

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Unearthing the unsung heroes of regional arts in Western Australia

*Regional Arts WA is excited to announce the release of their book, **heart of the community**, showcasing stories of belonging, ingenuity, and heart from Western Australia's regional arts sector.*

The collection of stories celebrates the unsung heroes of arts workers, arts volunteers and artists working and living in 15 regional, rural, and remote communities in WA, from Broome, Port Hedland, and Carnamah, to Narrogin, Denmark, and Esperance.

These stories from 15 arts organisations are supported by the Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program, funded by the State Government, and delivered by Regional Arts WA.

Regional Arts WA CEO Pilar Kasat says she is excited to share regional arts stories for a wider audience.

"I am thrilled to see the launch of this book, *heart of the community*. It provides a rare insight into the lives of arts workers, artists and volunteers working in regional towns and remote areas. They need to be celebrated and recognised for their creative work and this book is a fantastic way to tell their stories to the public.

"We thank the State Government for their multi-year operational investment for regional arts organisations through the Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program. It is important we continue to provide long-term funding for regional arts and culture organisations to ensure regional communities continue to thrive and connect through the arts."

Some excerpts from *heart of the community*:

- **Creality** (in the Gascoyne region) talks about nurturing people's superpowers. Artistic Director, Theaker von Ziarno says.

*"Operating in such a remote region, we don't always have resources readily available. It's one of the things that can be a drawback, but also an opportunity because we can give people a chance, a start. When we invest in people, and give them an opportunity to learn, we can help them find their superpowers. It's humbling to be in the company of so many heroes."*

- **Arts Narrogin** (in the Wheatbelt region) tackles accessibility in their community. Events Manager, Brad Flett says.

*“Our role at Arts Narrogin is not just about bringing in events alone, it’s being able to make them accessible for residents. An event in one town, sometimes means some residents will need to travel more than 70 kilometres to see it... People can now just jump on the organised bus, they don’t have to worry about travel... It is a simple way to get more people to events and give them more confidence to go.”*

- **Southern Edge Arts** (in the Great Southern region) highlight on the importance of sustainable arts careers for young people. Artistic Director, Anne Sorenson says.

*“Most of us, who’ve been in the industry for a long time and have given countless volunteer hours, are frustrated when people say we do it because we love it. We work in the arts because this is our skill set. This is what we have studied, trained, or invested many hours and many dollars in skills development in. We see Southern Edge Arts as a career pathway for young people because we believe in what we do.”*

*heart of the community* is available to order on the Regional Arts WA website at <https://regionalartswa.org.au/about/heart-of-the-community/>

An exhibition showcasing *heart of the community* excerpts is open for the public at the State Library of Western Australia, from 8 - 13 September 2022.

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