

**na
va** NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
VISUAL ARTS

2024 Annual Report

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.

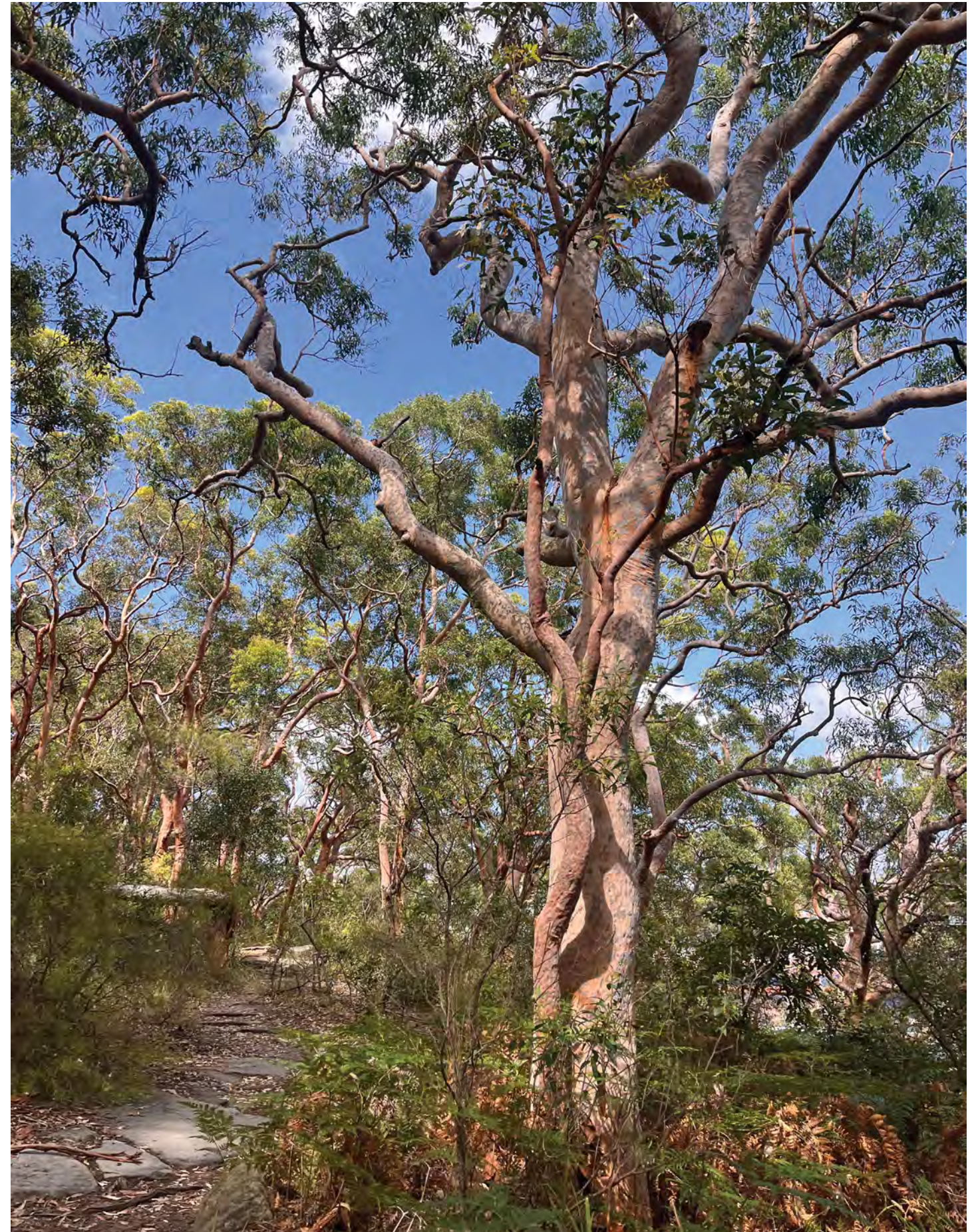
NAVA acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Custodians, and knowledge holders of the unceded lands on which we live, learn, and work.

NAVA especially acknowledges the Gadigal, Wangal, Dharug, Dharawal, 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.

Photo by Donnalyn Xu, taken on Cammeraygal country at the start of a NAVA staff cultural excursion with Koori Kinnections, January 2025.



National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)

Annual Report 2024

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.

