



# *Annual Review 2020*

**Museums  
& Galleries  
of NSW**

# *Acknowledgment of Country*

Museums & Galleries of NSW acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and all the other Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work.

We pay respect to them as First Nations people with continuing connection to land, place, waters and community.

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**Top** M&G NSW interview with Craig Barker, Chau Chak Wing Museum.  
**Bottom** M&G NSW interview with artist Vicky Browne, whose work is featured in *Material Sound*.

## What We Do

Museums & Galleries of NSW advocates for and supports small to medium public museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres and Keeping Places in NSW.

### Our Purpose:

Is to support small to medium galleries, museums and Aboriginal cultural centres in NSW to maximise their impact and help create strong and thriving local communities.

### Our Values:

**Respect** for Aboriginal people and their right to cultural ownership and more generally for their diversity of opinion and knowledge.

**Relevance** to contemporary cultures, government policy, industry, community and sector needs.

**Collaboration** to develop and deliver services.

**Inclusivity** of diversity of practices, range of knowledge, access, disability and special needs.

**Integrity**, be trustworthy, accountable and transparent.

### Our Methods and Outputs, or what we do:

M&G NSW uses four key Methods to assist museums, galleries, and Aboriginal cultural centres to maximise their cultural impact within communities and across the state.

### The four Methods we use:

#### 1. Services – providing programs and support

These include the promotion of sector organisations to the public, touring exhibitions, capacity building programs, formal and informal learning opportunities, skill development workshops, seminars and events.

#### 2. Resources – advice, fact sheets and small grant funding

These include a range of alternative and targeted funding opportunities, for small and large projects, and widely used 'on-demand' text and rich media practical guides, case studies and research reports undertaken for and about the sector

#### 3. Connections – enhancing direct and social media communication

Our programs create and provide opportunities for people to connect face to face and remotely using technology and social media

#### 4. Governance – promoting transparency, accountability and integrity

We observe strong governance to ensure stability, sustainability, transparency and accountability. This keeps the organisation connected to its agreed KPI's, with purposeful Board engagement, managed risk and financial health.

# Staff and Board

## M&G NSW Staff 2020

### Chief Executive Officer

Michael Rolfe (to December 2020)

### Administration and Finance

John Thompson

### Gallery Programs and Touring Exhibitions

Rachel Arndt

Olivia Welch

Marian Simpson

Susan Wacher

### Museum Programs and Collections

Tamara Lavrencic (to December 2020)

Emily Cullen

### Aboriginal Sector Programs

Steve Miller

Melissa Abraham

### Communications

Jason Gee

Vanessa Low

### Programs and Events

Dale Maxwell-Smith

## M&G NSW Board 2020

Ray Christison (Chair)

Jenny Bisset

Michael P Braybrooks OAM

Phil Gordon

Tamara Hynd

Susi Muddiman OAM

Rebecca Olejnik (to April 2020)

Louise Silburn (to April 2020)

Kevin Sumption

Kylie Tung

Frank Zaknich



The M&G NSW team meeting on Zoom.

# CEO Report and Highlights

2020 has been a tough year for many in our sector and across the world, yet has highlighted the importance of museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres in telling our stories, capturing our histories, enriching our communities and envisioning our collective future, particularly during times of uncertainty.

The M&G NSW team has quickly adapted to the new 'normal' - working remotely, delivering a range of ongoing programs and sector development work digitally, and physically where health restrictions permitted, with many successes achieved.

Despite the challenges of lockdowns, closures, cancellation of physical activities and events, and the additional resourcing and effort required to adapt to the rapidly changing conditions M&G NSW:

**toured seven visual arts exhibitions** including *Eugenia Lim: The Ambassador* and *Void* as well as launched two new exhibitions *Material Sound* and *Just Not Australian*. These exhibitions travelled to 11 regional NSW venues as well as eight venues in five other states and territories. They showcased the work of 32 living artists, included over 99 artworks and were seen by more than 80,000 people, despite gallery closures and the cancellation of physical programs and activities. Several exhibition itineraries were impacted with cancellations and rearrangements.

**launched a major publication** to accompany the *Just Not Australian* exhibition with funding received through the Gordon Darling Foundation.

**supported a submission from NETS Australia to the parliamentary inquiry into Australia's creative and cultural institutions.** Our recommendations encompass value and assurance placed on the qualities of creativity, culture, the vision of Australia's First Nations peoples and the cultural practices that are essential to Australia's identity; strengthening the sector and cooperation between local, state and federal governments.

**produced a new kit of resources** (video interviews, webinars, handbooks and podcasts) promoting an understanding of cultural mediation, arming staff and volunteers with the tools for deeper, sensitive audience

engagement – and guidelines to embed cultural mediation in their organisation.

**applied for and received federal government funding** to support the 2021 touring exhibition program as well as two forthcoming exhibition projects with significant accompanying audience engagement activities and resources (totalling \$282,974).

**published a new written resource in partnership with NETS Victoria** on Risk Assessment and Management for Exhibition Content. M&G NSW participated in a NETS Victoria, Public Galleries of Victoria and Creative Victoria funded curatorial intensive webinar series to discuss curatorial risk launching the resource.

**delivered a free professional development webinar on the topic of safe COVID cleaning for collections** in partnership with Sydney Living Museums and International Conservation Services, Sydney which provided information on the evolving processes for safely cleaning collections and historical properties. The webinar was attended by 80 participants and subsequently received a further 220 views via YouTube. In addition, hosted the RPGNSW AGM online including presentations from two of the standout IMAGinE Award nominees with attendance from 17 staff across 12 public galleries from NSW.

**hosted a full day workshop, *Engaging Audiences with Sensitive Topics in Art***, in support of the touring exhibition, *Just Not Australian* and M&G NSW's ongoing cultural mediation program. The training event was presented in partnership with Wollongong Art Gallery (WAG), M&G NSW receiving \$10,000 in funding through the gallery from Wollongong City Council. The day was attended by volunteer guides, gallery staff, council staff and other future hosts of the exhibition.

**managed three devolved grant programs on behalf of Create NSW** - the Audience Development Fund (ADF), Mentorships, Fellowships and Volunteer Placements and the Volunteer Museum grants:

- In its fifth year the ADF grant program devolved \$45,000 across five galleries in NSW, three of which were regional and two from greater Western Sydney. This program provides assistance to galleries to trial new models for engaging audiences, creating

innovative public programs that engage artists and the community, increasing access and participation.

- The Fellowships, Mentorships, and Volunteer Placement program received 12 high quality applications. Due to COVID-19 health orders and organisational uncertainty the \$20,000 devolved funding was not able to be awarded and a variance has been approved by Create NSW to roll over the funds and applications into the 2021 round.
- The Volunteer Museum Grant Program received 66 applications and awarded \$72,876 to 40 museums in 31 local government areas.

**continued the successful partnership with the Sir William Dobell Art Foundation** for a further four years (2021-2024) and awarded the 2021 Dobell Exhibition Grant to Maitland Regional Art Gallery, who received \$40,000 to support their upcoming exhibition *Shadow Boxer*.

**supported 78 museums/collecting organisations in 19 local government areas.** The Museum Advisor program continued to assist the work of over 1,000 volunteers through the provision of advice and specialist skills.

**continued its secretariat, communications and advocacy support for the NSW Aboriginal Culture, Heritage & Arts Association (ACHAA)** which represents Aboriginal cultural venues around the state. Combined with its Annual General Meeting, ACHAA members took part in a strategic planning session for the organisation which will seek its independence as an autonomous peak body in the next 2-3 years. Interested members have also taken part in a Mukurtu Train the Trainers program, partnered with the Jumbunna Centre for Education and Research at the University of Technology, Sydney, involving two half day workshops in 2020, continuing in 2021. Mukurtu is an Indigenous Collection Management System with customised protocols for sharing knowledge and information. Due to Covid, all workshops were conducted online and, in the case of Mukurtu, participants then work remotely at their own pace between workshops.

**continued its Reconciliation Action Plan** by engaging staff and Board with relevant news and issues fortnightly.

**presented the 14th annual IMAGInE Awards** in partnership with RPG NSW and AMaGA (NSW) the awards were reimagined to reflect and acknowledge the challenges faces by museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres in 2020. With 77 nominations received from volunteer run and paid staff organisations in NSW including many first-time nominees, across the new

Innovation and Resilience category and the prospective Imagination award. The 5 organisations from across the state to receive the Imagination funding of \$3000 each will undertake their projects in the first half of 2021. In the face of event and travel limitations there was no physical award ceremony and instead the announcements were live streamed to an audience of 573 in a first for the awards.

