



Barkly
Regional
Arts

Strategic Plan

2016 – 2020





“We live in a region of extremes ...”



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1. Strategic Context

Barkly Regional Arts (BRA) operates in the Barkly region of the Northern Territory. This region is home to sixteen Indigenous languages groups (eight in daily use) that spread across a vast arid landscape of 310,000 sq km — roughly the size of Victoria. The Barkly is inhabited by peoples whose song lines, story lines, art and living culture span thousands of years.

In the Barkly, 74% of the residents are Indigenous located across one main centre (Tennant Creek), eight remote communities and seventy family outstations. Each community BRA works with suffers extreme impoverishment.

However, the Barkly region also provides the setting for great artistic vibrancy. BRA continuously seeks ways to harness our place, such as celebrating the rich diversity of culture and language that we have the privilege to engage with.

Ours is a positive story (one of the few) in our region where there is limited assistance from outside.

BRA makes a significant and sustainable contribution to the lives of Barkly residents. Developing artistic talent is different in Barkly; here art is intimately connected to the emotional and physical health of individuals, families and communities because art is an



extension of people's culture and their beliefs. By BRA developing a strong local remote arts and cultural output, we contribute to a healthy national arts ecology. Art from remote communities is both an enhancer of Australia art ecology and an essential and unique aspect of Australia's art story.

To succeed under circumstances made difficult by remoteness and entrenched dysfunction across the communities, BRAs continually pursues an ambition of ever-greater artistic merit through multiple art forms. Foremost amongst our priorities is building local leaders in art and enabling artists to continuously explore and pursue artistic expression across a multi arts platform.

We know that success will come from the Barkly region being renowned for creating exciting art. The continuous striving to improve what we develop and deliver requires the recruitment and retention of passionate, professional and qualified staff committed to exploring modalities and improving technical competence.

Our flexibility and resilience will ensure that local artists, art consumers and visitors can access the best trainers, partners and collaborations including national partners. These partners stimulate local learning and development and art appreciation across many forms.

BRA offers rare opportunities for local people to achieve a job, foster their passion and talent and to lift community capacity. The annual Desert Harmony Festival will remain our flagship offering 5,000 visitors to one of Australia's remotest locations, the opportunity to experience the artistic power of the Barkly.

BRA continues to provide the diverse art platform that we are known for nationally. This artistic platform enables an ever-increasing artistic merit to be produced and shared locally, nationally and internationally.

With support, BRA will assist the Australia Council for the Arts to realise its mission and will contribute to the Strategic Goals of the Australia Council and ensure that:

The artistic excellence of the Barkly region is recognised and celebrated on a local, national and world stage.

1.1 Environmental forecast

(political, economic, social, technical and legal)

A number of factors across our external environment impact the execution of our artistic vision.

Political

- Politics in communities
- A concentration in the Northern Territory of funding to the main centres resulting in smaller centres such as the Barkly struggling to get government support
- A lack of creative industry recognition as an economic driver at the community and political level
- A shifting arts policy e.g. the rolling back of contracts which creates uncertainty in funding.

Key lessons and strategic factors going forward:

Community politics requires careful and constant management as local issues can work for or against efforts to produce art and hold events. It can determine our success or failure.

Economic

- Regional challenges include:
 - Low levels of economic activity across the Barkly region
 - A weak spending ability of art consumers
 - The cost of doing business in very remote locations.

Key lessons and strategic factors going forward:

A real opportunity to build a creative industry in the Barkly exists, for example, using major events to stimulate economic activity.

Social

- The Barkly Region continues to have some of Australia's worst statistics and rates of:

• Domestic violence	• Incarceration and Recidivism
• Homelessness	• Welfare dependency
• Isolation	• Disconnectedness
• Overcrowded housing	• Unemployment
• Alcohol and substance abuse	• Lack of transport
• Family/community dysfunction	• Lack of services.
- Despite these indicators of a region in trauma the people of the Barkly possess:
 - A rich and diverse artistic tradition
 - A great diversity of languages and culture (8 languages in daily use).

