

# **Australian Museums and Galleries Association**

ANNUAL REPORT

January 2022- June 2023

# **AMaGA**

**Australian Museums  
and Galleries Association**

## **National Office**

Old Parliament House  
Upper Level 18 King George Terrace  
Parkes ACT 2600

**PO Box 24**  
**Deakin West ACT 2600**

[info@amaga.org.au](mailto:info@amaga.org.au)

# National Council 2022-2023: Executive and Ordinary Members

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## Executive

PRESIDENT

**Seb Chan**

Director and CEO, ACMI Melbourne

VICE-PRESIDENT

**Julie Baird**

Director Museum Archive Libraries & Learning, City of Newcastle

TREASURER

**Yulia Firestone** (to December 2022)

Finance Manager, Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Canberra

SECRETARY

**Craig Middleton**

Senior Curator, National Museum of Australia, Canberra

## Ordinary Members

**Cameron Auty**

Associate Director, Operations, Museums and Collections, University of Melbourne

**Nina Earl**

Assistant Curator, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney

**Vick Gwyn**

Curator, Creative Liaison, National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra

**Marcus Hughes** (to March 2022)

Director, Indigenous Engagement, National Library of Australia, Canberra

**Dr Lynda Kelly**

Director, LyndaKellyNetworks, NSW Jane King, Director, John Curtin Gallery, Perth

**Carly Lane** (to June 2022)

Senior Research Officer, Culture and the Arts, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Perth

**Dr Janice Rieger**

Associate Professor, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane

EX OFFICIO MEMBER

**Dr Mathew Trinca** AM FAHA

Chair, ICOM Australia

PUBLIC OFFICER

**Rebecca Coronel**

Head of Collection Preservation, Collections, National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra

# President and National Director Joint Report

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Museums and galleries are altered, disrupted and forever changed. Across the eighteen months of this report our sector has been beset with challenges to its very core, and some of our member organisations did not survive the assault. More recently, public trust in museums has been eroded and doubt cast on the integrity and ethics of our work with the recent exposures at the British Museum amongst other high profile institutions' failings. Although immeasurable, the ripple effect of such breaches is bound to impact the Australian sector. Given this grim picture of systemic loss, AMaGA has continued to reckon with the question as to how we best serve the needs and amplify the activities of our members in a turbulent environment. Yet, we agree that:

**This is the moment to reinvent museums: collectively as a global field; at the institutional level and as museum professionals. It is time to 'go down to the studs' by deconstructing harmful ideologies, facing truths, engaging communities that have been excluded in the histories and stories museums present, and rethinking the role of museums.** - Gail Anderson (ed.), *Reinventing the Museum, Inclusion, and Global Responsibilities (third edition)*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland (US), 2023, p.2.

Recent policy actions and the federal governments' legislative reform agenda have arguably created the most favourable conditions for the Australian museum and gallery sector in over a decade. The simplest way to characterise the various strategies, recalibrations and realignments of AMaGA's work over the past eighteen months is the act of making space for whatever these conditions enable.

## The national context

After the submission of a comprehensive 'ask', representative of the variety and diversity of museum and gallery practice in Australia, our requests (along with those of approximately one thousand other arts organisations) were met in late

January 2023 with the release of Revive, Australia's first cultural policy in 30 years. Two initiatives of Revive— the National Gallery's \$11M Sharing the National Collection and the updating of Significance 2.0 – amongst other structural innovations for the arts, signal that policymakers are sympathetic to our cause, recognise the expertise that resides within the sector itself and are prepared to work collaboratively.

AMaGA is well placed to navigate how the federal changes intersect with actions at both state and local levels. Given that over 50% of our members and stakeholders are from regional and remote areas, it is also pleasing to see more ongoing funding directed to these areas through the Regional Arts Fund to continue to address the needs of our sector's most vulnerable organisations, some of which were beneficiaries of the AMaGA administered Culture, Heritage, Arts and Regional Tourism (CHART) micro-grant program in 2021-22.

AMaGA has now commenced negotiations with government and other partners/stakeholders that will form the basis of our involvement in the rollout of the 80+ funded initiatives of Revive, namely the implementation of AMaGA's First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries and a focus on regional skills development and training. While the reboot of Significance 2.0 is currently unfunded, the government recognises AMaGA as a key driver in the revision and update of this critical methodological framework which informs so much museum and gallery work, and we will continue to advocate for this work to get underway.

## Federal institutions funding

The longstanding funding shortages of the national cultural institutions was addressed in April this year with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's announcement of the government's \$535.3m in funding over the next four years for: the Australian National Maritime Museum, Bundanon Trust,

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Museum of Australian Democracy (Old Parliament House), National Archives of Australia, National Film and Sound Archive, National Gallery of Australia, National Library of Australia (including \$33m for the digital archive, Trove), National Museum of Australia and the National Portrait Gallery of Australia.

While we've been a strong advocate for the national cultural institutions, our responsibility is to the whole sector. We believe the relief will be felt beyond the NCIs, as these federally funded institutions resume and rebuild their leadership roles in sharing their collections and expertise with the rest of the sector, through touring exhibitions, loans and skills development.