**continued a proactive communications strategy with:**

- 356,076 visits to the website; 246,433 unique users. Visitors from NSW made up 64% of all traffic, a 5.6% increase on the previous year We had a total of 1,197,431 pages viewed, an increase of 515,618 (75%) on the previous year.
- a high engagement rate for the sector-focused e-news, with 4,137 subscribers.
- 10,254 subscribers to Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

**in response to the COVID shutdown we ensured the sector was advised and kept informed of all Government directives.** We delivered resources that would assist in navigating the broader impacts during closure, including a resource to assist in the process of reopening which received 4,460 page views.

**research to support the regional collection digitisation project** was supplemented with the development of *Crystal Clear: standards and guidance for digitising regional collections*, a resource that addresses the challenges and methods of digitising collections held in regional museums, galleries and Aboriginal keeping places.



**Rachel Arndt**  
Acting CEO, M&G NSW

## Partnerships

From Board leadership through staff, peer panel and reference committee involvement, our skills, knowledge and program activity represent the needs of the sector state-wide, our governance framework and the diversity of who we work with. In 2020, M&G NSW:

**partnered with the Local Government NSW (LGNSW)** for three roundtable meetings with museum staff employed by local government. The number of attendees across the two meetings was 71. The partnership with Museums & Galleries Queensland (MGQ) on the Standards Program, now in its 15th year, continued to strengthen the relationship between the two organisations.

**continued to grow partnerships with local government** with financial support provided for the Standards Program and the Museum Advisor Program enabling over 20 local government areas to be involved.

**continued a research partnership with The University of Sydney** Museum and Heritage Studies program delivering collaborative resources, presentations and papers exploring the engagement model of cultural mediation and its application to the small to medium museum and gallery sector.

**forged a new partnership with the University of Queensland Art Museum** for trained cultural mediators to accompany the forthcoming tour of Mel O'Callaghan's *Centre of the Centre* exhibition. UQ Art Museum will provide training, interpretation material and learning resources to support host venue staff as well as a trained cultural mediator on site at each host venue.

**negotiated a partnership with TAFE NSW** to develop online volunteer focussed collection management training to be launched in 2021.

**continued working with the six other state and territory based NETS agencies**, sharing resources and knowledge around touring exhibitions, supporting Australian public galleries and advocating collectively to government and peak bodies to ensure high quality cultural programs are available to communities across the breadth of the nation.

**partnered with regionally based and Western Sydney cultural institutions, such as Campbelltown Arts Centre, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, Wollongong Art Gallery and Murray Art Museum Albury** for the delivery of touring exhibitions, associated engagement activities and training events for sector staff and volunteers.

**continued working partnerships with presenting organisations such as 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Carriageworks, Artspace, UTS Art and UNSW Galleries** on exhibitions and related engagement programs.

In addition, **Sydney Living Museums, Australian Museum, Art Gallery of NSW, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and NSW State Archives and Records** continue to support and work with M&G NSW in the delivery of professional development programs, provision of expertise and venues that in turn support the small to medium sector.



M&G NSW touring exhibition *Just Not Australian* packed in crates and ready to hit the road.



Opening of *Eugenia Lim The Ambassador* at the Culture Hub in Coffs Harbour. Photo by And the trees photography.

## Aboriginal Programs

During 2020, the Aboriginal Programs team continued its secretariat, communications and advocacy support for the NSW Aboriginal Culture, Heritage & Arts Association (ACHAA) which represents Aboriginal cultural venues around the state.

ACHAA now has 15 core members, representing Aboriginal owned cultural centres, Knowledge Centres, galleries, keeping places, museums and language centres across NSW. Its Associate Members include most of the major cultural institutions including the Australian Museum, State Library of NSW, Museum of Contemporary Art and the Art Gallery of NSW.

There was little service activity in the first five months of 2020 due to the COVID-19 restrictions and the long service leave of the Aboriginal Programs Manager. However, there was considerable activity in the second half of the year upon his return.

The ACHAA Spring newsletter in August surveyed all core members to find most had re opened and were experiencing increased visitation and sales, some even planning for building extensions. This was attributed to more people holidaying in their own state due to the Covid restrictions.

Combined with its Annual General Meeting, ACHAA members took part in a strategic planning session for the organisation which will seek its independence as an autonomous peak body in the next 2-3 years. This will include having its own staff and website, rather than the generous support of M&G NSW. Most of the work towards autonomy as outlined in the strategic plan will be necessity be carried out by the M&G NSW's Aboriginal Programs team and some of this work had already begun in the second half of 2020.

Interested ACHAA members have also taken part in a Mukurtu Train the Trainers program, organised by M&G NSW in partnership with the Jumbunna Centre for Education and Research at the University of Technology, Sydney and State Library of NSW with funding from Create NSW. It involved two half day workshops in 2020, continuing in 2021. Mukurtu is an Indigenous Collection Management System with customised protocols for sharing knowledge and information. Due to COVID-19, all workshops were conducted online and, in the case of Mukurtu, participants then work remotely at their own pace between workshops.

In addition to supporting the wider sector in response to a broad range of inquiries, the Aboriginal Programs Manager also took part in formal consultations through workshops and submissions including the Federal Government's Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support consult, NSW Public Works Indigenous engagement on Crown Lands, City of Sydney's Indigenous representation on public land, the National Maritime Museum's new introductory gallery experience and a proposed keeping place/gallery for the new Sydney airport.

The M&G NSW Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) continued its engagement and cultural awareness building with staff and Board through fortnightly reports on news and issues.



**Top** Dharriwaa Elders Group, Robyn Morgan & Richard Lake setting off to deliver frozen meals to Elders who are staying at home. Photo courtesy of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative.

**Bottom** Vanessa Hickey and Bow Simpson elbow greeting, Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative. Photo courtesy of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative.

## ACHAA Members on Their COVID-19 Lockdown Experiences

“Walgett had recently experienced the drought and water crisis, then our only supermarket burnt down June 2019, then the bushfires and now COVID-19. These events emphasised for us our interconnectivity with the world, cities, our food, water and housing vulnerabilities, and the need for local solutions that we are developing.”

- Wendy Spencer, Dhariwaa Elders Group

“As Aboriginal Peoples, we have been in survival mode for 250 years; I believe we will continue to keep going and like many businesses, Boomalli has seen many obstacles in the past and have overcome them. This is just another obstacle to get through. I believe Boomalli will survive.”

- Kyra Kum-Sing, Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative

“It has given us a timely pause to reflect and work on our collection behind closed doors. We don't often get the time to do some of our essential collection management, as we are under-resourced.”

- Allison Williams, Wadjar Regional Indigenous Gallery and Yarrowarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre



*Just Not Australian*, installation view at Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre, 2020. Image courtesy of Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre.

## *Touring Exhibition Program*

M&G NSW produced and toured seven exhibitions of contemporary practice across Australia and the state. These exhibitions travelled to 11 regional NSW venues as well as eight venues in five other states and territories. They showcased the work of 32 living artists, included over 99 artworks and were seen by more than 80,000 people, despite gallery closures and the cancellation of physical programs and activities, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Left** Noongar-Yamaji artist Lily-Mae Kerley installing Hayley Millar Baker's artwork *Meeyn Meerreeng* (2017), as part of *Void*, at Geraldton Regional Art Gallery. As a condition of display, the handling and arrangement of this work must be undertaken by a nominated First Nations staff member or community member. Photos by Marina Baker.

**Middle left** *Material Sound* at Manning Regional Art Gallery, Photos by Rose E Smith Photography.

## Exhibitions Touring Nationally in 2020

### **Eugenia Lim *The Ambassador***

This 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art and M&G NSW touring project presents Eugenia Lim's most recent body of work, *The Ambassador* series. In this three-part project, Lim takes on a Mao-like persona who sits halfway between truth and fantasy – dressed in a gold lamé suit and matching bowl haircut. Throughout each of her works, the Ambassador takes on new roles in uncovering the Australian-Asian narrative – drilling down into racial politics, the social costs of manufacturing and the role of architecture in shaping society.

