

# regional arts

## SERVICES NETWORK

### RASN 2018-2021

#### Summary evaluation findings

In 2018, the **Regional Arts Services Network (RASN)** was introduced as an innovative approach to support the sustainable growth and development of our regional communities.

Acknowledging the distinctive identity and diversity within its eight designated regions, RASN's devolved service model has funded eight RASN Providers and one State-wide Coordination Office across three years to deliver a state-wide approach to increasing arts engagement in regional Queensland through building capacity, strengthening networks, and celebrating stories.

#### 2018-2021 Regions

Cape York & Torres Strait Islands  
Far North Queensland  
North Queensland  
Central Queensland  
South East Queensland North  
South West Queensland  
Western Queensland  
Ipswich and Logan

### OUTCOMES 2018-2020

RASN has **improved the quality and diversity of arts and cultural services in regional Queensland**, led by professional Regional Arts Officers providing quality advice and arts projects.

RASN has **built networks** of industry stakeholders that were not previously well connected, and brokered partnerships that align with regional priorities and needs.

RASN has **led widespread engagement with communities and partners** to, nurture, support and empower regional artists and arts workers across Queensland.

The network has **activated creative leadership** across communities, including with local government partners, and developed an understanding in key communities of cultural infrastructure and regional opportunities.

RASN has supported the **growth of artists and arts workers**, creating employment opportunities, providing advice and support, and provided programs that have developed careers.



**Over 220** Regional arts projects



**Over 160,000** Attendees and participants at RASN supported activities



**1,189** Artist employment opportunities created. **16%** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and arts workers



**\$1.16m** Paid to Queensland artists and arts workers through RASN programming



**Over 250** Capacity-building and training sessions and regional forums



**75%** Queensland LGAs partnered with RASN



**\$5.9** Million new investment (81% cash)

# RASN 2022-2025

RASN's year two Evaluation and Final Options reports have recognised the profound impact of RASN's core function (creating successful networks), and the subsequent growth and increased capability of Queensland's regional artists and arts workers. However, reflecting the diversity of each region, RASN's progress towards achieving outcomes have been limited in some regions.

## RISKS AND BEST PRACTICE

### What have we learned?

**Regional Arts Officers** roles are demanding and complex, and Manager roles would bring requisite skills to lead planning, consultation and partnership development

**Cluster models** increase coverage, diversify service delivery and reduce risks associated with limited staffing

**Strong governance** supports strategic planning, sustainability and equitable service delivery outcomes

**Capacity building** outcomes were inconsistent, and fully realising benefits in future requires high priority

**Regional boundaries** should promote both natural alignments and new partnerships through researched and thoughtful allocation

**RASN objectives** that address Creative Together priorities provide RASN providers with a clear focus for planning

**RASN brand** establishment will raise awareness of programs and build credibility with local stakeholders.

*An effective and successful framework for Qld regional arts services is built on a genuine partnerships approach connecting Arts Queensland, RASN Providers and the State-wide RASN Office*

### Representation and Strategy

Despite considerable successes and the continued maturation of the network, the Final Options report noted required improvements to the level of state-wide strategy and coordination. A shortage of public facing communication and promotion relating to the progress and successes of RASN has limited the perceived value of the initiative, and impacted investment and partnership potential. **Representing an allied and strategic state-wide network is a RASN 2022-2025 priority.**

### Supporting All Regions

It is acknowledged that engaging well-established partnership organisations to deliver arts services across all regions will assist in strategic delivery, maximise accessibility, and allow all communities to understand and experience the initiative's benefits into the future. **Securing strong regional providers with aligning objectives to lead the network into a period of growth is a RASN 2022-2025 priority.**

### First Nations Arts

While significant progress has been made in elevating First Nations artists and arts workers, outcomes were found to be inconsistent across the state. The employment of First Nations Regional Arts Officers was the main way that RASN providers empowered and established strong mechanisms that led to the commissioning of First Nations creative producers to direct projects by and for First Nations people. **Empowering and supporting First Nations artists and communities is a RASN 2022-2025 priority.**

External evaluation of RASN was conducted by Wavelength. Findings presented are from the second year report (2020) and Final Options report (2021).

## MOVING FORWARD

### Where are we going?

#### Continuing commitment

The Queensland Government is continuing its support of RASN and arTour with a further \$7.8 million committed over four years from 2022 to 2025.

#### Enhanced regional services

Arts Qld identified an opportunity to align state-wide objectives by integrating the statewide RASN Office and the Queensland touring service arTour.

#### Robust partnerships

Arts Qld will work across regional networks and engage closely with RASN providers to support robust networks and accessible regional arts services.

#### Renewed boundaries

Designated service regions will consider areas of natural alignment, a dispersed presence, and accessibility for all regional and remote communities. Efficiencies in service delivery will be sought through collaborations and larger catchment areas.

#### Strong providers

Strong business models will deliver reliable and accessible arts services to regional stakeholders. RASN providers will represent regions with transparency and accountability.