regional Gallery, Orange Regional Gallery, Manning Regional Art Gallery and Lismore Regional Gallery are distinct, locally responsive and community-facing.

That same spirit of exchange and capacity building animates programs such as *Culture Dose for Kids*, a partnership between the Art Gallery and Black Dog Institute and trialed across regional galleries with extraordinary results. Using art and creativity to support children experiencing mild anxiety and their families, it demonstrates what becomes possible when institutions combine their expertise in service of community wellbeing. The regional pilot program that supported delivery at regional galleries across NSW showed that this model can travel, adapt and make a lasting difference to people in every corner of the state.

The Western Sydney and Regional NSW Engagement Plan 2026–29 reflects an Art Gallery that listens, responds and invests in the long term. The regional gallery sector looks forward to deepening this partnership, one built on genuine exchange, shared ambition and a commitment to a cultural ecosystem across NSW that is ambitious, bold and inclusive.

Yvette Dal Pozzo

Director, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery
President, Regional and Public Galleries
Association of NSW





opposite
 Archibald Prize 2023 winner
 Julia Gutman in conversation
 with Yvette Dal Pozzo at
 Goulburn Regional Art Gallery,
 photo courtesy of Goulburn
 Regional Art Gallery

this page
 Ngemba artist Andrew Snelgar
 teaching a Djamu Junior workshop
 at the Art Gallery in the Paradise
 Foundation Learning Studio, 2025

Through many years of regional engagement with the Art Gallery of New South Wales, I have developed a strong connection to the role that art education plays in community, creativity and cultural exchange. Working across regional communities in NSW, I value opportunities that create meaningful access to the arts for young people and communities who may otherwise experience barriers to participation.

My involvement with the Djamu Junior and Djamu Youth Justice programs has been an important part of my creative and professional practice. In partnership with the Art Gallery, I have contributed to the development and delivery of programs that encourage creative expression, connection and learning through art education. Supporting participants to engage with contemporary art, storytelling and culture has reinforced the importance of accessible and inclusive arts programming in regional communities.

The Art Gallery continues to create valuable opportunities for regional practitioners, educators and communities through collaborative programming and long-term engagement. These partnerships strengthen connections between regional galleries and the state institution, while supporting creative outcomes that are grounded in community experience and participation.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside the teams, artists and educators at the Art Gallery to support innovative and accessible arts experiences across regional communities.

Andrew Snelgar
 Artist

Supporting the state

The opening of our new building, Naala Badu, and the expansion of our campus on Gadigal Country in 2022, marked a turning point in the Art Gallery's capacity to deliver on our strategic objectives to reach new and larger audiences across NSW.

With the introduction of the new Yiribana and Contemporary Projects Galleries, alongside enhanced facilities such as the Paradise Foundation Learning Studio and the Lewin Media Lab, the Art Gallery is now better equipped than ever to connect with Western Sydney and regional audiences in meaningful and innovative ways.

The following pages highlight the rewarding and impactful projects, partnerships and collaborations that were successfully achieved through our previous plan (2022–25).



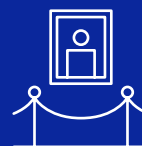
600,620

visitors attended our touring exhibitions and partnership projects across 31 NSW and 14 interstate tour locations*



270

artworks were loaned to 38 NSW borrowers out of 547 works loaned to 97 national and international borrowers^



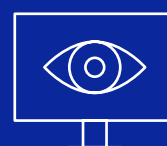
22

venues across Western Sydney and regional NSW galleries hosted the Archibald Prize and Wynne Prize tours, showing the works of 357 artists^



23,364

visitors at Western Sydney and regional NSW venues voted in the Archibald Prize People's Choice award*



325,580

page views of touring and regional program website content*

* Financial years
^ Calendar years



305,434

students and teachers have visited the campus since Sydney Modern launched in 2022 including 25% from Western Sydney and 20% from regional NSW*



36,364

students and teachers from Western Sydney and regional NSW visited ARTEXPRESS, out of 64,708 students^



3985

students and teachers from across NSW participated in our Art Pathways program^



1484

students and 106 teachers from Western Sydney and regional NSW were supported by our Art Pathways travel support program when it launched in 2025^



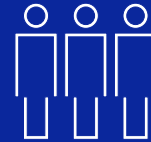
3144

students from Western Sydney and regional NSW participated in online learning programs



3524

students and 108 teachers from 88 schools, 46 artists and community members, and 6 regional galleries across NSW participated in our Home: Aboriginal Art from New South Wales program



220

junior and senior First Nations students and 50 Youth Justice participants engaged with our Djamu program



449

families engaged with Culture Dose for Kids when it was delivered through 14 regional NSW galleries^



14%

of Young Archie finalists, out of 13,000 Young Archie entries, were from Western Sydney and regional NSW^



1,242,750

social media impressions for Art Gallery posts about our touring exhibitions and regional engagement programs

Exhibitions and collections

Through its touring exhibitions and outward loans programs, the Art Gallery has significantly expanded regional audiences' access to its collections and exhibitions.