### Copyright reform

In 2023 AMaGA has been an active participant in the Federal Government's Ministerial Roundtable on Copyright, alongside senior reps from all the broadcasters, AIATSIS, Screen Producers Australia, IGEA, Vision Australia, Australian Society of Authors, Arts Law, Universities Australia, CSIRO and about 30 other peak bodies and organisations.

Throughout these roundtables the Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and his department have been present and listened. In addition to a full embrace of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) our collective concerns have been condensed into five areas to explore for further reform. These were:

- Orphan works (museums and library collections are full of these: where the rights holder is unknown and thus they stay in limbo, often undigitised because of perceived risk);
- A quotation exception (bringing us into line with the Berne Convention and potentially making it easier for researchers, documentary makers, and not-for-profit museums and galleries to engage in contemporary interpretive practices);
- Clarity over remote learning provisions (which currently have a different licensing regime to in-classroom delivery);

- Modernisation of the definition of 'broadcast'; and lastly,
- A roundtable on artificial intelligence - a topic that museums and galleries need to have a stake in for research and discovery uses, alongside the interests of artists.

It appears previous power blocs between industry and creator groups, and peak bodies like AMaGA, ALIA, CAUL and CAARA have started to shift and realign. There is positive momentum towards potential reforms that have stalled over the past 20 years. You can read the official high-level summary [here](#).

### Constitutional change

AMaGA's constitution was adopted in 1994 with minor updates in 2013. Throughout its term the current National Council has been considering if this document is fit for purpose and reflects the needs of the contemporary museum and gallery sector. In April this year, AMaGA members met in Canberra (or submitted proxies) to vote on two resolutions:

1. To change the association's financial year to July-June and
2. To include online participation and voting at all meetings of the Association.

Both resolutions were resoundingly endorsed by member vote and you can access the revised AMaGA Constitution [here](#). We're already beginning to see the benefits of these changes flow into the governance and operational areas of AMaGA as well as creating greater scope for active member engagement in decision-making.

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### **AMaGA enables and amplifies**

The positive cultural sector and organisational developments outlined above and within the body of this report, have given us both pause to reflect on the consistent advocacy of our predecessors on the National Council, former staff, branches and chapters and the work all members have done, and continue to do in their own contexts to advance the cause of museums and galleries in less sympathetic political environments.

Despite the fact there is, as yet, no direct benefits flowing to AMaGA from the new national cultural policy, to have our perspective sought by Ministers coupled with increased media coverage of our commentary on a range of sector issues, provide reasons for optimism. We therefore acknowledge we stand on the shoulders of those who went before us and created the strong platform for advocacy that AMaGA represents.

As we approach AMaGA's 30th anniversary in 2024, we honour this legacy, while forging new pathways and celebrate the foresight of our founders in the creation of a body that enables its membership and amplifies the role of museums and galleries.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'S' and 'C' followed by a horizontal line.

Seb Chan  
**National President**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Russell' in a cursive style.

Katie Russell  
**National Director**

## About the Association

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AMaGA is the national membership association and peak advocacy body representing museums and galleries. We encompass a wide and diverse range of national, state, regional and community museums, art galleries, historic sites, research centres, Indigenous cultural centres and Keeping Places across Australia. Our membership includes thousands of individual professionals through the large institutions and thousands more individual volunteers. AMaGA is an advocacy, research, service and professional development organisation. We build on a history of museum professional association activity that extends back to the 1930s, have branches in every state and territory, and support professional national networks of expertise. We promote industry best practice, develop ethical policies and provide guidelines.

The AMaGA National Office is located within the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House in Canberra. This accommodation partnership was established with former MOAD Director, Daryl Karp AM in 2021, with the newly appointed MoAD Director, Stephanie Bull agreeing to continue to host AMaGA, free of charge, across the reporting period. We would like to thank MoAD and Stephanie in particular for this generous support.

### Vision

Australia's cultural heritage is valued, enjoyed and protected.

### Purpose

To champion and connect a diverse, inclusive and thriving museum and gallery sector, that inspires and enables cultural participation.

### What we do

As a national membership association, we provide advice, representation, support and services to enable organisations and individuals to thrive; as a peak body we advocate on behalf of the sector to communicate the value of museums and galleries, raise professional standards, inform policy, and promote ethical practice.

### Our values

- First Nations first: recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.
- AMaGA champions its membership and the museums and galleries sector as resources for social development, based on equality of opportunity and support for intellectual, cultural and social diversity.
- AMaGA promotes an understanding of heritage as including natural and cultural, tangible and intangible dimensions. Heritage is conserved through particular objects and people, sites and places, events and narratives, music and performance, song, dance, scientific research, history and other human activities that convey knowledge and bear cultural meaning.
- AMaGA affirms that governments and communities share responsibility to support and resource the arts and the conservation and communication of the nation's heritage.
- AMaGA believes that the distinctive work museums and galleries pursue in conjunction with communities in preservation, research, interpretation, education and public programming is critical to the conservation of the nation's memory.

### Our environment

- Increasingly urgent calls from Australia's First Nation's communities for Indigenous-led organisational change and agency in the presentation of contemporary art and cultural heritage.
- The new National Cultural Policy provides a framework for the key pillars that guide the sector.
- Government-funded operational budgets are generally constrained, while non-government resources are increasingly sought and secured.
- The pandemic has precipitated a significant decrease in volunteerism, which has impacted all tiers of the sector.