### **Arlo Mountford *Deep Revolt***

Working across video, sculpture and drawing, Arlo Mountford's practice questions our individual and collective memories of the artistic canon. Curated by Gina Mobayed, Director of Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, the exhibition features selected video works tracing a gradual distillation of the artist's ideas and offers an amusing and thought-provoking journey through the annals of art history.

### **Tracey Moffatt & Gary Hillberg *Montages: The Full Cut, 1999-2015***

This exhibition presents the full suite of eight montage films by artist Tracey Moffatt and collaborator Gary Hillberg. Presented together for the first time, the exhibition spans 16 years of the artist and editor's collaborative practice and includes their most recent work, *The Art* (2015). The exhibition is an ode to cinema and to the cinematic form, offering unprecedented insight into the stereotypes that populate our collective cultural imagination. Curated and developed by Artspace, Sydney.

### **Void**

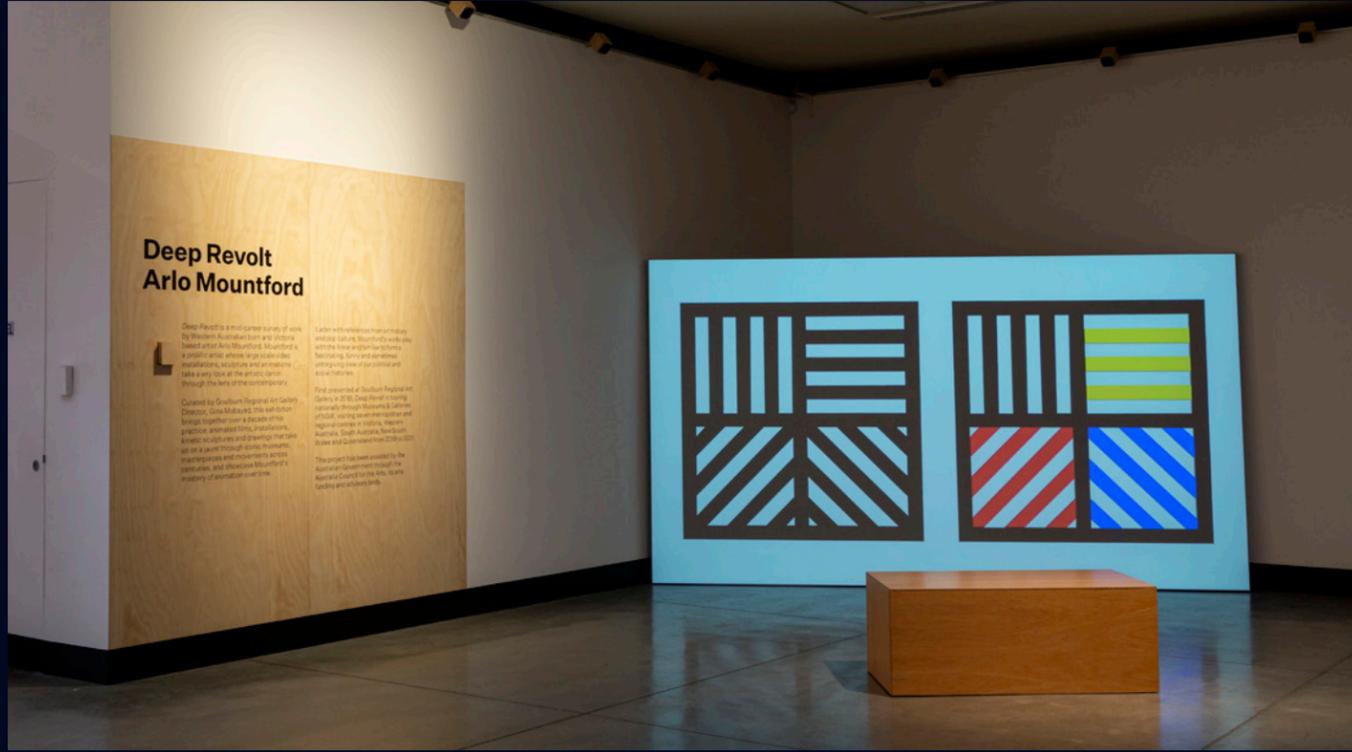
This exhibition explores the multiple ways in which artists visually articulate the unknown as space, time and landscape and brings together contemporary Aboriginal artistic practice from across the country. Curated by Emily McDaniel in conjunction with UTS Gallery and Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, the exhibition features existing works across the mediums of drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, video and photography.

### **Just Not Australian**

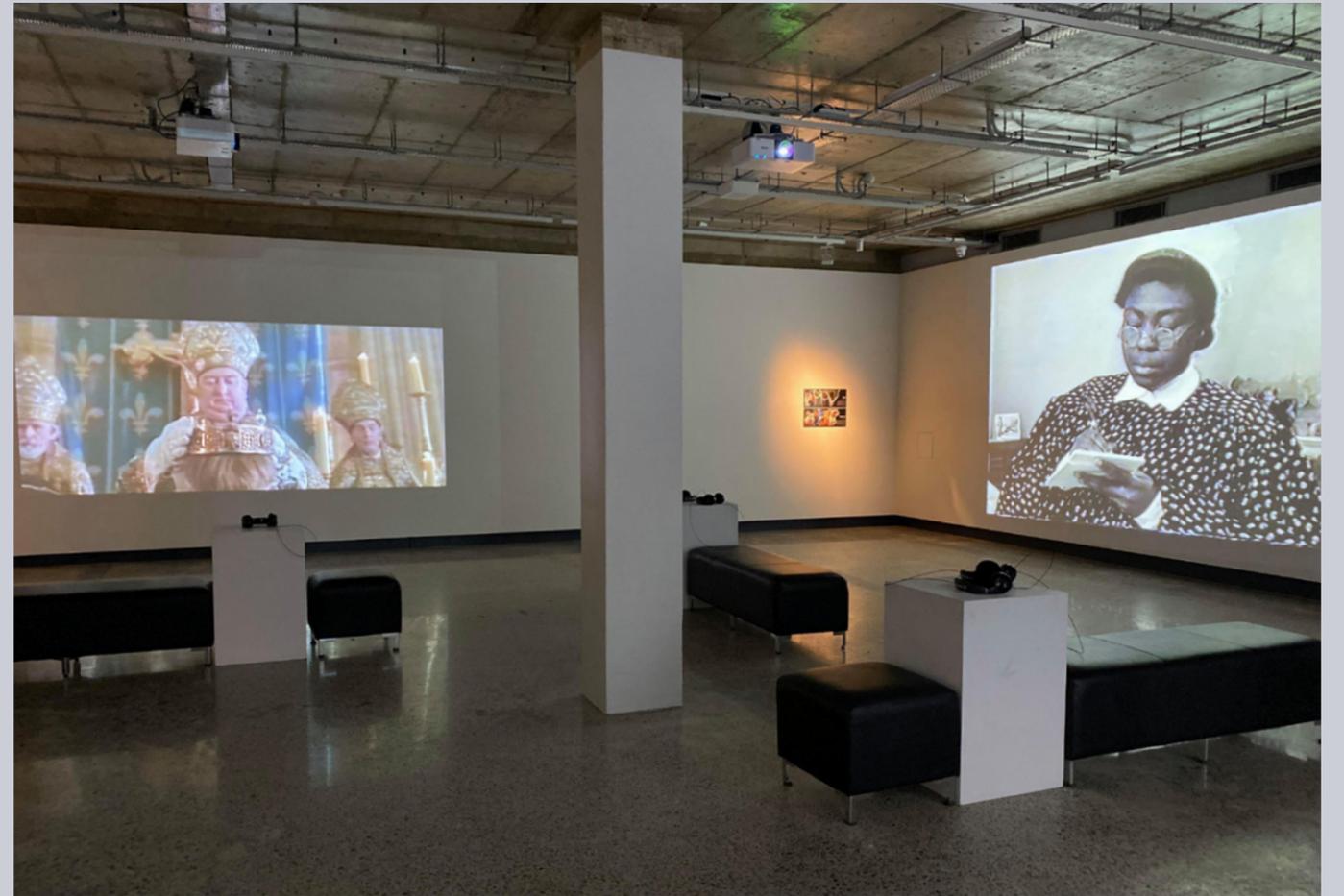
This exhibition brings together a group of 20 living Australian artists across generations and mediums to deal broadly with the origins and implications of contemporary Australian nationhood. This timely thematic show showcases the common sensibilities of satire, larrikinism and resistance, examining what constitutes Australian identity today. Curated and developed by Artspace, Sydney, the Sydney Festival and M&G NSW.