Key lessons and strategic factors going forward:

BRA remains the only outlet for artistic expression and achievement in the region.

Technical

- Local Indigenous people are fast adopters of technology and keen to apply new technology
- The Barkly region suffers low technology infrastructure including poor broadband and a weak telecommunications system delivering poor access in remote communities
- BRA has to be self-sufficient when delivering art programs in remote communities
- BRA is a corporate production in-house with the ability to support art through technology, for example, digital mapping, interactive platforms, digital art, full music production and web casting.

Key lessons and strategic factors going forward:

BRA extend use of technology for art e.g. harnessing the power of social media and more education around technology and online/platforms.

Legal**The legal environment of BRA is highly complex and includes:**

- Risks associated with art delivery in very remote and environmentally harsh conditions, including:
 - Vast distances that have to be travelled over poor roads requiring the use of off-road vehicles
 - Extreme heat and weather events
 - Unreliable satellite phone connections
 - The need for constant vigilance on vehicles and equipment compliance
- The increasing focus by a range of authorities on compliance
- The need to offer protection for directors and officers e.g. constitutional indemnification
- Tied contracts with government that must be delivered
- IP and ownership rights of artists and a range of cultural (legal) matters
- Matters associated with events, including:
 - Venues which may not be compliant with industry standards
 - Providers who may not meet regulations requirements in food and alcohol
 - Insurance for, and risks arising from, the use of volunteers at events
 - Security standards and whether they can be met
 - Finding licensed first aid providers and security

Key lessons and strategic factors going forward:

Everyone associated with BRAs must be constantly vigilant towards risk and legal matters.

1.2 Audience and community relevance

BRA has a significant audience reach considering its remote location and the size of the regional population - approximately 3,500 for Tennant Creek 8,500 in the whole region. Our results include:

We reach a worldwide audience on line —

Our music/dance best events are always well attended	650
The webcast of the festival	666
Poetry reading event	50
Opera	300
Burlesque	270
Dancers	1,200
Festival	4,000 visitors
Total	7,136

Key lessons and strategic factors going forward:

Despite this outstanding result, given our location and the size of the community, we can do better:

- We know artistic merit is the key to success
- Community involvement always leads to more attendance
- Knowledge of community interest leads to demand
- Planning the marketing/communication and selling new art forms is essential
- We need to better engage non-Indigenous members of the community.

1.3 Competitor analysis

BRA has no direct competition in any one of its art platforms but a number other providers cross over. For example, consumers can access radio and music from a variety of sources.

Key lessons and strategic factors going forward:

To remain competitive BRA has to:

- Deliver a consistently high standard of artistic merit in everything we do
- Strengthen marketing and sales
- Lift consumer engagement, and
- Ensure our organisational capability will support the development of quality art.

1.4 Assessment of internal SWOT

In response to our external environment BRA must leverage our strengths, manage our weaknesses, exploit our opportunities and mitigate our threats, including:

The strengths we can leverage:

- The ability to respond to artists' aspirations
- We live and work in the region
- The resources to produce quality across an entire multimedia platform
- Self-sufficiency in putting on remote productions
- A positive reputation
- Our reach, from local grass roots through to national and international
- Our skills, including the ability to plan inclusive events and projects that deliver artistic results
- Strengths in consultation and value adding partnerships within the art sector and across services
- Exceptional community access pathways.

The weaknesses we have to manage:

- The cost/affordability of professionals and mentors for our local artists to access
- Consistency of people on the ground to respond to demand
- Regional challenges including scale and high costs
- Broad band limitations including delivery point limitations
- Visual art challenges including lifting quality and increasing prices
- Staffing remote community art spaces consistency
- Imparting skills into the region.