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Reflecting on 2024



Clothilde Bullen and Penelope Benton
Background artwork: Joan Ross, *Like a cat marking its territory* (2013). Hand coloured lithograph print.
Vernon Ah Kee, *let's be polite about aboriginal art* (2012). Etching on paper.

In a year overshadowed by global turmoil, and seismic shifts in previously accepted world orders, artists and arts workers have inspired moments of genuine hope in the centre of the maelstrom. In 2024, the visual arts, craft and design sector continued to face major pressures, from the cost-of-living crisis and education cuts to ongoing challenges around artistic freedom and the growing impact of generative AI on artists' rights. Despite all of this, artists and arts workers kept showing up, creating work, finding new ways to connect, and pushing for positive change.

At NAVA, we stayed focused on our mission to improve the conditions in which this work happens. The Recognise Art as Work campaign progressed significantly, with sustained sector consultation and advocacy contributing to a commitment by the Fair Work Commission to vary the Amusement, Events and Recreation Award 2020, laying the groundwork for stronger protections for arts workers under the Fair Work system.

NAVA continued its long-standing advocacy on income support, working with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to improve how mutual obligation requirements under Workforce Australia apply to artists. NAVA also contributed to national conversations on arts labour through contributions to SaSCA's Workforce Planning Report for the Arts and the Arts Workforce Scoping Study interim findings, championing better pay, job security, and culturally safe workplaces.

As a member of the Arts Strategic Workforce Advisory Group (SWAG), NAVA highlighted persistent issues faced by artists and arts workers, including income disparity, precarious employment, unpaid labour and skills shortages in roles like gallery technicians, arts educators, and support staff. NAVA's visibility and contributions at these strategic levels have been critical to conversations around structural change.

The Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design (the Code) remained central to NAVA's work in 2024, underpinning its advocacy, education and sector support. One of this year's biggest wins was seeing all Archibald Prize finalists, paid an artist loan fee for the first time in the prize's 103-year history. NAVA also launched its online Code Training Courses and delivered 30 workshops around the country, from Gympie to Port Macquarie – an extraordinary achievement given its relatively small (but hugely committed and strong!!) team. Engagement at events like BL:AK Camp on Kabi Kabi Country and the online NAVA Talks AI series continued important dialogue on good practices in an increasingly complex sector.

Throughout the year, NAVA made 20 submissions to government on issues ranging from AI and copyright, arts education, award reform, and the classification of arts occupations. Advocacy and visibility remain absolutely key to enabling the ecosystem to understand how artists and arts workers work and live, and how best to support that – in the ways that our sector needs.

We continued to advocate for improved education pathways and defended university programs either cut or at risk of closure. An important component of these actions must be for incumbent governments to understand the critical pathways universities play in training new generations of artists and arts workers as the key resource in our sector, without whom we could not continue to challenge, advance, critique and bring joy to communities across the country. NAVA also launched its new First Nations Policy and second Reconciliation Action Plan, and partnered on national research projects including the Countess Report and Precarious Movements.

Findings from NAVA's 2024 Membership Survey reinforced what we're hearing more broadly: artists are still struggling with financial instability, rising studio costs, and limited access to professional development. This feedback is crucial - it helps guide what our next focus will be.

We were incredibly pleased to welcome new Board Directors Sophia Cai, Janice Falsone, Kate Just, Jamie Lewis, and Liz Nowell, with Brian Tucker stepping into the Treasurer role. The calibre of these committed and passionate people is an asset to the organisation. We extend our sincere thanks to outgoing Directors Abdul Abdullah, Imogen Beynon, Lisa Radford, and Patrice Sharkey (Deputy Chair), Kate Joannou (Company Secretary), and Anjli Punia (Treasurer) for their valued service and contributions.

Voluntary service to our organisation is one way the sector can have agency and a say in the direction of NAVA, whilst supporting its critical work in making change. To that end, we encourage others to put themselves forward as potential Board Directors when call-outs are made – NAVA supports new Board members with governance training if needed, as well as other assistance.

This year also saw some changes in the team. We welcomed Janel Yau as General Manager and Georgia Mokak (Djugun) as First Nations Outreach Coordinator. We farewelled Deputy Director Georgie Cyrillo after nearly five years at NAVA, and Robyn Fernandez, who concluded her role as Queensland Professional Development Coordinator, following the conclusion of project funding.

As always, NAVA's work is shaped by the strength and support of our Members. Thank you for the many ways you engage with and guide this organisation. We remain committed to building more secure, sustainable conditions for artists and arts workers and we're grateful to be doing this work alongside you.