### **Material Sound**

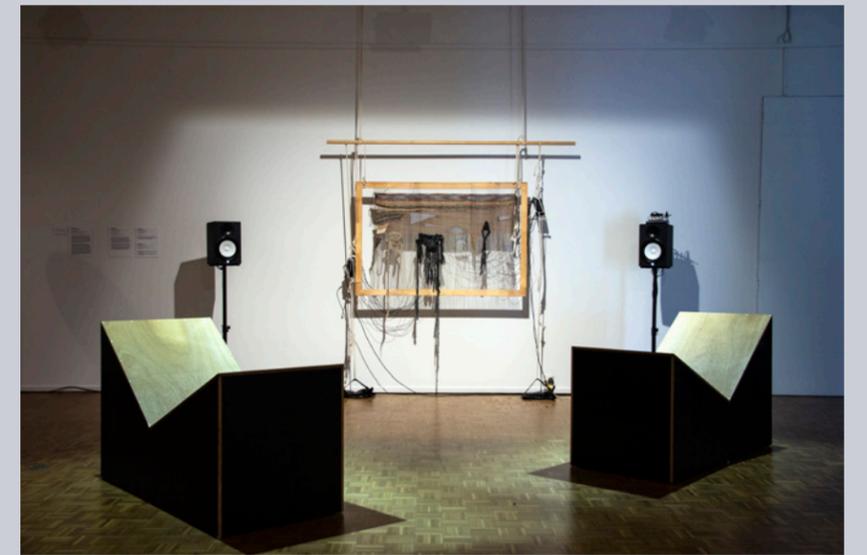
This exhibition brings together six contemporary artists who each create an experience of sound within installations and apparatus constructed from everyday materials. Curated by Dr Caleb Kelly and developed by the Murray Art Museum Albury, *Material Sound* features newly commissioned work by artists Vicky Browne, Pia van Gelder, Caitlin Franzmann, Peter Blamey, Ross Manning, and Vincent and Vaughan Wozniak-O'Connor, whose work and practice investigates sound and materials within art and performance.



Arlo Mountford *Deep Revolt* on display at Maitland Regional Art Gallery.



Above Tracey Moffatt & Gary Hillberg *Montages: The Full Cut, 1999-2015* on display at NorthSite Contemporary Arts.



Above Pia van Gelder, *Recumbent Circuit*, 2016, and *Soft Synth No.1*, 2018. *Material Sound* installation view, Warrnambool Art Gallery. Photo by Aaron Bradbrook.

## Exhibitions in Development in 2020

### Thinking Business

This exhibition by Barbara Cleveland explores forms of female friendship, collaboration and artistic labour. The project takes its title from Hannah Arendt's description of her friendship with Mary McCarthy. As Arendt wrote, "it's not that we think so much alike, but that we do this thinking-business for and with each other." This idea of an intellectual and creative connection between women is at the centre of this project, which focuses on the 15-year-long working relationship between the members of Barbara Cleveland. A Goulburn Regional Art Gallery exhibition.

### Suspended Moment

This exhibition brings together current and past work by the three recipients of *Suspended Moment: The Katthy Cavaliere Fellowship* and formative work by Katthy Cavaliere loaned from her estate. Curated specially for tour by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, Director Programs, Carriageworks in conjunction with the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Museum of Old and New Art, and M&G NSW, the exhibition will comprise work by Giselle Stanborough, Frances Barrett and Sally Rees, the three recipients of this prestigious fellowship. A selection of work by Katthy Cavaliere will be presented alongside the three artists who have benefited from her generous legacy.

### Zanny Begg These Stories Will be Different

Once described as an advocate for women and marginalised communities, Zanny Begg's work incorporates film, drawing and installation and is highly collaborative. Begg explores themes of gender, activism and migration and the ways in which we can live and be in the world differently. This exhibition, curated by UNSW Galleries and designed for tour, brings together the artist's most significant works to date including *The Beehive* (2018), *City of Ladies* (2017) and a new work *Stories of Kannagi*, (2019).

### Mel O'Callaghan Centre of the Centre

This major new commission traces the origins of life and its regenerative forces, iterated through video, performance and sculpture. The Australian-born, Paris-based contemporary artist works across film, performance, installation and painting. This ambitious new commission offers O'Callaghan an opportunity to further explore her ever-expanding fields of influence and demonstrates the remarkable range of her artistic practice. The exhibition is co-commissioned by Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers; Artspace, Sydney; and The University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane.

### Vernon Ah Kee The Island

Vernon Ah Kee is one of the most prominent and important contemporary artists practicing in Australia today. Often utilising tongue-in-cheek and wordplay, his practice ranges from large-scale renderings of his family members to multimedia installations with impacting text, sculptural elements, and moving image works. Curated by Campbelltown Arts Centre this major survey examines the significant political impact of Ah Kee's contemporary art practice.



**Top** Barbara Cleveland *This is a stained glass window*, 2019.

**Bottom left** Zanny Begg, *Stories of Kannagi*, 2019, 15mins, single channel HD video. Commissioned by STARTTS (Service for the Treatment And Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) and created in collaboration with members of the Tamil community in Western Sydney.

**Bottom right** *Suspended Moment: The Katthy Cavaliere Fellowship*. Giselle Stanborough, *Cinopticon*, 2020. Installation view at Carriageworks, Sydney. Image courtesy of the artist and Carriageworks.



Mel O'Callaghan, *Respire, Respire*  
performance at UQ Art Museum.  
Photo by Simon Woods.

# Cultural Mediation

Since early 2019, Museums & Galleries of NSW have been investigating the practice of cultural mediation with the aim to equip gallery and museum staff with the tools to implement this engagement strategy across the sector, and ultimately deepen the interest and participation of existing audiences, whilst also creating unique pathways to develop new audiences. In 2020 M&G NSW embedded this practice in the development of *Centre of the Centre* and *Just Not Australian* to launch the program which will continue alongside our touring exhibitions into the future.

Throughout the year we produced a new kit of resources (video interviews, webinars, handbooks and podcasts) promoting an understanding of cultural mediation, arming staff and volunteers with the tools for deeper, sensitive audience engagement. In partnership with The University of Queensland (UQ Art Museum), early adopters of cultural mediation, we produced a video resource exploring their experiences and their motivations for developing this practice, promoting a mutual exchange of ideas and a deeper understanding of and relationship with art and the world it examines.

As part of our continuing research relationship with the University of Sydney we presented *The Museum: Dangerous Ideas in Civil Places* - a dynamic video discussion, moderated by Rachel Arndt (M&G NSW), and featuring Dr Chiara O'Reilly, Director Museum and Heritage Studies, University of Sydney; Dr Anna Lawrenson, Museum and Heritage Studies, University of Sydney and Dr Lee-Anne Hall, Director, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery and Research Affiliate University of Sydney. The discussion explored the changing nature of museum practice and methodology in the midst of a global pandemic, and what programming and engagement may look like in times of crisis, controversy and challenge.

Our cultural mediation resources also included live and recorded conversations between *Just Not Australian* artists Joan Ross and Abdul Abdullah, and we launched our first podcast series *Artist to Artist*, the first episodes featuring Liam Benson and Cigdem Aydemir discussing their work in depth.

In November we hosted a full day cultural mediation workshop, *Engaging Audiences with Sensitive Topics in Art*, in support of the touring exhibition, *Just Not Australian*. The training event was presented in partnership with Wollongong Art Gallery (WAG), M&G NSW receiving \$10,000 in funding through the gallery from Wollongong City Council. The day was attended by volunteer guides, gallery staff, council staff and other future hosts of the exhibition.

**Opposite** Cultural Mediation workshop at Wollongong Art Gallery. Photos by Document Photography,



Cultural Mediation workshop at Wollongong Art Gallery. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, participants sat spaced out. Photos by Document Photography.



# Professional Development



In 2020, M&G NSW delivered a free professional development webinar on the topic of safe COVID cleaning for collections in partnership with Sydney Living Museums and International Conservation Services, Sydney which provided information on the evolving processes for safely cleaning collections and historical properties. The webinar was attended by 80 participants and subsequently received a further 220 views via YouTube. In addition, hosted the RPGNSW AGM online including presentations from two of the standout IMAGinE Award nominees with attendance from 17 staff across 12 public galleries from NSW.

