

# ACTNATIONUK

Annual Report 2021



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Cover: On Wimmera land artwork, *Painted with Light*.  
Artist: Tanisha Lovett, Gunditjmara and Wotjobaluk artist.  
Photo: Mary French

Left: Grist glowing at Frinj Trim Oct 21. Photo: Jacqui Schulz

Annual Report designed by [argraphicdesign.com.au](http://argraphicdesign.com.au)





Travelling Lantunda, December members event. Artist: Mary French Photo: Mary French

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*ACT Natimuk acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we are located, the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Jupagulk and Wergaia and all the lands on which we meet and work.*

*We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge their sacred connection to land, water and community.*

# INTRODUCTION

## What is ACT Natimuk?

actnatimuk.com

ACT Natimuk is an arts organisation that drives and presents cultural activities in the west Victorian community of Natimuk and beyond. Originally established as the Arapiles Community Theatre in 1979 and presenting musical theatre, it has evolved over the past 20 years by extending its vision. It now supports arts in a variety of genres – disciplines such as dance, visual arts, film, new media, projection, aerial performance and experimental works. ACT Natimuk provides this support through a suite of programs:

ACT Natimuk Presents

Nati Frinj Biennale

Made in Natimuk

ACT Natimuk major Projects & Partnerships

## 2021 Snapshot in Numbers:

**\$200,357** in state and federal funding

**\$7,886** in private and philanthropic support

**900** audience reached

**12** events, exhibitions and workshops across Regional Victoria

## People

In 2021 ACT Natimuk consisted of the following people:

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Chair** – Sue Pavlovich

**Vice-Chair** – D’Arcy Molan  
– Jacqui Schulz (Feb 2021)

**Secretary** – Abby Watkins

**Treasurer** – Mary French

### GENERAL COMMITTEE

Yingying He

Gail Harradine

Anthony Schellens

### STAFF

**Hannah French** – General Co-Manager

**Tracey Skinner** – General Co-Manager

**Hannah French** – Nati Frinj Biennale Director

**Verity Higgins** – Made in Natimuk Producer

### MEMBERS

Jillian Pearce

Sean Keown

Hannah French

D’Arcy Molan

Sue Pavlovich

Tracey Skinner

Greg Pritchard

Mary French

Carolynne Hamdorf

Elaine Uebergang

Jacqueline Schulz

Yingying He

Gail Harradine

Desiree Cross

Cameron Abraham

Adam Demmert

Abby Watkins

Alison Eggleton

No Mi Che

Dawa Che

Bec Hopkins

Sally French

Kate Finnerty

Genevieve Lilley

Rob Grenfell

Julie Dyer

Sarah Natali

Shae Parker McCashen

Owen Pietsch

Olivia Page

Anthony Pelchen

Cassy Velinos

Meg Dennison

Mark Gould

Fari Islam

Tarni Eldridge

Paul Molan

Sherrin Molan

Cath de Vaus

Daniel Wade

Melissa Powell

Melissa Cook

## Message from the Chair

2021 has again been a forward-thinking year for ACT Natimuk. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have continued to be far reaching with impacts to ACT Natimuk's exciting programs. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, ACT Natimuk has continued to progress and evolve. The Strategic Plan was completed and published in 2021 and provides a clear roadmap for the future of ACT Natimuk.

ACT Natimuk's strong financial position allowed the strategic planning process to invest \$50,000 from our savings to build the organisation over the next 12 months. Some, not all, ACT Natimuk staff were supported by JobKeeper over part of 2020 and until early 2021. This coupled with our existing savings from successful productions like Poppet supported a strong financial position which we paid forward to the Creative Lab program. The Creative Lab investment includes five artists' fees, and documentation and management of the project by the Made in Natimuk producer Verity Higgins.

The Creative Lab, working through the MiN model, commenced in 2021 as a residency program attracting artistic talent to the area. It is an opportunity to foster new work and artists and ideally will feed into the Nati Frinj festival. Within the limitations posed by the pandemic, the Creative Lab residency program has thrived.

Goatfest 2021 was organised by Tracey Skinner returning to a regular Easter delivery. However, it was presented as a hybrid model, both online and with 50 in-person patrons.

Palais De Pixel resumed in-person screening in 2021 with capped numbers following density quotient requirements.

Verity Higgins continued her producer role for Made in Natimuk (MiN). She negotiated on behalf of MiN artists with artists and projects in South Australia and New Zealand, as well as within Victoria.

Former ACT Chairperson Douglas Hockly passed away in 2021. ACT Natimuk was the beneficiary of the artworks left by Doug. An exhibition was facilitated by ACT members Rob Grenfell and Genevieve Lilley of The Goat Gallery. Thanks to family and friends of Doug and ACT members for supporting this exhibition. Funds from the exhibition will be used to refine the ACT online presence. Jacqui Schulz and Gareth Llewellyn also organised a garage sale of Doug's belongings, with the collected monies going to ACT.

Tracey Skinner and Hannah French continued as General Co-Managers during 2021. Formerly a one-person position, the additional person's role continued to be paid by ACT Natimuk from reserves identified in our strategic planning process.

Philanthropic skills development occurred for the General Managers and the Committee, and a Patrons Prospectus was developed by the General Co-Managers as part of the long-term strategy.

The General Co-Managers reported on the Organization Investment Program (OIP) and compiled the 2020 Annual Report. ACT Natimuk has acted as the auspice organisation for several major grants. Nati Frinj was successful in receiving funding from Festivals Australia for Bamboo: Exquisite, a project bringing together Nati Frinj and two Natimuk companies, Nati Access Company and Y Space. Verity Higgins was successful in receiving funding for NatiFRIJ through a Regional Arts Fund project grant, auspiced by ACT Natimuk. Both projects were originally slated for presentation at the 2021 Nati Frinj Biennale, and will be presented at the 2022 festival.

ACT Natimuk continued to proactively engage with First Nations artists and arts projects in our region. *Painted with Light*, a new projection residency in the development phase, was led by First Nations artists Gail Harradine, Tanisha Lovett and the local community. Gail Harradine became a member of the ACT Committee in mid-2021. Her input has been invaluable as we developed both our Cultural Protocols and Cultural Safety documents (adopted in September 2021), and more broadly in bringing a First Nations perspective to our organisation. Cultural Competency training was undertaken by Committee and staff. The Reconciliation Action Plan process is underway with a team of members developing this further.

