

NARACOORTE REGIONAL ART GALLERY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 - 2027



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KEY STATEMENTS



Acknowledgement of Country

The Naracoorte Regional Art Gallery acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians of the land on which we have settled.

Introduction

The Naracoorte Regional Art Gallery (NRAG) is the oldest public regional art gallery in South Australia. The Gallery provides quality exhibitions featuring local and non-local artists, a retail shop with handmade items in all types of mediums, regular art workshops, a library and venue hire. The exhibition program includes an annual Ibis Art Competition, a yearly SALA (SA Living Artists) exhibition, regular workshops for children and adults, and high-quality travelling exhibitions from Country Arts SA.

Since its inception in 1968 NRAG has acquired works of art that now form a unique public collection. The art collection acts as a cultural document of the gallery and region's rich artistic history.

Catering for all walks of life, ages and artistic ability, the gallery continues to enrich the lives of those involved daily and those who visit on occasion.

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to set the objectives and vision for NRAG that will govern its direction for the next 5 years.



Vision

To enrich the lives of the people of the South East through art

Mission

We will deliver a vibrant space that is inclusive and welcoming and promotes creativity within the local and wider community

Target Areas

- 1.Preservation**
- 2.Programming**
- 3.Governance**
- 4.Community**
- 5.Connection**

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

History and Context

NRAG was formed in 1968 with the desire to provide a venue for exhibiting visual arts in the state's South-East. It was envisioned as a space for local artists to exhibit work as well as display high-quality touring exhibitions. NRAG was established in affiliation with the Naracoorte Palette Club, a group of local painters who worked solidly for over two decades to build local arts infrastructure in the region. Its original premises were a National Trust building in Rolland Street, Naracoorte. The newly-formed organisation had considerable support from Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA); it was opened by the Chair of the Board, and in its first year had two exhibitions from the AGSA collection.

Initially, influential Board members ensured support from the state government. Exhibitions were drawn from a variety of sources – palette painters, camera clubs, art groups and secondary students from nearby Keith, Mount Gambier and Naracoorte itself – touring exhibitions from Australian and New Zealand Print Councils and those provided by the South East Cultural Trust (SECT) and its successor South Australian Country Arts Trust (SACAT; now Country Arts SA).

NRAG quickly outgrew its old home and in 1976 a former ANZ Bank building on Smith Street was purchased for the gallery, with funding provided by the South Australian Government. In 1977 a loan was taken out to refurbish the new gallery, and South Australian Premier Don Dunstan opened the new gallery in 1977. By 1979 financial difficulties led SECT to purchase the building and lease it back to NRAG.

Board reports from the 1980s and 1990s show a thriving program, strong community buy-in and leadership, and sound financial management. There was some financial support from state government, directly and via Country Arts SA, but most importantly significant investment in fundraising from the community.

In 1998 the gallery moved to new premise at 91 Ormerod Street. The building is a two-story 1930s 'mock Georgian' former home of a doctor and his family, Dr Pavy. The building previously housed the Naracoorte Corporation, which amalgamated with the District Council in 1997, and the building was put up for sale. A committee was formed comprising Board members and local business people to consult with the Naracoorte community as to their views on what Council should do with the Pavy building.

A deal was struck with various parties whereby the Country Arts SA owned Smith Street building would be given to Council, who sold it and absorbed the profit into Council funds. In exchange the Council agreed for NRAG to lease 91 Ormerod Street for negligible rent, and to support the administrative costs of the gallery. Considerable financial investment from local businesses and community members enabled the formation of the Naracoorte Regional Cultural Trust, to oversee the financial resources to maintain the building. This is where NRAG currently resides.

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES & CONSULTATION

Challenges

Funding

Funding is an ongoing challenge to the growth of NRAG. It currently receives annual financial support from the Naracoorte Lucindale Council which covers the costs of a 0.4FTE paid secretary position, with other income coming from fundraising efforts by the board and successful grant applications for specific projects. Upgrades to gallery spaces, upgrades to storage and care for the permanent collection, and expansions to exhibition and workshop programming require more staffing and financial resourcing.

Staff Capacity and Experience

NRAG is managed by a volunteer board and supported by a 0.4 FTE secretary position, all of whom lack professional skills in gallery and collection management. The secretary's time is primarily filled with day to day tasks, and as volunteers the board members capacity to manage projects and seek out further financial investment is often limited.

Volunteers

Finding and retaining volunteers is difficult for any not for profit organisation. NRAG is open free to the public five days per week and relies on a group of unpaid gallery sitters to keep the doors open. Although there is a core group with regular availability, there are often gaps in the roster, resulting in an added workload for board members and secretary to either find or fill the space.

Building Infrastructure

NRAG is currently housed at 91 Ormerod Street in a building owned by the Naracoorte Lucindale Council. Negligible rent is paid by the NRAG Board in exchange for the upkeep of the building and grounds by the Naracoorte Regional Cultural Trust. The building is aging and will soon require significant upgrades to maintain a contemporary and user friendly space.

Opportunities

Community

As a community gallery, the people of Naracoorte represent an enormous opportunity for NRAG. Various art and school groups and individuals utilise rooms at the NRAG regularly throughout the year, allowing it to operate as a hub for the Naracoorte community. This aspect is something that could be capitalised on in the next 5 years. In 2021 a Significance Assessment of the permanent collection was undertaken. As part of this process, comment was sought from the Naracoorte community about the importance that these works and the gallery in general hold to the town. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and helped to raise awareness of NRAG to a younger generation.