Clothilde Bullen
Chair

Penelope Benton
Executive Director

2024 in numbers



70% of income from Membership
(Gross income from Membership, net of insurances paid)



4,199 NAVA
Members



30,123
Subscribers



71,000 Social
Media followers



225,834 views &
45,669 users to
The Code website



27,618 views &
11,910 users accessed
guides and resources
on NAVA website



Artist File videos
10 videos, with
79,622 views



30 Workshops and
talks presented, with
1,656 attendees



1,169 instances
of advice given



84 cases of support
given to Members
for sector disputes



20 submissions
to consultations
and inquiries



56 NAVA articles
published



64 media
mentions



176
meetings



\$106,125 paid to **87** 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 4,200 paid Members in 2024. While Membership has nearly doubled over the past five years, this year saw a decline of around 200 Members, the steepest in recent years. The drop is attributed to rising living costs, increased insurance premiums, and policy restrictions affecting some Members’ ability to access adequate coverage.

Membership Types

NAVA offers three paid Membership tiers:

- Premium Membership (\$8/month or \$96/year): Supports NAVA’s advocacy work and the Code of Practice, with access to opportunity listings and industry discounts.
- Premium Plus Membership (\$365/year): Includes all Premium benefits plus a significantly 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.

In 2024, net Membership revenue (after insurance costs) was \$577,605, accounting for 56% of NAVA’s total income.

Geographic Reach

NAVA’s Members span all states and territories:

- NSW (40%)
- Victoria (28%)
- Queensland (12%)
- Followed by WA (7%), Tasmania (5%), SA (4%), ACT (4%), and NT (1%).

Member Engagement and Campaigns

Membership Campaign

In 2024, NAVA commissioned artist Judy Kuo to develop a new Membership campaign centred on the message: “We need NAVA / NAVA needs us.” The campaign highlighted a shared commitment among Members for pay and better working conditions for artists and arts workers, alongside a series of graphics promoting NAVA’s “Art is Work” campaign and Members’ insurance package.

The campaign featured bold, illustrative imagery showing NAVA Members coming together to support a stronger, more secure arts sector. It was rolled out across NAVA’s website, newsletters, and social media channels.

Artist Files

In 2024 NAVA continued the popular Artist Files series featuring video interviews with NAVA Members [Nicole Barakat](#), [Ruha Fifita](#), [Libby Harward](#), [Gabby Malpas](#), [Mylyn Nguyen](#), [Connor Ovenden-Shaw](#), [Amanda Jane Reynolds](#), [Ebony Russell](#), [Garry Trinh](#), and [Katie West](#).

In these conversations, artists shared insights on career-defining moments, the challenges of sustaining a practice, and the importance of self-advocacy. Common themes included the realities of working as an artist today, how the Code of Practice has supported their decisions, and what continues to motivate and inspire their work. The 2024 videos collectively reached over 79,622 views, with Mylyn Nguyen’s interview attracting the highest engagement at over 19,000 views.



Illustration by Judy Kuo, 2024.

Membership

Member Resources and Support

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 2024, the Guides received 27,463 views from 11,815 users. The most accessed titles included:

- How to Work in First Nations Classrooms
- How to Stage an Exhibition
- Invoice Templates
- Copyright and Licensing Templates

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.

Industry Discounts

NAVA Members enjoy a range of sector-wide benefits, including:

- Discounted entry to paying exhibitions at major Australian galleries
- A 10% discount at Eckersley’s Art and Craft stores
- Discounted subscriptions to Artlink magazine

Artists’ Benevolent Fund

In 2024, NAVA distributed \$23,890 through the Artists’ Benevolent Fund to support visual artists facing financial hardship due to crisis, including health emergencies, housing insecurity, environmental impacts, and sudden loss of income. The Fund remains a vital but limited safety net for those who often fall through the gaps in broader support systems.

Advice and Disputes

In 2024, NAVA responded to an average of 98 enquiries per month, providing guidance on increasingly specialised topics including good practice, artists’ rights, diversity and inclusion, censorship, and insurance. The slight decrease in enquiry volume from previous years may reflect stronger sector awareness and improved access to information through NAVA’s updated Code of Practice and expanded online resources.

NAVA also supported Members in approximately 84 dispute cases, assisting artists to navigate professional challenges and assert their rights.