The opportunities we can exploit:

- Maximizing the diversity of artistic expression in communities
- Become the 'go to' people for events
- Supporting more local workers to developing skills, capacity and self-reliance
- The chance to reflect the traditional culture in its 'find' phase — keeping stories alive
- Engage younger generation bringing together in art/story telling/song culture/dance/music
- Supporting intergenerational knowledge sharing
- Building the interface between art and culture
- Supporting other agencies to access communities through art and culture.

The threats we have to mitigate

- Over extending ourselves resulting in burn out
- A lack of understanding of our remote circumstances by others
- Agencies undermining long term art development e.g. 'work for the dole' placements underrating visual art marketing strategies
- Lack of security of tenure at our premises due to government policy.

Conclusions:

- Our strengths and opportunities outweigh our weaknesses and threats
- We have succeeded to date despite persistent weaknesses and threats, including the low economic base of the Barkly region, and must continue to innovate to do so in the future.

1.5 Financial capability

Our financial position includes:

- Proven cash flows
- At this stage the 2015 financial year is forecast to conclude with a small surplus.
- We have equity of some \$450,000 to draw on if necessary
- The cost and challenges of doing business in remote Australia have resulted in high levels of efficiency and effectiveness in arts development and presentation, making BRA one of the most cost effective arts organisations in the country
- A long trading history — in various forms.

Conclusion:

BRA is a viable going concern.



2. BRA's enduring purpose

The enduring purpose of BRA is to add living culture to the artistic merit of Australia whilst contributing creative industry opportunities in very remote communities.

2.1 Our values

The values that support the attainment of our purpose are:

What we value:	What we will do to fulfil our value:
Artistic merit	Continually strive for improvement in art, production, promotion and skills Recognise the value of vibrant artistic cultural outcomes Offer opportunities for community development and participation.
Actively participate in the larger arts ecology	Promote professional and artistic development from within and externally Value strong local, regional and national partnerships Celebrate and respect cultural diversity and our rich and Indigenous demographic.
Cultural diversity	Celebrate cultural diversity, Indigenous and other Remain flexible to respond to community-driven needs Respect individuals and communities and their cultural practices Recognise the unique and rich Indigenous history and demographic of our region Speak in language and train in language where possible.
Rights and recognition	Use the enrichment art offers to improve the conditions Indigenous people experience Protection of artists' Intellectual Property (IP) Advance reconciliation, social justice, human rights, access and inclusion Support cultural maintenance in partnership with our constituents
Integrity	We do what we said we would do, ethically . Reputation is everything.

3. Our artistic vision

The long term vision we are pursuing is to produce artistic excellence and present the cultural diversity of very remote communities.

In the centre of Australia, BRA offers a complete proven multi-arts package capable of delivering exceptional artistic merit, either alone or through our vast network of partners and arts professional in our environment of extremes.

3.1 Our capabilities

Our capabilities to deliver the vision include a complete multi arts package delivered through:

- Capacity to deliver exceptional artistic merit in a harsh setting through our experience and expertise
- Being the 'go to' organisation to deliver arts in our vast region
- Innovation and a high levels of adaptability
- Connectivity to local, regional and national audiences
- High Indigenous employment and micro industry development in very remote communities
- Pathways to culture and the eight living languages across the Barkly Region
- Ability to enable events
- High value for money.

3.2 Our macro goals

The long term goals we will pursue are:

- To develop the competence and courage of local people to drive artistic development
- To produce art with artistic merit and contribute to Australia's understanding of its diverse cultures
- To push art boundaries by continuously developing organisational capacity
- To always be recognised as an important element in the arts ecology of Australia through effective marketing
- To contribute to a body of evidence which measures the value of arts to the Australian ecology.

3.3 Implementing our macro goals

For the next few years our specific goals are:

Goal one: To develop the competence and courage of local people to drive artistic development

The KPIs we will deliver:

- A range of innovative artistic products and outcomes
- Community involvement
- Art works and projects which reflect and respect the cultural landscape
- Wider audiences.