Projects acquitted in 2021 include *Splash of Circus* youth circus, led by local artists Dawa and No Mi of Wobbly Spoon. *Grist*, a portable outdoor venue launched with delight to local community in October's Frinj Trim. *Travelling Lantunda*, a traveling iteration of Mary French's successful Lantunda, was premiered to members in December. The first preview of the *Natimuk Open Studios Artist Trail* (NOSAT) occurred in December 2021.

In her Frinj Director role, Hannah French formed a program, liaising with artists, pursuing funding opportunities and Covid Safe training, and commenced publicity and venue planning.

Due to COVID-19 lockdowns and planning uncertainty, the decision was taken to postpone the Frinj festival in September 2021. Hannah French, as Festival Director, had the delicate and complex task of negotiating artists and funding bodies. The last weekend in October 2022 has been identified as the date of the next Frinj Festival.

In December 2021, Hannah French resigned from her positions as Frinj Director and as General Co-Manager. We thank her for her work. She has assured us that she is looking forward to participating as an ACT member. Tracey continues in her General Manager role which will be at two days per week. 2022 will welcome a new Frinj Director into the role. Hannah will work with the new Director in a handover period.

Mary French has continued her role as treasurer and Alison White extends her tenure as Bookkeeper.

Sue Pavlovich

**ACT Natimuk Chairperson**

## Message from the General Manager



Grist. Photo: Jacqui Schulz

Like many organisations, ACT Natimuk headed into 2021 with a hopeful outlook that the issues of the pandemic would subside. This was not to be the case, but ACT focused on the positives and started the year off with more strategic planning. Due to being successful with the Strategic Investment Fund 2 in 2020, much of 2021 involved the management of projects and deliverables. One of the deliverables was the development of a 4-year Strategic Plan. This carefully crafted document gave us a roadmap for moving forward in the best possible way in what would be another challenging year. Hannah and Tracey continued into the year sharing the General Manager role with a mix of in-office and remote working due to lockdown restrictions.

Some notable achievements throughout 2021 –

- Annual Report document completed
- Strategic Plan 4-year document completed
- Philanthropy consultant engaged and further fundraising possibilities researched. Started development of a Philanthropy Patron prospectus
- Cultural Competency training provided and taken by all key personnel
- Developed a First Peoples Cultural Protocols Policy
- Developed a First Peoples Cultural Safety Policy
- Started work on a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and set up a RAP working group
- Submitted ACNC reporting
- Created ACT Natimuk monthly newsletter
- Created Online Membership system

- Grist project- Continued and completed work on Grist field bin. Mini launch on Frinj Trim weekend
- Delivered the Natimuk Open Studios Art Trail. Successful grant funding from Horsham Rural City Council
- Delivered Natimuk Projection test night – development of new projection initiative
- Goatfest in Easter delivered in both face to face (max allowed 50 people) and online
- New permanent office in Soldiers Memorial Hall along with permanent parking for Grist field bin and its sibling field bin
- Applied for Creative Victoria's Creative Enterprise Program multi-year funding. This funding program replaces OIP
- Applied and successful with extra marketing funding for RAV Project 'Grist'
- Submitted proposal for Northern Grampians Shire Council Outdoor Activation. Project beginning in February 2022

Tracey Skinner, Hannah French  
**General Co-managers**



## Nati Frinj Artistic Director Report

Planning for Frinj 2021 started in December 2020, with an excellently attended initial Frinj community catch-up showing that there is strong support for the festival. There was enthusiasm from those excited to create work, and those wishing to support the festival as volunteers.

This community meeting was followed by an internal ACT Natimuk/Frinj stakeholder planning meeting in January 2021 to discuss how the festival should proceed following the recent ACT Natimuk strategic planning sessions and with the impacts of COVID-19. This meeting established that the festival should aim to take place on the regular dates and for 3 days, but with some new approaches to the financial arrangement of the festival, including increasing ticket prices and the festival taking a cut from box office. At this meeting a festival curatorial committee was also established.

Following this meeting funding applications made by the festival included a \$10,000 submission to Horsham Rural City Council's community development grant program, a 10,000 submission to VicHealth for the next phase of the *Splash of Circus* program, and a \$64,000 application to Festivals Australia for *Bamboo: Exquisite* project.

Nati Frinj was successful in securing \$7,000 from Horsham Rural City Council to support COVID-safe initiatives for the festival, including new cashless ticketing infrastructure and the production of a promotional video. The VicHealth submission was also successful, as was the *Bamboo: Exquisite* project application to Festivals Australia.

Other submissions that were made for programming into the festival were for *Apart Together* to Creative Victoria by Abby Watkins which unfortunately was not successful, and *Nati Frij* to Regional Arts Victoria by Verity Higgins, which was successful. ACT Natimuk also submitted to Regional Arts Victoria for the development of a new exciting venue in *GRIST*, which was successful.

A broader call-out for submissions to the festival was circulated in April with applications to the festival program coming from both local and interstate groups. A majority of applications came from musical groups. Over the coming months the curatorial committee reviewed these applications and made recommendations on the programming of the festival weekend. A big thank you to the curatorial committee for their time and energy with this.

The *Splash of Circus* project, which was funded by VicHealth, was an exciting project led by No Mi Che and Dawa Che of Wobbly Spoon. It was a follow-on from the successful 2020 series of circus workshops which included juggling, hula hooping and adajio skills development. In 2021 the *Splash of Circus* program expanded to a series of 16 workshops in the lead up to the Nati Frinj weekend, with the intention to hold a live performance on the festival weekend.

In August 2021 in between COVID-19 lockdowns, the roll-out of the vaccination program and a general sense of unease and unpredictability, it became apparent that running Nati Frinj as we had hoped was going to prove challenging and hard to plan for. After much discussion, including thinking about an online festival, it was decided to postpone the festival by one year. This was a difficult decision but once made felt right and was received with support from artists, community and funders. Not long after Frinj deciding to postpone, many other festivals scheduled for the latter half of 2021 also postponed, including White Night. A big thank you to all those who spent time with me nutting this decision out.

