



Always Was, Always Will Be Aboriginal Land.

The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is a national organisation whose staff and Board, as well as the artists, arts workers and organisations we represent, are based across hundreds of sovereign nations and unceded lands throughout the continent that has become colonially known as Australia.

NAVA acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Custodians, and knowledge holders of the unceded lands on which we live, learn, and work.

NAVA especially acknowledges the Gadigal, Wangal, Dharug, Dharawal, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our staff are currently located.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first artists on this continent, and pay respect to First Nations communities' ancestors and Elders.

Sovereignty was never ceded.



National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) Annual Report 2025

Mission

The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is a Membership organisation which brings together the many voices of the contemporary arts sector to improve fundamental conditions of work and practice. We do this through advocacy, education and the Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design.

Vision

The visual arts are vital, sustainable and ethical.

Contents

- 04 Reflecting on 2025
- 05 2025 in Numbers
- 06 Membership
- 09 Code of Practice
- 10 Education
- 12 Advocacy
- 14 Media Impact
- 15 Operations
- 16 NAVA Board 2025
- 17 Acknowledgements



Janel Yau, General Manager and Georgia Mokak, First Nations Outreach Coordinator, NAVA information stall at Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (DAAF) 2025. Photo by Dylan Buckee.

Reflecting on 2025

2025 was a year of challenge across the sector, alongside governance change for NAVA. Across the visual arts, craft and design sector, artists, arts workers and organisations continue to navigate precarious pay and working conditions and increasing threats to artistic freedom and intellectual property rights.

Early in the year NAVA introduced a new Premium Plus Membership insurance package, developed through a new partnership to provide Members with stronger coverage and more consistent pricing. The response from Members has been strong, showing the importance of practical services alongside NAVA's advocacy and sector leadership.

NAVA also marked important governance developments during the year. Clothilde Bullen's remarkable tenure as Chair came to an end in March and the Board made an internal appointment of Co-Chairs to support continuity in leadership. Work progressed on updating NAVA's Constitution, modernising the organisation's governance framework.

Throughout the year, NAVA remained focused on improving fundamental conditions of work and practice. This included contributing evidence and Member feedback to the Fair Work Commission review of the Amusement, Events and Recreation Award, advocating for improved recognition and pay for arts workers across the visual arts. The case hearing concluded in April 2025 and, at the time of writing, the outcome from the Fair Work Commission is still pending.

This work took place alongside renewed momentum for tax reform and growing national attention to the impact of generative AI on artists' copyright and moral rights, and other ongoing advocacy to improve recognition and pay for artists and arts workers.

NAVA contributed to cross-sector bodies including the Arts & Disability Code of Practice Steering Committee and the Arts Strategic Workforce Advisory Group (SWAG) through Services & Creative Skills Australia (SaSCA). We also maintained our involvement with the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), joining concerns about further cuts to arts education.

NAVA played a visible leadership role in national conversations about artistic freedom. We spoke out publicly about the importance of the sector standing behind artists, particularly in regard to the Australian Pavilion at Venice Biennale. Recognising the challenges that many organisations and independent practitioners face when navigating controversy and media or political pressure, NAVA began exploring new resources to support crisis preparedness, communication and risk management across the sector.

Internally, NAVA strengthened its commitments to equity and accountability. The organisation launched its Disability Action Plan, and continued implementing actions under its First Nations Policy and Reconciliation Action Plan. Improving conditions for artists requires addressing structural barriers within the sector.

Our sincere thanks to NAVA staff and Board Directors for your commitment, care and leadership in sustaining NAVA's work.

To every Member, supporter, partner and collaborator - thank you. Your participation and insight continue to guide NAVA's work and strengthen the collective voice of the visual arts sector.

Jamie Lewis and Liz Nowell, Co-Chairs
Penelope Benton, Executive Director



Liz Nowell, Penelope Benton, Jamie Lewis, 2025.