Strategies:

Continually pursue artistic excellence in very remote communities through artistic and organisational innovation that will include:

- Nurturing pathways for artistic expression
- Using arts to engage and test social boundaries
- Being resourceful to source the full range of support artists and communities will require
- Enabling people to access new artistic concepts
- Developing new methods of presenting/packaging art
- Finding solutions to obstacles that prevent 'great' art being produced, distributed and consumed.

Goal two: To produce art with artistic merit and contribute to Australia's understanding of its diverse cultures

2a Multimedia platform

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Ensure BRA's multimedia platform continues

Strategies:

- Retain our multi-arts platform's ability to support artists' aspirations through the production, promotion and marketing of their art and artistic pathways.

2b Music

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Retention of a suitable workforce
- The development of quality music products
- Progress in developing BRA's ability to advance artists
- Reinforcement of our local music industry as an integral part of the national music sector

Strategies — BRA continues to:

- Support language retention through music
- Identify and develop local talent
- Develop a local and national micro industry through music
- Build on our connections into the wider music industry
- Deliver quality events and productions

2c Festival

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Communities having fun in 2016 and annually
- A successful outback festival
- Maximum community involvement in 2016 and beyond
- Economic activity for artists and the region
- A platform for showcasing our arts program

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Build on our successful outback festival framework
- Develop a festival model — suited to our unique setting
- Strengthen community collaborations in 2016 and beyond
- Continue promoting the connectivity and role of our festival in the NT and nationally
- Use the festival for education and raising cultural awareness, local, nationally and internationally.

2d Visual Arts

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Continuous skill development
- Ever-improving arts management
- Facilities that support great art
- Increasing access to art facilities

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Develop and support local artists
- Develop the volume of quality art
- Continue to promote artistic excellence
- Improve conditions in remote communities
- Develop networks to increase exposure opportunities for artists
- Develop art that reflects the region's 70% Indigenous people.

2e Media Mob (Multimedia/Social media)**The KPIs we will deliver:**

- Media sites updated
- Increasing capacity
- Utilizing training and employment programs
- Marketing plans for all projects through multimedia

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Record and promote our activities
- Pursue greater artist and community self sufficiency
- Develop workforce and workforce capacity
- Continue leveraging our marketing and voice
- Continue to produce stand alone, quality, media products

2f Arts School in residence (music/dance/ ballet/comedy/ links to schools/youth)**The KPIs we will deliver:**

- Connecting into creative industries
- A stable of artist working with us to draw on
- Young people graduating into creative industries
- Fostering young people's artistic passion

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Work with successful arts companies e.g. Melbourne City Ballet, Opera Australia and Finucane and Smith (Cabaret Burlesque) programs
- Build career pathways and opportunities
- Develop long term meaningful partnerships
- Enhance the opportunities for young people to experience a professional art experience
- Invest in young people's artistic aspirations.

2g Research & Development (Australian Research Centre)

The KPIs we will deliver:

- National linkages
- Completion of research publication
- Benefits to BRA e.g. a measuring tool for all programs
- Validation of our artistic results.

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Contribute data to the 'Creative Barkly' three-year ARC research project
- Validate our impacts regionally and within the national arts ecology through research
- Build on research findings for maximum artist and community benefit.

2h Radio

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Increase listening audiences
- Extension of quality local content
- Increasing advertising revenue
- A full time station manager (in partnership)
- Training offered to Indigenous peoples.

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Build on the partnerships with 8CCC and CAAMA
- Develop more local content including social public bulletin
- Increase revenue e.g. sponsorships, broadcast services, fundraisers
- Lift content quality
- Increase the number of live language broadcasts.

2i Touring & events – Show case (produce/present) on tours

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Even greater increases in arts access
- The quality of our products
- Collaboration with major organisations

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Get more of our work on tour
- Bring tours to the region that will succeed
- Feed more of our products into the Desert Harmony Festival
- Increase access to events
- Offer quality support for local events.