- Increasing cultural social and age diversity across Australia.
- Greater institutional and government focus on ethical cultural heritage acquisition including collection building, deaccessioning and repatriation.
- Increasing community focus on environmental sustainability and the impacts of climate change.

### New strategic direction

Throughout this reporting period the National Council and AMaGA leadership continued to develop a radical new approach to the strategic direction of the association, one that operates simultaneously for the sector and to improve the association overall. This work is channelled through the following seven pillars which are to be read as interdependent:

#### First Nations

By which we mean: Indigenous agency, self-determination, governance, decolonisation, Indigenising.

#### Equity, Access and Inclusion

By which we mean: Ethics, diversity, access and inclusion.

#### Museum and Gallery Work

By which we mean: Career trajectories, mentorship, remuneration, salary equity transparency and benchmarking, succession planning, volunteer labour.

#### Sustainability

By which we mean: Sustainable models for the sector, environmental standards, exhibition processes, climate education.

#### Collections

By which we mean: Collection management, access, digitisation, disaster management and recovery.

#### Digital Transformation

By which we mean: Sector digital literacy, data-driven decision-making and advocacy, sector metrics, digital collection management, digitisation, digital museum ecosystem.

#### The Funding Mix

By which we mean: Sources and availability of funding for all tiers the sector, government, corporate, philanthropic, community.

#### National Association funding

Like many arts and culture organisations we are in a challenging financial position. For the last 12 months Council has been investigating additional revenue streams as well as submitting pre-budget submissions to government and clear financial requests through the AMaGA Cultural Policy submission. What we are ultimately seeking is operational funding to diversify the funding-base away from a reliance on revenue from memberships. That said, following ICOM's lead, in 2023 we increased our membership fees for the first time in many years to negate the increased costs to the organisation.

#### Constitutional change

AMaGA's constitution was adopted in 1994 with minor updates in 2013. As mentioned in the introduction, across this period the National Council made a strong commitment to and has been considering if the association's governing document is fit for purpose and reflects the needs of the contemporary museum and gallery sector.

As with the process that led up to the April 2023 vote on the resolutions regarding the association's financial year and enabling online voting, any future changes the Council propose will be presented to members with the requisite consideration period and a detailed discussion paper to inform their vote and to remain constitutional.



With the necessary re-focus on membership, strategic partnerships and internal processes, it is unsurprising that there have been changes to the staffing structure at AMaGA. The period also saw the introduction of a dedicated conference coordinator role.

In the second half of 2022 AMaGA entered a four-year partnership with the Western Australian Museum to administer the Collections WA program. We were delighted to welcome Natalie Evans, former Executive Officer of the AMaGA WA branch, to the national office team as the Program Manager on her return from maternity leave.

Julie Monro-Allison, National Professional Development Coordinator resigned from AMaGA in May 2022. In October 2022 longstanding staff, Lee Scott, National Operations Manager, Stephanie Hamilton, Communications, Membership and Awards Manager and Evie Kollas, Administrative Assistant and Membership Officer, resigned from the organisation.

As such, the association lost significant corporate knowledge and as a result, has had to divert limited staffing resources to recruitment and restructuring the association during the reporting period. Although this has been a challenging process, it has created a significant amount of momentum and a refocus on sustainable employment practice.

AMaGA staff at June 30, 2023:

Katie Russell  
**National Director**

Michelle Fracaro  
**General Manager (acting)**

Lily Pedvin  
**National Office Coordinator**

Deborah Milsom  
**National Finance Officer**

Abbie Hartman  
**National Conference Coordinator**

Natalie Evans  
**Collections WA Program Manager**

Lana Epshteyn  
**Social Media and Communications**

The AMaGA Victoria branch supports a dynamic team of part-time and contracted positions, headed by Executive Director Dr Ashley Robertson. AMaGA Victoria is responsible for providing various programs and services across Victoria, including the Museum Accreditation Program and Victorian Collections.

In 2022, the Western Australian office transitioned to a volunteer committee-led branch.

The Queensland branch maintains a 0.1 FTE Membership Officer, Karike Ashworth, as a secondment from Museums and Galleries Queensland.

# National Projects

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## First Peoples: Roadmap

AMaGA remains committed to the First Peoples: Roadmap as a strategic priority for which we are actively seeking funding for implementation. It is critical this process is Indigenous led.

Current First Peoples leadership discussions, especially the Bringing It Forward report launched at the September 2022 Purrrumpa gathering in Adelaide and, closer to AMaGA, the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD) is investigating a cultural safety program specific to museums that adheres to the principles of the Roadmap.

It must be acknowledged that the pandemic has delayed this work across the sector, and for AMaGA, in particular, the introduction of the CHART grant program for pandemic recovery diverted staff to deliver this national program. As soon as Roadmap funding is secured, AMaGA will seek advice from First Nations leaders regarding culturally sensitive implementation of the Roadmap, with remuneration of Indigenous advisors to shape an implementation plan as a first principle.

