



Barkly  
Regional  
Arts

**Annual Report**

**2021**

Pammy Foster,  
Epenarra Landscape

# **Acknowledgement of Country**

Barkly Regional Arts acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Barkly region. The Warumungu, Mudburra, Jingili, Wakaya, Wambaya, Waanyi, Walpiri, Warlmanpa, Alyawarr, Anmatyerre and Kaytetye people, whose lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to the Elders of this land, past, present, and emerging.

## **Thanks to funders**

The work we do would not be possible without the generous support of the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments. Barkly Regional Arts is supported by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support fund and the Indigenous Languages and Arts program. We are supported by the Northern Territory Government through Arts NT.

We extend additional thanks to local sponsors who have continued to support us in the production of our flagship event, Desert Harmony Festival.

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# Our Story

Barkly Regional Arts is the hub for arts in the Barkly, a region that covers an area of around 322, 717 square kilometres of Australia's Northern Territory.

The largest town in the region is Tennant Creek, approximately 1000km south of Darwin and 500km north of Alice Springs, a place where vivid blue skies form a canopy over a vast expanse of red dust. And that's where you'll find us. From our visual arts and music studios in the heart of Tennant Creek, we do outreach with the area's remote communities, producing art and music that tell the stories of the Barkly.

We collaborate with remote Indigenous communities to foster access, development and recognition of arts in the Barkly.

Art made here is significant not just as a way of preserving culture, but also a means by which the community can come together, celebrate culture and Country and, not least, earn income. The work of our artists reflects the remote, unforgiving desert landscape and harsh conditions, yet also portrays the history, charm, and magical beauty of this region.

# Our People

Across our Board and staff groups, our team brings together highly collaborative people who share a commitment to bringing the arts to the people of the Barkly. Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members work together at all levels of the organisation. While frequent changes to staffing bodies is a hallmark of Tennant Creek and remote communities generally, all key positions are currently filled.

## Board:

**Deborah Hartman**

Acting Chairperson

**Sarah Woodland**

**Frankie White**

**Brian Coleman**

**Olivia Vizard**

**Peter Colahan**

**Staff:**

<b>Heather Anderson</b>	Tennant Creek Community Liaison
<b>Larry Belton</b>	Studio Assistant
<b>Harold Dalywaters</b>	Elliot Community Liaison
<b>Marcus Finlay</b>	WMC Assistant
<b>Jeremy Finlayson</b>	Music Outreach Tech
<b>Dirk Kelly</b>	WMC Music Worker
<b>Katie Lynch</b>	Artistic Director
<b>Chelsea Manning</b>	Visual Arts Facilitator
<b>Sarvika Mishra</b>	Events and Communications Officer
<b>Zoey Nish</b>	Kulumindini Arts Worker
<b>Reggie O’Riley</b>	WMC Music Worker
<b>Annette Peterson</b>	Epenarra Arts Worker
<b>Julie Peterson</b>	Epenarra Arts Worker
<b>Md Humayun Rashid</b>	Finance and Administration Officer
<b>Waylon Ward</b>	WMC Assistant
<b>Maitlin Waugh</b>	Visual Arts Manager
<b>Warren H Williams</b>	WMC Community Liaison
<b>James Winwood</b>	Music, Media and Events Manager
<b>Andrew Wright</b>	Executive Officer

# Acting Chairperson's Note

2021 has been a wonderful roller coaster ride for the Board of Barkly Regional Arts as we navigated our way to overseeing a thriving, vibrant regional arts organisation supporting many wonderful artists, musicians, writers and makers throughout Tennant Creek and the Barkly Region.

If I imagined the role of a Deputy Chair in 2020 and then Acting Chair in 2021 would mainly involve swanning around art exhibitions, I couldn't have been more wrong. Like many organisations which have been under stable leadership for many years, 2020 and 2021 brought an explosion of change in both the Board and the staff.

With all the changes, it was difficult for the Board to get accurate information about our grants, finances and operations. Under the leadership of our long-term Chair, Kevin Banbury, we requested advice from one of our funders Arts NT and were offered wonderful support by them and opportunities to work with a very knowledgeable and experienced governance advisor Patrick Moriarty, who has stayed the journey with us for this whole period of incredible change. We are very grateful for his support, advice, guidance and training. In February and March 2021, we also secured experienced arts administrative consultants Tracker to support the updating of our procedures and creative arts consultants Caroline Lieber and Erica Izett to set systems in place to ensure that we were making the most of the opportunities for our artists to market and sell their work on the local, national and international stage.

