




# **ORANA ARTS**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2019**





*“I remember when I was real little, we all lived at Nanima, all my brothers my sisters and me. My brothers ...every Sunday ... they played the guitars at church and all of us would be there singing away, couldn't even sing but we thought we could, clapping and singing away for hours we would”*

Thelma Dowton Nee Carr  
Wiradjuri Elder  
Nanima Original  
Credit lines: Tayla Martin,  
Thelma from Flood to Dust series, 2019.  
Image courtesy the artist.

We acknowledge  
the Traditional  
Owners of country  
throughout Australia  
and recognise  
their continuing  
connection to land,  
waters and culture.  
We pay our respects  
to their Elders  
past, present and  
emerging.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OA TEAM

that saw several successful projects come to fruition as well as their successful grants for continued development of the sector in 2019. We are thankful for the hard work and dedication of the small yet very dynamic team that oversaw these successes.

I've come into the role of Acting Chair to relieve Jessica Moore of her Chair duties as she pursued her new job as Cultural Development Coordinator for Dubbo Regional Council, and I thank her for the time she served as a board member and as Chair. I've seen this organisation grow and transform itself into a vibrant and active producer of regional arts.

The OA team pursued bigger opportunities to support the works of regional artists and I witnessed first-hand the impact it had to our region and the sector. OA took the stage at University of Michigan's Prison Creative Art Project in the USA to present their two-year program Creative Social Investment. I congratulate them for the valuable exchange of shared learnings on a challenging but rewarding program. 2019 also saw the team head to Melbourne and stage A Little Piece of Heaven, during Yirramboi festival. This opportunity for our Elders was remarkable and well worth all our investment.

These highlighted projects are just examples of our stories and how they are being told with much dedication to the story tellers as well as to the audience who have the privilege to experience it. I thank the team for their tireless dedication and commitment to the artists and the arts in regional NSW.

**Acting Chairperson-Anne Louise Capel**





## I'M A FIRM BELIEVER THAT ARTS ORGANISATIONS NEED TO BE VIGILANT,

we have an obligation to evaluate our core mission and to support any changes that helps maintain our relevancy in the sector. In the last few years Orana Arts has seen significant changes from Board representation to operational reviews, from local government workshops to significant strategic partnerships. What we have discovered during this period, is that to further our mission we need our artists to be central to all our programming.

The OA team oversaw several programs in 2019 that provided us with this critical insight. Most of the programs highlighted here mark those changes to our core function and move us into an artist led organisation whose primary focus is to invest in our artists, to broker and create opportunities for critical engagement that elevates the practice of artists who are based in regional NSW.

We choose to work and live in the region and we will continue to advocate for the artists who do so as well, we are determined that our voices will be heard. I'm immensely thankful for our Board who have been behind the OA team 100% and to the team who never seem to lose the faith in what we do. I look forward to their guidance as we pursue this very new and exciting future ahead of us.

**Executive Director-Alicia Rodriguez Leggett**

# ORANA ARTS

**INVESTS**

in regional artists, regional institutions  
and their practice

**BROKERS**

partnerships and relationships  
with artists, cultural institutions,  
organisations and agencies

**CREATES**

opportunities for artists and institutions in  
regional NSW to extend their practice and  
their audiences beyond the local

**ELEVATES**

public awareness, appreciation and  
acquisition of culture, art, history and  
heritage from Regional NSW

**ADVOCATES**

for our artists and  
cultural institutions needs

**38 artists**

engaged in communities of  
Cessnock, Wellington, Nyngan,  
Coonabarabran, Coolah, Mudgee,  
Gilgandra, Narromine, Dubbo,  
Broken Hill, Narrabri, Kiama,  
Albury, Capertee Valley, Riverina  
Blue Mountains, Port Stephens,  
Newcastle and Nanima.