## CHART

The Culture, Heritage and Arts Regional Tourism (CHART) grant program was administered by AMaGA on behalf of the Australian Government aimed to support community, cultural heritage and arts organisations in regional Australia to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. CHART applications opened 5 November 2021 and ran until 30 June 2022.

CHART promoted participation in, and access to, Australia's arts and culture through developing and supporting cultural expression and sharing stories of community and historical significance. Community-run collecting organisations – including community museums, galleries, and historical societies were the beneficiaries of the CHART funding, by supporting these organisations to re-establish appealing cultural tourism experiences for visitors. Overall

CHART grants were distributed to 571 regional and remote organisations, representing a 1.58 million dollar boost to the sector.

## Collections WA

Collections WA is a digital repository developed by AMaGA WA and the Western Australian Museum. Funded by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Collections WA aims to enhance engagement and access to regional collections and connect WA's Distributed State Collections.

Launched in 2020 there has been exponential growth, engagement, and excitement about the platform. In 2022 the AMaGA National Office entered a renewed four-year partnership with the Western Australian Museum to administer the Collections WA program.

Collections WA is uniting collecting institutions and groups from all sectors of the community and regions of the State.

Collections WA statistics to 30 June 2023:

- 176 organisations have contributed more than 58,000 records.
- There are 35,000 public records to explore.
- The website has received nearly 1 million individual views.

In the coming year Collections WA will focus on a partnership with the Country Women's Association of WA for their Centenary in July 2024 and encouraging use of this valuable resource by schools and researchers.

## National Projects

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### Mentorship pilot program

The AMaGA Mentorship Pilot Program paired seven early career professionals with established industry professionals by their area of expertise. Over the course of the six-month program, from March-September 2023, fourteen participants received targeted skills development, personal guidance, and greater exposure to the GLAM sector through regular one-on-one meetings.

**As a mentee I found the AMaGA Mentorship program invaluable. It connected me with someone far more accomplished in the industry, with skills, knowledge and insight exceeding my own. The program has given me fresh ways of looking at and engaging with the sector.**

**Being a mentor and trying to help another with their career caused me to reflect on my own and articulate knowledge and understanding I didn't realise I'd gained.**

This Program was coordinated by AMaGA National Office with the Emerging Professionals National Network and the Evaluation and Visitor Research National Network, and we look forward to developing the program further in the coming years.

### ASEAN Pilot Training Programme on Conservation and Collections Management

In May 2023, Dr Ash Robertson, Executive Director of the Victorian Branch, travelled to Singapore as a representative of AMaGA to participate in the Pilot Training Programme on Conservation and Collections Management for ASEAN. This significant event marked the first collaborative effort between ICOM Australia (represented by the National Museum of Australia) and ICOM Singapore (represented by the Heritage Conservation Centre, an institution under the National Heritage Board).

From 8 to 12 May 2023, heritage professionals from across the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Australia joined together

with more than 20 participant delegates to engage in a collective learning experience. The primary focus was on practical preventive conservation approaches, tailored to address common conservation challenges encountered in the Southeast Asian region. In particular, Ash presented on collection management systems and cataloguing practices, using their Victorian Collections CMS and Small Museums Cataloguing Manual as useful examples and resources.

The training sessions were conducted at various venues across Singapore, including the beautiful Heritage Conservation Centre, with the aim of raising awareness and fostering a deeper understanding of deterioration factors, risk assessments, conservation priorities, and collection documentation. The program helped to equip participants with practical solutions and innovative ideas in these areas, as well as the ability to engage in meaningful discussions around their shared challenges.

AMaGA is honoured to have been invited to contribute to this unique and collaborative initiative. The experience and knowledge gained through the Pilot Training Program proved to be of immeasurable value, benefiting not only the ASEAN delegates but also leaving a lasting impression on the partnership organisations and presenters who directly observed the transformative power of international knowledge exchange of this nature.

## National Projects

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### Collaborative advocacy: Building networks, connections and visibility

AMaGA considers it a priority to work with industry partners, government and the private sector towards shared goals and outcomes. This is essential to building a sustainable peak body. In the lead-up to the federal election AMaGA joined the Consortia of Arts Peaks to collectively advocate for the recognition of the value culture brings to Australian society. The group accelerated its work during the national cultural policy consultation, working to align our asks and highlight each other's areas of strength.

Post submission, AMaGA was invited to a roundtable of arts leaders with Minister Burke in the leadup to September 2022 national jobs summit. We also backed this work with a group letter to Prime Minister Albanese and Treasurer Jim Chalmers urging the national cultural policy be fully-funded.

Our media profile is also growing with comments regularly sought from the President and National Director on topics ranging from the ICOM definition of museums, funding for national cultural institutions and careers in the sector. We continue as a pillar of **Blue Shield Australia**, whose chair shifts from the archives to the museums sector as of July 2023, and we participate in the **Cultural Response Roundtable** and **GLAM Peak**.