Two significant changes took place when Vanessa Hutchins, EO, who had commenced in August 2020, resigned in March 2021, due to illness and family commitments, and, after acting as consultant EO for several months, Andrew Wright applied for and won the position of EO in August 2021. Since then, an incredibly talented and strong team has developed and we now have a vibrant visual arts and music program supported by stable and effective administration. Hats off to our wonderful staff!

The amazing Kevin Banbury who had been Chair of the Board since 2017, took a well-earned break from the Board and long service leave from his work in 2021. He has skilfully overseen this intense period of reflection and renewal in his caring and hands-on style. We miss him immensely.

By mid 2021, we were very confident that our organisation is financially viable and is now well on the way to having all the governance structures, policies and procedures in place to be a well-run sustainable organisation.

As a Board we have continued to re-new ourselves. As two year terms expired, long-term members did not stand again and new enthusiastic member took their places on the Board. I'd like to thank all of the past and current Board Members who have contributed their time, talents and skills to this incredibly active process of renewal for Barkly Regional Arts. Over the past two years, retiring or resigning Board members and officers, Kevin Banbury, Kym Brahim, Tristan Duggie, Jimmy Frank, Georgina Bracken, Meg McGrath, and Mahmudul Hasan have all left important legacies for our organisation.

New Members Brian Coleman, Frances White and Olivia Vizard joined and have contributed new skills and talents.

Maintaining talented Board members and staff is a constant challenge for all organisations in Tennant Creek and the Barkly and COVID has made this even more difficult. However, I feel that all of our hard work to delve deep into our governance and financial structures and operational procedures has put us into a strong viable position and I am confident that new, energetic and talented Board Members and staff who are committed to Tennant and the Barkly will build on the hard work during this challenging period and take us to greater heights in 2022 and beyond. The Board has a strong structure, with all the governance, financial, legal and arts leadership skills needed to be highly functioning. We now have plans to develop more Aboriginal leadership through a Regional Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

It has been a privilege to serve on the Board for the past two years. While I am leaving town soon to spend time with my children and grandchildren in Southern Queensland, I will remain on the Board for a period of handover, while the new committee settles into their roles. Following that, into the future, I look forward to hearing about the wonderful events and successes of the artists and musicians that are the backbone of BRA. Maybe I'll get to come back and swan around some exhibition openings after all. Thank you for this wonderful roller coaster ride!

**Deborah Hartman**

**Acting Chairperson**

**April 2022**

# Executive Officer's Note

2021 commenced with key staff having left or leaving as well as long term Board members retiring. Instability throughout the organisation from top to bottom caused many sleepless nights, but a plan was hatched and supported by all stakeholders.

During 2020 we have had our EO of 12 years retire, the finance manager resigned and key positions such as the visual arts manager and music manager leave the organisation. At Board level the 2020 AGM saw the retirement of key long-term Board members and three new board members appointed. In early 2021 the Secretary, and Public Officer resigned and unfortunately the new Executive Officer also resigned for health reasons. We must thank Vanessa Hutchins for her stay with us as EO.

Fortunately, the roots of Barkly Regional Arts are deeply embedded in the Barkly, the organisation's vibrant and successful history means that with support from the community and funders we well positioned to face a challenging start to the year and begin to rebuild.

An organisational and operational audit was conducted which paved the way for the next 6-9 months of rebuilding systems, staffing, and confidence.

The organisational and operational audit consisted of the following stages and outputs:

- Examination of BRA's operations including human resources, administration, compliance, programming, funding and partnerships.
- Preparation of a comprehensive recommended action plan based on observations, including a timeline of actions which laid out responsibilities and cost implications .
- Submission of a draft action plan to the Board for consideration.
- Incorporation of feedback and any additional communications.
- Submission of final action plan.

Patrick Moriarty from Strategic Communications Australia was also engaged, initially voluntarily, and then with the support of ArtsNT, to guide the Board through a critical transition phase in the organisation's lifecycle. We thank him for his ongoing support and expertise.

Mahmudul Hasan came on as voluntary Treasurer and was a strong hand in keeping the financial side of the organisation in balance.

In March Katie Lynch walked into the Visual Arts Studio looking to volunteer as her partner had just commenced teaching with the local High School. She was subsequently appointed Visual Arts Manager and oversaw a significant upgrading of systems and procedures, and more than doubling sales figures.

The latter means that more funds are going directly into the hands of Indigenous artists in Tennant Creek, Elliott, Canteen Creek and Epenarra which is a wonderful outcome. Katie has recently been appointed as Artistic Director at Barkly Arts which is testament to her passion, organisation, and the outcomes she has achieved. Watch this space.

In May 2021 I was appointed Interim EO to take up the recommendations of the Report, to update systems, and to engage the organisation effectively with local stakeholders and funders.