- Between 2022 and 2025, the Archibald Prize toured 17 venues in regional NSW, three in Victoria and one in the Northern Territory, each hosting local Young Archie competitions for their youth communities.
- In 2022 and 2023, the *Mervyn Bishop* touring exhibition travelled to the Brewarrina Visitor Information and Exhibition Centre and the Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre, where the artist connected with family and local First Nations communities through events and programs.
- *Archie 100: A Century of the Archibald Prize* toured to eight regional and metropolitan venues across Australia, including Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, where it attracted record visitation for the regional gallery. Overall, the tour attracted 266,464 visitors.
- With the support of the NSW Government's Blockbuster Funding initiative, the 2023, 2024 and 2025 Wynne Prizes toured to 12 regional galleries throughout NSW. This was the first dedicated tour of the prize and reached over 60,000 visitors across the state.
- The NSW Government's Blockbuster Funding initiative also enabled the tour of *William Kentridge: I Am Not Me, the Horse is Not Mine*, presenting an ambitious eight-channel moving image work – the most significant work by William Kentridge in an Australian museum collection. The exhibition toured to six regional galleries across NSW, reaching more than 64,000 visitors.
- In 2024 and 2025, *Brett Whiteley: Inside the Studio* toured to four venues across Australia while the Brett Whiteley Studio in Surry Hills underwent redevelopment. In NSW, the exhibition travelled to Orange Regional Gallery, attracting the gallery's largest attendance with over 11,000 visitors.
- With the launch of Sydney Modern in 2022, the Art Gallery resumed our outward loans program for lenders across NSW as well as interstate and internationally. Since then, we have loaned 270 works to 38 borrowers across Western Sydney

and regional NSW, reducing financial burdens through subsidised freight and professional development in installation, registration and conservation.

- In 2024, the Art Gallery launched an initiative with Western Sydney and regional NSW galleries to share our collection. These projects are led by the partner institutions, responding to the needs of their audiences and often engaging local artists. Supported by philanthropic funds that remove financial barriers to loans, we have since collaborated with Penrith Regional Gallery, Orange Regional Gallery, Manning Regional Art Gallery, Lismore Regional Gallery and Western Plains Cultural Centre on collection loans, installation support and accompanying education and access resources.
- Two major artwork commissions for the Art Gallery's newly transformed campus in 2022 showcased the work of regionally based First Nations artists Lorraine Connelly-Northey and Karla Dickens. This formed part of the largest commissioning program in the Art Gallery's history, with all works acquired for the permanent collection.
- In 2025, with the championing and support from Eastern Riverina Arts and Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, the Art Gallery presented the first state art museum exhibition of Wagga Wagga-based Gamilaraay artist Juanita McLauchlan.
- In 2025, the Art Gallery partnered with Tamworth Regional Gallery to present *Bush Lines*, an exhibition of works by Australian artists from the collections of both institutions that connect with Australia's regional and remote landscapes. Initiated by Tamworth Regional Gallery and its local community, the project supported regional artists and deepened our understanding of works in the Art Gallery's collection, demonstrating how lending to regional galleries can reveal valuable local context about where and why they were created.

Opening night of the Wynne Prize 2024 touring exhibition at Tweed Regional Gallery, photo: Kate Homes





Partnerships

Partnerships underpin the success of the Art Gallery's regional engagement and delivery of major projects and programming across NSW.

- The Art Gallery's Djamu program encompasses a suite of First Nations-led partnership programs, including Djamu Metropolitan, Djamu Regional and Djamu Youth Justice, each connecting First Nations artists, students and communities in metropolitan Sydney, Western Sydney and across regional NSW.
 - Ongoing program delivery within Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre, Kariong, between 2022 and 2025.
 - Engaging programs led by regionally based First Nations artists including Badger Bates (Baakantji), Karla Dickens (Wiradjuri), John Kelly (Dunghutti), Juanita McLauchlan (Gamilaraay) and Andrew Snelgar (Ngemba).
 - Sustained collaboration with Wilcannia community and Wilcannia Central School, both in Wilcannia and during excursions to Sydney.
- In 2022, the Sydney Modern launch program included panel discussions about regional NSW arts communities that focused on future initiatives and the impact of climate change. Speakers included regional NSW artists and gallery directors.
- In 2023, the Art Gallery worked in collaboration with Shoalhaven Regional Gallery, Nowra, on *The Wonder Room 2022–23*. Presented in the exhibition *brick vase clay cup jug*, guest curated by NSW South Coast artist Glenn Barkley, the ceramic installation was created by members of the Shoalhaven community.
- In 2023, the Art Gallery joined with Regional and Public Galleries NSW (RPGNSW) and Museums & Galleries of NSW to host the RPGNSW members annual general meeting and the IMAGInE Awards, celebrating the resilience, innovation and creativity of museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres across NSW.
- In 2024, the Volume music festival featured a new commission, *Every dull moment (EDM)* by regional NSW artists Jonathan Zawada and Flume, seen by over 8200 people across the 11-day display.
- The Art Gallery partnered with Western Sydney creative collectives Hotter Out West (in 2024) and Kerfew (in 2025) to co-produce our Archie Party for the annual Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes exhibition and develop programming for Art After Hours, supporting emerging artists and musicians from Western Sydney.

Shoalhaven Regional Gallery staff with *The Wonder Room*, a collaborative work made with their community in the exhibition *brick, vase, clay, cup, jug 2023* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

Learning

The Art Gallery's commitment to regional and Western Sydney communities is reflected in our learning programs, supported by dedicated Art Pathways funding that expands access for students, teachers and schools across NSW.

