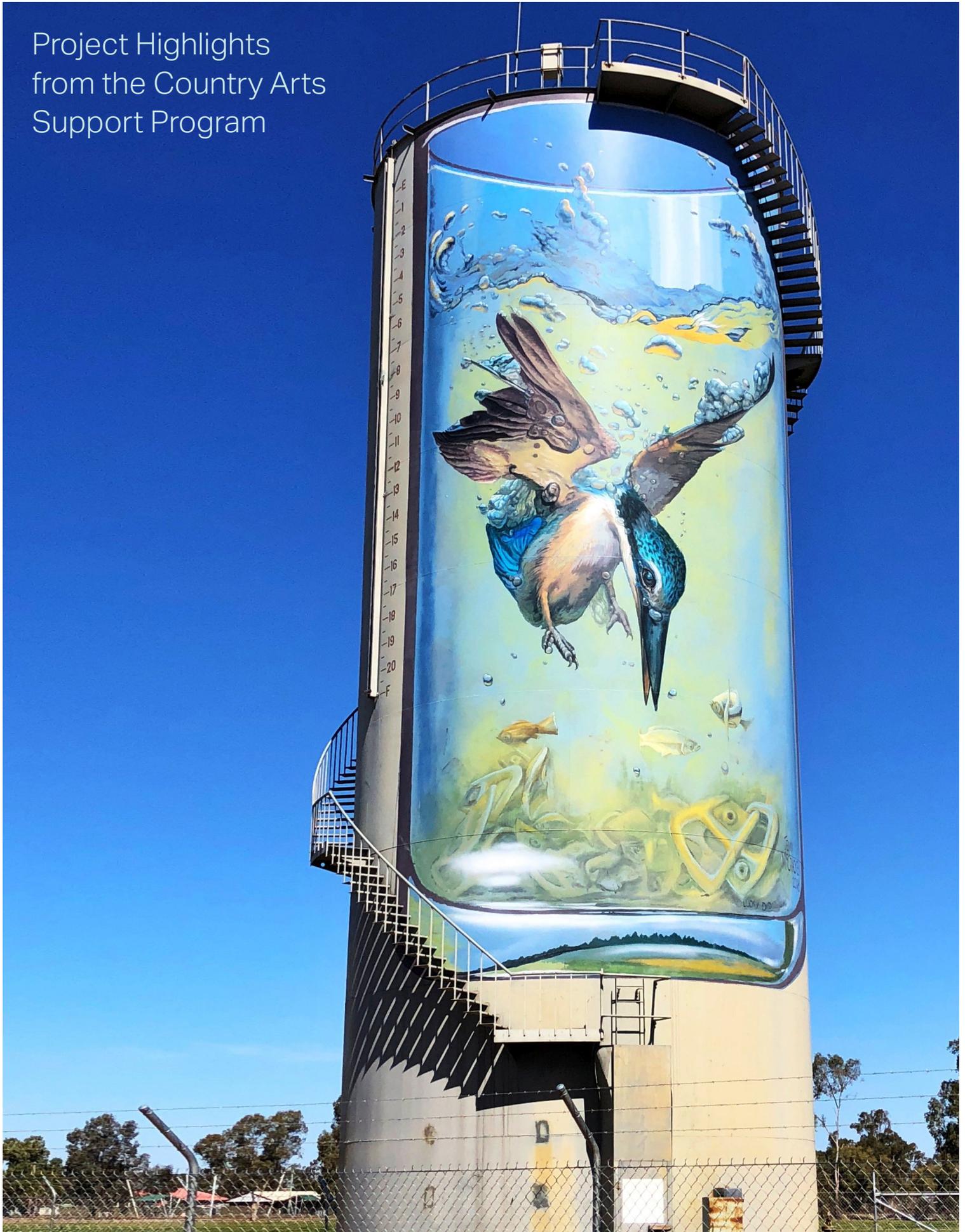


Project Highlights
from the Country Arts
Support Program



Project Highlights from the Country Arts Support Program

The Country Arts Support Program—CASP—is an annual small grants program with a funding pool of \$250,000 per year. Introduced by the NSW Government in 1987 with a pool of \$85,000, CASP supports a vast range of community initiated projects in rural, regional and remote parts of the state.

CASP is locally assessed by the Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADOs) with a small amount reserved for applications from eligible LGAs that do not contribute to the network, administered by Regional Arts NSW with funding from Create NSW. Each year at least 50% of applications cannot be supported.