With the decision to postpone the festival a few things changed. The *Splash of Circus* team were fantastic in being able to pivot their outcome to a wonderful short film showcasing the talents of the NatiBat circus, and the running of a 6-week circus club pilot program to whet the appetite for an ongoing, all ages circus club in Natimuk.



Grist curiosity. Photo: Jacqui Schulz



Signals from the Dark at Frinj Trim, Creative Lab. Artist: Anthony Pelchen Photo: Jacqui Schulz

No Mi and Dawa also organised the procurement of a wonderful array of circus equipment which are now community assets.

The funding for *Bamboo: Exquisite* was able to be held for the project roll-out in 2022. The Nati Frij workshops with the Ballarat-based Pitcha Makin Fellas were able to proceed, with the fridges now being stored at Natimuk Primary School for display at Frinj 2022.

A new exciting initiative called 'Creative Lab' was also launched by Made in Natimuk.

On the weekend marked for the Nati Frinj, a small celebration was held at the Soldiers Memorial Hall which launched the fantastic *GRIST* venue. Operating as a bar, *GRIST* activated the rear of the hall area and showcased its potential as a performance, exhibition and otherwise versatile space.

Also on this weekend, Portarlington-based artist Gillian Turner presented her *Rain Women* project at the Boarding House studios, Isabelle Hoskins and Ruby Hughes shared their new online video work *Scary Girls Dance Party* and Anthony Pelchen began his two-week Creative Lab development at the Goat Gallery called *Signals from the Dark*. With lights and nightly musical and voice works floating down Main Street, *Signals from the Dark* was a gentle work reflecting the pandemic and the absence felt of Nati Frinj proper. This weekend of programming also saw the Pitcha Makin Fellas run three fridge painting workshops at Natimuk Primary School.

After this weekend celebration, new possibilities emerged for artists including possible collaborations for Gillian Turner. Other Creative Lab artists visited Natimuk, including Sam Burke's *the apology I was never given, and the one I never made*. Artist Louise Cooper also visited Natimuk leaving behind art caches and ideas for a street projection work to be delivered in 2022.

In late 2021, Tracey Skinner applied for state government COVID-19 support for Frinj 2022, and also led the application for a new multi-year funding opportunity with Creative Victoria – the Creative Enterprise Program. I supported this application with the development of an operational plan for Nati Frinj, aligning with ACT Natimuk's Strategic Plan.

At the end of 2021 I decided to resign as the Festival Director of the Nati Frinj Biennale. I would like to thank all who supported me in my tenure as the Director of the festival, and especially acknowledge Kate Finnerty who worked so hard to see the festival become the extraordinary artistic and community celebration we know it as today. I also thank Elaine Uebergang who was an incredible volunteer coordinator, Adam Demmert who captained the production ship in 2019, and Tracey Skinner and Verity Higgins, who have been wonderful, supportive and inspiring colleagues through 2019, 2020 and 2021. I will always have a fondness for Nati Frinj and I am excited to have the time and space to contribute to it both creatively and practically in years to come.

Hannah French  
Nati Frinj Biennale Festival Director



# PROGRAM



Nati kids at Nati Frinj workshops run by the Pitcha Makin Fellas. Photo: Jacqui Schulz

## Made in Natimuk

madeinnatimuk.com

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on curtailing/cancelling the presentation of work, much of 2021 Made in Natimuk focus was spent in supporting the consolidation work of the organization. This included contributing to -

- the development of the next Strategic Plan
- the development the Reconciliation Action Plan
- the development of the Creative Enterprises Program funding submission

Despite cancellations (such as White Night) one major opportunity for MiN was achieved in being given a place to pitch Space & Place at the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) at the Dream Big Festival in Adelaide in May 2021. Pitches were pre-recorded to cater for the hybrid model of delivery necessary due to Covid. Fortunately a window in between Covid lockdowns allowed attendance in person. As well as the traditional pitch sessions, much attention was given to collegiate support and wellbeing during these difficult times. The APAM team did an exceptional job adapting to the constantly changing circumstances.

Despite other lockdowns (and the emergence of Omicron) since then, the APAM opportunity has opened up some conversations with potential presenters.

With the postponement of Nati Frinj 2021 the MiN producer also supported the delivery of Frinj Trim by way of a local low-key celebration of creative practice and a way to mark the original Frinj dates.

An exciting new MiN development was the establishment of the Creative Lab program. The work on this new program for the MiN producer included establishing the program, promoting it, developing the application process, setting up the selection panel and guidelines, responding to inquiries, facilitating the panel meeting, communicating with applicants, managing the successful applicants together with ongoing support and promotion of the six successful applicants/projects.

A hopeful sign of things to come was the MiN contribution to the development of the submission to the Northern Grampians Shire Outdoor Activation Program.

## CREATIVE LAB



Signals from the Dark. Installation performance project, Creative Lab. Artist: Anthony Pelchen. Photo: Jacqui Schulz

A new initiative that evolved in the development of the Strategic Plan, and which was influenced by the impact of COVID-19 on artists, was for ACT Natimuk to establish a Creative Lab program with the following aims:

- To encourage artists to connect with Natimuk and work as part of Natimuk’s small but vibrant arts community
- To create/seed work for Nati Frinj Biennale
- To create/seed work that may be suitable for inclusion as a Made in Natimuk (MiN) work.
- To help with the sustainability of maintaining a regional arts practice
- To encourage artistic exploration
- To encourage diversity of artistic expression

The Creative Lab Project was originally intended to provide artists some creative exploration time on an idea that would ideally seed a project with a showing at Nati Frinj 2021 leading to a fully realised outcome for Nati Frinj 2023. Artists were invited to apply for \$5000 grants under two streams – Open Project or Projection Project.

The original idea was to grant 3 Creative lab opportunities per year, however with the necessary postponement of the 2021 Frinj Festival after the application process, it was decided, taking into consideration budget constraints, to award 5 Creative Lab opportunities over 2 years with the hope to add a 6th should ACT Natimuk be successful in attracting further funding. This decision was guided by the postponement of the festival, the quality and diversity of the submissions, and the stated aim to support 3 Creative Lab opportunities per year as outlined in the new Strategic

*Creative Lab’s Signals from the Dark - It was a real privilege to have a collaboration of artists of this calibre on the streets of Natimuk every night during Frinj Trim weekend – Genevieve*

Plan. It was all about the pivot in these tricky times and it seemed the fairest way forward given a showing at the Frinj Festival was a component of the submission criteria.