58% of income from Membership
(Gross income from Membership, net of insurances paid)



4,119 NAVA
Members



31,667
subscribers



73,477 social
media Followers



213,941 views &
48,213 users to
the Code website



455,809 views &
172,690 users to
the NAVA website



Artist File videos
7 videos, with
82,624 views



30 workshops and
talks presented, with
1,504 attendees



2,887 instances
of advice given



100 cases of support
given to Members
for sector disputes



16 submissions
to consultations
and inquiries



36 NAVA articles
published



66 media
mentions



160 stakeholder
meetings



\$72,714 paid to **70** artists
(commissions, consultations and
license fees)

Membership

Overview

NAVA's network includes more than 50,000 artists, arts workers, galleries, arts organisations, and industry bodies, with approximately 4,119 paid Members in 2025. This represents a decline of 80 Members compared with the previous year.

Recent changes in the insurance industry has created uncertainty and rising costs across many sectors. In 2023, NAVA's insurance offering was significantly impacted, with reduced cover and additional premiums for use of kilns or open flames, removal of height limitations and declarations for working at heights. This affected many artists.

In response, NAVA worked collaboratively with Craft Victoria and Guildhouse to negotiate a new partnership with Cover for Creatives on behalf of Members. In February 2025, NAVA announced an improved insurance package for Premium Plus Members, with no additional premiums, reduced limitations, full professional indemnity coverage, and expanded protections tailored to visual arts practice.

This contributed to growth in Premium Plus Membership during 2025, with more than 114 new or renewing Premium Plus Members.

Insurance is often a requirement for participation in many areas of artists' practice, including exhibitions, residencies, public art projects, workshops, markets and studio access, as well as for arts workers engaged as independent contractors.

In 2025, Membership revenue (net of insurance costs) contributed \$639,581, representing 58% of NAVA's gross income.

Membership Types

NAVA offers three paid Membership tiers:

- Premium Membership (\$8/month or \$96/year): Access to industry guides and resources, funding and job listings, sector discounts, and voting rights in NAVA governance, while supporting NAVA's Code of Practice, advocacy and work to improve conditions for artists and arts workers.
- Premium Plus Membership (\$365/year): Includes all Premium benefits plus a heavily discounted insurance package.
- Organisational Membership (\$400/year): Extends Premium benefits to up to three staff members within an organisation.

A free subscription is also available, which includes NAVA's monthly e-newsletter.

Geographic Reach

NAVA's Members and subscribers span all Australian states and territories:

- New South Wales (41%)
- Victoria (28%)
- Queensland (12%)
- Western Australia (6%)
- South Australia (4%)
- Tasmania (4%)
- Australian Capital Territory (4%)
- Northern Territory (1%).

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Work progressed on a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Membership platform to improve Member services, data management and future capacity.



Illustration by Judy Kuo, 2025.

Membership

Member Resources and Support

Advice and Disputes

In 2025, NAVA responded to an average of 307 enquiries per month. Most enquiries related to insurance and Membership, with additional calls concerning Payment Standards and other Code of Practice questions, and requests for guidance or resources on a range of topics.

During the year NAVA also assisted Members in approximately 100 dispute matters, supporting artists to navigate professional challenges and assert their rights.

Common issues included:

- Cases involving freedom of expression and perceived risk, resulting in exhibitions or events being postponed or cancelled.
- Workplace grievances between staff and management or between management and boards.
- Mislabeled “opportunities” that did not meet sector standards.
- Public artworks being cancelled before completion, and public artworks damaged or deaccessioned without consultation with the artist.

In these cases NAVA engaged with organisations and provided guidance on the Code, which sets standards for working engagements, copyright, moral rights and minimum fees and wages.

NAVA Guides

NAVA’s online Guides continue to be a valued resource for Members, offering practical advice on topics such as tax, writing grants, pricing work, and more. In 2025, the Guides received 16,409 views from 9,783 users.

The most accessed titles included:

- [How to work with First Nations artists in the classroom | Teacher Toolkit](#)
- [Invoice Template](#)
- [Superannuation Contribution Obligations for Employers](#)
- [Sponsorships and Partnerships](#)
- [Arts worker occupations in the visual arts, craft and design](#)

These tools support Members in building good practice and advocating for themselves professionally. The full suite of resources is available at nava.net.au/guides.