The aims of CASP are to:

- Assist locally determined community arts and cultural activities.
- Increase opportunities for regionally-based groups to access a diverse range of arts programs.
- Enable communities to explore and express their cultural identities.
- Bring social and economic benefits to the community through training, employment and promotional opportunities.
- Lead to greater awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- Increase the sustainability and resilience of regionally based community arts organisations.

The following is a snapshot of recent successful projects from each RADO. I am constantly amazed by the extraordinary results achieved in regional areas with a comparatively small amount of money. I hope you enjoy reading them.

Elizabeth Rogers
Chief Executive Officer
Regional arts NSW

Cover image:
Silo Pave the Way – image supplied



Arts Mid North Coast

Artlink Workshops, Bellingen Community Arts Council—\$3,000

In 2019 the Bellingen Community Arts Council was able to deliver the ArtLink Workshops with their successful CASP grant. The program in the recently renovated Old Police Station Stables was a structured program of performing and visual arts activities connecting youth (14-21 years) with other sectors of the community.

The program involved twice-weekly workshops and studio sessions to develop strong creative skills in areas such as art design, the effective use of arts media, sculpture, stagecraft, music and dance.

According to the program's Coordinator Julie Hutchinson, the program had a wide scope. "Artlink was particularly suitable for teenagers who have creative energy but who might not otherwise have been involved in the arts. We were keen to have people who have something to say and want a chance to say it through the arts."

Scene from *In My Skin* – image supplied

Arts Northern Rivers

In My Skin, Byron Youth Theatre—\$5,000

In My Skin was a Byron Youth Theatre project, supported through the Country Arts Support Program. The production explored issues of racism and prejudice and was created in response to youth and community audiences' requests after Byron Youth Theatre's previous production *Here Today and Gone Tomorrow*. The production's focus was and remains a hot topic not only in Australia but world-wide with increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, asylum seekers, refugees and right-wing groups and organisations inciting white supremacy.



Arts North West

Stories Connect Community: Storytelling Sessions, New England Writers Centre—\$2,800

This project, funded by a CASP grant, and an important part of the Stories Connect program in 2019, brought together members of the newly-resettled local Yazidi refugee community and the broader Armidale community in an innovative, accessible and memorable way. The objects from the Armidale Folk Museum, which functioned as 'storystarters' aroused a great deal of interest both from the Yazidi and non-Yazidi participants, sparking off memories, anecdotes and stories from participants' own experiences, whether in Australia or

Iraq. Everyone expressed a great deal of interest in the Museum's collection, and in fact it was soon apparent that it wasn't just the Yazidis who weren't familiar with the Museum: many of the broader community participants had not been there before or were only vaguely aware of it, even those who had lived in Armidale for years.

This project by New England Writers Centre, with the in-kind support of Armidale Regional Council, Arts North West, TAFE Armidale and Settlement Services International, achieved great outcomes, creating meaningful community connections through the sharing of stories. Like all the other components of our wider Stories Connect program,

the project culminated in a two-week multi-media exhibition at the New England Regional Art Museum in November 2019, at which slides and photos from the storytelling sessions were shown along with those of other events within the program. The opening of the exhibition was a big success, with a large crowd attending from both the Yazidi and broader community.

The CASP grant enabled these sessions to be free to the community, whilst paying presenters, facilitators and co-ordinators. This is especially important in a time of regional hardship caused by drought, bushfires, and business downturn.

Storytelling Sessions - image supplied



The Armed Man – photo Alan Sadler



Arts OutWest

The Armed Man, Allegri Singers—\$3,000

Allegri Singers is a choir based in Bathurst. In November 2019 they staged a performance of a major choral and symphonic work, *The Armed Man* by Karl Jenkins, a Welsh jazz musician and composer. The CASP funding provided Allegri Singers with leverage to gain additional funding for this major undertaking. The work is a mass for peace and was written in 1999 to mark the passing of the millennium. It draws on religious sources from Christianity, Islam and Hinduism as well as historical sources and poetry by Tennyson, Kipling and Sankichi Toge – a survivor of the Hiroshima bombing.

Under conductor Bill Moxey, Allegri brought together multiple choirs from Bathurst, Orange and Sydney, vocal soloists including one to sing an Islamic call to prayer, and a large orchestra. The work was performed in Bathurst and Orange to packed audiences who regarded the event as hugely successful.

Arts Upper Hunter

Bandon Grove School of Arts Inc, Community Ceramic Tile Project—\$3,000

Bandon Grove is a small village in the Dungog Shire. Over the last few years, the community has been raising money to renovate and reactivate the Bandon Grove School of Arts Hall.

