

# OUR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Culture is the expression of identity, of what we share and where we differ.

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“The arts and creative industries are fundamental to Australia’s identity as a society and nation, and increasingly to our success as a national economy”



## OVERVIEW

Creative industries are endeavours which have their origin from individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for job creation. Creative industries may include but are not limited to: visual arts, sculpture, metal and wood, advertising, architecture, antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio.

All forms of art and creativity have the ability to capture the 'essence' of a place, an experience, a memory or an idea in ways that strongly communicate non-verbally. When a community is rich in creativity it usually means there is plenty to communicate and both residents and visitors can share in the ways in which an artist expresses an idea.



welcome  
creative  
industries!  
from bvsc

The making of art and creative products for a living in what was, until quite recently, a remote rural region is for some areas of the community a foreign idea. As communities change and adapt, so has the Bega Valley, with creative industries and the benefits this brings to the broader community becoming an embraced part of the Valley's culture.

In 2011 a Creative Industries Forum hosted by Bega Valley Shire Council was held in Bermagui, and attended by over 50 members of the cultural community. Facilitated by Professor Brad Haseman, the workshop brought together local artists from all mediums and backgrounds to explore what it is about our Shire that inspires local artists and brings cultural seekers to the Valley, and to explore the ideas and opportunities of how to further develop and support the growth of the cultural sector. The workshop highlighted the cultural talent and energy within the Bega Valley, and raised awareness of the need to create a support network to further nurture the opportunities of the creative industry sector within the Shire.

The creative industries are also highlighted as a potential cluster development area in Councils' Business Growth Strategy

Research has shown that those regional centres that support diversity and cultural richness are the most socially viable and economically successful.”

DR. PETER BRAIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL ECONOMICS

## LOCAL ARTISTS

The visual arts are a particular strength of the Shire and are represented through arts organisations, individual artists, commercial and cooperative galleries, and artist's studio galleries. There are increasing numbers of professional artists residing in the Shire, a significant number who have national and international reputations.

While painters may seem to dominate the art scene, there are many artists within the Bega Valley engaged in making three dimensional objects in a wide range of media and materials. Internationally renowned glass artist, and local Tanja resident, Klaus Moje is considered a founding father of the contemporary Australian glass movement. Klaus's work is held in more than 50 public collections in Australia and overseas and he has been the recipient of many significant awards in Australia, Europe and the United States. Klaus is very active in supporting the development of excellence in arts practice in the Bega Valley.

Another important figure in Australian and international art is local resident Alan Watt. Alan is a ceramicist, and was the head of the Ceramics Workshop at the ANU School of Art from 1979 to 1998. Alan's work is represented in the National Gallery of Australia and is held through institutional, corporate and private collections throughout Australia, the United Kingdom, Europe and Asia. As well as enjoying a flourishing career in sculpture, Alan is active in the community through running popular workshops to teach people how to build woodfired ovens which brings much of his ceramics knowledge into play.



Another celebrated ceramics artist on the South Coast is Poppy Benton who was the 2007 winner of the Living Artist Scholarship and has gone on to run a successful business and exhibitions.

Traditional creative industries are still alive within the Bega Valley, with three blacksmiths in the small town of Cobargo. Local blacksmithing business Galba Forge is a small ornamental business run by its owners, Phillippe and Marie-Claude Ravenal. If blacksmithing has become a rare art, Phillippe's speciality is an even rarer technique of plaiting steel, giving to his work a distinctive appeal. Phillippe's work is exhibited in many local galleries and through the popular local markets.

Jewellery making on the south coast is an extremely popular industry and has captured artists from a broad spectrum. Many local artists design and create jewellery for sale

at local markets, some as a 'hobby' but there are several professional creators of jewellery within the shire. Artists such as Sharon Cornthwaite from Cardog Designs, Lisa Ferrier from Pendantree, Martin & Dorte Planert and Cathy Jarret are renowned contemporary jewellery designers with exhibits throughout the region.

## LOCAL GALLERIES

Commercial, private and community galleries through the shire play an important role in cultural tourism by supporting emerging artist trails and support to local artists. The Spiral Gallery ([www.spiralgallery.org.au](http://www.spiralgallery.org.au)) is one of the area's most interesting galleries, and is housed in one of Bega's historic buildings in the middle of town. The Spiral Gallery supports local contemporary and innovative artists through its frequently changing exhibitions.

A popular gallery which has recently opened is the Black Wattle Gallery in Cobargo. The gallery is run on a volunteer basis by a group of local artists called the Cobargo Creators (<http://thebegavalley.org.au/24949.html>) The Black Wattle Gallery represents more than 50 talented and diverse local artists and craftspeople producing quality designs and handiworks.

Next door to the gallery is an artist's workshop where visitors can see artists, quilters, knitters and jewellers at work. This provides an opportunity to further share skills and knowledge and support the growth of artwork within the community.