**\$258,319**  
back to  
**32 regional**  
artists.

**86%**

of our artists  
engaged  
came from  
Regional NSW

# 2019 ELDERS

## ELDERS

Dick Carney

Ruth Carney

Violet Lousick

Jen Lousick

Thelma Downton

## ARTISTS

Adam Norton

Alison Clouston  
& Boyd

Alison Ross

Amanda Donohue

Amanda Stuart

Andy Abra

Anna Glynn

Annie McKinnon

Bridget Nicholson

Caleb Thaiday

Cathy Franzi

Dale Freeman

Danielle Andrews



# AND ARTISTS

Jack Randell

Jan Payne

Jason Walker

John Harvey

Joh Waller

Julie Crighton

Kelly Leonard

Kodi Brady

Lee Hilder

Louise Pender

Luke Pender

Lynn Quinton

Nicola Mason

Nolan Furnell

Rebecca Selleck

Sam Paine

Tallulah Cunningham

Timothy Reeks

Vicki Luke

Victoria Pittel

Warwick Keen

William Crighton





SCAFFOLDING  
INCOMPLETE

**NOTICE**  
ASSISTANCE  
REQUIRED IN ACCESS  
SHOWER/TOILET  
WHEN BUZZER  
SOUNDS

3HK-17A DANGER

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT  
AUTHORISED PERSONNEL  
ONLY  
Tools may only be o  
Performance  
flammable mate

10-79-VY  
NEW SOUTH WALES

DANGER  
ASBESTOS  
REMOVAL  
PROGRESS

# PROJECTS



Photo: Paris Norton

# A LITTLE PIECE OF HEAVEN

A Little Piece of Heaven (ALPOH) is the first regional production and the first performance outcome of our Staging Stories Program. Uncle Dick and Aunty Ruth Carney are Wiradjuri Elders and active members of the Narromine community. This is their first work as playwrights and actors, supported through Staging Stories. ALPOH looks at their early years and marriage, the couple having experienced loss and triumph and built a life that is a testament to their endurance, generosity and love.

*“They used to say If you’re white you’re all right, if you’re brown hang around, if you’re black go back. True they did, but now, it’s like a weight has been lifted and I cannot stop smiling. I feel so great about all of this, telling my story. I think it healed me. I do. Because a lot of things I was afraid of, I’m not afraid anymore, not like I was.”  
Uncle Dick Carney May 2019*

ALPOH performed to over 1000 people during its small towns season and through the International premiere of the work at Footscray

Community Arts during Yirramboi, Australia’s premier First Nations Arts Festival.

- 97% of the audience had never seen Aboriginal Theatre,
- 80% of our small towns season was Aboriginal – none had been to the theatre before
- 100% said that would like to see more Aboriginal Theatre
- 100% said they wanted to see more stories from our region
- 100% of the audience found the work relevant, authentic and wanted to see more stories from our region.
- 95% said it changed how they viewed Aboriginal people through history

“Gave me an important and extraordinary insight into the hardships experienced by Aboriginal people in rural Australia through the voices of those who had lived it. It also spoke to the dignity, integrity and strength of Aunty Ruth Carney and Uncle Dick Carney and their love for each other. They have brought a special light to me personally.”

Audience Member Yirramboi 2019

# ART OF THREATENED SPECIES

A collaboration to increase community awareness of our Saving our Species, the Art of Threatened Species (AOTS) saw Orana Arts, Department of Planning Industry & Environment and Create NSW collaborate to increase community awareness of NSW endangered species and the Saving our Species program

Artists, scientists, park rangers and museums creatively engaged, researching their selected species through self-directed residencies across the NSW landscape from the Australian Museum to National Parks in the outback. 10 artists created new works that were reflective of their experiences and learnings, capturing the fragility of the species and its environment.

Curated by Kent Buchanan, Western Plains Cultural Centre, the works formed the world class exhibition Art of Threatened Species, opened by Dugald Saunders at the Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo

AoTS audience response:

- 96% were exposed to new work
- 100% enjoyed the exhibition and the experience
- 95% want more exhibitions from Orana Arts
- 82% felt moved and inspired

*“A complex and long engagement that involved ten artist projects throughout NSW, widely scattered artists and scientists collaborating on works about widely scattered endangered species. Add the Office of Environment and Heritage and Create NSW and you have a very varied palette of professionals.*

*During this time, the Orana Arts staff were supportive, proactive and highly motivated. I am certain that without their tenacity, the complications would have overwhelmed our ambitions, and everyone would have reasonably said it was too hard and too ambitious.*

*Eighteen months later the reality of the exhibition Art of Threatened Species is a lyrical mix of works that reflect the seriousness of the subject in a respectful and beautiful outcome.*

*Vicki Luke, Artist*



Photo: Michelle Hall



Danielle Andrews, A Little Piece of Heaven 2019. Photo: Michelle Hall



# CREATIVE KOORI

Creative Koori, through Create NSW, aims to build support for a strong, resilient and exciting Aboriginal arts and cultural sector for NSW. This is done through embracing the principles of Aboriginal self-determination and putting Aboriginal artists, organisations and communities at the centre of funded cultural and creative activity.