Part of the reactivation were two tiling workshops in December 2019 funded by CASP and run by artists Clare Tilyard and Alexandra Wade.

The overall theme for the tiles was native plants and individual designs were based on photographs of plants collected in the area by Bill Dowling, by plants and seed pods brought along by workshop participants of all ages and by drawings by Alexandra and Bruce Read. The designs were applied to the tiles using a variety of tools and techniques.

After being left to dry, the tiles were applied to the outdoor pizza oven which was built as part of the hall's reactivation. A celebratory pizza night ensued.



Ceramic tile project – photo Anne Fisher

Eastern Riverina Arts

Salad Dayz, Halfway Print Fest (\$3,679)

This was a CASP recipient in 2017 that has continued three years running in Wagga Wagga. It attracts participation from Sydney and Melbourne to a brewpub in Wagga where workshops, talks and a zine fair take place over two days.

What's been really great has been seeing people from our multicultural communities and several artists with disability creating and selling their own zines and artwork. We have seen several productive partnerships emerge from Halfway Print Festival, too, lasting artistic partnerships between artists of different ages, cultures and abilities.



Salad Dayz – photos James Farley



Murray Arts

Speedforce Sessions, Workshops—\$4,650

Speedforce Sessions is an accessible drama group which teaches participants collaborative theatre making skills whilst achieving their occupational therapy goals. We had 10 participants aged from 14 - 24 but the group has performed at various events to audiences between 80-200 people

CASP funding enabled us to pay local teaching artist Rachel McNamara and local occupational therapist Drue Mortlock to facilitate the group. The group was free for participants. It also enabled us to provide transport for participants to ensure ease of attendance for the sessions. CASP was invaluable to our project. We highly recommend you apply!



Speedforce – image supplied

"It's been more fun that I could have ever imagined"

Phillip

"I feel happy"

Dillon

Creative Collective – photo Allison Reynolds

Orana Arts

Creative Collection, Creative Collective—\$2,420

Creative Collective in Coonabarabran received funding for a 12 month project to develop local artists with disabilities through a series of workshops with professional artists. Last year they received a CASP grant for an artist-in-residency with Travis De Vries and to have a physical gallery in town called Space.

Having a professional artist willing to teach in Coonabarabran is a rarity so we took advantage of the opportunity. The workshops received high praise and help meet one of our group's goals to promote artists with disability.



We believe we raised the profile of artists with disability, both within our group by showing members that being an artist with disability is a valid career choice, and outside the group as local community members spent a day learning from a disabled artist.

The project was a huge success and met all of our goals – we reached well over one thousand people via social media leading up to the workshop. We are still getting lots of reactions to photos posted of the event.

Outback Arts

***Pave the Way to Gular, Gulargambone* Community Enterprises Co-op—\$5,000**

The Gulargambone Community Enterprises Co-op was successful in their application to receive CASP funding for two components of their arts festival *Pave the Way to Gular*. The festival was held 5th – 8th April, 2018. Gulargambone is located within the Coonamble Shire, with a population of approximately 400 people. The festival organisers wanted to use art to lift the spirits of the local community and put Gulargambone on the map for tourists attracted to street art.

The festival well and truly accomplished their aim with eleven renowned artists from across Australia visiting Gulargambone for four days to create the wildest of make overs! This multi-

faceted festival was the first of its kind in the region and provided unique experiences for audiences to explore the hidden corners of Gulargambone and connect with some of the country's most celebrated and iconic street artists.

They painted murals on buildings and footpaths, ran workshops with locals, visitors and school kids, held an exhibition for local artists, had live painting demonstrations and generally immersed themselves in the local culture and hospitality of this fantastic country community. One of the most noteworthy artworks is by a local artist who created a wire sculpture depicting a life-size bullock wagon loaded with wool bales, a team of bullocks and bullocky.



Bullock Train – image supplied



COPE in CONTACT – image supplied

South East Arts

Community of Practices Emerging (COPE), COPE in CONTACT—\$3,000

Community of Practices Emerging—COPE—is an interdisciplinary arts project that brings together musicians, dancers, poets and technicians to create original performance work and support creative exploration and experimentation. COPE was initiated through CASP funding and more recently supported by RAF. The COPE group have performed in many places in the Bega Valley and in February 2020 presented COPE in CONTACT at Navigate Arts in response to the recent bushfires.