The successful 2021/2022 applicants (in no particular order):

### Open Project Opportunity

- Anthony Pelchen:** Signals from the Dark – installation performance project
- Jesse Stevens** (Cake Industries): Boat Ride – installation and whimsical ride
- Sam Burke:** ‘an apology I was never given, and the one I never made’ – community engaged text inspired projection and audio work
- Jacqui Schulz:** Deus Ex Machine (working title) – an immersive theatre experience
- Kat Pengelly:** Truck – installation and performance inspired by trucking stories. Leaping off point interviews with her Dad

### Projection Project Opportunity

- Louise Cooper:** Natimuk Street Art Come to Life – community created paper cut puppets, stop form animation projection
- By the end of 2021 thus far 3 of the artist have spent time in Natimuk and engaged with the Natimuk community. There will be more Creative Lab activity throughout 2022 and showings of the works at Nati Frinj 2022.



# Goatfest



Goatfest 2021- Online and Beyond. Photo: Tracey Skinner

The Goatfest Climbing Film Festival held its inaugural event in 2002. The festival was created as a way of raising funds for ACT Natimuk administration. With Natimuk’s strong history of climbing - the town itself placed next to world class climbing location Dyurrite/Mt Arapiles - it was a vision that has seen the festival grow in popularity year after year. Traditionally held over the Easter long weekend, it takes advantage of the annual climbers Easter pilgrimage to Dyurrite/Mt Arapiles. The weekend draws visitors from across the country and internationally and the event is always a sell-out. It is an opportunity for climbers to create and view films (be they amateur or professional) and to enjoy the global camaraderie that is part of being a member of this great community.

As per the previous year, the pandemic was still impacting events however with a slight relaxing of restrictions, some were able to go ahead but with strict density requirements in place. Goatfest once again stepped into the challenging space and was presented in a hybrid version.

The Soldiers Memorial Hall in Natimuk has been the traditional venue for presenting Goatfest. Although due to density requirements, only 60 people were allowed in the space including the volunteers, we decided to run a live and online event at the same time - Goatfest 2021 - Online & Live.

Tickets for live viewing were sold quickly, with the online attendance a little slower and being sold up to the start time. Using Zoom, we brought the two audiences together at the key live moments such as opening, live presentation delivery, voting and winner announcement. Online viewers watched the films via the Vimeo platform where all films had been uploaded, whilst the live audience watched real time via the projector in the venue.

The evening opened with a small memorial speech and slideshow to our friend, ACT Natimuk past Chair and Goatfest champion Douglas Hockly who had recently passed. His film and previous Goatfest winner ‘Climber Model Denialism’ heralded the beginning of the films.

The night went well with relatively few hitches. It was certainly a little fiddly swinging between live moments with online and live audience but there were no real issues. The evening closed with a talk from filmmaker Olivia Page on the trials and tribulations of filming ‘Kakapo Crest’. Feedback for the festival from the attendees was great from both audiences.

Attendance numbers as opposed to ticket numbers for the online audience were hard to gauge. Attendance was a lot higher than the actual ticket sales, as there were many instances where 1 or 2 tickets were bought for much larger amounts of attendees who set up in group viewings. Approximate viewing would be likely 250 plus. Ticket sales were not as high as hoped. Future festivals may contain an online component but we will assess whether this happens at the time of the live event or after.

Goatfest sponsor Climbing Anchors continued their support with the voucher prizes – Audience Choice - \$200, Jury Choice - \$200 and Kids Award - \$50.

**13 films were submitted to compete:**

- **Bergurk Episodes 1-4** – Brecon Littlefoot
- **One Somebody First Ascent** – Paul ‘Frותר’ Thompson
- **The Intellectual** – Stanislav Likane
- **Covid Shuffle** – Bryn & Claerwyn Watkins
- **Tarkine** – John Middendorf
- **Mt Geryon Highline Adventures** – Brendan Plaza
- **The Most Psyched – The story of Dylan Soin** - Lucas Corroto
- **Mindbender** – Anton Korsun
- **Groove Train** – Brecon Littlefoot
- **Kakapo Crest** (Goatfest Cut) – Olivia Page

**WINNERS**

**Jury Choice**

– Kakapo Crest (Goatfest Cut)

**Audience Choice**

– The Most Psyched - Story of Dylan Soin

**Kids Award**

– Covid Shuffle

**Special Commendations**

– Mt Geryon Highline Adventures

**Special event:**

Kakapo Crest filmmaker talk and presentation

# Palais de Pixel

Palais de Pixel, aka ‘Palais’, delivers a program of new and old films from around the world. It is run by an adept team of volunteers; Lynne Quick, Yingying He and Elaine Uebergang, and provides a regular opportunity for a diverse community to come together and view a just as diverse range of films.

Throughout 2021, Palais de Pixel continued to be held on the second Monday of every month from February to November. However, the pandemic did upset the movie cart again, but the Palais team took it all in their stride and despite lockdown managed to screen most of the program.

There were more opportunities for us to get together and be armchair film critics in 2021 than we did in 2020. The season started with 2 new films ‘Leave No Trace’ and ‘Honeyland’ followed by the remainder of 2020’s program.

“Palais is our monthly dose of culture, living in the country”  
– Lisa



Palais de Pixel members socializing pre screening. Photo: Tracey Skinner

The first 2 films were screened at the Soldiers Memorial Hall to maintain Covid density requirements. It then migrated to NC2 for the rest of the season (Covid permitting) as lower attendance numbers enabled us to meet density requirements there and pay lower rental fees. Attendance numbers averaged 10 to 12 throughout the year. General public precaution against Covid and requirements for attendees to be vaccinated/exempted may have contributed to the reduction in attendees.

Despite interruptions from COVID-19, we got to catch up with the program once restrictions were eased in November. We had 2 extra Palais nights from November to December. In total there were 8 out of 10 films shown of the original planned season. ‘Backtrack Boys’ and ‘Fisherman’s Friends’ will be carried forward to 2022’s program.

Cost of membership and benefits for full membership remained the same as per 2021. We did not have to pay film rights for those not shown.