- Between 2022 and 2025, the Home: Aboriginal Art from New South Wales program engaged 3524 participants from 88 schools across six regional galleries. Curators and educators delivered talks, workshops and programs co-developed with local communities and the Department of Education's Arts Unit to provide professional learning for teachers in participating regions.
- The annual teachers conference at the Art Gallery continues to draw educators from across NSW. In 2025, the conference focused on the Home program, with contributions from Ngemba artist Andrew Snelgar and travel subsidies supporting teachers from Southern NSW/Murrumbidgee and Hunter/New England regions.
- Burbangana, developed in 2022 to create meaningful connections for regional First Nations students, has since engaged 4481 students from 80 schools,

offering workshops and tours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

- ARTEXPRESS remains a significant annual exhibition, attracting 64,708 student visitors between 2022 and 2025, with nearly 50% of students from Western Sydney and regional NSW.
- The Art Gallery strengthened its partnership with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) through ongoing support for the WriteOn competition for primary students across the state, including hosting the 2024 awards ceremony.
- The Art Pathways program engaged 3788 students and 197 teachers from Western Sydney and regional NSW, providing free programs and subsidised transport through philanthropic funding. In 2025, the Art Gallery launched the Art Pathways travel program, which has since supported students and teachers from regional NSW schools to attend exhibitions and professional learning programs at the Art Gallery.
- Engagement with tertiary audiences expanded with university peer mentorship programs, for students – over 80% of whom were first-time visitors – including many from regional and remote areas.
- Art Gallery curators delivered lectures and floor talks to fine arts students from University of Wollongong and information and communication technology students from Charles Sturt University, bridging academic learning with museum practice.
- The Print, Drawing and Photography study room hosted regional teachers attending the Art Gallery's annual conference, recorded virtual excursions for Home program participants, provided research opportunities for regional artist collectives such as the Southern Printmakers Association, and supported tertiary students from Western Sydney with regular access to key works.
- In 2022, 2024 and 2025, the Art Gallery partnered with the University of Sydney's Art History faculty on an eight-week peer learning project, with tertiary students developing and delivering portraiture-focused tours for Western Sydney high-school students.



Artist Shireen Taweel delivering an artist talk to students from Westfield Sports High School for the 2023 Art Pathways program



Access and family programs

Accessibility and inclusion for visitors of all ages remain central to the Art Gallery's work. Through collaboration across departments, the access and family programs teams have enriched exhibitions and experiences for families, young people and visitors with diverse access needs.

- Hive Festival was established in 2024 as an annual summer event for children and families. With partner Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre (2024 and 2025), the multi-day celebration brought together artists and performers to engage with Western Sydney and metropolitan audiences. In 2024, visitation exceeded 18,000 and increased to more than 26,000 in 2025.
- Between 2022 and 2025, the Young Archies received over 13,000 entries, more than double the previous plan period, with around 14% of finalists from regional NSW. Regional galleries presenting the Archibald Prize touring exhibition also delivered their own Young Archie competition, strengthening family engagement and celebrating young artists locally.
- Culture Dose for Kids, a partnership with the Black Dog Institute, supported 277 children experiencing anxiety and 266 parents or caregivers from

2022 to 2024. Delivered across 24 eight-week sessions onsite, and as a pilot program at 14 regional galleries, the program provided structured creative engagement with artworks in small groups. In 2025, the program was selected by UNICEF as the only Australian global case study for their report on child-responsive loss and damage.

- Tactile and sensory resources were developed for the touring exhibitions *Brett Whiteley: Inside the Studio*, the Archibald Prize regional tours in 2023, 2024 and 2025, and the 2025 exhibition *feathered: Birds in Myth and Memory* at Manning Regional Art Gallery.
- The Art Gallery collaborated with Arts & Cultural Exchange (ACE) in Parramatta, the Multicultural Women's Hub and the GUL Collective, to co-develop a community-specific version of the Culture Dose: Art for Wellbeing program. In 2025, this version informed further engagement with refugees in a partnership with Settlement Services International (SSI) Creative Compass, supporting access and language needs of newly arrived communities of refugee artists.
- The Art Gallery's Arts in Health collaboration with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District and Health Infrastructure NSW provided aged care residents in three regional facilities with professional arts engagement programs, extending access to meaningful creative experiences in regional NSW.
- The Art Gallery partnered with Blacktown-based We Are Studios and Little Orange Studio at Campbelltown Arts Centre to strengthen representation and support professional development and creative opportunities for artists with disability. Since 2022, We Are Studios has engaged with the Art Gallery's collections and exhibitions and delivered a range of programs including at Art After Hours. In 2025, the Art Gallery's collaboration with Little Orange Studio culminated in an artwork installation, *Fun Park Water Feature Garden*, presented in *Mike Hewson: The Key's Under the Mat* in the Nelson Packer Tank.
- In 2024, the Art Gallery hosted the launch of CASE Incubator Studio, a national hub for the development of socially engaged art led by the Narrandera-based, artist-led organisation The Cad Factory. Delivered through access programs, this collaboration strengthened community partnerships and expanded inclusive participation in socially engaged practice.