Shortly after that Maitlin Waugh was appointed to co-ordinate visual arts outreach, which resulted in reinvigorating engagement and artwork production at all locations, including active management and mentorship for remote arts workers.

Both Katie and Maitlin came with incredibly valuable qualifications and experiences for their roles which was a wonderful piece of synchronicity, with them being in the right place at exactly the right time. It also highlighted the challenges of attracting and retaining suitably skilled staff and accommodating them in remote communities. This is a key strategic issue we grapple with, and we are not alone.

James Winwood was contacted to assist with Desert Harmony Festival months, initially contracted from June to August, he has since committed to staying on at least for 2022 as Music Manager. James has a decade long history with the organisation, his commitment to the rebuild was significant given his extensive music industry contacts, skills, and experience.

As of December 2022, the organisation has made significant steps towards rebuilding a strong and sustainable art centre with the following outcomes in place:

- Staffing hires and retention (see pg. 5).
- HR policies and procedures reviewed and updated – awards, contracts, and PDs.
- Update to financial and non-financial Board reporting system including monthly risk management and compliance reporting records.
- Recruitment of external IT provider and update to internal IT systems.
- ILA tender submitted, and a new multi-year submission offered in 2022.
- Strengthened relationship with partner organisations.
- Organisational budget in place and updated monthly.
- Multiple events, exhibitions, recordings and workshops successfully led.

Thank-you to all who have worked to drive the rebuild of Barkly Regional Arts at every level. I would like to add a particular thanks to our former Chair, Kevin Banbury who led the rebuild in 2020 leaving the organisation in a strong position when he resigned in 2021. He was a great support to all of us during the build. I also thank the broader Barkly Regional Arts Board for their support, guidance and commitment to getting us through such a challenging period.

**Andrew Wright**

**Executive Officer**

**April 2022**

# Governance

Early 2021 saw several board resignations, we thank Tristan Duggie, Jimmy Frank and Kym Brahim for their service to Barkly Regional Arts. The positions left vacant in their stead have been filled by new board members. Brian Coleman, a local Indigenous musician and town stalwart, and Frankie White, a local singer and education department employee joined the Board at the 2021 AGM. They were followed by local teacher Olivia Vizard who was appointed by casual vacancy later in the year.

Potential new Board members have nominated at the 2022 AGM.

In 2021, finance and governance policies were reviewed and updated.

Monthly Board reports gave both transparency and direction to the Board and management. Reviews and monthly updates to the organisation's compliance register and the Risk Management were undertaken. Additionally, monthly finance reports and statements including a monthly variance report to budget were submitted to the board.

Reviews to the constitution were made and put forward for approval by Special Resolution at the 2022 AGM.

Chair Kevin Banbury resigned late in 2021, we thank Deborah Hartman for fulfilling his position as Acting Chair until a new chair was appointed at the 2022 AGM.

An important focus for the Board moving forward is the recruitment of more Indigenous Board members and the commencement of an Indigenous Advisory Committee.

# Visual Arts

2021 saw the invigoration of Barkly Regional Arts' Visual Arts program. The program facilitates the Artists of the Barkly collective, a talented group of artists who work in studios across five Barkly communities. Re-engagement, creative development and promotion were strong focuses for the Visual Arts team in 2021, leading to an increase in participation, artistic output and sales for what was the collective's most successful year yet. The team also focused on building strategic partnerships with peak industry bodies, galleries, and other art centres.

Initiatives and outcomes in the Visual Arts programme include:

## **Re-engagement:**

- Recruited Outreach Co-ordinator with specific focus on managing outreach to remote art studios, allowing for multi day visits to each community on a fortnightly basis.
- Strengthened key partnerships within each community.
- Identified and facilitated use of an appropriate art studio space in Canteen Creek. Cleaned and refreshed studios in Tennant Creek and Elliott. Facilitated use of new art studio in Epenarra.
- Developed a strong focus on active engagement with members of all communities. Employment of community outreach officers in Tennant Creek and Elliott to support efforts to engage community members in the arts.
- Developed a focus on active management of community arts workers.

## **Creative development:**

- Developed an active focus on creative development, implemented a culture of reviewing works collectively, leading to an increase in creative innovation.
- Employed a workshop facilitator to run a total of nine weeks' worth of painting workshops in Epenarra, Canteen Creek and Elliott.
- Facilitated pottery workshops for studio artists in Tennant Creek.
- Took opportunities to travel to exhibitions, for example Desert Mob in Alice Springs.