.....  
**Full membership** (10 film pass) – 14

**Trial membership** (3 film pass) – 12

**Casual visit** – 15  
.....



Palais members Bec and Lisa catching up pre screening. Photo: Tracey Skinner



# ACT NATIMUK PRESENTS



*Circus Club is a thing to love!  
Juggling scarves, balls and skittles,  
hula hoops, balancing and making  
movement patterns together.  
So great for ages ranging 9 to 68  
skilled and unskilled to be able to  
play together, try, test and care  
for each other – Sue*

No Mi Che guiding Sue Pavlovich through the art of juggling, Circus Club. Photo: Hannah French

## A Splash of Circus and Circus Club

After a successful series of workshops funded by Horsham Rural City Council's Covid-19 Support Grants in 2020, Nati Frinj applied for a continuation of the Splash of Circus project with the VicHealth, Reimagining Health Grants program.

This application was successful and saw the roll-out of a 16-week circus program, again led by No Mi Che and Dawa Che of Wobbly Spoon.

Initially the project was designed with workshops leading to a performance outcome at Nati Frinj. With ongoing lockdowns and uncertainty caused by COVID-19, the Nati Frinj was postponed and the Splash of Circus project pivoted to a new outcome – a film. No Mi and Dawa produced a beautiful film showcasing the skills of the newly formed NatiBat Circus in locations around Natimuk.

Connected by the motif of a Frij Library Book, the NatiBat Circus take the viewer on a tour of Natimuk, activated by the juggling, hula hooping, balancing, whip cracking and aerial silks skills of the young participants.

<https://actnatimuk.com/actnatimuk/current-projects/a-splash-of-circus/>

Another pivot for the project was the roll-out of a 6-week Circus Club pilot program. Held every Thursday evening in the Natimuk Soldiers Memorial Hall in the final weeks of 2021, Circus Club was open to all community and was a weekly opportunity for people to gather, to play and to learn new circus skills. This pilot series was augmented with the purchase of circus training equipment, curated by No Mi and Dawa.



No Mi and Heather practising adagio work. Isabelle Hoskins encouraging them on, Circus Club. Photo: Hannah French

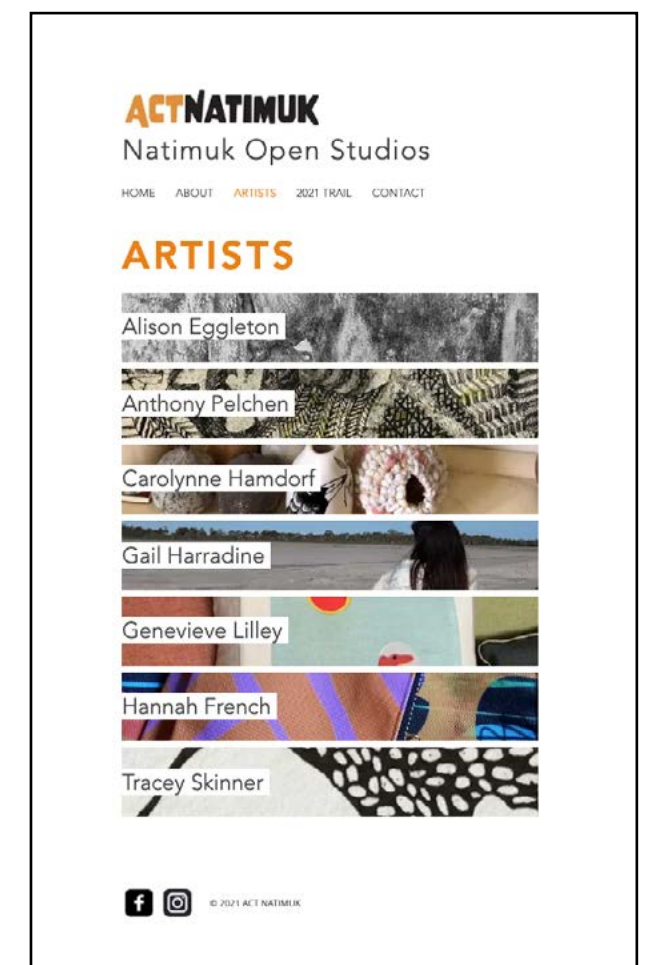
## NATIMUK OPEN STUDIOS ART TRAIL



Genevieve Lilley creating upholstery magic, Natimuk Open Studios Art Trail Photo: Rob Grenfell

Thanks to funding from Horsham Rural City Council via a Community development grant, Natimuk Open Studios Art Trail (NOSAT) became a reality and allowed us to further develop our visual arts program. The trail is inspired by the local visual artists and creators in the community. Held annually but with the potential to occur more often if desired, artists will open their studios to the general public. An opportunity to share their practice, offer diverse art for sale and to create another vibrant element of the arts and cultural activity that Natimuk and environs are renowned for. The weekend will offer more opportunity for visitors to stay in the area, engaging with the artists and their studios, visiting the local Farmers Market, supporting other local businesses and cultural endeavours that may be happening.

COVID-19 played havoc with our planning for the trail and its intended Frinj launch. We took the opportunity when restrictions eased to hold a 'teaser' trail that coincided with the last Natimuk Farmers Market for the year on Sunday 12th December. We held it in three locations with 6 artists that spanned a diverse range of art styles. Feedback for the event was positive and we are looking forward to the full trail happening in 2022 on the June long weekend. There will be more studio location and more artists on offer.



NOSAT website - <https://www.natimukopenstudios.org>





Grist in daylight, Frinj Trim. Photo: Jacqui Schulz

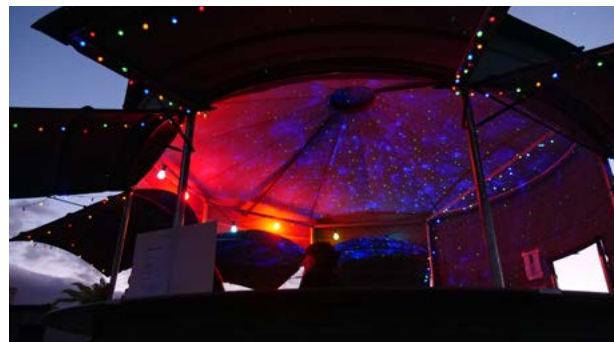
Grist was borne from some early brainstorming at the start of Covid via Zoom meetings. It was not Grist at that point. It was ideas around possibilities and possible outside venues, given this may be the new trajectory.