Orana Arts was successful in funding for its Creative Koori program which saw Danielle Andrews, a Kamilaroi Young and Emerging Performance Artist join Orana Arts. Through the program Danielle increased her practical skills through on the ground learning, developed new contemporary work with aspiring artists aged 13-18 through the Black Box Creative partnership, was Assistant Producer and Performer with A little Piece of Heaven as well as delivering Pop Up Creative workshops for young people. Danielle since joined Orana Arts as a core team member implementing our youth performing arts program.

*It was such a privilege receiving the chance to work with Orana Arts under the Creative Koori grant, as it was the defining point in my career and provided a platform for me to be a*

*working artist within regional NSW. Had the opportunity not arisen I don't believe I would have found an entry level job of this kind within the arts in either regional or metro Australia.*

*I had opportunity to travel and meet other creatives across NSW and VIC along with the opportunity to work closely with community and understand just how important the creative industry really is in bringing people together and creating conversations. I look back on my time with Orana Arts/ Creative Koori Program and I've had several incredible opportunities that really have pushed and enhanced my abilities as an artist, this role never stops giving.*

*Wherever my career is to take me I know none of it would have been possible without the creative Koori opportunity and I have been so fortunate to have the chance to learn from several industry professionals at Orana Arts.*

Danielle Andrews Kamilaroi Young and Emerging Artist

# SOUP SESSION KANDOS

Orana Arts Soup Sessions are community dinners that provide micro grants to local groups or individuals to develop creative projects. Soup sessions allow the community to engage and connect with the artists behind such projects through buying tickets, listening to artists pitches and finally voting for the project they wish to see in their community. The project with the most votes wins the total of the door sales (minus costs) plus any donations made from the community on the night.

Kerrie Cooke of Capertee Valley Landcare was successful with the Capertee Valley Hydrology art project. The project engaged artist Leanne Thompson who created work that explored the collective relationship of everyone in the valley to the water that flows through it. This work was especially timely given the severity of the drought.