Key issues included:

- Projects with unclear responsibilities between artists and commissioning organisations, leading to miscommunication and unrealistic timelines
- Ambiguity or absence of clear written agreements
- Censorship-related cases involving postponed or cancelled artworks, exhibitions, or events
- Contracts or payments that excluded superannuation
- Mislabelled ‘opportunities’ that failed to meet good practice standards, particularly in relation to copyright, moral rights, EOLs, and minimum fees

In such cases, NAVA provided direct support to artists and contacted organisers where appropriate, referring them to the relevant sections of the Code of Practice.



NAVA Artist File: Mylyn Nguyen. Photo by Garry Trinh.

Membership

Membership Survey 2024

To better understand Member needs, NAVA conducted its Membership Survey in August 2024, receiving 1,036 responses. The results provide a detailed snapshot of Members’ challenges and priorities. Respondents identified key concerns including financial precarity, rising studio costs, lack of affordable workspaces, and limited access to professional development, while also affirming the value of NAVA’s Code, advocacy, and educational resources.

Top advocacy concerns (ranked by respondents):

- Pay and working conditions / cost of living – 70%
- Freedom of expression – 55%
- Lack of funding – 54%
- Racial equity – 53%
- Gender equity – 52%

Open-ended responses called for a living wage for artists, better funding access, mental health support, and more practical resources linked to the Code. While the challenges are significant, Members expressed strong support for NAVA’s leadership and role in advancing both individual and sector-wide change. There was a clear desire for greater visibility of NAVA’s impact, targeted support across career stages, and improved regional and digital engagement.

Key recommendations from Members:

- Strengthen campaigns on pay equity, tax reform, and regional access
- Develop tailored resources for Disabled, culturally diverse, mid-career, regional and mid-careers artists
- Increase visibility of how Membership fees support sector-wide advocacy
- Expand digital access to professional development and peer support
- Improve accessibility and usability of the NAVA website
- Establish regional Member ambassadors to strengthen local outreach

The survey also reinforced the importance of NAVA’s learning resources and Code of Practice, with over 78% of respondents using guides and publications. Members noted their value in negotiations and grant applications, while suggesting more practical examples and improved navigation.

In 2025, NAVA will continue to prioritise improved conditions of work and practice, with a strong focus on ensuring artists and arts workers are paid for their work. Additionally, we will expand digital access, enhance support for underrepresented groups, and strengthen advocacy around cost of living, mental health, and access to space. Understanding the needs of our members remains central to our ongoing work. The recommendations and concerns raised from the survey will inform NAVA’s current and future priorities.



NAVA Artist File: Gabby Malpas. Photo by Garry Trinh.

Code of Practice

Access

In 2024, NAVA continued to build accessibility and inclusion into the Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design (the Code).

Artist Desirai Saunders, from Gunggari Country and Saltwater People, was commissioned to create new illustrations for the First Nations section of the Code.

To expand access for the d/Deaf community, NAVA produced eight Auslan-translated videos summarising good practice recommendations across key sections of the Code within the chapters of; Principles, Ethics and Rights, Exhibiting, Selling, Residencies, Studio, Education and Workshops;

- Community Engagement
- Freedom of Expression
- Grievance and Dispute Resolution
- Exhibiting
- Hiring a Gallery Space
- Resale Royalty
- Residencies and Studios
- Education and Workshops

Awareness and Application

A major win in 2024 was the announcement that all finalists in the Archibald Prize received a \$1,000 artist loan fee, the first time in the prize’s 103-year history that artists were paid to participate. This milestone aligns with the Code’s payment standards and was recognised as a result of NAVA’s advocacy. This decision followed the federal government’s endorsement of the Code through the National Cultural Policy, Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place.

To support sector-wide adoption of the Code, NAVA launched new interactive Code of Practice Training Courses in April. These courses help artists, arts workers, and organisations understand and apply ethical and professional standards in their work. NAVA strongly encourages arts organisations to include the training in staff inductions and professional development programs.

Payment Standards

The first annual increase to the Payment Standards in NAVA’s Code was implemented on 1 July 2024, marking the first indexation since the revised Code was launched in September 2022.

The Payment Standards chapter was updated to reflect:

- The 3.75% increase to minimum and award wages announced by the Fair Work Commission
- The increase in the National Minimum Wage, now set at \$915.90 per week or \$24.10 per hour (plus 25% casual loading)
- The Superannuation Guarantee increase from 11% to 11.5%

An indexation rate of 2.375% was applied to artist fees, which is the midpoint between Creative Australia’s 1% increase for multi-year contracts and the Fair Work Commission’s higher adjustment.