### Collaborative research

In this reporting period AMaGA has placed newfound emphasis on research, to heighten awareness of and seek solutions for the 'wicked' problems of the cultural sector. Research work is key to building the broader stakeholder networks we need for long-term sustainability. To this end, we continued work on one national research project, and established three further university partnerships as follows:

- **Visual Arts Work: Strategies for a sustainable visual arts sector** (RMIT ARC Linkage Grant - AMaGA and NAVA Project Partners)
- **Organisational Change for Audience Diversification** (Deakin University Business School Australia Council & Ian Potter Foundation - AMaGA Industry Partner)
- **Museum Digital Social Futures** (RMIT ARC Linkage Grant - AMaGA and ACMI Project Partners)
- **Assembly: A New Conversation about Museum Research** (ANU & Monash – AMaGA Industry Partner).

## Sponsors, Supporters and Donors

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AMaGA continues to amplify our impact through partnerships and collaboration with allied organisations across the cultural sector, as well as through industry and government sponsors and supporters.

We thank the **Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development Communications and the Arts** for continued support of AMaGA conference bursaries under the National Distributed Collections program. In June 2023 AMaGA signed a further support agreement for this program until 2026.

We continued our longstanding relationship association with **ICOM Australia** (the Australian National Committee of the International Council of Museums). AMaGA receives secretariat funding from ICOM Australia, which enables AMaGA to support ICOMs yearly renewals and membership. AMaGA and ICOM offer reciprocal membership discounts. Close cooperation between the two organisations continued throughout the reporting period with ICOM sponsoring international keynote speakers at both the 2022 and 2023 AMaGA national conferences. ICOM Australia also present their annual awards within the program of the AMaGA conference each year.

The **Gordon Darling Foundation** (GDF) has supported AMaGA in various ways for close to twenty years and continues to generously support AMaGA initiatives and the broader Australian visual arts sector.

Up to 2020 GDF sponsored the Museum Leadership Program, a unique week-long intensive residential program (plus follow-up refreshers) for emerging leaders in the museum and gallery sector. Many MLP participants have since been elevated to senior sector leadership positions in Australian and international institutions – testament to the programs' effectiveness.

For many years now, the GDF has sponsored an in-person international visual arts keynote speaker for the AMaGA national conference. In 2023, GDF sponsored the attendance and appearance at the Newcastle conference of Laura Raicovich, New York City-based author of *Culture Strike: Art in the Age of Protest*. We thank the foundation for providing AMaGA conference delegates the opportunity to hear from this inspiring sector leader and look forward to similarly thought-provoking future collaborations.

**AARNet** is a not-for-profit company that provides ultra high-speed Internet and communications services only to Australia's research and education sector. AARNet supports AMaGA by subsidising AMaGA's Zoom license, enabling seamless communication and our professional development sessions.

**Gallagher** are part of a group of Australian and international companies providing world class insurance broking and risk management services. Working with Gallagher, AMaGA developed, and have been offering since 2013, group Voluntary Workers Personal Accident Insurance policy available to organisational members that is cost effective and tailored to our sector.

We thank the **Australian Book Connection** for their ongoing annual support of the Museums Australasia Publication Design Awards (MAPDA).

AMaGA is incredibly grateful to all members, and supporters who donate to the association. We particularly acknowledge the **Cartwright Douglas Fund** which continues to support members to attend the national conference.

# National Conference

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## **Boorloo / Perth, June 2022**

The 2022 National Conference took place from 14-17 June in Boorloo Perth with the theme of: *HEAR. US. NOW. Turning Conversations into Action*, with many braving their first conference in 2 years.

Significant investment was agreed by AMaGA National Council to make Perth 2022 a success. A number of factors, namely border closures until late March, contributed to delegate and sponsor uncertainty about the event. As we know, events were the largest casualty of the COVID-19 environment, and AMaGA's national conference was no different and as such experienced significant participation hesitancy. In response, Council took the decision to reduce registration rates for delegates and to forego the surplus expected from previous national conferences.

In the interests of accessibility, we also introduced a new registration category of organisational digital registrations - which, for a set fee, any or all staff of an institution could access the conference digitally. As with any new product, this type of registration was also subsidised by AMaGA in the interests of building it in as standard into the future. It should also be noted that the conference team also did an extraordinary amount of work to secure new sponsorship and partners for the event, which meant the financial loss was less than it would likely have been.

Despite these challenges 432 delegates attended face-to-face, with 334 delegates attending online.

## **Awabakal and Worimi Land / Newcastle, May 2023**

The AMaGA 2023 National Conference took place from 16-19 May on Awabakal and Worimi Land, Newcastle, NSW. The theme for this conference was *Discomfort: Brave Conversations and New Connections in Changing Environments*. AMaGA 2023 invited delegates to address uncomfortable but extremely important conversations to engage with the current issues facing the GLAM sector. 476 delegates attended face-to-face, with 340 virtual delegates. This was an increase from AMaGA 2022.

The growth in virtual delegate attendance reflects AMaGA's dedication to accessibility and we plan to retain this hybrid model moving forward.

## **Conference bursary program**

AMaGA's bursary program is continuing to move from strength to strength with a renewed commitment to providing support for conference attendance. Additionally, AMaGA and the Department of the Arts has signed an agreement to provide bursary funding until 2026.

AMaGA acknowledges the support of all our state and territory branches, the Cartright Douglas Fund, The Education Network, Thylacine, Axiell, Archival Survival and of the members who contributed to the Conference Inclusion Fund. Without this generous support, the bursary program would not be possible.