Goal three: **To push art boundaries by continuously developing organisational capacity.**

3a Financials (whole of organisation)

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Upgraded charity sub type to Public Benevolent Institute (PBI) status
- Lift in revenue, including non-government revenue
- Achieve a breakeven or better result
- Continue to ensure the effective and efficient use of all resources

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Explore corporate partnerships
- Explore other types of government grants from other sectors
- Realise our real estate, if the right price can be attained
- Ensure the festival is profitable in service to the community and artistic vibrancy
- Explore donations and bequeaths
- Form a 'Patron Circle' and 'Friends of BRA'
- Broaden attendance at events — develop signature events and take over big events in the region
- Build towards program self sufficiency.

3b Governance

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Continue to ensure full compliance
- Pursue a Board that can add value across the full spectrum of BRA

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Continue to develop Governance Capability to support the advancement of creative industries
- Continue to source directors from leading local service organisation/agencies
- Continue to develop a holistic IT capability across all functions and activities
- Find innovative solutions to remote workforce challenges.

3c Our hub and spoke model and our artistic platform

The KPIs we will deliver:

- An integrated model for artistic advancement in very remote communities

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Get BRA working at the optimum level
- Retain close working relationships with communities
- Sustain a network of highly skilled and capable arts providers
- Maintain a roadworthy fleet to deliver services.

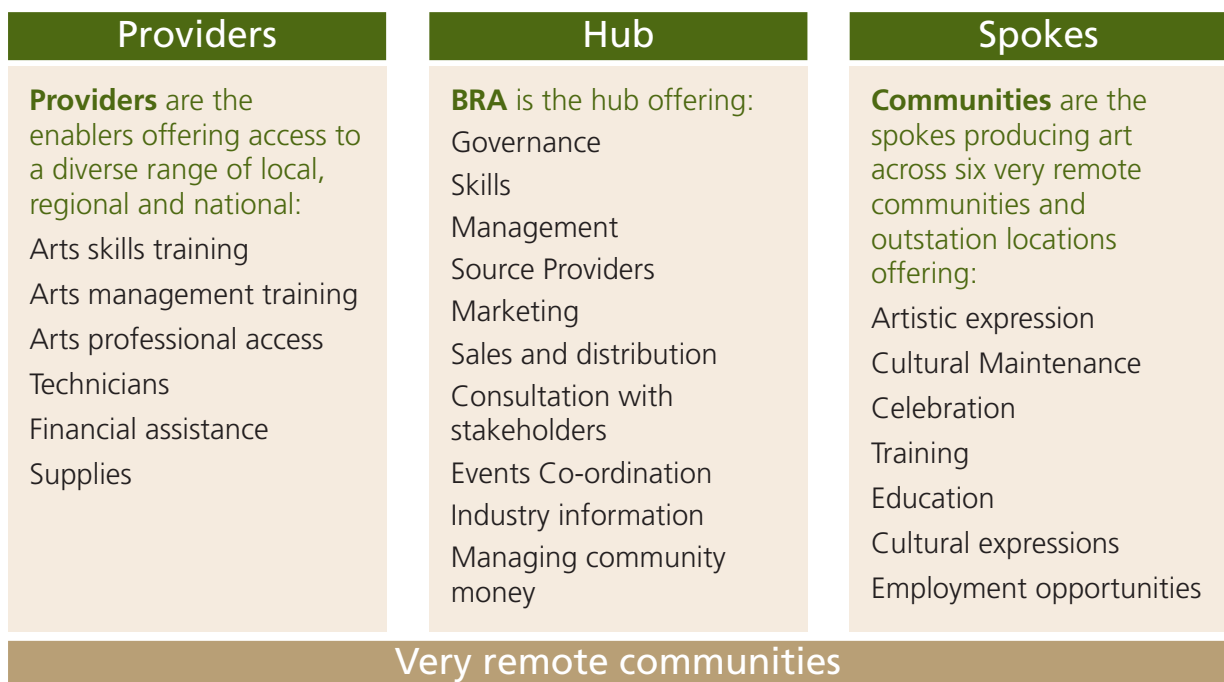
3d Our multi arts platform

The KPIs we will deliver:

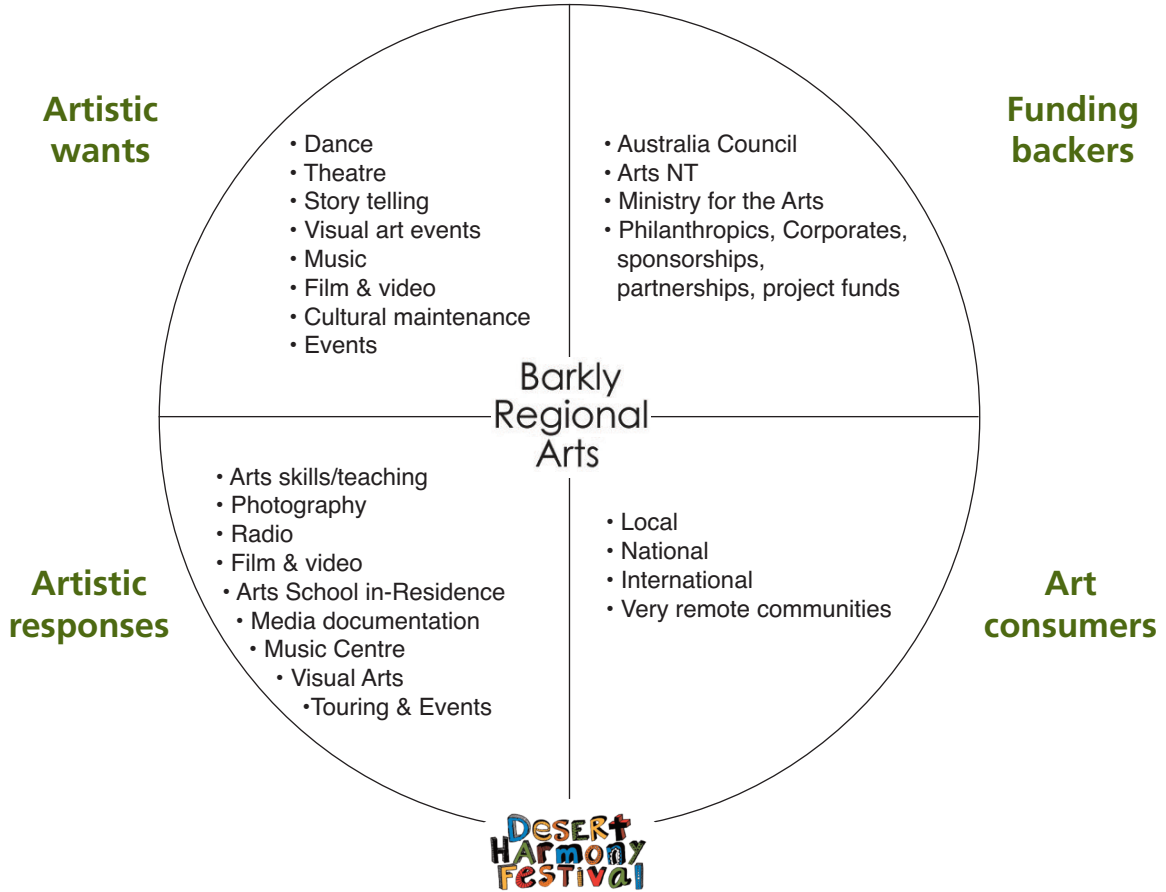
- An integrated multi arts platform for artistic advancement in very remote communities

Strategies — BRA will continue to:

- Perfect our platform and deliver outstanding artistic merit
- Identify what artist and communities are seeking to accomplish and support their aspirations
- Ensure artistic responses meet the aspirations of artists and communities
- Hold a successful flagship festival suited to our unique outback setting
- Engage art consumers with a diverse range of quality artistic experiences
- Fulfil the needs of funding providers.