Updates were also made to Performance Fees and Allowances, which are based on the Live Performance Award (MA000081). Freelance rates from the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) and the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) were also reviewed.

Engagement and Reach

Google Analytics data for 2024 reflects significant and consistent engagement with the Code of Practice, with:

- 225,834 page views
- 45,669 users

The most frequently visited pages continue to be those within the Payment Standards section, reinforcing its importance as a trusted reference point for artists and arts workers seeking clarity on fees and conditions.



Illustration by Claudia Chinyere Akole for the Code of Practice Training Courses.

Education

In 2024, NAVA expanded access to the Code through targeted professional development initiatives, supported by funding from Create NSW, Arts Queensland, and the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) Program. These activities aimed to improve sector-wide understanding of rights and responsibilities, promote ethical standards, and support artists and arts workers to confidently self-advocate.

National Reach

NAVA delivered 30 workshops, webinars and talks across the country, both in-person and online. Topics included artist fees, contracts, copyright, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), and ethical work practices.

With support from IVAIS, NAVA engaged Libby Harward to co-facilitate an information stall at the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF). NAVA also presented a booth at Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (DAAF). Later in the year, Georgia Mokak was appointed as NAVA’s First Nations Outreach Coordinator, to lead engagement with First Nations artists and communities around the Code.

NAVA also presented and participated in national forums and panel discussions, including NAVA Talks AI—a collaborative series on good practice and the impacts of Artificial Intelligence on visual arts practice. Presented with Terri Janke and Company, Arts Law, and practicing artists, the series explored copyright, consent, and ICIP.

State-Based Programs

New South Wales

Through the NSW Professional Development Program (Create NSW), NAVA extended outreach across Western Sydney and regional communities, coordinated by NAVA staff Emma Pham and Donnalyn Xu. Events included:

- Presentations and stalls at the National Art School, the University of Sydney, and the UNSW ADA Community Day
- Understanding Artist Fees and Wages with artist-educator Jeremy Sheehan at Glasshouse, Port Macquarie
- Understanding Good Practice Around Copyright and IP, hosted with Arts North West, featuring Sandra McMahon
- Know Your Worth with Khaled Sabsabi, hosted with Fairfield City Museum & Galleries at Whitlam Library, Cabramatta
- Ethical Practices for Working with First Nations Artists with Dr Lorina L. Barker and Dr Eliza Kent, in partnership with Arts North West
- An introduction to the Code co-facilitated with Utp Rising at Bankstown Arts Centre
- Commissioning Art in Public Space, presented with Carla Gottgens, South Coast Arts, and Kiama Municipal Council
- Respecting ICIP in Collecting Institutions, an online webinar presented by Tammi Gissell and Madeline Poll
- An online session with artist Abdul Abdullah on pricing work for auctions, co-hosted with Firstdraft



Participants from the Utp Rising cohort at a workshop co-facilitated by NAVA and Utp on the Code of Practice at Bankstown Arts Centre. Photo by Garry Trinh.

Education

Queensland

NAVA delivered a series of professional development activities in partnership with arts organisations and local governments, coordinated by Robyn Fernandez through the Queensland Arts Showcase Program (QASP). Activities included:

- Workshops on Understanding Artists' Fees and Wages in Pomona and Gympie, delivered with CQ RASN and Pomona and District Community House
- A session on good practice frameworks for public art at the Find: Public Art Summit, with Stephanie Parkin, author of the First Nations sections of the Code as well as participation in the ethics panel alongside Brian Robinson and Libby Harward, facilitated by Bundaberg Regional Gallery Manager Rebecca McDuff
- An industry booth at CIAF, providing advice on artist rights, Code resources, and insurance
- A presentation to University of Queensland Museum Studies students

The program helped strengthen relationships with artists, organisations, and councils across Queensland, and highlighted a strong demand for practical engagement with the Code. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with calls for more regionally focused sessions and ongoing support.

Despite its success, funding for the Queensland program was not renewed. NAVA is seeking investment from the Queensland Government, as well as broader support from all state and territory governments, to expand access, awareness, and application of the Code of Practice, ensuring artists and arts workers are equipped to secure better working conditions and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable sector.