# Awards

## National Museum and Gallery Awards

AMaGA delivers an annual awards program that celebrates, recognise and promotes sector achievements. The peer-reviewed 2022 awards program exemplified excellence and provided qualitative examples of sector publications, branding, exhibitions. These innovations were shared at the national conference in Newcastle.

## Awards revamp

The Museums & Galleries National Awards (MAGNA) and the Museums Australasia Multimedia & Publication Design Awards (MAPDA) are evolving. The national awards will be known as The AMaGAs.

In late 2021 a working group was formed to undertake a review of the MAPDA and MAGNAs. community members from a range of backgrounds and experiences gathered to review the AMaGA awards program with the aim of streamlining and updating them.

Working group members: Jilda Andrews, Stephanie Hamilton, Andrew Hiskens, Lynda Kelly, Craig Middleton, Michael Parry, Lauren Smith and Keir Winesmith.

There are a number of recommendations that have been made and they will be slowly implemented over a period of two annual award cycles.

For the 2023 AMAGAs, the MAGNA and MAPDAs were amalgamated mostly in name only, as the categories, for the most part, remained the same. However, the criteria for entry and judging will now be the same for both categories.

In addition to the review, AMaGA would like to acknowledge all the sector professionals who volunteer their time to judge the awards. It is a very big undertaking, and it is only through their generosity that the awards can continue as a key annual event for the museum and gallery sector to collectively celebrate their achievements. AMaGA would like to make special mention of Brett Wiencke and Suzie Campbell for their long-term commitment to the Awards.



*Carol Cartwright and Louise Douglas receiving the inaugural AMaGA Patrons Award*

AMaGA communications are primarily focused on connecting, building, and engaging members and the broader sector with relevant sector news and activities. In late 2022 and throughout 2023, we greatly increased AMaGA's mainstream media and social media presence, actively engaging more people through our e-news bulletins and social media.

In the ten months to July 2023 AMaGA's LinkedIn profile gained 2,147 new followers, to reach a total following of 3,485. AMaGA's Facebook's reach has increased by 27% over the past year (June 2022 to July 2023), reaching 18,857 people profiles and site visits are up 69.5%.

A consistent schedule of e-newsletters has been put in place to communicate news and highlighted content to engage our membership and subscribers. The fortnightly newsletters include a Director's message with AMaGA updates and highlights of upcoming events and relevant sector news. Jobs bulletins are sent via email every other week and offer value for money for member organisations undertaking recruitment. Jobs listings have significantly increased, a continuation of the year-to-year gain for listings. Listing prices increased in July 2023, yet we remain a cheaper alternative to our competitors.

To the relief of many members, we are happy to say we've continued work on the AMaGA website redevelopment project which also incorporates a much-improved membership portal. A website demonstration and virtual walkthrough was shared during the Members Forum at the national conference in May, and although this project has been affected by staff changes and resourcing challenges, we are determined to launch AMaGA's new website before the end of 2023.



## Branches, Chapters and National Networks

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### Australian Capital Territory

President: Holly Anderson  
Vice-President: Kate Armstrong  
Secretary: Georgina Holt  
Treasurer: Caitlin James  
Committee members: Craig Middleton, Peter Mascini, Mitchell Dare, Rose Mackie, Grace Blakely-Carroll, Rowan Henderson, Kate Johnston, Megan Shakeshaft, Zoe Bilston.

The reporting period has been a challenging one for the ACT branch with several changes to the committee. The focus has been on continuing to offer networking and development opportunities for members of the Territory and NSW regional surrounds. Events throughout the year have provided behind the scenes access to both national institutions and hidden collections with the chance to talk with industry professionals on developments and challenges they have faced with their exhibitions, collections and site management.

### Northern Territory

President: Wendy Garden  
Secretary: Felicity Green  
Treasurer: Carolyn McLennan  
Membership Officer: Kerry Nancarrow  
Committee members: Jared Archibald, Neville Jones, Kevin Lucas, Wendy Wood, Christine Tarbett-Buckley, Paige Taylor and Adam Worrall.

The NT Branch of AMaGA remained active across the reporting period with a regular series of networking breakfasts with guest speakers from the GLAM sector, talks and an excursion to Marrawuddi Arts and Culture in Jabiru. We also embarked on a special online project that will bring together member organisations in an online exhibition to be launched early in 2024.

### Western Australia

President: Christen Bell  
Vice-President: Jenny Scott  
Secretary: Amy Rumble  
Committee members: Marani Greatorex, Rikki Clarke, Louella Hayes, Erica Persak, Alex Moir, Prue Griffin.

### Great Southern Chapter

Malcome Traill and David Theodore

### Southwest Chapter

Jenny Scott and Wendy Dickinson

### Peel Chapter

Nicholas Reynolds

### Mid-West Chapter

Marilyn Gazeley

Following the National Conference held in Perth in mid 2022, the WA State Committee reverted to a fully volunteer model and has been focused on repositioning activities to better support the active regional chapters, and metropolitan membership. A new structure in 23/24 will align the WA State operations with other volunteer-run state committees. The Committee is continuing to seek opportunities to collaborate with other organisations in the sector.

### Tasmania

Treasurer: Kristie Ross  
Committee members  
David Maynard, Dawn Oelrich, Elspeth Wishart, Jaydeyn Thomas, Michael Smith, Elizabeth Bondfield.