Young Archie award ceremony at the Museum of Art and Culture Lake Macquarie for the Archibald Prize 2022 touring exhibition, photo: Wanagi Zable-Andrews, courtesy of Museum of Art and Culture, yapping, as part of the Lake Arts Precinct Lake Macquarie



Support

During 2022–25, the Art Gallery continued to provide accessible and meaningful art experiences for audiences across NSW, collaborating with regional galleries and their local communities while supporting arts workers through professional development and access to resources.

- To strengthen statewide collaboration, the Art Gallery gathered feedback from regional galleries, artists and audiences through surveys aligned to major touring exhibitions. This feedback informs future approaches to exhibitions, collection care and public programming.
- The Art Gallery's executive and curatorial staff regularly engaged with regional NSW galleries, judging prizes, launching local exhibitions and participating in programs independent of the Art Gallery's own initiatives.
- An independent evaluation by the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research (UTS) in 2022 found that the Home: Aboriginal Art from New South Wales program was achieving its aims and delivering significant benefits for participating Aboriginal communities, artists and galleries, including enriched cultural engagement and increased awareness of Indigenous languages.

- Following the 2022 floods in Lismore and the Northern Rivers, the Art Gallery's curators and conservators advised on the care of Lismore Regional Gallery's collection and flood-damaged works, and the Research Library supplied books to Lismore TAFE to help rebuild its post-flood collection.
- The Art Gallery supported regional arts workers' professional development through mentorships across learning, curatorial, conservation, installation and registration, including extensive support to Newcastle Art Gallery staff ahead of its reopening.
- The Research Library provided support and loans for regional and Western Sydney-based academics and curators; welcomed biannual visits from Charles Sturt University students for tours, professional development and their annual three-week student placement; and regularly distributed Art Gallery catalogues to regional galleries, ensuring statewide access to key reference material.

Nick Yelverton, Brett Whiteley Studio curator, delivers a talk at the *Brett Whiteley: Inside the Studio* touring exhibition, Orange Regional Gallery, 2025, photo: Orange Regional Gallery

2026–29: Our vision, priorities and partnerships

The Art Gallery is committed to deepening our impact in Western Sydney and across regional NSW, building on the longstanding relationships and trust we have established with diverse communities and partners statewide to ensure our collections, exhibitions and programming are accessible to all.

Guided by the Art Gallery's Strategic Plan 2025–28, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Policy, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework, and Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025–28, this plan sets out our renewed commitment to collaborative, inclusive and innovative engagement. Continuing the five core objectives – partner, exchange, learning, grow and support – the plan reflects our ambition to strengthen cultural connections, elevate diverse voices, and create new opportunities for participation onsite, offsite and online.

Partner

Strengthen existing partnerships and establish new strategic relationships with cultural, community and education organisations through purposeful collaboration on exhibitions, loans, public programs and joint initiatives.



We will work alongside regional partners to codesign opportunities that reflect local priorities, uphold First Nations initiatives, and expand access to art, artists and ideas across NSW.

Key priorities and partnerships

- The Art Gallery will continue to collaborate with the NSW Department of Education and regional galleries across NSW and their local Aboriginal communities to deliver the Home program to primary school students. Additional philanthropic support will ensure the program remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of participating regional communities.
- In 2026, the Art Gallery partnered with Wollongong Art Gallery to deliver Hive Festival for children and families to showcase regional storytelling and creative innovation. Future regional partnerships will be identified to broaden participation and impact.
- The Art Gallery's touring exhibitions and loans programs will continue to enhance statewide access to the collection through long-term partnerships with regional NSW galleries. Supported by philanthropic investment, major projects with Orange Regional Gallery, Manning Regional Art Gallery and Penrith Regional Gallery will be co-curated to ensure significant, sustainable and locally relevant engagement for participants and audiences.
- The annual tour of the Archibald Prize to five regional NSW galleries and one interstate venue will continue to strengthen strategic cultural partnerships and deliver significant economic and social benefits to host institutions and their broader communities.
- The Art Gallery will expand its collaborations with NSW Government agencies to deliver impactful, statewide programming that aligns with their strategic priorities. Key partners include Create NSW, the Department of Education and its Arts Unit, Health Infrastructure NSW, and the Department of Communities and Justice.
- The Art Gallery will seek new opportunities to collaborate with the Asylum Seeker Centre, STARTTS refugee services and Settlement Services International to enhance connections with diverse communities in Western Sydney and across NSW.
- The Art Gallery will design and implement new sustainable models of partnership with assisted studios and artists with disability, ensuring greater visibility, inclusion and support across all areas of engagement.

Opening night of the Wynne Prize 2023
exhibition at Mudgee Arts Precinct,
photo: Col Boyd Photography

Exchange

Foster a culture of reciprocal learning by developing and implementing projects and programs that support the exchange of skills, cultural knowledge and creative practice.

this page
Installation view of *Fun Park Water Feature Garden* in the exhibition *Mike Hewson: The Key's Under the Mat* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2025, featuring (from left) David Capra, Adam Jones, Jezzy Fezzy, Joel Beers, Imogen Jade and Julie Finch from Little Orange Studio, Campbelltown Arts Centre

opposite
Teachers from regional NSW with the Art Gallery's director Maud Page (centre) and Art Gallery staff at the Art of Teaching professional learning conference, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2025



The Art Gallery will collaborate with regional stakeholders in ways that uphold cultural protocols, recognise diverse expertise, and embed inclusive approaches across artistic and organisational practice.