River Lung, Leanne Thompson. Photo: Alex Wisser 2019

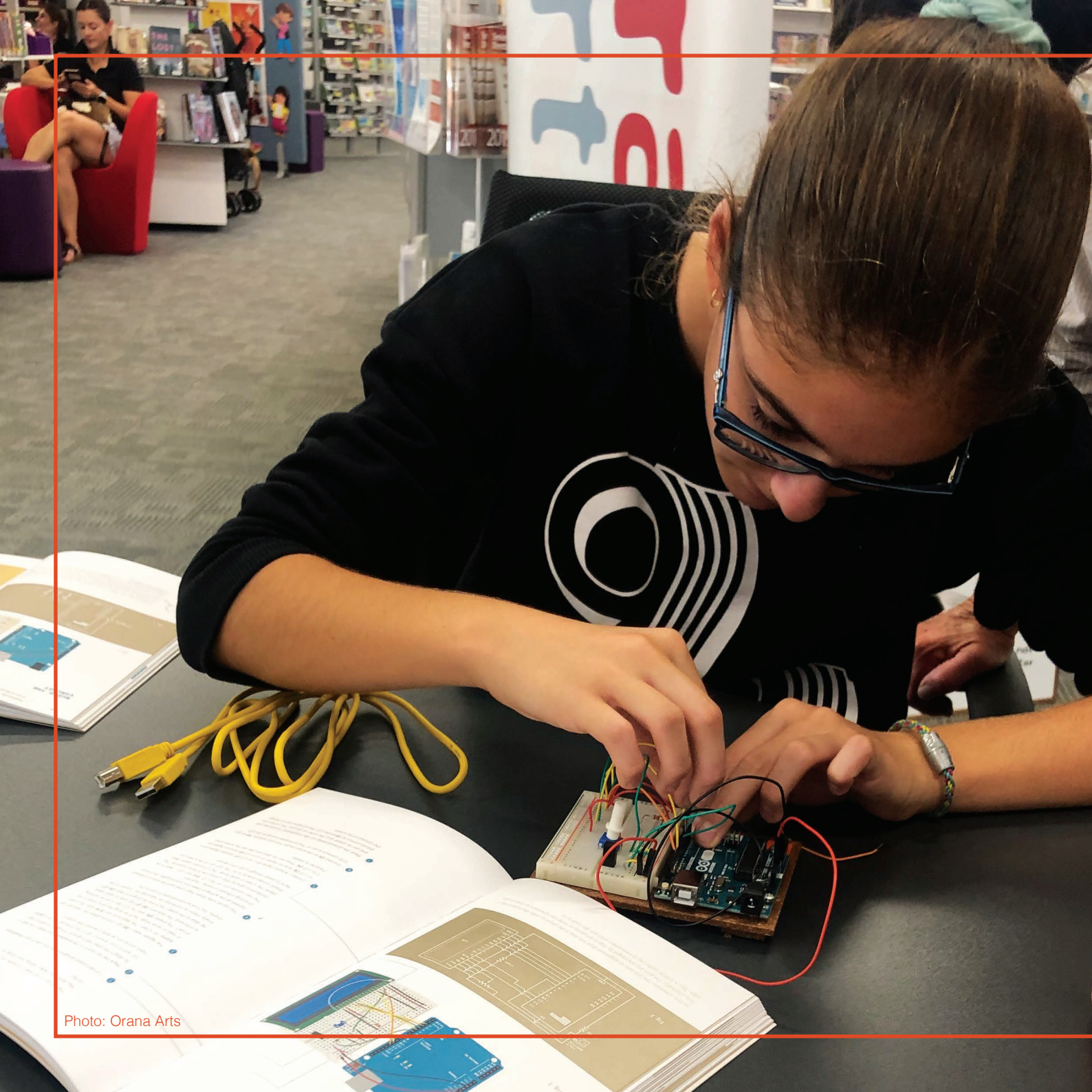


Photo: Orana Arts

# POP-UP CREATORS

Pop-Up Creators is a digital engagement program designed to enhance coding and design skills in Orana region communities. Working with both children and adults, this program enhances confidence. Supported through the Indigenous Languages and Arts program, Office of the Arts. Pop-Up's were held in Nyngan and Mudgee with over 150 young people engaged in digital creativity.

# CREATIVE AND SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Our innovative, creative model — based on national and international learnings — expands opportunities for incarcerated and post release disengaged community members to increase life skills and creative skills and reconnect back with education and community.

The program continued in 2019, with a series of artist residencies complementing the ongoing creative program. This program feeds back into the community, as Orana Arts continues to support creative and cultural ventures outside the facility — an important factor in reducing the rate of recidivism and reincarceration. Elements

of the Orana Arts program directly address these issues and work with individuals to create social entrepreneurs and leaders through imparting knowledge, skills and a strong support system.

Over 600 men participated in the CSI program in 2019

2019 saw Orana Arts invited to present our model at the International Prison Creative Arts Conference, University of Michigan to great acclaim.



Artist, Raymond Ryan. Photo: Michelle Hall



Work by Cecily Walters & Toni Morrison. Home Ground Exhibition 'Imperfect' WPC 2018. Photo: Toni Morrison



# HOMEGROUND

HomeGround is a partnership between the Western Plains Cultural Centre and Orana Arts Inc. that is focused on development of professional practice in visual arts and culture for regional artists. HomeGround provides emerging regional artists with the opportunity to work with a professional curator to extend their practice and benefit from mentoring sessions on a range of possible areas. The outcome being an exhibition of their work in a high-profile exhibition space. Artists from regional New South Wales are invited to submit a proposal that outlines their exhibition including ideas, concept or body of work and example images of work to support the proposal.

In 2019 we saw the following artists create and exhibit at the WPCC, fully supported throughout the process by the Mariam Abboud, Curator HomeGround WPCC.

## **Twisted Sisters: Imperfect – Gulgong Parkes**

The Twisted Sisters, Cecily Walters and Toni Morrison, recreated the spirit of the universe in wool. Employing modern techniques to one of the oldest fabrics they constructed energetic three-dimensional pods and sculptures that bring together the vastness of the solar system to the earthy familiarity of our natural world.

## **Greg Pritchard: The Forest Wagga Wagga**

Greg Pritchard created a major gaffer tape installation called The Forest. The exhibition represented a great forest of branches, projecting moving elements like waterfalls, animals and birds. Since 2006 Greg Pritchard has worked with gaffer tape and is one of the few artists in the world who uses it in a figurative way.

## **Sam Paine: The Five Obstructions Mudgee**

Sam Paine's medium is traditional representational painting. Inspired by the Lars Von Trier film The Five Obstructions, his exhibition featured five paintings created based on a series of rules which have been placed before him by five contemporary artists hailing from the city and country.

## **Merryn Sommerville: This Haunted House Bega**

Merryn Sommerville explored the internal oppression of being raised in the Christian religion, and the complexity of negotiating issues of social injustice and identity as a condemned agnostic. Sommerville's emotive drawings touch on issues of female autonomy, sexuality, disability, morality and mortality.