A full day workshop was also held at Wollongong Art Gallery as part of our work in cultural mediation (see pages 21-24 for more information).

The Fellowships Mentorships, and Volunteer Placement program received 12 high quality applications. Due to COVID-19 health orders and organisational uncertainty the \$20,000 devolved funding was not able to be awarded and M&G NSW will roll over the funds and applications into the 2021 round.

Julian Bickersteth, CEO of International Conservation Services, and Sarah-Jane Rennie, Head of Collections Care at Sydney Living Museums.

# IMAGinE awards

In 2020, MGNSW presented the 14th annual IMAGinE Awards in partnership with RPG NSW and AMaGA (NSW). The awards were reimagined to reflect and acknowledge the challenges faces by museums, galleries and aboriginal cultural centres in the preceding year. With 77 nominations received from volunteer run and paid staff organisations in NSW including many first-time nominees, across the new Innovation and Resilience category and the prospective Imagination award. The 5 organisations from across the state to receive the Imagination funding of \$3,000 each will undertake their projects in the first half of 2021. In the face of event and travel limitations there was no physical award ceremony and instead the announcements were live streamed to an audience of 573 in a first for the awards.



M&G NSW CEO Michael Rolfe announces the IMAGinE Awards winners via live-stream.

## Innovation & Resilience - Museums

### Volunteer organisations or organisations with 2 or less paid staff

- **Winner** Port of Yamba Historical Society - *Yaegl Cultural Garden as part of the Enhancement of Yamba Museum Precinct*
- **Highly commended** Griffith Pioneer Park Museum - *From the Collection*
- **Highly commended** Leeton Museum and Gallery - *Water by Design – the Leeton Water Story*
- **Highly commended** Tumbarumba Historical Society - *A 21km Linear Museum*

### Small/medium organisations with 3-10 paid staff:

- **Winner** Bathurst Rail Museum - *New Museum*

### Large organisations with 11 or more paid staff:

- **Winner** Sydney Living Museums - *Convict Love Tokens Live Virtual Event*
- **Highly commended** Chau Chak Wing Museum - *Object Matters podcast*

## Imagination Awards

- **Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery** *Culture Hub*
- **Fairfield City Museum & Gallery** *Living the Past Digital Project*
- **Griffith Pioneer Park Museum** *Vintage Voices – Tune in to Griffith's History*
- **New Italy Museum** *The New Italy Heritage Trail*
- **Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre** *Margaret Olley Children's Book*

## Innovation & Resilience - Galleries

### Volunteer organisations or organisations with 2 or less paid staff

- **Winner** Pari - *Gallery Warming*
- **Highly commended** Bega Valley Regional Gallery - *BVRG at HOME*
- **Highly commended** The Lock-Up - *Dancing with the Dead at The Lock-Up*

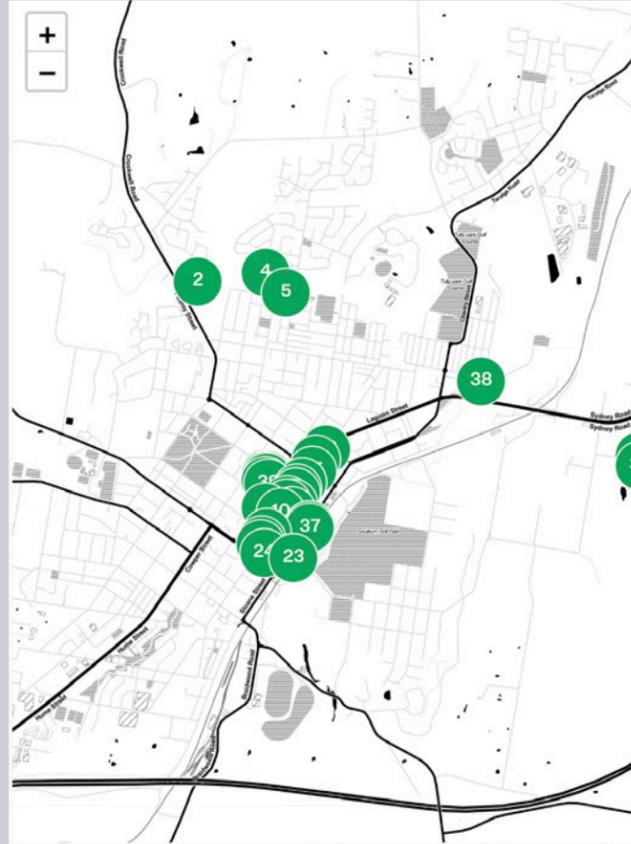
### Small/medium organisations with 3-10 paid staff:

- **Winner** Goulburn Regional Art Gallery - *Oh hope and longing - Sidney McMahon*
- **Highly commended** Bathurst Regional Art Gallery - *Ar+Collect*
- **Highly commended** Australian Design Centre - *Object150: Commission a local maker*

### Large organisations with 11 or more paid staff:

- Art Gallery of NSW - *Faboriginal: Australia's deadliest art game show*

# Grants & Funding



## Audience Development Fund (ADF)

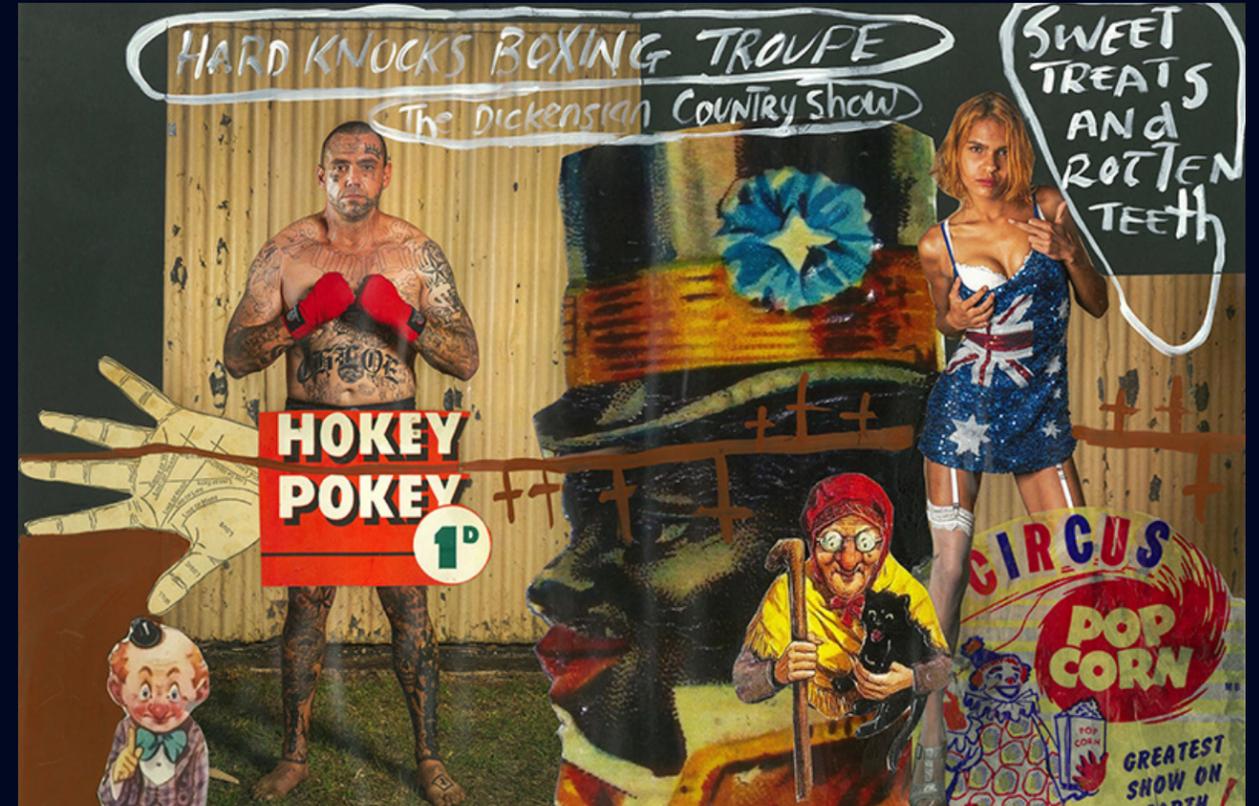
In its fifth year, the ADF grant program devolved \$45,000 across five public galleries in NSW supporting projects that focus on priority areas including people living in regional NSW, people living in Western Sydney, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people living with a disability, and young people. In 2020 grants were awarded to:

- Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
- Blacktown City Council (Blacktown Arts)
- Blue Mountains Cultural Centre
- Fairfield City Council (Fairfield City Museum & Gallery)
- Orange Regional Gallery

**Above** Goulburn Regional Art Gallery's Art Walks project received an ADF grant in 2019.

**Bottom left** *Beastman, Conflux*, 2018, located in Russell Lane, Goulburn.

**Opposite** Karla Dickens, *Hokey pokey*, 2019, inkjet print. Edition 10, 38 x 58 cm which will be featured in *Shadow Boxer*.