Key priorities and partnerships

- The Art Gallery will work with Create NSW and other state cultural institutions to develop and deliver training and professional development opportunities for regional First Nations arts and cultural practitioners, including practitioners with disability.¹
- As family programs expand onsite and offsite, the Art Gallery will identify additional opportunities to engage NSW artists and communities as collaborators, enhancing access and participation for children and families from regional NSW and Western Sydney.
- The Art Gallery will develop a digital strategy and action plan in consultation with technology and creative sector partners, as well as key education and audience stakeholders, to strengthen digital engagement and capability.
- The Art Gallery will collaborate with NSW regional galleries and seek to develop new relationships with the network of Regional Arts Development Officers to connect with the state's broad and diverse artist and creative practitioner communities.
- The Art Gallery has collaborated with Little Orange Studio, a supported studio based at Campbelltown Arts Centre, to create *Pet Palace*, a new mural installation for the *John Kaldor Family Hall* associated with the *Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes 2026* exhibition.
- The Art Gallery's short-term loans program will support broad public access to the state's diverse art collection. This program will also increase opportunities for skills exchange with local teams through curatorial, registration, conservation and installation support delivered via site visits and online engagement.
- The Research Library and National Art Archive will continue to collaborate with Charles Sturt University's Wagga Wagga campus to deliver a biannual placement program for students in library and information studies.
- To maintain our commitment to continuous improvement, the Art Gallery will seek regular feedback from Western Sydney-based and regional stakeholders and audiences through consultation, surveys and evaluation processes to inform program design and measure impact. Additional to this, the Art Gallery will hold stakeholder forums in regional centres around NSW.

¹ *Heartland: a plan for regional arts, culture and creative industries 2026–2035*, Create NSW, 2026, p 16.



Learning

Deliver outstanding, relevant and future-focused creative learning experiences and resources for students and teachers across NSW.

Working in close collaboration with educators, artists and learning institutions, we will design accessible curriculum-aligned education programs – onsite, online and regionally delivered – that embed First Nations perspectives and support student learning at every stage.

Key priorities and partnerships

- The Art Gallery will collaborate with First Nations artists on innovative learning programs and resources that connect students and teachers with First Nations artists, community, language and culture.
- The Art Pathways program will expand to Art Pathways: Regional to strengthen connections with regional students and teachers through both in-person and online learning offerings. The program will also support educational initiatives delivered alongside the touring exhibitions program.
- Over the next four years, the Art Gallery will collaborate with Western Sydney and regional NSW artists and creative practitioners to develop new digital learning programs and resources. These will be broadcast from the Lewin Media Lab to enhance access for regional and remote schools.
- The Art Pathways travel program will provide financial support to eligible schools in Western Sydney and regional NSW, reducing barriers to accessing the Art Gallery's collections, exhibitions and learning programs. Support will include teacher professional development, classroom incursions, free transport to and from the Art Gallery's campus, and facilitated excursion workshops.
- In February 2026, the Art Gallery launched new professional development opportunities for NSW teachers, including in-person and online curriculum-focused workshops, dedicated preview events for major exhibitions and an annual teachers conference.



Grow

Expand and diversify audiences by delivering engaging, accessible and inclusive exhibitions, programs and digital offerings that connect communities throughout NSW with artists, creative ideas and the state's collection.

By embedding care and empathy in our curatorial and engagement practices, the Art Gallery will expand its reach, relevance and impact – attracting new audiences, deepening engagement and fostering sustained relationships across the state.

Key priorities and partnerships

- With the implementation of the Art Gallery's new collections management system, we will explore opportunities to support collecting institutions across NSW through skills exchange initiatives focused on best-practice collection care.
- In collaboration with Create NSW, the Art Gallery will strengthen regional partnerships and networks by working with regional galleries and regional arts development organisations (RADOs) to deliver Arts in Health programs aligned with the NSW Government's *Health and the Arts Framework 2024–2032*.²
- With the launch of Sydney Cinémathèque in 2026, the Art Gallery will investigate opportunities to extend film programming to regional NSW in partnership with regional galleries and other organisations, increasing access to film culture for regional audiences.
- Following a successful pilot delivery in 2024 and supported by further philanthropic investment, the Art Gallery's Culture Dose for Kids eight-week program will extend to partnerships with the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba and Shoalhaven Regional Gallery in Nowra in 2026, with additional regional partners to be secured in future years.
- Following the reopening of the Brett Whiteley Studio in Surry Hills in 2026, the Art Gallery will identify new approaches to expand the Studio's reach and engagement with schools and broader audiences across NSW.

² *Heartland: a plan for regional arts, culture and creative industries 2026–2035*, Create NSW, 2026, p 19.
³ *Heartland*, 2026, p 24.

Support

Build sustainable funding streams through government partnerships, philanthropic investment and collaborative initiatives to realise the goals of this plan.

opposite
Students participating in a Djamu digital workshop in the Lewin Media Lab at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2024

this page
A community afternoon presented with Down Syndrome NSW

The Art Gallery will support regional communities by building trusted, reciprocal relationships that value local knowledge, strengthen capacity and recognise individuals and communities as co-creators in cultural practice.