Artist Files

NAVA’s Artist Files series featured interviews with Members Digby Webster, Elyas Alavi, Merindah Funnell, Alfred Lowe, Cherine Fahd, Shivanjani Lal, and Dylan Mooney.

In these conversations, artists reflected on the evolution of their practices, financial precarity, and the importance of amplifying underrepresented voices, including First Nations, queer Indigenous, and Disabled artists.

Common themes discussed included cultural identity and community connection, environmental considerations, the challenges of balancing personal and parental responsibilities with an arts career, and how NAVA’s Code of Practice has supported artists in advocating for fair pay and improved working conditions.

The 2025 videos collectively reached over 82,600 views, with Alfred Lowe’s interview attracting the highest engagement at over 33,100 views.



NAVA Artist File: Alfred Lowe. Photo courtesy APY Art Centre Collective.

Code of Practice

As a living document, the [Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design \(the Code\)](#) - a national framework outlining good practice and payment standards for the sector - evolves in response to sector needs. While the revised Code was released in 2022, NAVA has committed to ongoing development, with new content and updates introduced over time. To maintain Federal Government endorsement of the Code, updates and new content are communicated to the Office for the Arts (OFTA) before publication.

Access

In 2025, NAVA expanded accessibility within the Code. Audio versions of the Summary of Good Practice Recommendations were added throughout each section of the Principles, Ethics and Rights chapter. Terminology in the Access Rights for d/Deaf and Disabled People section was updated in line with NAVA's Disability Action Plan 2025–2027.

NAVA also produced nine Auslan videos across the following Code sections:

- Artist-Run Initiatives
- Commissioning New Work
- Commissioning Art in Public Space
- Festivals
- Funding
- Insurance
- Publicly Funded Galleries Selling Work
- Selling Online
- Workplace Health and Safety

Awareness and Application

NAVA promotes the adoption and practical application of the Code across the sector.

In 2025, NAVA delivered a suite of online training courses for artists, arts workers

and organisations. These courses provide a structured and accessible way to engage with good practice standards and are designed to support organisations inducting new staff.

Professional development and education activities were also supported through the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) program, enabling targeted engagement with First Nations artists and practitioners through workshops, resources and outreach.

In New South Wales, NAVA delivered its professional development program supported by Create NSW. While annual funding concluded in June 2025, a new multi-year funding agreement was secured to expand this work from 2026.

Engagement and Reach

Engagement with the Code of Practice remained strong in 2025, with 213,941 page views by 48,213 users.

The Payment Standards section was the most frequently accessed, with 156,105 section views by 34,783 users.

Code Updates

New content was added across the Exhibiting, Commissioning, and Touring sections to support good practice when working with performers in visual arts contexts. These updates draw on the Precarious Movements Sector Resource, developed through a multi-year research partnership between University New South Wales (UNSW), National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), TATE UK, Art Gallery New South Wales (AGNSW) and Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) and artist Shelley Lasica. NAVA contributed to its development and continues to support the publication by hosting the website.

New content was added to the Gender Equity section referencing the Work Health and Safety (Sexual and Gender-based Harassment) Code of Practice.

The Resale Royalty section was updated to include the 17 countries that now have reciprocal arrangements with Australia since 2024 and an additional 9 countries from March 2025.

Payment Standards

On 1 July, the Code's Payment Standards were updated, marking the second annual increase since the revised Code was released in 2022.

A 2.25% increase was applied across artist fees and wages. This sits between typical adjustments for multi-year government contracts and the 3.5% increase to the National Minimum Wage and award wages set by the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

Updates reflected broader changes across wages and industry benchmarks, including:

- increases to the National Minimum Wage and award wages;
- the Superannuation Guarantee increase to 12% following the final legislated rise;
- adjustments to performance rates in line with the Live Performance Award;
- updated freelance benchmarks, including Australian Society of Authors (ASA) rates;
- and the removal of licensing rates following the Copyright Agency's move to case-by-case pricing.