Stephanie Parkin and Robyn Fernandez talking to participants at Find: Public Arts Summit in Bundaberg, Qld. Photo by Knights Creative.

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

Submissions to Inquiries

NAVA made twenty submissions to government inquiries and consultations.

Recognise Art as Work

In 2024, NAVA continued to lead national advocacy for fair pay and protections for artists and arts workers through its Recognise Art as Work campaign. A key focus was the Fair Work Commission’s Modern Awards Review, where NAVA facilitated input from nearly 20 visual artists and arts workers to highlight award coverage gaps, unpaid labour, and the need for minimum standards across the sector.

This advocacy resulted in a historic commitment to vary the Amusement, Events and Recreation Award 2020, including a revision of the classification structure, and change to the award title. NAVA made multiple submissions to the Fair Work Commission throughout the year and participated in hearings and consultations from January to February and again in October 2024. The case will continue in early 2025.

NAVA engaged with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to address barriers to income support for freelance and contract-based arts workers. NAVA continued to advocate for clearer guidance under the Points-Based Activation System and responded to feedback from DEWR and Services Australia on mutual obligation requirements for those receiving government income support.

Workforce Planning

NAVA was appointed to the Arts Strategic Workforce Advisory Committee (SWAG) to Services and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA), a jobs and skills council which plays a key role in shaping strategic responses to sector-wide workforce issues.

Through submissions and feedback, NAVA helped inform SaSCA’s Workforce Planning Report for the Arts and the Arts Workforce Scoping Study, advocating for structural reforms that support income security, professional recognition, and employment opportunities, particularly for underrepresented groups. NAVA emphasised the need to address skills shortages, particularly in gallery technicians, educators, and support staff, and prioritised cultural safety and career pathways for First Nations workers.

Copyright and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

With the rapid development of generative AI posing new risks to artists’ rights and intellectual property, NAVA made several key submissions in 2024:

- Senate Inquiry into Adopting Artificial Intelligence
- Attorney-General’s Department’s Orphan Works Scheme Design Options Paper
- Copyright and AI Transparency Paper via the Copyright and AI Reference Group (CAIRG)
- Department of Industry, Science and Resources’ Mandatory Guardrails for AI in High-Risk Settings Proposals Paper

NAVA reinforced the importance of consent, attribution, and remuneration for artists, and called for regulatory frameworks that uphold the rights of creators, particularly those most vulnerable to exploitation.



NAVA Executive Director Penelope Benton, Research Assistant Chloë Powell, Professor Grace McQuilten, and Associate Professor Marnie Badham from RMIT University’s School of Art Visual Arts Work research team, and artist Eugenia Lim in front of the Fair Work Commission building in Naarm.

Arts Education

NAVA continues to advocate for the protection and expansion of arts education, and in 2024 voiced strong opposition to the closure or downsizing of key programs, including:

- The University of Queensland’s Museum Studies program
- Southern Cross University’s creative arts degrees
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Art Museum’s 2025 programming

NAVA maintains its call for reduced tuition fees and expanded education pathways to support the next generation of visual artists and arts workers.

This year, NAVA contributed to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Arts and Music Education and Training, urging long-term investment in creative education and the integration of visual arts as a core entitlement for all students.

ANZSCO consultation

NAVA made a formal submission to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Consultation Round 4, highlighting the need to update the classification system to better reflect contemporary arts careers, especially those of First Nations visual arts workers whose roles are not currently recognised.

NAVA also responded to the Creative Arts Draft Project Plans within the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) and Indigenous Research Data Commons, advocating for frameworks that embed cultural protocols and support data sovereignty in creative research contexts.

Pre-budget Submission to Treasury

NAVA’s submission called for targeted investment in First Nations employment, S2M organisations, improved pay and working conditions, skills development, and sector-wide equity. NAVA emphasised that delivering on Revive requires sustained public funding for artists and the systems that support them.

Research and reports

In 2024, NAVA:

- Supported the release of the Countess Report, exposing persistent gender inequities in the visual arts
- Backed the launch of Precarious Movements: Sector Resource for Choreographic Works in the Museum led by researchers at the University New South Wales (UNSW) and Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) with industry partners the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), TATE UK, Art Gallery New South Wales (AGNSW) and independent artist Shelley Lasica
- Continued partnerships with major national research initiatives:
 - Visual Arts Work: sustainable strategies for the Australian visual arts and craft sector led by researchers from RMIT University The University of Melbourne, and industry partners Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA)
 - Empowering Australia’s Visual Arts via Creative Blockchain Opportunities led by researchers from the University of Wollongong (UoW), University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) and The University of Queensland (UQ) with industry partners Australian Network for Art & Technology (ANAT), CSIRO Data61, Copyright Agency and Australian Copyright Council



Participants at ‘Understanding Artist Fees and Wages’, Port Macquarie. Photo by James Lander.