## Dobell Exhibition Grant

The Dobell Exhibition Grant of \$40,000, funded by the Sir William Dobell Art Foundation, was awarded to Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) for their proposed exhibition *Shadow Boxer*. The boxing ring is a magnetic site for artists. What is it about the fight that speaks to artists through the ages and why do some contemporary artists respond so vividly to its grit, history and contest? *Shadow Boxer* will highlight this cultural fascination and showcase the work of contemporary Australian artists who explore ideas of race, gender and class and the sheer physicality of boxing in their work.

*Shadow Boxer* will look at boxing from diverse perspectives including the work of Karla Dickens and her homage to the acclaimed Aboriginal tent boxers of the 1920s – 1950s. The exhibition taps into the deep-rooted connection that the City of Maitland has with boxing and will feature rare items from the MRAG Collection connected to the story of the 'Maitland Wonder', Les Darcy. In 1915, when boxing

was a major sport in Australia, Les Darcy captured the hearts of the nation, becoming a boxing world champion and national hero. MRAG is custodian to objects from that era that relate directly to Australian boxing history as well as personal items belonging to the Maitland champion himself.

The exhibition will be presented from 5 June – 22 August 2021 and curated by Dr Gerry Bobsien, Cheryl Farrell and Kim Blunt. Artists and contributors include Karla Dickens, Richard Lewer, Michael Willson, Keri Glastonbury, Nigel Milsom, Fiona McMonagle, Bianca 'Bam Bam' Elmir and David Matthews.

In 2020, M&G NSW and the Sir William Dobell Art Foundation committed to continuing this successful and fruitful partnership for a further four years (2021-2024).



# Museum Grants

In 2020, the Volunteer Museum Grants program received 66 applications and awarded **\$74,155 to 39 museums from 31 local government areas.**

## Leg Up Grants

In 2020, the Leg Up Grants program allowed museum volunteers and staff to attend training and networking events. There were two applications received and funded, with matched funding by the applying museum.

## Skills Development Grants

In 2020, the Skills Development Grants program allowed for volunteer museums and museum networks to run a wide range of different skills development training and networking events. There were four applications received

and funded, these included training for conservation, significance assessment, disaster preparedness and volunteer guide training.

## Small Grants

The Small Grants program funded a wide range of projects in 2020, these exhibition development, display cases, disaster recovery and conservation. Twenty eight applications for Small Grants were successful.

## Project Development Grants

Project Development Grants support long term strategic projects, in 2020 these included exhibition development, significance assessments and strategic plans. Five applications for Project Development Grants were successful.



**Opposite page** Mary Boulton Pioneer Cottage and Museum's new interpretation sign, funded by an M&G NSW Small Grant.

**Top left** New Italy Museum undertaking a Significance Assessment of the collection, funded by an M&G NSW Project Development Grant.

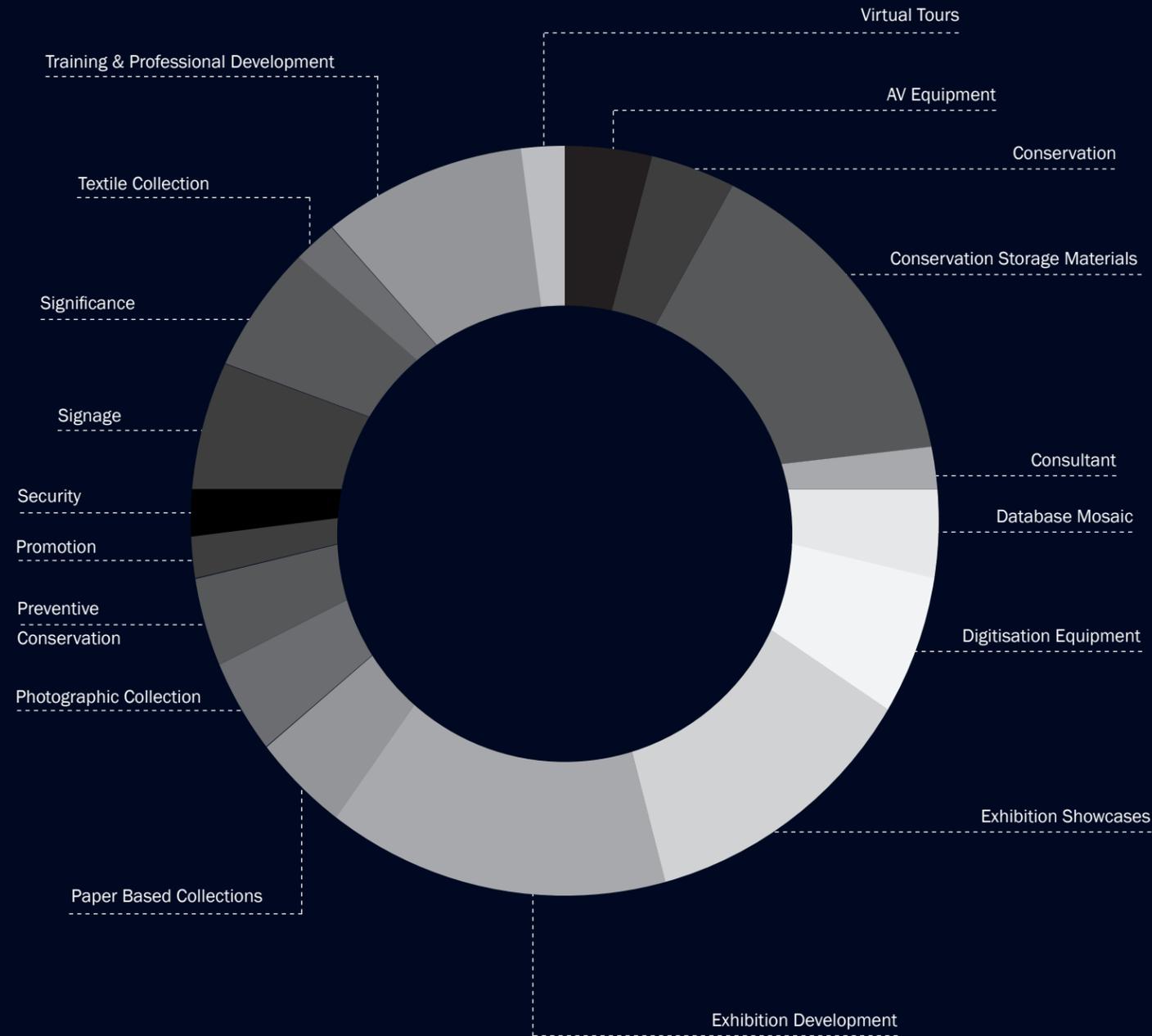
**Top right** Emily visiting the new location of the Australian Railway Historical Society (ARHS) in Alexandria.