Key priorities and partnerships

- Secure financial stability for the long-term delivery of Djamu Youth Justice, Regional and Metropolitan programming throughout NSW.
- Seek sustainable funding to support the summer and winter Hive Festivals as a major partnership event for children and families in Western Sydney and regionally.
- Expand sponsorship support to deliver digital learning programs accompanying the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes to reach more students and teachers in regional, rural and remote locations.
- Support the disability arts sector through strong relationships with Accessible Arts, Vision Australia and Down Syndrome NSW, and deliver on priorities outlined in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025–28.
- Work with the NSW Government, Create NSW and Museums & Galleries of NSW, as well as regional NSW galleries and the state's RADOs, to offer an expanded range of capacity-building and professional development opportunities for the regional arts sector to deliver on *Heartland: a plan for regional NSW arts, culture and creative industries 2026–2035*.³
- Investigate regional locations to develop a sustainable and resilient collection management strategy and storage, and examine the operational, environmental, and community benefits that regional infrastructure could provide for the care and preservation of the state's collection over the long term.
- Collaborate with regional NSW galleries to develop innovative programming that responds to seasonal climate changes and risks.



Case studies

Students from Bossley Park High School making cardboard sculptures at the Art Gallery's *The Aquilizan Studio: Making it Home* for the Art Pathways program



Onsite, offsite and online Art Pathways

Art Pathways is a learning initiative designed to provide students and teachers throughout NSW with first-hand encounters with contemporary art, artists and ideas. The program supports curriculum outcomes, fosters creative and critical thinking, and promotes social and emotional wellbeing. It also provides financial support where the cost of transport is prohibitive for participating schools.

Art Pathways has three streams – Local, West and Regional – with a central model that establishes opportunities for students to hear directly from artists onsite at the Art Gallery, offsite at partner cultural institutions in Western Sydney and regional NSW, and online through broadcasting from the Art Gallery's Lewin Media Lab.

In 2022, in conjunction with the launch of Sydney Modern, commissioned artists Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan invited 13 Western Sydney schools, including Bossley Park High school, Blacktown Girls High School, Condell Park High School and Doonside Technology High School, along with community groups and Art Gallery visitors, to participate in workshops and create their own cardboard 'dream home'. Some of these constructions were featured in the Aquilizans' new sculpture for the *Dreamhome* exhibition in the Naala Badu building.

In 2023, Sydney-based artist Shireen Taweel worked with schools from Fairfield in Western Sydney to explore cultural heritage and identity.

In 2024, Art Pathways partnered with Archibald Prize finalist Mostafa Azimitabar to deliver workshops at Prairiewood High School, Bossley Park High School, Oran Park High School and Fairfield High School's Intensive English Unit. The program included artist workshops at the schools and excursions to the Art Gallery, with transport costs for the latter covered by the Art Pathways program. In 2025, Azimitabar's participation in the program extended to the Central Coast, where the program engaged local schools at Gosford Regional Gallery.

In 2025, Art Pathways West focused on the collection exhibition *High Colour* with participation by south-west Sydney secondary schools. Combined with the Local program, Art Pathways engaged over 1000 students in offsite classrooms and onsite at the Art Gallery.

'The visit enlivened the students and made them very aware of different ways of making artworks. This also gave them an understanding of artist practice. The whole experience has been very exciting for the students, they have looked forward to every step of the program.'

Teacher, Condell Park High School support unit, 2022

Onsite and offsite Sharing the collection

The Art Gallery enables equitable access to art across the state by sharing its collection, expertise and professional capability with regional galleries and communities throughout NSW. Through staff travel, touring exhibitions and a highly supported outward loans program, the Art Gallery ensures the state collection reaches wide and diverse audiences.

Curatorial engagement is a key strategy to supporting the sector. Many of the Art Gallery's curatorial team regularly travel throughout regional NSW, providing curatorial advice, mentoring and advocacy. Their longstanding relationships with artists and regional institutions support visibility for regional practice and strengthen professional networks.

Following the 2022 Northern Rivers floods, curator of Australian art Anne Ryan worked closely with Lismore Regional Gallery, offering curatorial guidance on damaged works, facilitating in-kind conservation support through the Art Gallery's Conservation Department, and contributing to public programs focused on caring for collections. These engagements supported community recovery while laying foundations for ongoing collaboration, including proposed collection loans aligned to local disaster response needs.

Onsite at the Art Gallery, our staff often participate in formal and informal mentoring of Western Sydney and regional NSW arts professionals to support capacity building. In 2025, we developed a broad mentoring program for exhibition, installation and programming staff from Newcastle Art Gallery ahead of its reopening in 2026.

Touring exhibitions further extend this impact. Conservation and installation staff travel with major exhibitions, such as the Wynne Prize and those developed from the collection and the Brett Whiteley Studio, to deliver best-practice installation and care while working collaboratively with small regional teams. These visits embed professional development and skills exchange, particularly for complex and culturally specific works, and establish trusted advisory relationships beyond individual tours.