Development and Consultation

In August, NAVA held its first Parenting in the Arts consultation, bringing together artists, arts workers and organisations to identify what good practice recommendations should be added to the Code to better recognise and support parents. This work will inform a new Code section currently in development.

Discussions highlighted challenges including limited time for creative work, financial pressure, social isolation and a lack of sector support. Participants emphasised the need for organisations to better recognise parenting through more flexible timelines, childcare support, and clear communication across exhibitions, residencies and other professional contexts.

The consultation also highlighted how experiences of parenting vary, with solo parents, First Nations artists and others facing additional structural barriers, pointing to the need for more inclusive and flexible working conditions across the sector.

Following this work, NAVA began research on Carers in the Arts, including a survey and input from the Disability Advisory Group. Findings will inform future Code updates in 2026, including guidance on recognising carers and support workers within professional arrangements, and better supporting artists with care responsibilities.

Education

NAVA's learning program supports artists and organisations to embed the Code in day-to-day practice and understand their rights, responsibilities, and good practice standards.

National Reach

Across the year, NAVA delivered 30 workshops, webinars, talks, covering artist fees, artists' rights, and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP). These sessions were delivered both online and in person, reaching artists, arts workers, students and organisations across Australia.

NAVA also participated in national forums, university programs and sector events, extending the reach of the Code and strengthening shared understanding of good practice.

First Nations-led programming was expanded with renewed funding through the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) program, led by NAVA's First Nations Outreach Coordinator, Georgia Mokak.

Georgia delivered workshops and one-on-one advisory sessions at the Saltwater Freshwater Forum (NSW) and the National Gallery of Australia's (NGA) Dhiraamalang Program (ACT), and coordinated NAVA's presence at key events including the Revealed Art Market (WA), Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) and Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (DAAF).

At Revealed in WA, Georgia facilitated the panel discussion Creative Sovereignty and Legacies at Perth Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), with artists Amanda Bell, Shannon Clohessy, Emily Rose and Dr Charmaine Papertalk Green. NAVA also partnered with Arts Law's Artists in the Black to deliver an ICIP and good practice workshop at Carclew, Adelaide.

First Nations artists and writers were commissioned to develop resources, including promotional assets designed by Merindah Funnell. Work commenced on a new Teachers Toolkit resource, Introduction to Committing to Meaningful First Nations Projects in Education Settings, written and illustrated by Dr Emma Hicks in consultation with Dr Christine Evans, and a new guide, Building Strong First Nations Advisory Groups, written by Nadine Lee and illustrated by Mikayla Lee. Both resources will be published in 2026.

New South Wales

NAVA's NSW Professional Development Program was led by Professional Development Coordinators Emma Pham and Donnalyn Xu, supported by Create NSW annual project funding (concluded June 2025).

Through this program, NAVA extended its reach across Western Sydney and regional NSW, strengthening relationships with artists, communities and institutions. This included:

- Partnering with Arts Mid North Coast to deliver in-person workshops
- Ongoing engagement with universities including UNSW, the University of Sydney and the National Art School
- Delivery of training for local governments on artists' fees.

NAVA also partnered with Utp on Area Coded, a four-part online series featuring Western Sydney artists Grace Almansour, Gillian Kayrooz, Marikit Santiago and Jason Wing. The program attracted 558 registrations, demonstrating strong interest in peer-led discussion around the Code and good practices.

The workshop Activate Your Activism: Access, Ethics and Cultural Rights, delivered with Disabled artists and facilitators, created space for discussion on improving access practices.



Georgia Mokak presenting 'Empowering Artists for the Future: First Nations Professional Development Forum' hosted by Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance, 2025. Photo by Jay Black, AND THE TREES PHOTOGRAPHY.

Advocacy

NAVA is actively involved in advocacy to improve the fundamental conditions of work and practice in the visual arts.

In 2025, NAVA made sixteen submissions to government inquiries and consultations, alongside ongoing engagement with government and sector bodies.

Industrial Reform

NAVA has long advocated for clearer Award coverage and improved protections for arts workers. This work gained momentum through NAVA's 2022 National Cultural Policy submission and the Government's commitment in Revive to establish minimum standards and improve award coverage as part of the Fair Work Commission's Modern Awards Review 2023–2024.