Media Impact

In 2024, NAVA maintained a strong media presence, contributing to national and international discourse on arts policy, funding, education, industrial reform, copyright, censorship, and artists’ rights. NAVA was cited or quoted in over 90 media stories.

Coverage included NAVA’s responses to the Fair Work Commission’s Award review, where the organisation called for the introduction of minimum standards across the arts. NAVA’s submissions on copyright and AI developments were featured in Arts Hub, and its opposition to the discontinuation of arts programs at Southern Cross University and the University of Queensland received coverage in the Daily Telegraph, Honi Soit, and Sydney Morning Herald.

In May, NAVA attracted international media attention for defending artist Vincent Namatjira following calls to remove his portrait of Gina Rinehart from the National Gallery of Australia. NAVA also supported the release of the Countess Report, with widespread commentary on the need for greater representation in institutions.

NAVA’s advocacy featured across major public conversations on tax reform, funding, and the federal budget, and was consistently referenced in Creative Australia’s policy communications. Media outlets that published, quoted or mentioned NAVA in 2024 included ABC News, The Guardian, Sydney Morning Herald, The Canberra Times, Arts Hub, Crikey, Art Forum, Independent Australia, Australian Arts Review, Yahoo News, 9 News, The Age, Mining.com, The Lighthouse, National Indigenous Times, In Queensland, and more.

“The National Association of Visual Arts backs the idea of a specialised award to recognise the complexity of work undertaken by visual artists and arts workers and says without it, pay and conditions will continue to decline.”

Creative jobs fall between the cracks into a wages no-man’s-land
Linda Morris, Sydney Morning Herald, 12 February.

“Policy change and investment is urgently needed to address the glaring gap in career pathways for First Nations arts workers and leadership roles within the visual arts.”

Countess Report findings show Australian visual arts institutions are lagging on gender equity
Anna Freeland, ABC News, 30 April.

“Artistic expression is a fundamental aspect of Australian cultural life and it must include the freedom to exhibit, perform or distribute works that may be unpopular, shocking, or disturbing.”

Vincent Namatjira says ‘people don’t have to like my paintings’ after Gina Rinehart demands portrait be removed
Michael Sun, The Guardian, 16 May.

“It is unacceptable that those who dedicate their careers to enriching public life through the arts face such low pay and limited career pathways. We urge the government to prioritise adequate wages for the many artists and administrators in roles fundamental to our society.”

Arts Workforce Scoping Study interim findings indicate crisis across sectors
Gina Fairley, Arts Hub, 14 November.



Co-authors of the Countess Report, Miranda Samuels and Shevaun Wright in front of Gamilaraay/Wailwan/Biripi artist r e a’s GARI (language), 2024, for the 24th Biennale of Sydney, Ten Thousand Suns, 2024, Artspace. Courtesy the artist. © r e a. Photograph by Jamie James.

Reconciliation Action Plan

In August, NAVA launched its second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. Building on the inaugural Reflect RAP (2023), the Innovate plan sets out a clear framework for embedding cultural competence in NAVA’s operations and in sector-wide standards.

The RAP is overseen by a Working Group including General Manager Janel Yau and Membership and Projects Officer Donnalyn Xu, with Executive Director Penelope Benton as RAP Champion. NAVA is currently inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to join the Working Group, with remuneration offered for their time and contributions.

The cover artwork of the RAP features *Why Don’t Whitefellas Like Trees?* by Pitcha Makin Fellas, created by Trudy Edgeley, Alison McRae, and Ted Laxton. The work honours Djab Wurrung’s care for Country and collective resistance to cultural erasure.

NAIDOC Commission

For NAIDOC Week 2024, NAVA commissioned multidisciplinary artist Jarra Karalinar Steel (Boonwurrung, Wemba Wemba and Trawlwoolway) to respond to the theme *Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud*. Her artwork honours the resilience of ancestors and the ongoing power of collective pride, identity and community.

The piece was shared with an artist’s statement and a list of NAIDOC activities, arts events, fundraisers, and First Nations-owned businesses, encouraging the NAVA community to participate, support, and learn.