Dare to Dream – photo Giselle Newbury

Southern Tablelands Arts

Jugiong Small Schools' Writers Days, Focus on Writing for the Future—\$3000

The Jugiong Small Schools' Writers Days were supported by CASP in 2019 and consisted of two days of workshops attended by 250 students from

10 small schools in the Jugiong area. The program was part of the Jugiong Writers Festival, a biennial festival celebrating reading, writing and really good fun in the picturesque village of Jugiong, part of the Hilltops local government area.

The Writers Days, delivered on 7 and 8 March, gave students from Jugiong, Binalong, Wombat, Stockinbingal, Bongongo, Brungle and Wallendbeen plus Harden-Murrumburrah Public School and Trinity Murrumburrah the opportunity to work with noted authors and artists and with peers from other schools to enhance literacy and individual writing skills.

Workshops included dreamtime storytelling with Wiradjuri storyteller Jenny Beath, creative writing with author Jane Carroll, bush poetry and drawing with cartoonist Brian Allen, writing a wellness diary with Freda Marnie, writing character descriptions with Tracey Rainie and Sally Keating and a visual art session with artist Alison Guy.

Students were encouraged to enter resulting written works into the Jugiong Writers Festival small stories competition. Below is the winning entry for the Poetry and Short Story Competition in the Kindergarten to Year 2 category.



Dare to Dream — Down the Track

"Don't go down!" my mum said. But one day I didn't listen and I should have listened. It was scary, I ran. Don't dare to even dream of going down that track because I saw a bushranger and he killed my friend. I ran. He shot my leg. It stung. My mum brought me to the hospital. They pulled the bullet out. I was in a wheelchair for a long time. Afterwards my mum was angry. She dragged me to the car. She was disappointed.

Zac Boulet, Jugiong, NSW

South West Arts

Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre, Community Mural—\$3,400

Local Artist Sivonne Binks engaged young people from the Aboriginal community of Deniliquin in the design and development of a mural depicting characters from the local Aboriginal story *Emu and Brolga*.

This project became more than a beautiful piece of public art:

- The mural, spanning some 15 metres in length is a source of pride for the entire community;
- The artwork developed by the young people was used to illustrate the first Wamba Wamba language children's book in the region, the CASP funding leveraged to secure additional funding from the federal government;
- The art work also became the branding for the first Indigenous language program in a Deniliquin primary school. This program has now been expanded to two primary schools.



Mural Deniliquin – image supplied

White Cliffs Music Festival – image supplied



West Darling Arts

White Cliffs Music Festival, White Cliffs Music Festival 2019—\$5,000

White Cliffs is located three hours drive from Broken Hill and is an isolated opal mining town of around 130 residents, many of whom live underground in “dugouts”. The annual White Cliffs Music Festival is one of the major highlights of the local cultural calendar and is attended by up to 400 people, many of whom travel from major city centres to attend. The Festival has been a regular recipient of the CASP grant, which has allowed them to afford to bring in talented musicians, whilst keeping tickets affordable for their audience. The Festival was successful in its 2019 CASP application allowing them to headline performers, the Davison Brothers and Nick Charles to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of this iconic outback event.

Western Riverina Arts

The Cad Factory, On Common Ground—\$3,000

The Murrumbidgee River has a long history as a contested site. Colonisation, the development of agriculture, species extinction and reduction, continuing environmental changes and resource management initiatives such as the Murray Darling Basin Plan, make this location and its surrounds a place of consternation with many conflicting views.

Featuring 26 artworks from 19 local artists, 7 visiting artists, 36 students and 20 community members, On Common Ground is a celebration of what links us, through all of our different viewpoints and histories. It is an attempt to allow a neutral place, a place for discussion and reflection for three days and beyond.

Artworks will be presented between the entrance at Lake Talbot, near the Murrumbidgee River at Narrandera, and extend all the way down to the Koala count marshalling area and across to Second Beach. Part of the experience of On Common Ground is walking through this beautiful natural environment. Artworks are installed in different locations throughout the Common, some in close clusters, whilst others are up to 1km apart.



On Common Ground – photo courtesy The Cad Factory

An anecdote on promoting CASP from Mark Reedman, ED, Arts Upper Hunter

Some years ago, I used to walk past a women's health centre on my way to the local lunch shop. I discovered later that the centre's main role was dealing with domestic violence. I'd been doing a bit of promoting CASP to service providers and one day I thought I'd pop into the centre and let them know about CASP. I knocked on the rather heavy, locked screen door and a woman's head appeared around the main door on the other side of the screen door.