Through funding from Regional Arts Victoria via the Boost Recovery grant, ACT Natimuk and artists brought it to life. Local acclaimed artist Dave Jones worked with the vision and did the build with a couple of community members, wielding a blow torch to create the creature. Community members Mark and Elaine Uebergang offered field bins for purchase and provided storage and working space. A quirky portable venue, informed by the agricultural landscape around the town of Natimuk, *GRIST* is an adapted field bin custom designed to offer a variety of art and cultural opportunities within the many open spaces of Natimuk and surrounding areas. A Covid safe moveable feast, it is a stage for performance, an external exhibition space, an afternoon or evening hub of musical treats, a peek-a-boo dance experience, a space for sharing cuisine and a bar. Incorporated into the custom build will be projector housing to act as a projection booth to provide larger scale audience viewing opportunities.

Planned for a Nati Frinj 2021 launch, this was scuttled due to having to postpone the festival. Whilst it will do its big launch at Frinj 2022, the build was completed in time and it had a soft launch on the Saturday evening of Frinj Trim.

*GRIST* was located at the rear of the Natimuk Soldiers Memorial Hall and operated on the night as a bar in the outside area. Lit up with festival lights and with the silhouette of the iconic Nati Silos behind it, a gathering of approximately 60 people basked in its glow.

As part of the *GRIST* celebrations, projections were beamed onto the outside back wall of the hall, music was pumping and the audience was also treated to the debut screening of *Scary Girls Party*- a collaborative video project between local Isabelle Hoskins and long-time Frinj artist and performer Ruby Hughes.



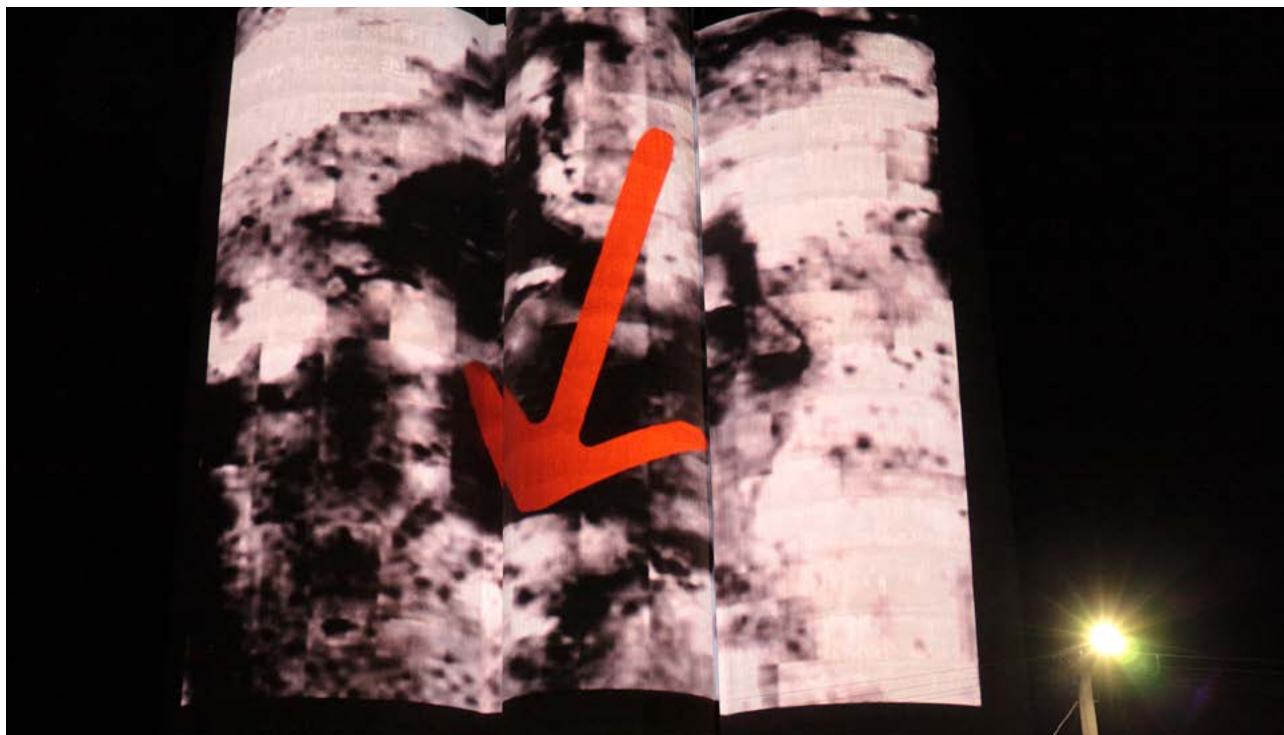
Grist glow in evening, Frinj Trim. Photo: Jacqui Schulz



In the glow of Grist at Frinj Trim, *Scary Girls Dance Party* screen launch. Artists: Isabelle Hoskins and Ruby Hughes. Photo: Jacqui Schulz



## PAINTED WITH LIGHT



*'Tchingal (Giant Emu) print over Country' on the Nati Silos, Painted with Light. Artist: Gail Harradine, Wotjobaluk, Djubagalk, Jadawadjali artist. Photo: Hannah French*

