

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Partnership provides much needed support for southwest creatives



Almost one year on from the launch of the South West Creative Industries Strategy 2025–2029, partners across southwest Victoria are celebrating a year of collaboration, investment and tangible progress toward a more sustainable creative sector.

Led by Regional Arts Victoria (RAV) and delivered in partnership with local councils and regional stakeholders, the Strategy's first year has focused on strengthening creative practice, building connections, and supporting artists and creative workers to access skills, networks and funding.

Over the past 12 months, RAV alone has supported 366 southwest artists and creative community members, alongside 415 partners and stakeholders, through tailored advice, programs and strategic collaboration.

On behalf of the federal government, RAV delivered 58 Regional Arts Fund advice sessions for local projects, lead to 15 southwest applications and \$9,000 in successful grants supporting local creatives.

These included support for a First Nations theatre maker, Nazaree Dickerson to participate in Yirramboi Festival; art therapist, Angela Seran Blue Aerth to lead an exhibition empowering women; musician, Nigel Wearne to perform internationally, and for creative cinematographer, Harvey McCorkell to film Find Your Voice Collective ahead of their performance with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra this Friday.

In 2025, partners attained almost \$35,000 directly for strategy-aligned projects & supported community members to attain almost \$250,000.

Local Keeray Woorong artist, Sherry Johnstone, who received support through Strategy partners, said the impact has been both practical and transformative:

*“Having RAV and the South West Community Foundation walk alongside me made a real difference. Their advice and letters of support helped me secure over \$42,000 in funding, which gave me the confidence to pivot my business and launch my fashion label. It’s opened opportunities to work with knitwear specialists and grow my practice in new ways, while staying connected to who I am, my culture and my community here in the southwest.”*

RAV Southwest Regional Manager, Stacey Barnes said the Strategy demonstrates the power of working collectively across the region.

“2025 was about building on progress from the inaugural 2020-2024 Strategy whilst refining the focus and approach. While challenges for local creatives remain, particularly around income, visibility, connection and access to spaces, the progress we’ve seen shows what’s possible when partners work together with a shared vision.”

Insights gathered through the annual Creative Confidence Poll reinforced key sector concerns while also highlighting a strong appetite for collaboration and professional development. Last year, 336 people participated in in-person programs, workshops and information sessions in the southwest connected to the Strategy, including a Creative Social attended by 83 creatives, which reinvested more than \$8,000 into local businesses and creatives and led to further funding and mentoring.

Strategy partners have numerous opportunities planned throughout 2026 for creatives of all ages and artforms. This includes an event focused on partnerships and collaboration in Koroiit on 27 March in partnership with Moyne Shire Council, with support from Fletcher Jones Family Foundations.

RAV’s work in the southwest is supported by Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians, and Warrnambool Councils, leveraging funding from the Australian Government through the Regional Arts Fund, alongside strategic support from state government, the tourism and philanthropy sectors, and community.

For updates, opportunities and upcoming events, follow [@RAVsouthwest on Facebook](#) or visit [rav.net.au/swcis](http://rav.net.au/swcis).

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**About the South West Creative Industries Strategy:**

Since 2020 the [South West Creative Industries Strategy](#) has laid out a collaborative plan to support and grow the local creative sector. This innovative approach was influential and impactful as Victoria’s first regional creative strategy and is now in its second iteration. Regional Arts Victoria leads the Strategy in partnership with regional stakeholders, including the Victorian Government, the Great South Coast Regional Partnership, Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians, and Warrnambool Councils, Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism and South West Community Foundation.

**About Regional Arts Victoria:**

Regional Arts Victoria backs artists and communities across regional Victoria to make, participate in, and experience creative work. Regional Arts Victoria is an independent, not-for-profit, membership-based organisation working in long-term partnerships with every level of government, fostering contemporary and innovative regional cultural practice. We advise and impact on decision-making across multiple portfolios and levels of government. Regional Arts Victoria is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations, and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria.

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