# THE NANIMA PROJECT

Nanima is Australia's first and longest running inland Aboriginal reserve. Its significance is high, yet it is largely unknown or ignored given the complex social issues facing the community. Nanima is located 3kms out of Wellington.

The Nanima Project placed leading Aboriginal Contemporary artist Warwick Keen in residence within Nanima, creating large scale outdoor contemporary Dendroglyphs, reviving the practice of carved trees with Elders, post release Aboriginal men and community.

Warwick completed two works in residence, reflective of his experience and interpretation of place and history. Two pieces were completed, Incarceration and Locked Up, Both gifted to the Nanima community.

## INCARCERATION

After being shown 4 metal objects by Michael Nolan at the Wellington Lands Council building, I was left with a sense of intrigue in relation to their usage to chain and shackle Aboriginal people to a fence so that they couldn't escape their colonial masters. The 4 metal objects are referred to in my design and as the work developed that I could see a relationship to ring lock fencing.

*This relationship supports the notion of locking Aboriginal people like they were animals.*

This work is an immensely powerful piece (to me) because it does reflect in a historical and cultural way, the underlying reason for my visit to Wellington.



## LOCKED UP

My second carved pole refers to Aboriginal people being locked up behind bars, away from their own culture and way of life forced upon them by British rule, still very prevalent today.

*I have created jail door patterning as one component of my design and then included more recognisable cultural pattern making and line work, which is representing our people and our culture being isolated and punished for not conforming to the 'whitefella' way.*

This pole has a more traditional look to it and provides a more cultural and thoughtful contrast to "INCARCERATION".



Mask: Boi. Digital Image: Travis De Vries and Teresa Tan. Image Courtesy of artist.

# COUNTRY ARTS SUPPORT PROGRAM

Country Arts Support Program supports community arts and cultural development in regional NSW through small grants that assist locally determined community arts and cultural activities and increase opportunities for regionally based groups to access a diverse range of arts programs.

Orana Arts supported the following community driven arts projects through CASP.

- Baradine Pastoral, Agricultural & Horticultural Association: Roll Up to Circus Arts Workshop at the 2020 Baradine Show (\$2, 785)
- Dubbo South Public-School P&C Association: Using Art to Promote a Growth Mindset in Students (\$657.00)
- Coona Writers: Short Story Skills Workshop with renowned Australian Author (\$2,076)
- Mid-Western Regional Council Libraries: Fiction in a Flash (\$2,583)
- 1st Dubbo Scouts: Burning, Sculpting and Airbrushing our Creative Cub Scouts (\$2,810)
- Creative Collective ARI Inc: Artist in Residence (\$3000) Aboriginal contemporary artist Travis DeVries in residency, Coonabarabran.
- Goolma P& C: My Art My Story (\$5000)

# PARTNERS AND INVESTORS

- Bogan Shire Council
- Dubbo Regional Council
- Gilgandra Shire Council
- Mid-Western Regional Council
- Wellington Local Aboriginal Lands Council
- Ngarru Mayin Aboriginal Elders Corporation
- Create NSW
- Corrective Services NSW
- Department Primary Industry and Environment
- Destination NSW
- Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
- Charles Sturt University
- University of Michigan
- Western Plains Cultural Centre - Dubbo
- Footscray Community Arts Centre - Victoria
- Brown Cab Productions - Queensland
- Ilbijerri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre – Victoria
- Somebody's Daughter Theatre – Victoria
- Yirramboi Festival – City of Melbourne
- About Turn – Sydney/Coonabarabran

# BOARD

Jessica Moore (Chair) resigned October 2019

Anne Louise Capel Deputy Chair

Danielle Littlewood Treasurer

Virginia Handmer Director

Matt Poll Director

# OPERATIONAL TEAM

Alicia Leggett - Executive Director

Michelle Hall - Director Strategy and Development

Portia Lindsay - Manager Communications

Danielle Andrews – Creative Team

Shelby Russo-Vooles – Creative Team

## A SPECIAL MENTION AND THANK YOU TO

*Andrew Mitchell and Brendan Hartnett* for their generous donation which enabled our first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young and Emerging mentor program to happen in 2019 through Staging Stories.

*Portia Lindsay*, Communications Manager and trusted grammar police, who we farewelled during 2019. Portia is now available for others as she ventured into her own creative industry, Word Chicken. We wish her much success.

Design: Rachel Williams, Printed by: Hero Print

# ORANA ARTS 2019

Cover: *'Fire Within 1, 2 & 3'* by Toni Morrison. Photo by Toni Morrison.