**Middle right** Hunters Hill Museum.

**Bottom left** Emily and volunteer Chris at Hunters Hill Museum.

**Bottom right** Emily and volunteer Hayley at Golden Memories Millthorpe Museum.

# Successful Grants by Category



# Regional Museum Advisors Program

Supporting 85 museums/collecting organisations in 19 local government areas, the Museum Advisor program continued to support and assist the work of around 700 volunteers through the provision of advice and specialist skills. In 2020, the program ran in the following local government areas:

- Albury City Council & Greater Hume Shire [2 LGA]
- Bega Valley Council
- Bland Shire Council
- Blue Mountains City Council
- Broken Hill City Council
- Clarence Valley Council
- Cobar Shire Council
- Dubbo Regional Council
- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Gilgandra Shire Council
- Lithgow City Council
- Lockhart Shire Council
- Nambucca Shire Council
- Narrandera Shire Council
- Shoalhaven City Council
- Snowy Valleys Council
- Sutherland Shire Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council

Significant outcomes from the 2020 program included collection relocation projects, building repairs/improvements, capital works projects, exhibition development and interpretation projects, development of disaster plans, development and review of strategic plans, cataloguing and deaccessioning projects, collection rehousing projects, skills development in collections management, documentation, significance assessment, disaster preparedness and response, object conservation, reorganisation of displays and storage areas.



**Opposite** Volunteers at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum doing a workshop on paper collections care; conservation, storage and glass plate handling; and cleaning with their Museum Advisor Tegan Anthes.

# Communications

## Website

The M&G NSW website strategy continued to deliver highly regarded information, opportunities and resources to the sector.

In 2020, there were 356,076 visits to the website; with 246,433 unique users.

Overall the website traffic (visits) increased by 11,098 (3%) on the previous year.

The website had 1,197,431 pages viewed, an increase of 515,618 (75%) on the previous year.

The website maintained a listing of 475 museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres across NSW. These pages continue to be the only web presence and contact point for many smaller organisations. The listings received 293,735 page views, an increase of 70% on the previous year.

## Publishing

Through 2020 M&G NSW continued to publish our fortnightly e-newsletter Alert. It featured sector news articles, jobs, resources, grant information and professional development opportunities. The sector news articles received 81,917 page views, a 59% increase on the previous year.

## Online Resources

In 2020 M&G NSW developed a variety of online resources including 8 video stories and interviews, 89 articles and 36 sector resources.

Our sector resources pages received 185,726 page views, an increase of 91,426 (96%) from the previous year.

## Forums website launched

M&G NSW has been exploring new ways to leverage our website to be more than a one-way vehicle for communication. The first stage of this process was the development of a forum's website.

The forums website is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages, much like a message board. Each individual forum can be made public or private, in the case of the forums we have established so far, all are currently private.

M&G NSW has developed this forums website to facilitate improved and enhanced communication within the sector and to encourage collaboration.

## COVID Response - resources

In response to the COVID shutdown, we ensured the sector was advised and kept informed of all government directives. We delivered resources that would assist in navigating the broader impacts during closure, and our resource on *Planning to re-open*, which had practical information for adapting public spaces for new social distancing rules, received over 4,400 page views.

## COVID Response - sector survey

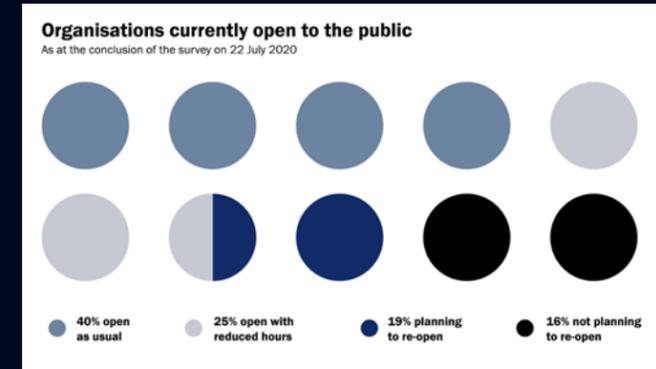
During the mandatory restrictions in NSW, we undertook a COVID-19 survey to assess the cumulative effects these had on arts organisations. 150 organisations responded and our findings were published at the end of July, revealing that 99% had experienced significant negative impacts on their organisation as a result of COVID-19.

## ALERT e-newsletter

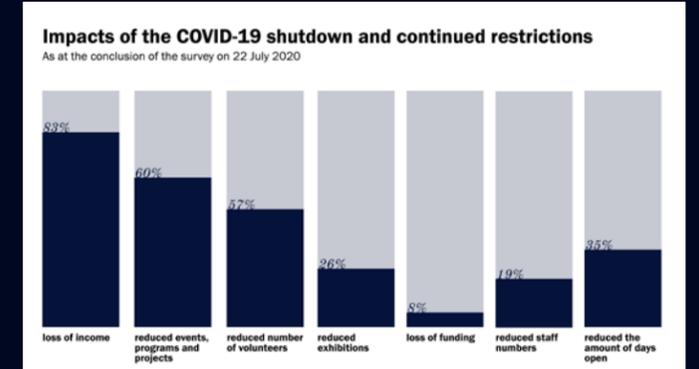
	2020	2019
Number of subscribers	4,137	3,751
Number published	22	22

## Social Media

Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
3,367 fans	4,572 followers	2,315 followers
370 new fans	59 new followers	475 new followers



Above Results from the M&G NSW COVID-19 Sector Survey.

