



Tasmanian Regional Arts

Membership Communique Update

7 April 2017

Hi TRA Members

My thanks to all of you who made it to the AGM, especially those who travelled significant distances. It was lovely to see the faces of so many members the SEC have been working to support over the past few years.

Below you will find the latest update from the Tasmanian Regional Arts (TRA) State Executive Committee (SEC). You will see that we have been reducing overheads to match our changed financial situation. We have resolved numerous contractual commitments that relied on us having core operational funding, the staff have submitted a range of acquittals, including preparing the significant four year RAF program acquittal for which I thank them.

We have sadly farewelled our wonderful CEO, thus the voluntary SEC members are stepping in to undertake operational responsibilities and support the remaining part time-staff as we move forward.

Please ensure you pass this update on as promptly as you are able to your individual members. We will also upload the latest information to our website shortly. I'm sure many of you will be pleased to see the consultation plans with Arts Tasmania and Regional Arts Australia.

Please also note the joint communique between Regional Arts Australia (RAA) and TRA toward the end of this document.

On a personal note, I greatly appreciate the kind words and messages many of you have sent me while we work through these challenging times.

All the best for your respective creative projects.

Best regards, Annette Downs

President

Tasmanian Regional Arts

Membership Communique Update

As detailed in recent Tasmanian Regional Arts (TRA) member communiqués, in late 2016 TRA lost

operational funding resulting in the member-elected State Executive Committee (SEC) submitting a Special Resolution proposing closure of the organisation at the Annual General Meeting on 4 March 2017.

As the Special Resolution required 75% of the attending membership to vote in favour for it to pass, with 74.35% of the vote in favour the Special Resolution was lost by one vote. All existing members were subsequently re-elected to the SEC to continue governing the organisation.

Since the AGM the SEC has continued conversations with Regional Arts Australia regarding delivery of the Regional Arts Fund in Tasmania; Arts Tasmania regarding the future of the organisation; and, the Department of Communications and the Arts re grant monies held by TRA for proposed projects.

Below you will find detailed information providing an update to the membership and affiliates on this complex situation for TRA. For further information please view all previous communiqués here: <http://www.tasregionalarts.org.au/resources.html>

Staff Changes

TRA's reduced financial capacity has resulted in operational changes for the organisation. As many members know, on 31 March the position of TRA's CEO was terminated. Outgoing CEO Alison Copley provided outstanding leadership during a difficult time, generating considerable project funding for projects that engaged the membership and the broader arts community. The SEC is delighted to see that Alison has secured work with Tasdance and wishes her every success for the future.

TRA's remaining two staff, -RAF Officer Josie Chapman and Finance Officer Amanda Pilon both work part-time. They have been exemplary in the way they have continued to work hard for TRA, in particular during the challenging past 6 months. They have both requested, and are taking, annual leave during April, thus TRA's operations are on an autumn break and will re-open on 2 May. With one exception: Josie will be doing a few hours during this time to ensure the current round of RAF is ready for the May 1 assessment meeting.

Communication Policy

The situation that TRA faces in being an unfunded member-based organisation is highly complex from financial, governance, legal and stakeholder points of view as we transition from having skilled professional staff, to skeletal resources. The SEC policy is to provide a full and factual account of all relevant information to member branches via communiqués for dissemination direct to members, as we have done since failing to secure Arts Tasmanian operational funding. As a rule, the TRA SEC has not engaged with unmoderated social media communications and cannot vouch for the accuracy of information or opinions presented in this format.

Arts Tasmania Update

As detailed in previous member communiqués, when TRA lost operational funding, the Tasmanian Government through Arts Tasmania, proposed three models for the short-term support of TRA. The SEC thoroughly assessed each model and determined that they were insufficient to ensure the sustainable operations of TRA and proposed closure to the membership.

Following the AGM the SEC renewed discussions with Arts Tasmania on the proposed models of support. After thoroughly reviewing the situation again in liaison with Arts Tasmania, the TRA SEC concluded that the three proposed models are not functional within the governance structure of incorporated associations and will not secure the future of TRA. Arts Tasmania

accepts the SEC's analysis. This exhausts all potential State Government operational funding avenues available to TRA.

All parties understand that the TRA SEC is facing ever-reducing financial capacity to continue into the future.

Consultation

Both Arts Tasmania and Regional Arts Australia have confirmed their intent to consult with TRA members and the regional arts community in 2017 to help develop a future regional arts strategy for Tasmania.

Catalyst Arts and Culture Fund

The loss of operational funding and staff resources means that TRA does not have the capacity to deliver the 2017 state-wide arts project *Origins*, for which we obtained \$138,000 in Federal Government support through the Catalyst Arts and Culture Fund. In consultation with the Department of Communication and the Arts, these grant monies have been returned to the Federal Government.

Member Insurance

In early 2016, when our cash flow forecasts showed we would not be able to operate for the full 2017 year, in good faith, the SEC aimed to alleviate the financial strain on members and respond to an uncertain future by providing a 6-month waiver on insurance fees until 30 June 2017 and gave advice on alternate insurance providers.

With a small group of members blocking the Special Resolution to close, the SEC finds itself in a difficult position. The organisation is losing resources yet cannot close and still has a remit to continue delivery of a state-wide aggregated insurance scheme. With relevant staff on leave during April the SEC is committed to reviewing this issue in May. We understand this lack of clarity must be difficult for members, yet please be assured that your activities are insured until 30 June 2017, and the SEC will provide updated information to all members before this date.

Regional Arts Australia & Tasmanian Regional Arts

Joint Communiqué

Re: Regional Arts Fund Administration 7 April 2017

Regional Arts Australia, the Commonwealth Government and TRA are engaged in discussions to ensure the continued and uninterrupted delivery of the Regional Arts Fund (RAF) for artists and arts organisations in Tasmania.

TRA is the current Regional Program Administrator holding a four-year (2016–2020) Regional Funding Agreement with Regional Arts Australia to deliver the RAF program within Tasmania on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. TRA's loss of operational funding and subsequent lack of resources to continue as the Regional Program Administrator within Tasmania has implications for this program.

Regional Arts Australia has worked to facilitate arrangements for the delivery of the RAF until 30 June 2017 in partnership with TRA. This means that arrangements for the current funding round, peer assessment, payments to grant recipients, staffing and grants administration have been secured.

Regional Arts Australia is in discussion with relevant agencies to ensure continued delivery of the RAF into the future. It is intended that a Regional Funding Agreement will be established with a new Regional Program Administrator so that the July Round of the RAF can be delivered. Information about these arrangements and applications for the July RAF funding round will be provided through the current networks.

In the longer term, Regional Arts Australia is keen to be involved in widespread regional consultation with the arts community in Tasmania to explore options and seek solutions for regional arts delivery into the future.

For more information about TRA's loss of operational funding from the State Government, the circumstances of TRA's proposed closure and the result from the AGM, please view relevant communiqués that have been distributed to all TRA member branches and affiliates here: <http://www.tasregionalarts.org.au/resources.html>.