Wonambi Gallery at Naracoorte Library and Town Hall

In 2022 the Naracoorte Lucindale Council opened the new Naracoorte Library on Smith Street, which included some upgrades to the Naracoorte Town Hall. The Wonambi Gallery, a small exhibition space in the foyer was a part of these changes and represents an opportunity to exhibit works outside of 91 Ormerod Street. Curated by Council's Arts and Cultural Facilitator, two to three exhibitions a year are dedicated to showing a small number of works from NRAG's permanent collection, expanding the reach to a wider demographic.

Arts and Cultural Facilitator

The Naracoorte Lucindale Council has employed an Arts and Cultural Facilitator in partnership with Country Arts SA since 2020. The position provides professional support to NRAG and represents an opportunity to strengthen NRAG and the Naracoorte Regional Cultural Trusts relationship with Naracoorte Lucindale Council and Country Arts SA.

Naracoorte Caves

As the only World Heritage Listed site in South Australia, the Naracoorte Caves National Park is an opportunity to connect with the high number of tourists to the region. In the past, the Cave's Café has provided a space for relevant exhibitions and with negotiation could become a regular site outside of 91 Ormerod Street. As both the Caves and NRAG are two high quality options for visitors to the Limestone Coast, this relationship has the potential to develop, strengthening the connection between the Caves and Naracoorte town.

Consultation

This plan was developed by Naracoorte Lucindale Council's Arts and Cultural Facilitator in close consultation with the Naracoorte Regional Art Gallery's secretary, and a sub-committee of members of the Naracoorte Regional Art Gallery board.

The process began with a Vision Workshop in April 2022 to determine the board's view on the current state of the Gallery's operations and what their wishes were for its future direction. The workshop looked at the physical environment of the Gallery including landscape and infrastructure; the user experience of the gallery including engagement, facilities and visitors lasting memories; and what they should Keep, Toss and Create: what was working, what needed to be let go, and what could be introduced to elevate the Gallery and its offerings.

The sub-committee then met to collate the answers, which helped to identify the areas of focus and to update the Vision and Mission Statement for the Gallery. Recommendations from the Significance Assessment completed in 2021 were also taken into consideration.

The sub-committee met again to determine a list of actions for each objective, and what challenges and opportunities are having an impact on the Gallery's growth. These, along with a short history of the Gallery, were compiled into a draft document and presented to the sub-committee and the board for feedback.

The plan was formally adopted at the October 2022 Board Meeting.

ACTION PLAN 2022 - 2027

Target Area 1 - Preservation: Preserve and maintain the permanent collection and promote the heritage of the building

- 1.1. Monitor progress and implementation of target areas, ensuring they reflect Goals and Mission Statement
- 1.2. Seek out Community Heritage Grant from National Library of Australia to upgrade storage areas for the collection
- 1.3. Understand best practice handling procedures when working with the collection
- 1.4. Undertake best practice condition reporting of the collection and seek funding for repairs as necessary
- 1.5. Evaluate and update current collections policy
- 1.6. Ensure an effective collection management system is used
- 1.7. Improve signage, labelling and promotion of History Room
- 1.8. Participate in South Australia's History Festival each year

Target Area 2 - Programming: Deliver a wide variety of exhibitions, workshops and activities for a broad community demographic

2.1. Hold an exciting, community driven exhibition program including annual IBIS and SALA exhibitions

2.2. Occasionally incorporate high quality, externally curated exhibitions from CASA and Oz Quilts into program.

2.3. Provide an interesting and engaging series of workshops for adults and children from both local and non-local artists

2.4. Promote ongoing activities within the NRAG such as the retail shop, library, children's table and puzzle table

2.5. Invite guest speakers and hold artist talks attached to exhibition programs or other events in region

2.6. Create opportunities to support regional artists through Maker of the Month and residency programs

Target Area 3 - Governance: Maintain an appropriate management structure for the effective operations in conjunction with the Naracoorte Regional Cultural Trust and Naracoorte Lucindale Council

3.1. Identify and apply for annual funding to support our operations growth at local, state and federal levels

3.2. Evaluate current models of governance to ensure compliance and long-term sustainability of the collection and NRAG into the future

3.3. Review and update roles and responsibilities for NRAG Board, secretary and volunteers

3.4. Streamline communications between NRAG Board, Naracoorte Regional Cultural Trust and Naracoorte Lucindale Council

3.5. Build the capacity and knowledge of board members, paid staff and volunteers through education and training in day to day collection management, handling of works of art, collection care, disaster preparedness and digitisation

3.6. Maintain professional status by retaining memberships to AMAGA and Regional Galleries Australia



Target Area 4 - Community: Develop a strong and connected support base for the gallery

4.1. Run targeted recruitment campaigns to increase volunteer and membership numbers by 10% each year

4.2. Hold regular engagement activities with our volunteers and members to encourage a strong sense of team

4.3. Develop and implement a plan to encourage corporate sponsorship within the local and wider community

4.4. Develop and implement annual fundraising activities to allow support from the local community

Target Area 5 - Connection: Maintain and expand a strong brand that supports an increase in community engagement

5.1. Develop a vibrant and engaging advertising campaign involving local media and tourism bodies to increase visitor numbers

5.2. Seek funding and support to develop an online presence via social media and website to increase accessibility to our exhibitions and collection

5.3. Manage external projects that increase community engagement beyond 91 Ormerod Street

5.4. Develop continuing education program with local primary and secondary schools to maintain ongoing relationships

5.5. Maintain an email database and send regular communications including exhibition invites and quarterly newsletters

Acknowledgements

Thanks is given to the Strategic Plan sub-committee: Jeanette Vine (Chairperson), Kaye Beachamp (Cultural Trust Representative), Lesley Cook (Secretary), Alison Rowe (Board Member).



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Cover Image:

Naracoorte Regional Art Gallery Exterior, 2022

Photographer: Deb Kloeden