In early 2025, NAVA contributed evidence and Member feedback to the Fair Work Commission's review of the Amusement, Events & Recreation Award to ensure that gallery, museum, technical and studio-based work is properly understood by the Commission.

NAVA made comprehensive recommendations to better recognise and protect arts workers, including clearer classification structures, appropriate pay rates, penalty rates and overtime provisions, as well as ceremonial and cultural leave for First Nations arts workers.

Further submissions were made in collaboration with Creative Workplaces, the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA), and the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA).

The case hearing concluded in April 2025 and the outcome remains pending.

Tax Reform

Tax reform has been on NAVA's agenda for more than thirty years. NAVA asserts that current regulatory settings negatively impact artists' incomes and limit sector productivity.

The NSW Government consultation, *The Art of Tax Reform*, marked a significant moment of momentum, with a high number of visual arts submissions and growing recognition across the sector that change is needed.

NAVA's submission, grounded in long-term policy work and our 2025 Tax Survey, outlined practical reforms across income tax, GST, grants and prizes, Non-Commercial Losses (NCL), workspace affordability, exhibition tax relief for galleries, and superannuation for artists. Many of these proposals are reflected in the government's summary report.

Tax reform is complex, but it offers the potential for long-term structural change. NAVA released a [Tax Reform Advocacy Toolkit](#) to support artists and arts workers to engage with their local MPs, providing clear language and practical tools to articulate how current tax settings affect their work.

Workforce Planning

NAVA contributed to the work of Creative Australia and Services & Creative Skills Australia (SaSCA) as a member of the Arts Strategic Workforce Advisory Group (SWAG). This included submitting feedback on research and reports, and participation in two full-day workshops focused on workforce challenges and strategic responses, contributing visual arts perspectives to national workforce planning.



Penelope Benton and Leya Reid in front of the Fair Work Commission building in Naarm.

Advocacy

Copyright and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

With the rapid development of generative AI, artists are increasingly raising concerns about how their work may be used in training datasets and what consent, recognition and payment should look like.

In 2025, NAVA undertook a sector survey to better understand visual artists' experiences and expectations in relation to copyright and AI. The findings reinforced strong support for consent, compensation and attribution, and have informed NAVA's ongoing advocacy.

NAVA contributed to national policy discussions, working in collaboration with cross-artform peak bodies and copyright organisations.

Following sustained advocacy across the sector, the Australian Government rejected proposals for a broad copyright exception for AI training. NAVA welcomed this decision as an important step in protecting artists' rights.

NAVA made several submissions during the year, including to the Attorney-General's Department and the Productivity Commission. Across this work, NAVA has called for regulatory settings that centre artists' rights, transparency and remuneration, including protections for copyright and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP).

Arts Education

Tertiary arts education has been contracting over a number of years, with courses closing or being restructured and pathways into the sector becoming more limited.

NAVA has advocated for the protection and expansion of arts education, including long-term investment, the reversal of fee hikes introduced under Job-ready Graduates (JRG) scheme, reform of associated HELP settings, and ensuring all students have access to visual arts education.

Through involvement with the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), NAVA joined sector concerns about further cuts to arts education.

Freedom of Expression

This year, artists reported increased caution around politically sensitive work, with projects being modified, delayed or withdrawn. Boards and venues more explicitly weighed reputational and political risk.

NAVA played a visible role in national conversations about artistic freedom, including in relation to the Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and the withdrawal and subsequent reinstatement of the selected artistic team for 2026, Khaled Sabsabi and Michael Dagostino.

NAVA issued multiple public statements and engaged directly with Creative Australia, government and the media, advocating for the importance of independent, peer-reviewed decision-making and for institutions to stand behind artists and their work. This advocacy received significant coverage across print media, television and radio.

This work has also informed the development of a proposed set of resources to support organisations and practitioners navigating controversy, media attention and political pressure.



Janel Yau and Penelope Benton at Parliament House, ACT.