The Tasmanian Branch is, at the time of this report in the process of reforming, and we look forward to hearing about its activities in next year's annual report.

## Branches, Chapters and National Networks

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### Victoria

President: Andrew Hiskens

Vice-President: Karina Lamb

Secretary: Anthony Camm

Treasurer: Siobhan Barker

Committee members: Megan Sheehy, Monica Cronin, Jade Hadfield, Sione Frances, Lucie Paterson, Kim Biggs.

Executive Director: Ash Robertson

The branch successfully renewed their core funding through Creative Victoria's Creative Enterprises Program (CEP), securing over \$340,000 annually for core operations (2022-2025), including the Accreditation Programs, event facilitation, and resource development and advocacy. Notably, AMaGA Victoria initiated the Bushfire Recovery Project (BRP), receiving \$160,000 from the Victorian State Government's Regional Business and Economy Recovery Plan. This project established temporary digitisation studios in bushfire-affected areas, aiding disaster preparedness and response. The overwhelming success of BRP has led to the Branch securing another \$330,000 to run a second phase of the program: The Collections and Community Resilience Project. This new phase kicked off in January 2023 and is scheduled to run until the end of the year.

Furthermore, AMaGA Victoria continued its commitment to the wider sector by conducting workshops for Timor Leste, in partnership with the Whole of Victorian Government Timor-Leste Program and the National Directorate for Museums and Libraries in Timor-Leste's Secretariat of State for Arts and Culture (SEAC). These workshops were held across January and February 2022, which bolstered the skills of Timor-Leste's public service museum staff.

Alongside Regional Arts Victoria, Creative Victoria, and the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV), work continued on the Victorian

Government's Regional Collections Access Program (RCAP). Launched in December 2021 with a \$4 million investment, the program aimed to support regional Victorian museums and galleries, including eligible interface LGAs, with equipment and infrastructure upgrades to enhance their exhibition capacity. In 2022 and 2023, the team focused on facilitating grant applications, participating in the selection process, and supporting successful project implementation.

As always, AMaGA Victoria met their commitment to the sector through professional support and advice as well as their regular initiatives and partnerships. These include the Accreditation Programs, the Victorian Collections CMS and training workshops, and a full calendar of networking and professional development events.

For their 'State Forum: Future Focus' event, the team was successful in securing a \$4,000 grant from the City of Melbourne, allowing for a full two days of engaging presentations and thoughtful discussion. Finally, AMaGA Victoria released a much anticipated update to the Small Museums Cataloguing Manual — a valued sector resource for the care and documentation of culture and heritage collections.

## Branches, Chapters and National Networks

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### New South Wales

President: Jane Thogersen  
Vice-President: Diana Lorentz  
Secretary: Helen Myers  
Treasurer: Debbie Sommers  
Committee members: David Hampton, Penny Edwell, Jess Jennings, Jane Johnston.

### Hunter Chapter

Maureen Kingston

### Far North Coast Chapter

Chair: Marea Buist

### Murray Network

Kate Eastick

### Riverina Chapter

Geoff Burch

### Mid North Coast Chapter

Chair: Debbie Sommers

2022 was a challenging year for many of our NSW AMaGA members including the continuing impacts of the pandemic as well as the disastrous weather, mold and flooding that plagued so many parts of the state. We applaud all those who reached out to assist colleagues and friends in the industry in times of need and who continue to offer support. It was excellent to be able to come together in-person for the behind-the-scenes/ exhibition tour and social networking events that we have held though we hope that numbers will continue to rise at these events as we get back to whatever the new normal is now.

The AMaGA NSW committee for the 2022-2023 term has been predominantly made-up of regional representatives, currently the committee members are at least 60% regionally based. This term also saw changes in the committee as members took on opportunities elsewhere, our branch Vice President, Margot Jolly, left at the end of 2022 due

to her increased workload as M&G NSW Museum Consultant, our Secretary, Stephanie Chinneck, left us in early 2023 to take-on a role at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge UK and most recently Jess Jennings has withdrawn as he takes on his duties of newly elected Mayor of Bathurst (Congratulations Jess). This does mean that we will be going into a Nov 2023 vote for 2024-2026 committee positions in need of nominations from our membership and we encourage AMaGA members from NSW to consider nominating.

The regional nature of the committee certainly contributed to the plan to host the 2023 conference in the regional centre of Newcastle and this became the main focus of the AMaGA NSW Committees' time throughout 2022 and into May 2023. Specific mention should be made to our regional chapters, two of which are represented by committee members Debbie Sommers (Mid North Coast Chapter) and David Hampton (Hunter Chapter) who have also been doing fantastic work bringing members together outside of Sydney. The Hunter Chapter, in particular, was pivotal to the success of the 2023 Newcastle Conference.

Along with the conference planning, committee members in 2022 were heavily involved in discussions and focus groups around the development of a NSW Museum & Heritage Strategy, having never had one in the state previously. This seemed to stall at the finish-line in 2023 with the state election and subsequent appointment of a new government.

In its place, we have now been involved in discussions around the development of the state's first Arts and Creative Industry Policy which is still in its infancy.