Our platform



Goal four: **To always be recognised as an important organisation in the arts ecology of Australia through effective marketing**

The KPIs we will deliver:

- An integrated marketing program that advances Barkly region's recognition in the arts ecology
- Increasing national visibility of BRAs brand and products

Strategies:

- Complete a marketing/sales plan to lift artistic engagement/partners which addresses:
 - Address the challenges associated with a poor economy in the region including low paying consumers
 - Creating a positive profile of the Barkly
 - Facilitating partners, audiences, artists, communities' engagement
 - Strengthening the impact of our communications and sales
- Build on our local marketing tag line:

“BRA is a creative industry, building a stronger Barkly, one artist at a time.”

Goal five: **To contribute to a body of evidence which measures the value of arts to the Australian ecology**

The KPIs we will deliver:

- Strong national links into research in art impacts
- Completion of a research publication
- Realising the benefits of the research project to BRA e.g. a measuring tool for all programs
- Validation of our artistic and community results

Strategies:

- Complete the ARC Linkage (*Creative Barkly*) research project currently underway
- Learn from the results of the research and adapt our approach to arts delivery
- Build on the research findings to evolve our arts delivery practices for maximum artist and community benefit 2018/2020.

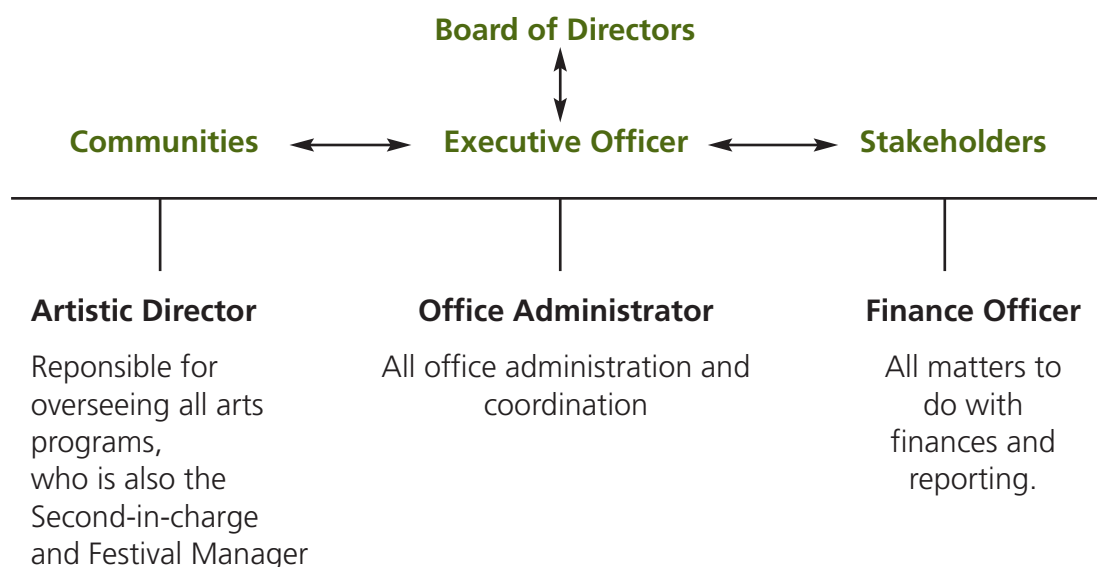
4. Organisational Support Planning

4.1 BRA’s structure

Priorities for 2016/17

Continue to strengthen the structure to deliver programs with a high degree of success including:

- Building stronger governance
- Supporting key positions to function optimally
- Using innovation to address challenges





“... where we walk hand in hand in two worlds.”





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