Advocacy

Federal Election – #VoteForArt

Ahead of the federal election in May, NAVA's #VoteForArt campaign called on candidates to commit to policies supporting artists' incomes, workforce development and freedom of expression.

The campaign included an Election Toolkit and Report Card to support Members to engage with candidates and assess policy positions.

Following the return of the Albanese Government, NAVA called for the next phase of the National Cultural Policy to prioritise structural reform for the visual arts sector, including fair pay, sustainable career pathways and stronger support for artists' practice.

Other submissions and engagement

In addition to the work outlined above, NAVA contributed to a range of government inquiries and consultations across 2025. This included submissions to the Senate Inquiry into the Copyright Amendment Bill, the Senate Inquiry into National Cultural Policy, Treasury's Economic Reform Roundtable, and the Australian Accounting Standards Board on not-for-profit financial reporting.

At a state level, NAVA made a submission to the NSW Inquiry into the structure and funding of the Arts, Music, Night-Time Economy and Transport portfolios, and presented at the Inquiry's first public hearing at NSW Parliament House.

NAVA also continued its engagement with the Attorney-General's Department on copyright policy, including the proposed Orphan Works Scheme, and submitted a Pre-Budget Submission 2025–26 to Treasury.

Research and Reports

NAVA remained an industry partner in the national research project Visual Arts Work: sustainable strategies for the Australian visual arts and craft sector, led by RMIT University and the University of Melbourne in collaboration with AMaGA. The report was published in April 2025.

The research provides new data on artists' working conditions, confirming the scale and persistence of financial insecurity across the sector. Nearly half of artists reported undertaking unpaid work, 63% struggle to afford essential living costs, and a 47% gender pay gap was identified - significantly higher than the national average.

It also highlights the extent to which artists are leaving the sector, with many navigating multiple jobs, insecure work and ongoing financial pressure.

NAVA is using this evidence to strengthen its advocacy across cultural policy and workforce reform, reinforcing the need for structural change in how artists are paid, supported and recognised.



NAVA Artist File: Cherine Fahd. Photo courtesy the artist, 2025.

Media Impact

In 2025, NAVA maintained a strong and consistent media presence, contributing to national and international public discourse on arts policy, funding, education, industrial reform, copyright, censorship and artists' rights. NAVA was interviewed, cited or quoted in over 60 media stories, reflecting growing public and media recognition of NAVA's role as a leading advocate for the visual arts, craft and design sector.

Key issues NAVA was quoted on in 2025 media coverage included the defence of artistic freedom, the rights of artists in the face of AI developments, tax reform for artists, federal and state funding cuts to the arts, cuts and restructures to education, workforce exit, the federal election, income precarity and the rising cost of living, and the federal budget. Media coverage also highlighted NAVA's leadership on the Code of Practice.

NAVA were published, quoted, or mentioned in outlets including The Guardian Australia, ABC News, SBS News, Sydney Morning Herald, The Conversation, National indigenous Times, Australian Financial Review, ArtsHub, Art Guide, Australia Arts Review, Independent Australia, AI Mayadeen English, The Advertiser, Limelight, InDaily, Australian Design Review, RMIT University, Western Sydney University, Sweden Herald, The Art Newspaper, Artnet News, The Music Network, Australasian Leisure Management, The World Observer, Mimeta, Ocula Magazine, World Socialist Web Site, PNG Attitude, and more. NAVA was also interviewed on ABC Radio National, ABC Western Plains Breakfast Program, ABC Darwin Drive and 10 News First Lunchtime.

“Artists are mobilising. There are open letters, petitions, and calls for an inquiry into the revocation, not just the selection process. The arts sector is standing firm: this decision should be reversed, and we need clear protections to stop political interference in the future.”

Interview by Narelda Jacobs on 10 News First Lunchtime, 25 February

“Arts work is work, and it deserves proper pay and protections and working conditions like all other work.”

New study of Australian artists finds average income from art is only \$14k
by Hannah Story, ABC News, 2 April.

“Artists want to be included in shaping the rules that will govern AI and creative practice. They are calling for clear legal protections and greater transparency in AI development, stronger education around artists' rights, public investment in local creative industries, and policy frameworks that value artistic labour, creative process, and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP).”