The Art Gallery's outward loans program supports greater access to the collection. Between 2022 and 2025, 270 works were loaned to institutions across NSW, underpinned by subsidised freight, in-house packing and staff support. In 2025 alone, 85 works were loaned to 14 regional galleries, including a loan of 23 works to Western Plains Cultural Centre for the exhibition *Carcass: The Death of the Animal*. Together, these initiatives position the Art Gallery's collection as a resource for the audiences of NSW, supported through partnership, expertise and long-term commitment to access.

Installation view of *feathered: Birds in Myth and Memory* at the Manning Regional Art Gallery, Taree, featuring works from the Art Gallery's collection as part of the outward loan program, photo: Julie Slavin

'The equitable access to high-standard exhibitions is an important public good. Having grown up in, and frequently travelled to, regional NSW, there is a vibrant creative scene that exists outside metropolitan areas. The interaction between these creative communities and the Art Gallery's programs can be a spark for further creative development.'

Owen Lewis, installation officer, Art Gallery of New South Wales



Onsite and offsite Djamu

‘Every year, our senior Aboriginal students look forward to participating in this incredible program. It provides them with the unique opportunity to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art as part of an inspiring, dynamic, meaningful and rich cultural education program that is also linked to their HSC studies and cross-curricular priorities.’

School program participant

Djamu is the Art Gallery’s flagship First Nations art education program, centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts, perspectives and cultural practices. Established in 2017, Djamu creates culturally safe pathways for young people to engage with art, culture and vocational futures through interconnected programs tailored to community, place and age group. The program consists of Djamu Regional, Djamu Metropolitan (Junior and Senior) and Djamu Youth Justice.

Djamu Regional operates through a First Nations-led, project-based model embedded in regional NSW. Developed with local artists, Elders, schools and partners in communities including Broken Hill, Wilcannia and Menindee, the program responds directly to local cultural priorities. In Wilcannia, participants have forged metal coolamons and shields with Uncle Badger Bates, created pit-fired ceramic vessels using natural pigments, and more recently recorded and animated local histories through a digital storytelling collaboration with Studio Gilay, preserving cultural knowledge for future generations.

Across Sydney, Djamu Metropolitan provides free, multi-day intensive experiences for primary and secondary students, connecting them with practising artists, curators and arts workers and positioning the arts as a viable career pathway. Djamu Junior introduces students in Years 5–6 to the Art Gallery’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art collection through artist-led workshops, such as pigment painting with Tiwi artist Pedro Wonaeamirri and constellation-making with Meriam artist Gail Mabo. Djamu Senior extends this engagement, supporting Years 10–12 students through studio visits and critical skill development, including natural dyeing and printmaking intensives with Gamilaraay artist Juanita McLauchlan.

Djamu Youth Justice further broadens the program’s reach, delivering long-term projects in custodial and early intervention settings. Across Youth Justice NSW centres, young people have participated in weaving, shield making, bark cloth (aute), kapa haka and garden-based cultural programs. In 2025, a pilot program in Aotearoa New Zealand extended Djamu’s model internationally.

Together, Djamu positions art as a powerful tool for cultural continuity, learning, wellbeing and long-term opportunity, grounded in First Nations leadership, place and community.



Gamilaraay artist Juanita McLauchlan (front row, third from right) with Djamu Senior students presenting their mounted intaglio prints in the conservation studio at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

Onsite, offsite and online Home: Aboriginal art from New South Wales

‘Home highlights the value for all students to engage with local artists. It highlights Gamilaroi stories. All students can participate in the continuing culture and hear directly from local Aboriginal artists and stories.’

Emma Stilts, Operations and Visitor Experience
Coordinator, Tamworth Regional Gallery

Hannah Debus, First Nations
assistant program producer,
addresses student artists at their
Home program exhibition, Manning
Regional Art Gallery, 2025, photo
courtesy of Manning Regional
Art Gallery and The Arts Unit



Since its inception in 2015, the Home: Aboriginal art from New South Wales program has grown into a statewide, place-based learning program that connects regional primary school students and teachers with First Nations art, artists, languages and cultural knowledge. Developed collaboratively by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the NSW Department of Education's Arts Unit, Wiradjuri community members in Wagga Wagga, regional galleries and Aboriginal communities across NSW, Home is designed to be responsive, locally led and sustainable.

Each year, the program is co-designed with participating communities and regional galleries, ensuring learning is embedded in local context. Schools engage in a yearlong program that integrates classroom learning with artist-led workshops, virtual lessons, professional learning for teachers and access to purpose-built online resources. The program culminates in a public exhibition of student works at each regional gallery, celebrating local identity, creativity and connection to Country.

Originally piloted in Wagga Wagga alongside Wiradjuri community members and Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Home has since expanded and has been facilitated in eight regional galleries. It is currently delivered in partnership with Shoalhaven Regional Gallery, Bank Art Museum Moree and Tamworth Regional Gallery, with sustained demand from schools seeking long-term engagement.

Home strengthens teachers' confidence and capability to embed Aboriginal perspectives across curriculum areas, while fostering meaningful relationships between schools and local Aboriginal communities. As one participating teacher noted, the program provides 'a framework to engage with language, culture and history, and connects me with the right people in community'.

In 2025, Home engaged 578 students, six local artists and three regional galleries across Nowra, Tamworth and Taree. Mentorship pathways also emerged, including in Tamworth, where Gamilaroi Yinarr artist Sophie Honess mentored emerging Gomeroi artist Kayleb Waters-Sampson. Looking ahead, Home will continue to deepen cultural connection, amplify local artistic leadership and support long-term educational and community outcomes across regional NSW.