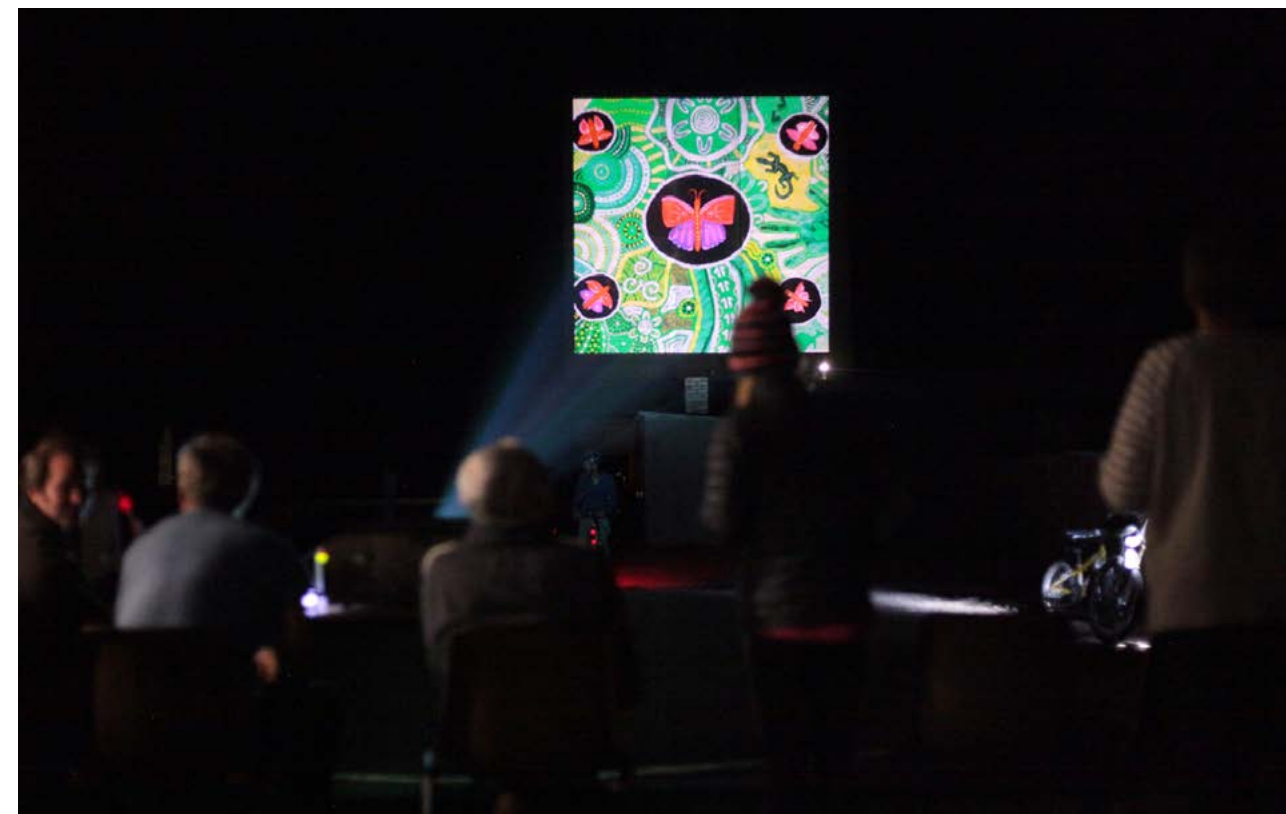
### Projection Project Development

First Nations artists took up the opportunity to lead the first creative development phase in a new projection residency project by ACT Natimuk called Painted With Light. In working with First Peoples, the essential protocols were followed by First Nation artists, ACT Natimuk General Managers, and members. This enabled a flexible and two-way learning approach in line with the values of the developing Reconciliation Action Plan (currently in an initial phase). Such an approach intends to be welcoming to First Peoples artists, so they can feel part of a strong platform whereby self-determination is put into action, and working relationships can be honest about generating projects in good faith. It was also an important factor in looking at specific technical needs of the projection project.

First Nations Artist/Teacher/Curator Gail Harradine (Wotjobaluk, Djubagalk, Jadawadjali) was approached to lead this work as a result of her contributions to local discussions about protocols in the First Peoples locally, in an open and inclusive approach, is definitely a growing area of interest. It was important for Gail to include another artist as part of the project with ties to other families in the region. Gail's art is colourful, expressive, and shows her love for Country and creation stories, so it was decided that the other artist involved needed similar linkages to Country, and strong visual expression of Country.

Overtures were made to local community organisations and discussions took place with community members. It slowly came together that another potential artist (Tanisha Lovett - Wotjobaluk, Gunditjmara) was available at that time to meet in Natimuk and progress the project further. Tanisha was able to be involved in her own time, through a process of listening and finding out more about how the projection would operate from a technical perspective.

Hannah French was a mentor, showing us how our work would be projected from the Natimuk Memorial Hall (noting it was slightly different to previous projections in the past, as we were using the north side of the silo). It was explained that a powerful projector would be sourced with the help of local contacts, and this made it easier for us to work with all parties and feel we could put together our artworks, and create new artworks with the help of Mary French. We used an overhead projector to make shadow images with eagle (Bunjil) feathers and emu feathers, as this connects to Country and creation stories. D'Arcy Molan, a musician, writer and teacher, also joined in a great day held at Natimuk to explore projections on the wall of the art space, and to photograph the work. This allowed us to explore how the actual projection would flow with the artworks and family shots.



*'Butterfly Dreaming' on the Nati Silos, Painted with Light. Artist: Tanisha Lovett, Gunditjmara and Wotjobaluk artist. Photo: Hannah French*

Together with the artists, we all developed the concept for the work to be projected. From early on in the process, there was planning to see what was viable with the artists and to work out what was needed. Gail has always been impressed with Tanisha Lovett's art and her art practice, having seen her work beautifully presented at market stalls in Horsham and then at Federation Square in Melbourne. Images reflecting family and connection to place were the basis of the works. These were stunning images of Tanisha's sisters on Country interspersed with images of Country and connection, both vibrant and reflecting patterns and the wonderful mountains. In the development of her works, Gail worked with First Nations producer, Savanna Kruger, and family Elders.

Both artists sought permission from their own families to share their images publicly. It was a proud moment for the families, as Gail's mother, Senior Elder Aunty Leila Harradine, and Tanisha's proud sisters, attended the evening projection. People that attended were very quick to say how exciting it was to see the work on the silos when driving in to Natimuk.