Other popular galleries within the Cobargo area that are actively supporting local artists include the Lazy Lizard (<http://thebegavalley.org.au/lazylizardgallery.html>) which has been active in the community since 2006 and the Bangles Gallery (<http://thebegavalley.org.au/8470.html>) which specialises in pottery and has been supporting Australian potters for over 30 years.

Galleries exhibiting local artists include the



Oaklands Art Gallery in Pambula, McKells Framing and Gallery in Pambula and Art on Imlay (<http://www.eden.nsw.au/index.php/arts-a-crafts/art-on-implay>) in Eden.

Professionally run galleries such as the Ivy Hill Gallery ([www.ivyhill.com.au](http://www.ivyhill.com.au)) and Narek Galleries ([www.narekgalleries.com](http://www.narekgalleries.com)) play a significant role in the support of local artists, and also the bringing of international standard exhibits to the region. This is valuable for both tourism, but also as an inspiration and stimulus for our own local artists.

Many local artists within the region exhibit from their own gallery as a 'single artist' gallery which often operates as both working space and exhibition space. These include the Boardwalkart in Merimbula, the Peter Dunne Artist & Studio Gallery in Tura, the Peter Berenguer studio gallery in Pambula, Tathra Beach Designs, and Mister Jones in Bermagui (<http://misterjones.com.au>).

The Mister Jones shopfront is a unique combination of espresso bar, art studio and exhibition space, and is the successful creation of Matthew Jones, the winner of the 2011 Living Artist Scholarship.

## ART TRAILS

The Coast Road ([www.thecoastroad.com.au](http://www.thecoastroad.com.au)) from Tathra to Bermagui is one of the most spectacular drives on the Far South Coast. Passing through spotted gum forests in Mimosa Rocks National Park, through green and productive farmland, and crossing iconic timber bridges, this area has attracted many creative people. Since the Tathra to Bermagui Coast Road was sealed, some unique, quality art and fine food venues have opened. This scenic drive attracts many locals and tourists to experience some of the South Coast's most stimulating galleries and cultural hot spots.

## EMERGING CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

There is growing interest and talent within the digital and web based creative industries throughout the cultural community. Emerging courses and opportunities in film making, animation and digital mediums is a reflection of the growing demand and skill level.

A major contributor to the digital creative industry sector is Screen Illawarra South East (SISE).

SISE provides a first point of contact for productions both domestic and international wishing to shoot in the region, advising and facilitating on locations, screen infrastructure and personnel and acting as an interface between production personnel and local government authorities and location owners.

SISE is committed to being a portal for creativity and innovation in the screen business and screen community in the Illawarra, South Coast and Southern Inland regions of NSW. SISE is also committed to local industry development and creating networking initiatives to connect industry practitioners throughout the region. We will work in cooperation with regional media, arts, and educational and training organisations to achieve this aim.

At a grass roots level, the Bega Valley Shire Library has recently opened a 'media room' in the Eden library branch. This enable school groups and the broader community to learn and develop skills in film editing and production and has been extremely popular. Courses for young people have been held in partnership with programs through the Bega Valley Regional Gallery

## LOCAL SUPPORT TO LOCAL ARTISTS

A lack of access to the arts markets of the main metropolitan areas and impact of the recent global financial downturn is a major challenge for artists looking to develop and maintain a professional practice, however there are areas of support within the Shire with initiatives such as the Far South Coast Living Artists Scholarship (<http://www.livingartist.org.au>). The biennial scholarship of approximately \$35,000 is raised by the Living Artist Project and community. The award provides mentorship, education, marketing and financial support to local emerging artists in a bid to retain them in the region. The Far South Coast Living

Artist Project Inc. provides opportunities for Far South Coast visual artists to develop excellence in their practices and achieves this in partnership with local communities as part of its broader goal to raise the regional profile of Art and Artists on the Far South Coast.

A number of artists of international repute live and work on the Far South Coast. However, many emerging artists struggle to find the time for concentrated professional development. Artists with potential to become outstanding in their field often reach a critical point where, if assisted and encouraged, are eventually able to support themselves through their art practice.

The introduction of the Living Artist Scholarship coupled with the well-known, prestigious Shirley Hannan Portraiture Prize, now sees the Bega Valley hosting two of Australia's top art awards. These events add to the Far South Coast's regional Arts Trail which is an important visitor draw card and



economic contributor to the Bega Valley Shire. In the words of Dr. Peter Brain, Executive Director of National Economics: “Research has shown that those regional centres that support diversity and cultural richness are the most socially viable and economically successful.”

The University of Wollongong – Bega campus provides opportunities for students through the Bachelor of Arts - Community, Culture and Environment, and Bachelor of Arts – Indigenous Studies . In addition to University run programs visual arts workshops, seminars and masterclasses are regularly held throughout the Shire. Bega TAFE has a long-running certificate course that has assisted in the development of many artists, and South East Arts offers training in arts-business skills of local artists and has previously established an artist’s cooperative for local Aboriginal artists.

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#### CULTURAL SETTING REPORT

The Cultural Setting Report is available via the Council website [www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au) Hard copies are available on request.

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