Access resources support inclusive engagement with the Art Gallery's collection by embedding accessibility into exhibition planning, touring projects and sector partnerships. Through collaboration with specialist access organisations such as Vision Australia and regional galleries, the Art Gallery develops adaptable tools and shared practices that enable broader audiences to engage meaningfully with art, both onsite and offsite.

A key focus has been the development of tactile interpretation resources, including specially designed 2D acrylic works that support focused observation, discussion and sensory engagement with original artworks. Successfully trialled with diverse audiences during the Art Gallery's major exhibitions onsite, these resources have since been commissioned for multiple projects, including the annual Archibald Prize regional tour, building a scalable model for accessible interpretation.

In 2024, when the Brett Whiteley Studio closed for redevelopment, significant works from the collection toured nationally in the exhibition *Brett Whiteley: Inside the Studio*. This presented an opportunity to embed access principles across multiple regional venues. The Art Gallery developed sensory and tactile kits reflecting the materials, textures and studio environment associated with Brett Whiteley's practice. The kits enabled audiences to engage through touch, making and discussion, supporting deeper connection with selected works.

Regional partners also incorporated low-sensory and quiet spaces within exhibition environments, expanding access for visitors with sensory needs and creating flexible, welcoming spaces for all. To support consistency and sustainability, the Art Gallery developed practical guides for educators and volunteers on using access resources with diverse audiences.

Ongoing conversation and advisory support continues to extend this work, with the Art Gallery sharing expertise with, and learning from, NSW regional galleries to develop tactile and multi-sensory resources. Access resources reflect a forward-looking commitment to inclusion, strengthening capability across the state and ensuring the collection can be experienced in meaningful ways by diverse communities.

'The tactile and sensory resources were invaluable in supporting inclusive engagement across our exhibition program for *Feathered*. They encouraged curiosity, discussion and hands-on learning ... enabling us to deliver a richer and more accessible experience for our community.'

Manning Regional Art Gallery staff member

Onsite and offsite Access resources

Visitor engaging with a tactile resource, produced in collaboration with Vision Australia, at the Archibald Prize 2025 touring exhibition, Gosford Regional Gallery, photo © Mike Wolfe, Wolfewise Creative

Onsite and offsite Hive Festival

‘For a state gallery and regional gallery to collaborate on a festival of this nature for kids and families is both smart and productive. Hive was successful in showing the personality of both organisations – it was a beautiful initiative. The volume of people who attended in 2024 and 2025 shows there is a want and need for this kind of programming.’

The Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre staff member



Hive Festival is a multi-day event for children and families across participating venues, designed to engage audiences in art, music, performance and play. Positioned within school holiday programming, Hive Festival connects diverse communities with artists, exhibitions and hands-on experiences across multiple sites, extending the Art Gallery's reach beyond its campus.

The inaugural Hive Festival launched in 2024 through a partnership with the Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre and Sydney Festival as a four-day festival delivered in Western Sydney and at the Art Gallery. The program attracted thousands of visitors in both locations and offered more than 20 free programs, celebrating the cultural diversity of Sydney. Community-led workshops foregrounded themes of inclusion, environmental awareness and collaboration, positioning families and community groups as active contributors to the festival's energy and learning.

In 2025, Hive expanded significantly, with a 40% increase in visitation to the Art Gallery and Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre, presented under the theme *Flights of Fancy*. Participatory artist-led activities were central to the program. It included a large-scale artwork by Blue Mountains-based artists Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, inviting audiences to construct elements of a giant kite across both venues. In Blacktown, a rich program of workshops and performances showcased Western Sydney artists and cultural leaders, alongside First Nations storytelling through dance and hands-on cultural workshops.

Building on this momentum, Hive has become a recurring highlight of summer programming and continues to grow through cross-institutional collaboration. Partnerships with Blacktown and Wollongong Art Gallery in 2026 strengthen regional and metropolitan connections, increase audience reach and engagement, and support future delivery at greater scale.

Participants in a workshop at
Hive Festival 2025, The Leo Kelly
Blacktown Arts Centre, photo:
Gary Trinh

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54 Reasons

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Cobham Youth Justice Centre
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Grafton Regional Gallery
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Lismore Regional Gallery
Maitland Regional Art Gallery
Manning Regional Art Gallery
Mudgee Arts Precinct
Murray Art Museum Albury
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Optus
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Packer Family Foundation
Packer Family Foundation in honour of David Gonski
Reiby Youth Justice Centre
Settlement Services International
Shoalhaven Regional Gallery
South East Centre for Contemporary Art
Studio Gilay
Tamworth Regional Gallery
The Armidale & Region Aboriginal Cultural Centre
and Keeping Place
The Bayard Foundation
The Estate of Philip de Carle
The Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre
TLE Electrical
Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre
Vision Australia
Wagga Wagga Art Gallery
We Are Studios
Wilcannia Central School

The Art Gallery values community feedback on our progress in meeting the goals outlined in the Western Sydney and Regional NSW Engagement Plan 2026-2029. We encourage individuals and community organisations to share their thoughts and experiences to ensure our continued improvement. Email artmail@ag.nsw.gov.au or phone 02 9225 1700.

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