"What do you want?"

I explained I just telling service providers about small arts grants.

"Wait there."

Her head disappeared and the inner door closed. After a minute or two another woman opened the inner door.

"Have you got some kind of ID?"

Fortunately I had some of my cards with me and I slid one under the screen door. The woman had a good look at it.

"OK, you can come in."

She unlocked the screen door and I followed her down the hall to a sort of lounge room where the second woman and a third woman were waiting. We sat down and there were first name introductions.

"So, what are these arts grants?"

I did a brief spiel

"And we could apply for one?"

"Yep."

"Does it have to be painting?"

"No.

"Could it be for a choir? There's a woman in Melbourne who runs women's choirs."

"Yep. The grant could pay for her fee, travel and accommodation."

The three women looked at each other with slightly raised eyebrows.

"Where can we get more information?"

I jotted down a website on a bit of paper.

"OK, we'll be in touch."

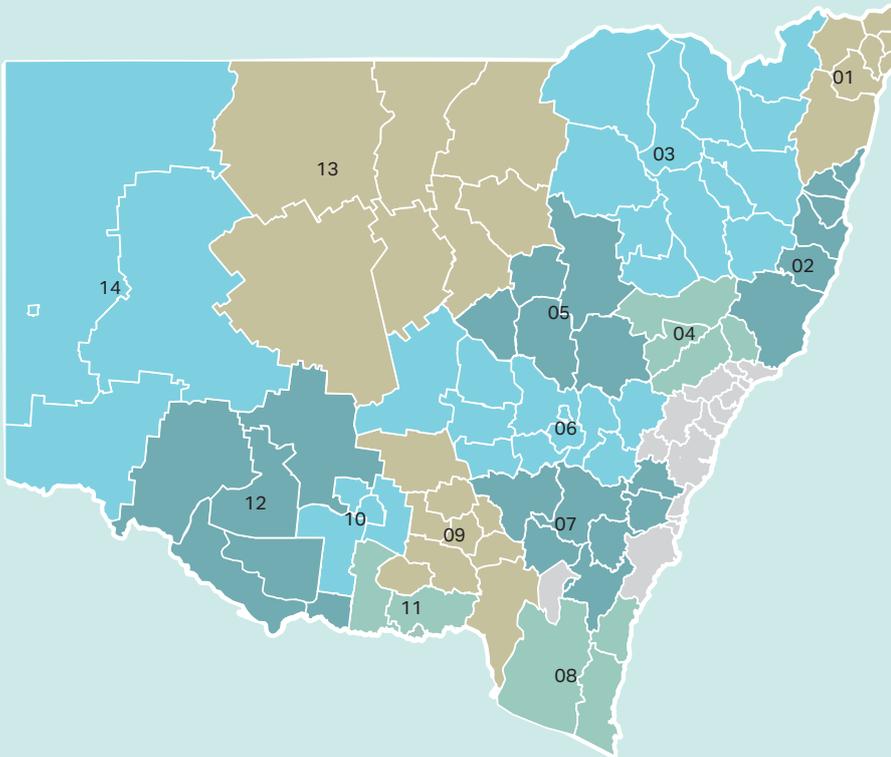
And that was that.

Well, they were in touch—often—and, to cut to the chase, they got a CASP grant, ran a series of choral workshops, did a public performance and recorded a CD which they proudly dropped off at my office.

Country Arts Support Program is a devolved small grant program from Create NSW and administered by Regional Arts NSW as part of its core funding. It is locally assessed by the 14 Regional Arts Development Organisations.

Published by RANSW April 2020.

The Regional Arts NSW Network



There are 14 Regional Arts Development Organisations in NSW, each providing strategic direction for sustainable arts and cultural development in their region.

- 01 Arts Northern Rivers
- 02 Arts Mid North Coast
- 03 Arts North West
- 04 Arts Upper Hunter
- 05 Orana Arts
- 06 Arts OutWest
- 07 Southern Tablelands Arts
- 08 South East Arts
- 09 Eastern Riverina Arts
- 10 Western Riverina Arts
- 11 Murray Arts
- 12 South West Arts
- 13 Outback Arts
- 14 West Darling Arts

Regional Arts NSW is a member of Regional Arts Australia

Regional Arts NSW
Tel 02 9270 2500
Fax 02 9270 2525
admin@regionalartsnsw.com.au

Level 1, 10 Hickson Road
The Rocks Sydney NSW 2000
www.regionalartsnsw.com.au



Regional Arts NSW