Artists say AI scraping without permission isn't innovation, it's exploitation
Penelope Benton, Independent Australia, 12 September.

“It's taken time to get here, but the conversation has shifted. Artists have shown up, spoken out, and offered real solutions. This is what policy change looks like, and it gives me enormous hope for what's next.”

Government's tax reform for the arts tabled – but will it be enacted?
Gina Fairley, Arts Hub, 22 September.



Behind the scenes photo of NAVA Artist File: Dylan Mooney with ATypical, 2025.

Operations

First Nations Policy

In 2025, NAVA began work on its First Nations Policy, following its launch in November 2024. A key milestone was securing a \$100,000 donation to support embedding First Nations leadership within NAVA from 2026.

Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2025, NAVA continued delivery of its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2024–2026), strengthening its commitment to embedding cultural competence across its advocacy, Code of Practice, professional development and Membership services.

Building on the Reflect RAP, the Innovate RAP focuses on strengthening relationships, respect, opportunities and governance, and aligning NAVA’s work with good practice for working with First Nations artists, organisations and communities.

This set in motion the following actions across NAVA’s programs, partnerships and internal operations. In 2025 NAVA achieved the following:

- Delivered Code of Practice talks, workshops and outreach with the support of IVAIS funding.
- Provided one-on-one professional development sessions with First Nations artists and arts workers, offering tailored advice and support through the Code.
- Commissioned First Nations artists including Merindah Funnell, Emily Johnson and Gordon Hookey across Code consultations and campaigns. Dylan Finney was commissioned for an artwork responding to the NAIDOC Week theme, “The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy.”

- Drafted a Cultural Learning Strategy and undertook staff cultural training, including a Koori Kinnections cultural learning day and ongoing access to AIATSIS Core learning modules.
- Celebrated National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week through commissioned content promoting First Nations-led resources and practice and supporting staff to attend events.
- Initiated partnerships with sector organisations to advance shared RAP priorities.
- Established a fortnightly meeting for the RAP Working Group.

Disability Action Plan

In February 2025 NAVA announced the launch of its Disability Action Plan (DAP), a living resource that strengthens NAVA’s commitment to inclusivity and equity.

The plan focuses on addressing ableism and improving conditions for d/Deaf and Disabled artists and arts workers, building on the access and equity principles established in NAVA’s Code.

This set motion to the following good practice standards internally and externally with our stakeholders and partnerships. In 2025 NAVA achieved the following:

- Established Accessibility Standards for NAVA events.
- Provided Digital Access Training for all staff.
- An Information Stall at the annual Deaf Festival in Sydney.
- Staff attended Deaf Awareness training at Curl Curl Creative Space.
- Strengthen partnerships with Accessible Arts NSW in Professional Development, Code Consultations and cross promotion.



NAVA Artist File: Merindah Funnell. Photo by Liz Ham, 2025.



Elected Representative - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Rebecca Ray is a Meriam woman descended from the Torres Strait Islands and is an experienced curator, writer, and cultural heritage researcher with deep experience across regional, national, and institutional arts contexts. Based on Gadigal Country, she is currently Curator, First Nations Art at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia (MCA), where she leads curatorial and research practices that prioritise re-Indigenisation, repatriation, and the reclamation of autonomous and sovereign cultural spaces.



Elected Representative - Artists

Kate Just is an American/Australian artist and academic of Polish, Irish, Scottish, German descent who lives and works on Dja Dja Wurrung country in Victoria. She has spent over twenty years hand knitting sculptural, pictorial and text based works that address significant social issues including feminism and feminist art, LGBTQIA+ rights, gender and sexual violence, racism, healthcare and community care, war and reproductive rights.



Elected Representative - Artists (Co-Chair)

Jamie Lewis is a Singaporean-Australian artist, curator, dramaturg and facilitator. She creates and curates site-responsive performances that engage audiences as participants, and communities as artists; often through autobiographical stories, conversation and food, and around bodies of water. She is currently also on the boards of VicHealth and Creative Recovery Network. She has previously been CEO / Director at Next Wave, Program Manager at Theatre Network Australia (TNA), on the Board of Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV), and participated in Creative Australia's 2018 Future Leaders program.