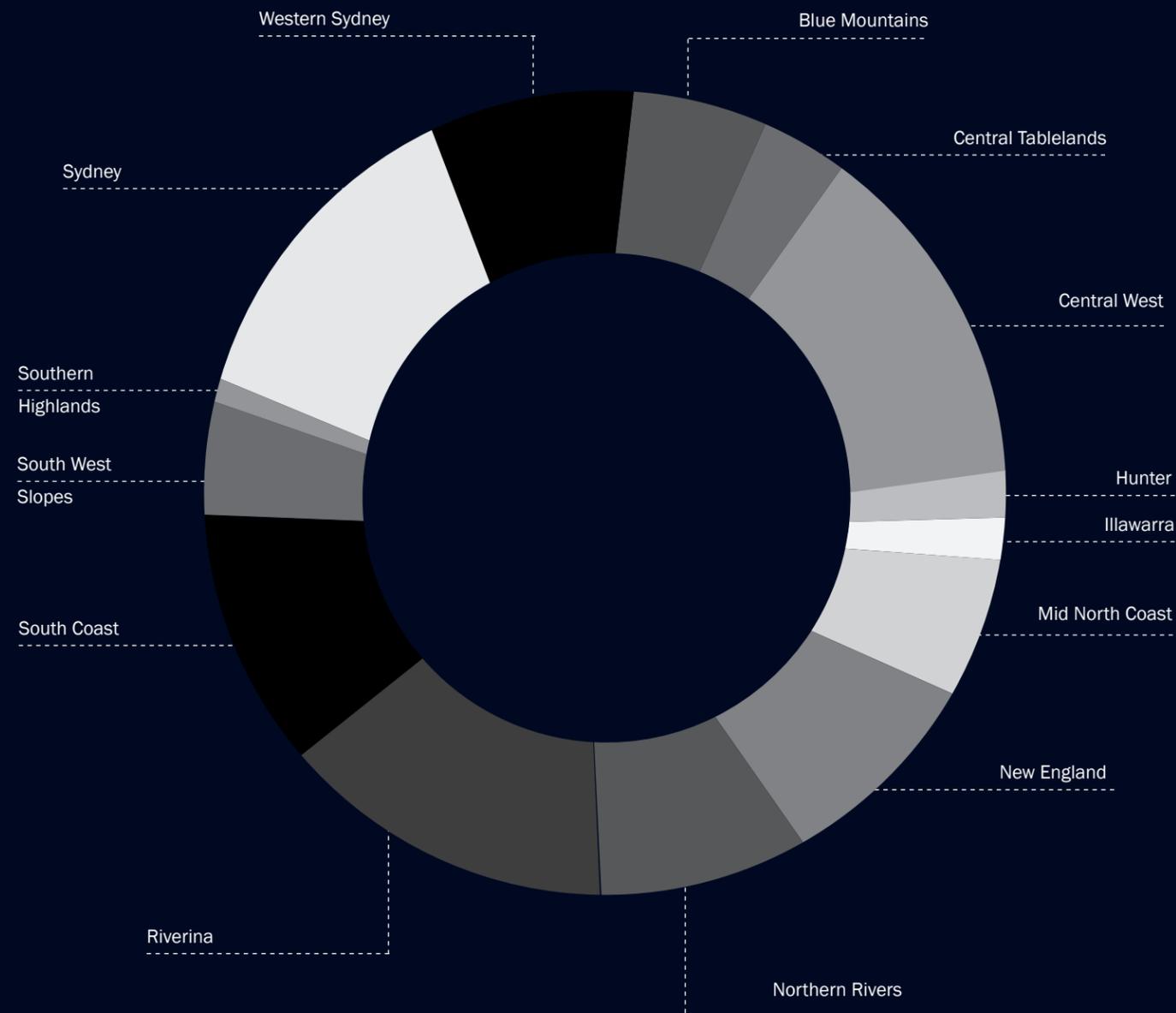


Above Pages from the Planning to re-open resource



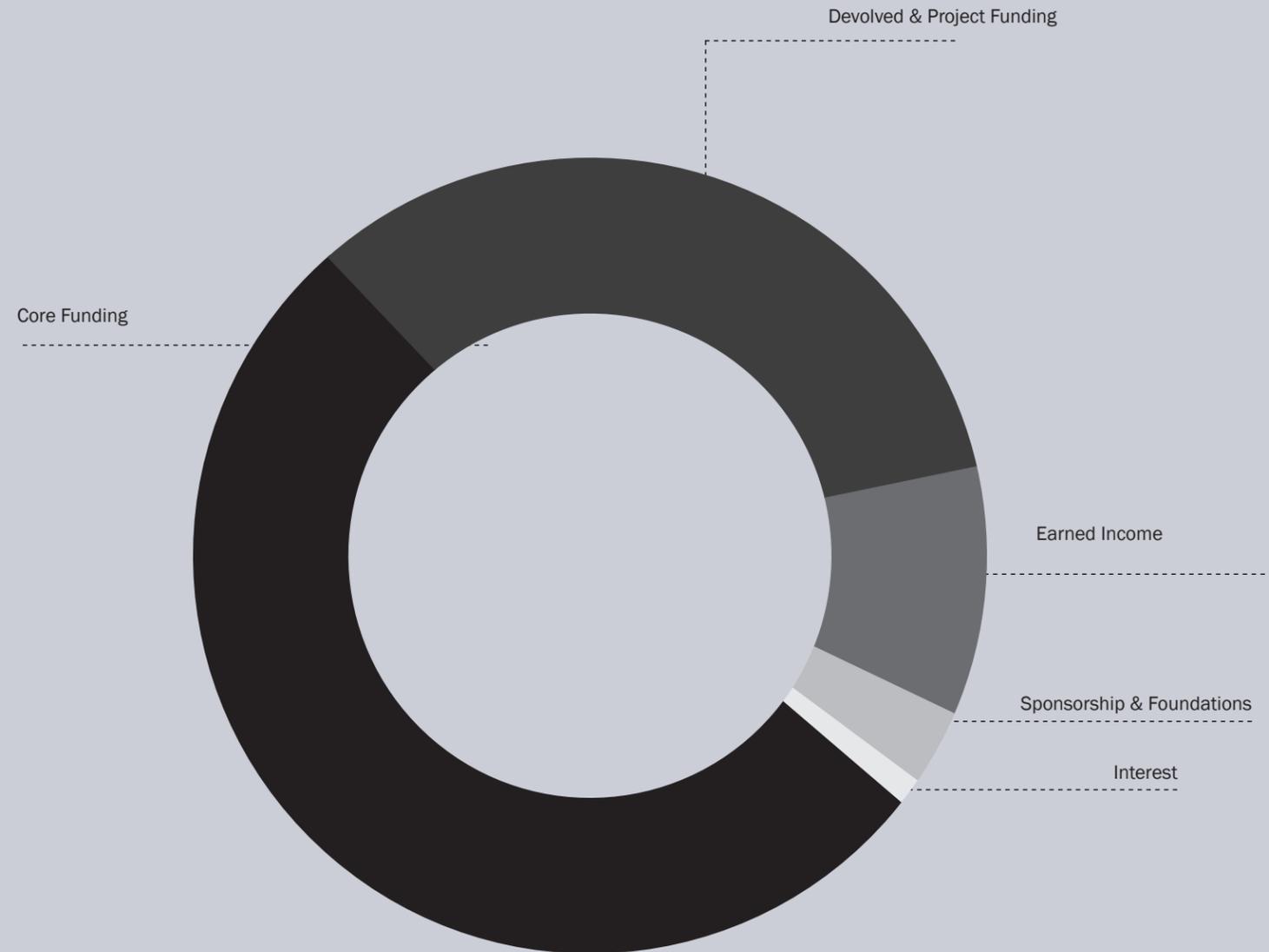
# Finances

## Devolved Funding by Region



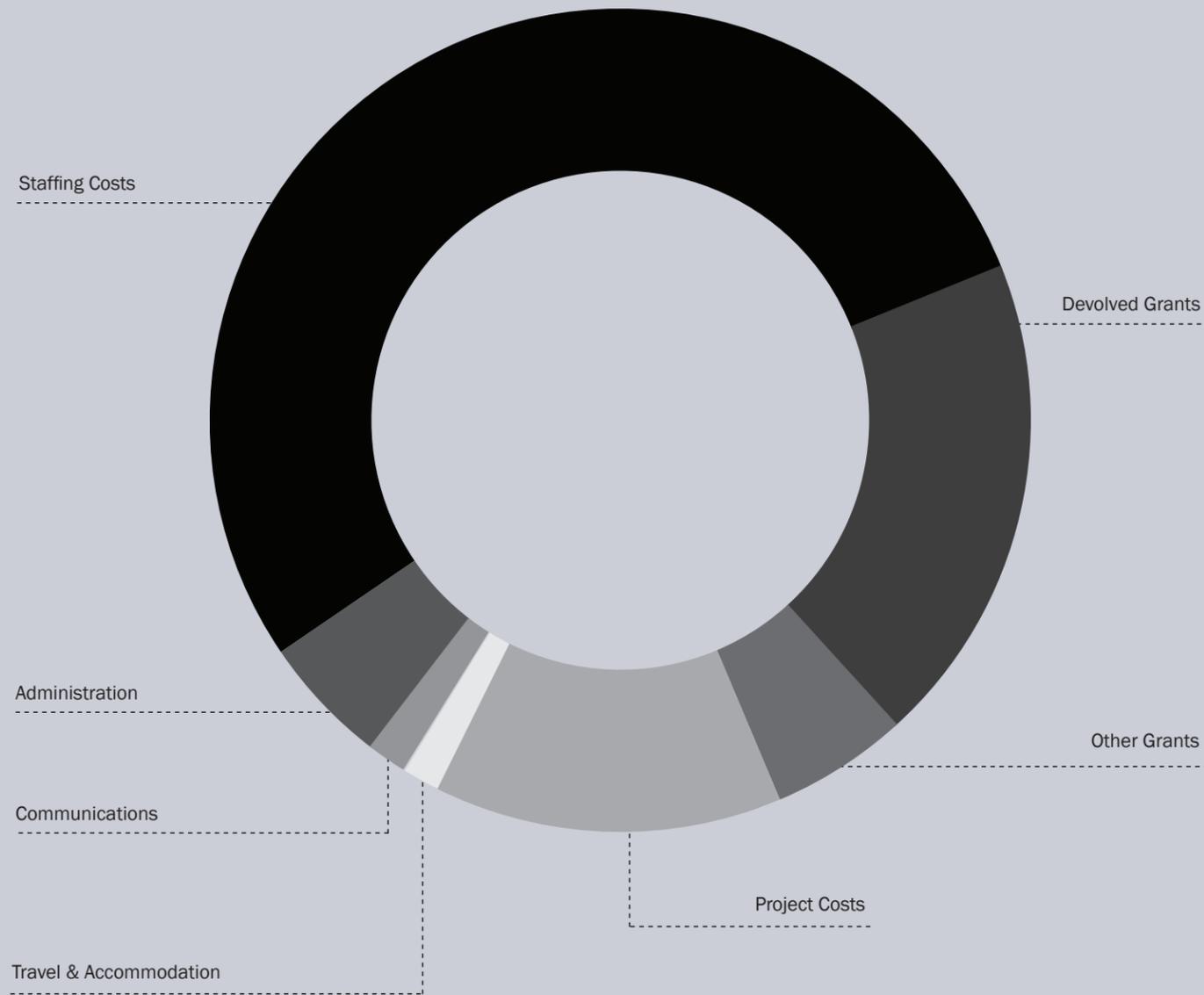
# Finances

## Income



# Finances

## Expenses



Eugenia Lim The Ambassador at the Culture Hub in Coffs Harbour. Photo by And the trees photography.

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