First Nations Policy

In November, NAVA launched its First Nations Policy 2024–2029, setting a strategic direction to increase First Nations representation, employment, and influence across the visual arts.

The policy commits to:

- Strengthening First Nations governance and staff pathways
- Increasing opportunities for First Nations artists, including leadership roles
- Embedding cultural competency across the organisation
- Respecting and protecting Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)
- Establishing an Indigenous Advisory Group and recruiting a Deputy Director, First Nations Policy and Advocacy

The policy supports implementation of the Code and aligns with the development of new ICIP legislation, reinforcing NAVA’s role in driving sector-wide change.

Policy and Organisational Practice

As part of its ongoing commitment to sector leadership and internal accountability, NAVA:

- Continued paying honorariums to voluntary Board Directors who are artists, independent arts workers and/or First Nations representatives
- Maintained its Artist and Arts Worker Fee Policy, ensuring superannuation is paid on artist and arts worker fees, regardless of legislative requirements
- Upheld its Safer Spaces at NAVA protocol, offering guidance on respectful engagement during events and consultations
- Completed drafting of NAVA’s first Disability Action Plan, launched in February 2025



Illustration by Jarra Karalinar Steel commissioned by NAVA for NAIDOC Week.

NAVA Board 2024



Chair

Clothilde Bullen OAM is a Wardandi (Nyoongar) and Badimaya (Yamatji) woman. She is currently Lead, Cultural Strategy and Development at Edith Cowan University. Clothilde was previously Curator and Head of Indigenous Programs at the Art Gallery of Western Australia and Senior Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collections and Exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. She serves on numerous boards and is a dedicated mentor and advocate.



Elected Representative - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

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 - 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

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. She is also on the Board of VicHealth and has previously been CEO / Executive Director at Next Wave, Program Manager at Theatre Network Australia (TNA), on the Board of Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV), and was in the 2018 cohort of Creative Australia’s Future Leaders program.



Elected Representative - Artists

Michelle Vine is an artist, educator, and researcher whose practice explores sensory experience, disability, and wellbeing. Living in Meanjin (Brisbane), Michelle has actively practiced as an artist for over a decade; prior to that she held senior management positions in the financial services and technology sectors. She brings to the NAVA board a combination of business and governance skills, now applied to her thriving arts practice, along with lived experience of disability which informs her artworks and her advocacy for disability inclusion.



Elected Representative - Organisations (Deputy Chair)

Sophia Cai is the current Director at Canberra Contemporary. From 2023 to 2024, Sophia was the Artistic Director of Bus Projects, while maintaining an independent curating and writing practice. Sophia’s 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. She previously taught at the University of Melbourne and Monash University and has had roles at Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP) and NETS Victoria.



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

Liz Nowell is a curator and cultural leader whose practice is informed by collaboration, relationality, and care ethics. She is the Executive Director of Arts Project Australia, an internationally renowned visual arts organisation that supports artists with intellectual disabilities and champions their inclusion in contemporary art practice. Liz has led preeminent public galleries including the Institute of Modern Art (IMA), Adelaide Contemporary Experimental (ACE), and Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia (CACSA).



Co-opted Director

Sophia Nampitjimpa Sambono is a Jingili woman with family connections from Elliot/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 is working on a number of exhibitions opening in 2024, including the 11th Asia Pacific Triennial.



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
Deputy Director: Georgie Cyrillo (until August)
General Manager: Janel Yau (from September)
Advocacy and Communications Manager: Leya Reid
Operations and Finance Coordinator: Holly Morrison
First Nations Outreach Coordinator: Georgia Mokak (from September)
NSW Professional Development Coordinators: Emma Pham, Donnalyn Xu
Qld Professional Development Coordinator: Robyn Fernandez (until July)
Membership and Communications Officers: Ju Bavyka, Yui Madden, Naomi Segal, Donnalyn Xu
Designers: Missy Dempsey, Kat Collins - KC & the Graphics Bandwagon
IT Consultant: Jay Cooper

NAVA thanks outgoing Directors in 2024 Abdul Abdullah, Imogen Beynon, Lisa Radford, and Patrice Sharkey (Deputy Chair), Kate Joannou (Company Secretary), and Anjli Punia (Treasurer) for their valued service and contributions.

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NAVA Artist File: Libby Harward. Photo by Sarah Osborn, 2024.

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