Elected Representative - Artists

Dr Ryan Presley was born in Mparntwe/Alice Springs, and currently lives and works in Meanjin/Brisbane. His father's family is Marri Ngarr and his mother's family were Scandinavian. A full-time artist, Ryan's practice wrestles with themes of power and dominion - in particular, how religion and economic control served colonialism and empire building over time, and the representation of its customs and edifices in our everyday lives. He is represented by Milani Gallery.



Elected Representative - Organisations (Deputy Chair)

Sophia Cai is a curator and writer based in Kamberri/Canberra, Australia. Sophia's ongoing research interests include Asian art histories, the intersections between contemporary art and craft, and building communities of practice rooted in feminist and anti-racist work. Sophia is the current Artistic Director + CEO of Canberra Contemporary, one of Australia's leading contemporary art organisations.



Elected Representative - Organisations

Janice Falsone is the Gallery Director at the South East Centre for Contemporary Art (SECCA), and brings to the role a deep passion for contemporary visual art along with extensive experience managing galleries and arts organisations. Janice was previously Director at Canberra Contemporary, as well as PhotoAccess (Director), Australian National Capital Artists (Gallery Manager), M16 Artspace, and advocacy organisation Queensland Artworkers Alliance.



Co-opted Director (Co-Chair)

Liz Nowell is a curator, executive leader, and writer with two decades of experience in Australian and international art. Her work engages with socially responsive practices and focuses on expanding narratives in contemporary art. She has served as the Executive Director of Arts Project Australia since 2023 an internationally leading arts organisation that supports neurodivergent artists and artists with intellectual disabilities. Previous to Arts Project, Liz led contemporary art spaces including Adelaide Contemporary Experimental (ACE), Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, and the Institute of Modern Art (IMA).



Co-opted Director

Sophia Nampitjimpa Sambono is a Jingili woman with family connections from Elliott/Newcastle Waters to Darwin, Daly River and the Tiwi Islands. She is the Associate Curator, Indigenous Australia Art at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) where she has worked on a number of exhibitions, including Seeds and Sovereignty, Great and Small, Snap Blak and the 10th and 11th Asia Pacific Triennials. Prior to QAGOMA Sophia curated community exhibitions for kuril dhagun at the State Library of Queensland and as Curator of Indigenous Collections at the National Film and Sound Archive.



Co-opted Director

Imogen Beynon is a Deputy Director at the United Workers Union. Her professional experience includes senior leadership positions in government and member-based organisations, with key responsibilities across industrial law, strategic leadership, regulation and policy.



Treasurer

Now retired, Brian Tucker CPA dedicated forty years to his career as an arts accountant, specialising in auditing arts organisations and Indigenous art centres across Australia for the last two decades. Leveraging this extensive experience, he has been a staunch advocate for the arts and artists. Currently, Tucker serves as Treasurer for eleven organisations and a Chair of one. He has held similar roles in over twenty organisations, ranging from the Queensland Poets Society to the considerably larger Queensland Performing Arts Trust.

Acknowledgements

Staff

- Executive Director:** Penelope Benton
- General Manager:** Janel Yau
- Advocacy and Communications Manager:** Leya Reid
- Operations and Finance Coordinator:** Holly Morrison
- First Nations Outreach Coordinator:** Georgia Mokak
- NSW Professional Development Coordinators:** Emma Pham, Donnalyn Xu
- Membership and Communications Officers:** Ju Bavyka, Donnalyn Xu, Naomi Segal (until July)
- Development Officer:** Luke Briscoe (from July)
- Designers:** Missy Dempsey, Kat Collins - KC & the Graphics Bandwagon
- IT Consultant:** Jay Cooper

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NAVA thanks outgoing Chair, Clothilde Bullen for her valued service and contributions.



Donnalyn Xu and Emma Pham at NAVA stall, UNSW Art & Design 2025. Photo by Liam Black.

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