## Branches, Chapters and National Networks

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### Queensland

President: Emma Bain  
Vice-President: Trudie Leigo  
Treasurer: Brian Tucker  
First Nations Officer: Cheryl Moggs  
Communications Officer: Rebecca Lush  
Committee members: Sarah Barron, Michelle Blair, Mary Findlay, Renai Grace, Rebecca McDuff, Charla Strelan, Beverley Smith.

This year the AMaGAQ Executive Committee's ongoing commitment to meeting our Queensland members in person at their museums and galleries recommenced. After our first meeting in February went online due to flooding and the spread of COVID-19 through the state in May, we were able to travel to Stanthorpe Regional Art Gallery for the second meeting of the year. During our two-day visit we met the gallery committee members, local volunteers, artists, and experienced the Granite Belt region.

For our third committee meeting and Annual General Meeting (5 July 2022) we visited Redcliffe Art Gallery, meeting with the team and participating in an exhibition tour. Our fourth committee meeting was in October at Fort Lytton National Park where we also participated in a fascinating site tour. Our final committee meeting for 2022 was in December at the Integrated Pathology Learning Centre located in the grounds of the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital.

The AMaGAQ quarterly e-newsletter 'QuickNews' featured the member sites we visited and also shared information about what is on offer, upcoming events and professional development opportunities.

In September 2022, AMaGAQ partnered with the Museum of Brisbane (MoB) to deliver an online webinar into the practicalities of caring for the Easton Pearson Archive as part of the AMaGA professional development series coordinated by the national office.

### South Australia

President: Amy Dale  
Vice-President: Claudia von der Borch  
Secretary: Jacinta Weiss  
Treasurer: Patrick Bugeja  
Committee members: Mandy Paul, Guanmin Hu, Liz Grandmaison, Stephen Zagala Ingrid Goetz.

In 2022 and 2023 the South Australian branch launched their second and third annual events program, advertising all events and activities for the whole calendar year. The forward planning and organisation of the program has raised the profile of the branch within the SA GLAM sector, as well as providing value to members. In 2022, the highlight of the year was the Night at the Quizeum event; a museum-themed quiz which was attended by over sixty people. In 2023, we slightly reduced the number of events within the annual program to avoid hosting multiple events in a single month. We also started to trial alternative networking options in addition to the popular GLAM breakfast. These were scheduled at the end of the working day, based on feedback that early mornings were not suitable for all. In 2022 and 2023, our branch also awarded \$4,877 in bursaries to support individuals in the sector to attend the National Conference.

### National Network Chairs

Aviation Museums: John Park  
CAUMAC: Caine Chennatt  
Community Museums: Debbie Sommers  
Education: Stephanie Smith  
Emerging Professionals: Natalie Carfora  
Evaluation & Visitor Research: Lynda Kelly  
Exhibitions: Helen Privett  
Historians: Rebecca Carland  
IMTALAP: Jo Clyne  
Performing Arts Heritage: Helen Munt

## Membership

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The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt across the sector with people choosing or forced to leave the sector for economic reasons. These stressors have contributed to a decline in both individual and organisational membership across the 18-month period of this report.

Despite these circumstances, AMaGA continues to accommodate the needs of our valued members. AMaGA has offered hardship support via discounted membership fees for smaller organisations struggling with the flow on effects of the pandemic or environmental impacts such as flooding or fires, on a case-by-case basis.

AMaGA has noted a decline in both organisational and individual memberships for the years 2022 and 2023. A considerable number of individual members corresponded via email or telephone, articulating career transitions during the pandemic or their preference for engagement with AMaGA through their organisational memberships. Notably, AMaGA received a substantial number of emails from members unable to maintain their membership due to cost-of-living pressures.

The most notably effected membership categories were as anticipated, organisational level A with an operational budget of \$50,000 or less, and individual members. AMaGA retained membership from larger organisations, Level B-F consistent with the previous year's trends and is on track to continue to retain and increase these members with many of the larger organisations opting into membership into conference and awards benefits and bundles.

An improved member online self-serve experience is currently being developed. Late 2023 will see the launch of a new AMaGA website and membership portal. AMaGA is looking forward to providing its members with a better user experience and the ability to accurately track member engagement.

The new website will provide AMaGA staff with increased visibility of membership renewals, trends and allow us to actively notify you of any membership concerns. We look forward to bringing an improved online membership experience later this year.

## Thankyou

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AMaGA National is supported by a small staff team and through the enormous goodwill of members who volunteer their time, sponsors, and sector allies. We are fortunate to have such a depth of talent and experience available in a small organisation, and, as a result, AMaGA continues to be greater than the sum of its parts.

We take this opportunity to thank all members of the staff team, national council, and branch committees, for bringing their passion and ongoing commitment and support to AMaGA throughout another very challenging environment in the 22-23 reporting period.

We also thank every member, organisational and individual, for their support. We have been fortunate to see the strength of our membership organisation grow over these eighteen months. We are excited about the challenges and opportunities of the year ahead as we continue to help the museum and gallery sector grow and transform – together.



*Curator Alice Clanachan viewing the European prints collection with a visiting artist.  
Flinders University Art Museum, Adelaide*

**AMaGA**  
Australian Museums  
and Galleries Association