

Australian Museums and Galleries Association ACT Branch Annual Report January to December 2020

Report compiled by Rowan Henderson – President, and Anna O’Leary, Treasurer, ACT Branch of Australian Museums and Galleries Association.

Branch Activities

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a disrupted year for the ACT Branch, as it was for the national organisation. The Branch’s planned calendar of events was put on hold when business shut down in March, and wasn’t able to be resumed until September. Despite this, the Branch was able to deliver four in-person events and one virtual event, and continued to contribute to the aims of the national Association.

The ACT Branch delivered the following events in 2020 *[ACT Branch Strategic Plan 2017-2020 Business Priority 1.1: Deliver a varied program of events that benefits members]:*

May 2020

- Iso Chats: ACT Branch Edition: After mastering Zoom, ACT Branch members met virtually to beat boredom and maintain connections during shutdown.

September 2020

- The ACT Branch held its delayed Annual General Meeting at the National Archives of Australia, and were treated to a tour of the Archives’ redeveloped spaces. *[Strategic Plan 2020 Business Priority 1.3 Recognise and celebrate the achievements of the museums and galleries sector in the ACT]*

October 2020

- The Branch held a local event for the national virtual meet-up at the National Museum of Australia. Guests enjoyed refreshments and watched the inspiring talk by Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art and Chair of the Federal Government’s Creative Economy Taskforce, Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE. This was followed by the virtual presentation of the Museum and Gallery National Awards (MAGNAs). *[Strategic Plan 2020 Business Priority 1.3 Recognise and celebrate the achievements of the museums and galleries sector in the ACT]*

November 2020

- As part of the Design Canberra Festival, the ACT Branch hosted a walk on Black Mountain led by Ngunawal Elder Tyronne Bell of Dhawura Tours *[Strategic Plan 2020 Business Priority 2.2 Partner with other organisations in national and regional programs where they benefit AMaGA members]*

December 2020

- The Branch held an end-of-year celebration at Canberra Museum and Gallery. They were honoured to hear from the new ACT Minister for the Arts, Tara Cheyne MLA, and also farewelled and thanked National President Alex Marsden.

The ACT Branch again awarded two Internship Prizes. Winners received: a one-year membership to AMaGA (valued at up to \$160), a \$100 gift certificate at a museum store or bookshop and an interview with the recipient which featured in the AMaGA ACT Bulletin and on the AMaGA web and social pages. The 2020 winners were: Junwen Zhu, Masters of Museum and Heritage Studies, who interned at the National Museum of Australia and ANU Heritage and Catherine Purnell, Bachelor of Art History

and Curatorship (Honours) who interned at the National Gallery of Australia in the department of Australian Prints and Drawing. [*Strategic Plan 2020 Business Priority 1.2: Build a diverse and sustainable membership base by focussing on retention of existing members and attracting new individual members from larger institutions and through other arts and educational networks in the ACT*].

National Conference

The 2020 Conference was first postponed to October 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and then further postponed until June 2021. Despite this, the ACT volunteers committed to delivering the conference in 2021 and, after a short break, returned to working towards this end. [*Strategic Plan 2020 Business Priority 4.3 Focus on effective communication with the 2020 National Conference organising committee*]

Unfortunately, this postponement meant that Branch funds were not expended this year on bursaries, however these will be expended in 2021. [*Strategic Plan 2020 Business Priority 1.4 Focus bursary opportunities on maximising attendance at the 2020 National Conference in Canberra*]

Finance and Membership

The strong financial position of the AMaGA ACT Branch ensured it was able to withstand a year thrown into upheaval by the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 year ended with \$86,063 in equity available to the branch.

In addition to using available funds to run regular programs in Canberra, AMaGA ACT is committed to supporting attendance at the National Conference through generous bursary assistance. Due to the postponement of the National Conference, bursaries were not paid out of the 2020 budget, but will be taken from the 2021 budget instead.

The Financial Report outlines the financial position of the branch in more detail. Expenditure and income were slightly reduced, largely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts are already being made to resume the events program in a 'COVID-safe' manner for 2021. Sustaining and growing membership is an ongoing focus for the branch, and we are always looking at ways to attract emerging professionals and students.

Committee

ACT Branch Strategic Plan 2017-2020 Business Priorities 4.1-4.4:

The Committee was active and committed to delivering AMaGA ACT's programming goals, despite being unable to host in-person events for much of the year.

All committee members are volunteers, and organised events and activities in their own time. The committee met face-to-face at Canberra Museum & Gallery (in February 2020 and from October to December 2020). The Committee met virtually using Zoom during the other months of the year.

The ACT Branch President was present at each of the virtual National Council meetings through 2020, and was able to contribute to national discussions regarding funding, programs, advocacy and use of membership funds. [*Strategic Plan 2020 Business Priority 3.1 Contribute to National Council through the participation of the President and by representing ACT members and local network members as needed*]. The President assisted preparing the National Membership Strategy and Action Plan as part of National Council's Membership Committee. This has been rolled out nationally and carries many of

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the actions already implemented in the ACT to other States and Territories, such as having a Branch Membership Officer.

I would like to acknowledge the additional efforts of committee members in supporting broader AMaGA activities and programs. Ben Pratten worked to update our web content, while Sheridan Burnett acted as our Branch Membership Officer.

Position holders

President – Rowan Henderson (National Council representative)

Vice President – Kate Armstrong

Secretary – Holly Anderson

Treasurer – Grace Blakeley-Carroll

Ordinary Members

Sheridan Burnett

Karina Libbey

Peter Mascini

Craig Middleton

Vicki Northey

Anna O'Leary

Ben Pratten

Amy Wolgamot

Thank you

The Committee would like to thank the AMaGA National Office staff for their assistance in managing financial matters, the website, membership processes and cross branch communications. The Committee would also like to thank the Directors, CEOs and staff of museums and galleries across Canberra who support the AMaGA ACT branch through the use of meeting rooms, theatres and exhibition spaces throughout the year. In particular, thanks go to the Canberra Museum and Gallery which provided the venues for our monthly meetings throughout the year and the NMA and NAA for hosting events.