## **Promotion:**

- Revised prices and developed a pricing system for the art centre.
- Developed and implemented a digital marketing plan which included the active use of [Barkly Regional Arts'](#) Instagram page and the development and management of an [Instagram](#) page and a [Shopify](#) website dedicated to the promotion and sale of works by the Artists of the Barkly collective.
- Developed local sales opportunities with a physical marketing strategy which focused on increasing foot traffic through studio galleries and developing partnerships with other local art centres to create sales opportunities.
- Spearheaded Desert Harmony Art Fair (July) and Barkly Artist's Fair (December) bringing together Arlpwe Art Centre, Artists of Ampilatwatja, Utopia Art Centre, the Artists of the Barkly and the Tennant Creek Brio at Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre.

- Forged and consolidated partnerships with art galleries leading to lucrative consignment agreements and exhibitions, for example, Japingka Gallery in Fremantle, Short Street Gallery in Broome and Suzanne O'Connell Gallery in Brisbane.
- Participated in major industry events including Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (online) and Desert Mob exhibition and marketplace.

The above efforts resulted in strengthened partnerships, several public art opportunities for the Artists of the Barkly, planned exhibitions for 2022. Additionally, 2021 saw record sale figures, with calendar year results showing a 250% improvement on the collective's previous sales record, the result is a significant increase to artists' income.

An important focus for the Visual Arts programme moving forward is ensuring higher sales figures are sustained by continuing to focus on creative development and promotion, thereby building the reputation of the Artists of the Barkly.

# Music

Despite the challenges faced by Barkly Regional Arts in 2020 and 2021, the Winanjikarri Music Centre has held its place as Central Australia's most significant remote music space. The WMC team have responded to a growing enthusiasm for local music in local language by identifying the Cornerstones of a Musical Community; learning, rehearsal, performance and recording and aiming to meet these needs. In 2021 WMC continued to provide recording and performing opportunities and is focused on developing a strategy to increase the WMC's capacity to provide complementary learning opportunities and rehearsal spaces.

Initiatives and outcomes of the Winanjikari Music Centre include:

- Produced album for Mudburra man Harold Dalywaters (Elliott).
- Produced album for Kaytetye group Desert Eagles (Ali Curung).
- Facilitated Desert Harmony Festival, Territory Day making every effort to promote local musicians.
- Facilitated performances by touring groups forging access to the arts for people across the community, for example Constantia Bush.
- Development of partnership with Barkly Regional Council for maintenance of remote music equipment.
- Maintained a busy fee-for-service schedule, meeting the AV requirements for key partners across the community, for example Julalikari Aboriginal Corporation.
- Development and consolidation of key partnerships, for example with Barkly Regional Council and Music NT.
- Multiple planned albums for 2022

An important focus for the WMC team moving forward is to build on the centres' ability to uphold the Cornerstones of a Musical Community by growing its music teaching capabilities and identifying a suitable, accessible space for band rehearsal with Tennant Creek.

# Events

In 2021 Barkly Regional Arts navigated the challenges of ongoing Covid-19 restrictions to offer what was a relatively limited programme of events. Barkly Regional Arts ultimately delivered a scaled-back version of its flagship event, Desert Harmony Festival. Additionally, we continued to engage with partners across the Country and the Territory to bring arts events to the Barkly community.

Initiatives and outcomes of our Events programme included:

- Production of Desert Harmony Festival. The 2021 festival brought together musicians from across Australia and the Territory and featured Opera Australia, Alice Springs World Chamber Orchestra as well as multiple local groups during BAMfest and saw an audience of more than 1,500 people. In 2021 Desert Harmony Festival catered expressly to the Tennant Creek community, with Covid-19 allowing for a renewed focus on a local audience.
- Production of Territory Day Concert which featured Coloured Stone, Gleny Rae, Barkly Drifters, Ray Dixon and Harold Dalywaters and saw an audience of more than 1,200 people.
- Hosted and facilitated multiple events across the community, for example, Constantina Bush (WMC Theatre), Tjupi Band ( Nyinkka Nyunyu).

In rebuilding from Covid-19, an important focus for Barkly Regional Arts will be to produce events which prioritise local artists and a local audience and facilitate events from beyond the Barkly. The organisation aims to accept expressions of interests from touring groups where reasonable and possible, thereby delivering a diverse but community focused events programme for the people of the Barkly.

# Get in touch

**Address:**

Barkly Regional Arts  
65 Staunton Street  
Tennant Creek, 0860  
Northern Territory

**Phone:**

08 8962 299

**Email:**

[admin@barklyarts.com.au](mailto:admin@barklyarts.com.au)

**Website:**

[www.barklyarts.com.au](http://www.barklyarts.com.au)  
[www.artistsofbarkly.com.au](http://www.artistsofbarkly.com.au)

**Social Media:**

@barklyregionalarts  
@artistsofbarkly