*The Painted with Light report is a case study written for our Cultural Protocols Policy - IMPLEMENTING PROTOCOLS - AN ACT NATIMUK CASE STUDY*

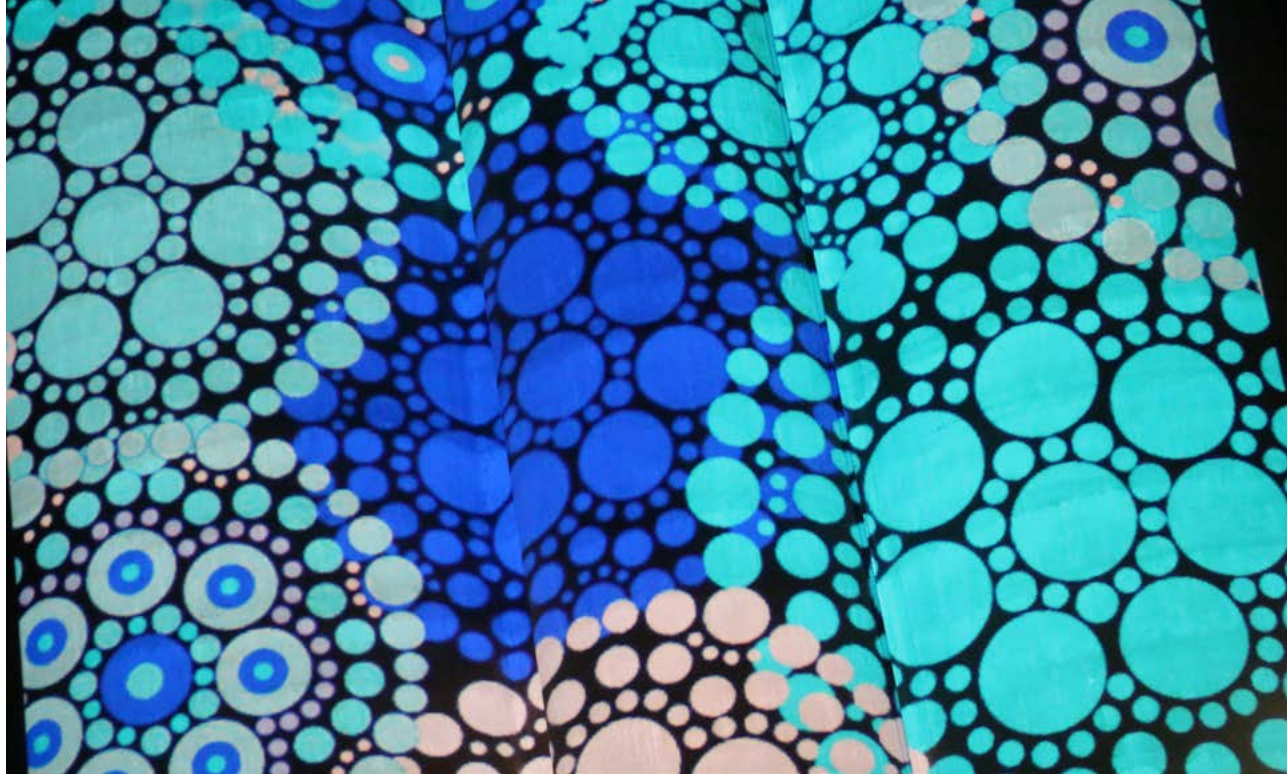
*Written by Gail Harradine (Wotjobaluk, Djubagalk, Jadawadjali), with contributions from Hannah French and D'Arcy Molan.*



*Pelham Cameron (GG Grandfather) on bark canoe on Wimmera River, Painted with Light. Artist: Gail Harradine, Wotjobaluk, Djubagalk, Jadawadjali artist. Photo: Hannah French*



# ACT NATIMUK – COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION



*Lost in Water, Painted with Light. Artist: Tanisha Lovett, Gunditjmara and Wotjobaluk artist. Photo: Mary French*

As part of the Reconciliation process and in developing meaningful dialogue with First Peoples, ACT Natimuk is working towards undertaking an inclusive approach with best practice working relationships at its core. This inclusive-led approach is of great importance in developing safe and respectful relationships. The Natimuk community is undergoing a long process of introspection as the uncovering of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in relation to Dyurrite (Mt Arapiles) redefines the past unlimited access to one of the world's top rock-climbing destinations. This highly significant cultural site is linked to Country via creation stories, and is connected to unique rock art such as the red ochre emu prints that state the importance of the Tchingal Giant Emu story.

ACT Natimuk and the creative community find themselves navigating a space of Cultural Leadership within the town, leading by example as we deeply respect the process of Traditional Owner organisations such as Barengi Gadjin Land Council and the strong First People's community networks available. In embedding such principles as an operational measure within ACT Natimuk, we are committing to creating further understanding of a living Culture that will inform the future relationship of the town to the mountain and Country.

This navigation of community attitudes brings forth many opportunities for truth telling and introspection. ACT Natimuk will continue to advocate and support respectful acknowledgment of First Nations People upon whose Country Natimuk was built on, and upon whose histories we currently benefit.

Through respectful cultural leadership led by Reconciliation as a driving principle, there is no time more prescient than now for ACT Natimuk to assist our community in navigating a culture of respect, deep listening, and transition.

The organisation is currently in the development process of our first Reconciliation Action Plan with a hopeful endorsement by May 2022. We are fortunate to have a First Peoples representation on our committee and on our RAP working group. Their guidance has been invaluable and greatly appreciated.

# FINANCIALS

## Finance Report



*No Mi, Heather and Isabelle working on adagio. Photo: Hannah French*

2021 saw the writing of an application to Creative Victoria seeking a Creative Enterprises Program grant to replace the expiring Organisation Investment Program. We applied for \$420,000 over four years.

During our Strategic planning we made the decision to use some of the savings in our investment account to supplement the Nati Frinj Biennale Festival (\$30,000), particularly to support the festival's technical requirements. Due to the cancellation of Nati Frinj as we know it, this amount remains in the investment account, as does the funding for Bamboo Exquisite (\$64,200) held over from 2021, ready for Frinj 2022.

We also voted to extend Verity's role by introducing Creative Lab, to support 5 artists in the creation of new work, and provide input into the Frinj Festival. The money for Creative Lab (\$25,000) also came from our investment account. Our investment account has always been healthy, mainly due to astute investment over time of any spare money available, especially fundraising, which at the time was receiving amazing interest rates. Unfortunately, the high interest rates are no longer the case, especially during the pandemic.

Last year was also notable for Tracey's excellent work in providing online portals for donations, which saw our donations rise from almost nothing, to more than \$5,000. Our sincere thanks to Genevieve Lilley and Rob Grenfell for hosting the sale of artwork associated with Douglas Hockly, the funds of which, in keeping with Douglas' wishes, went to ACT Natimuk.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our bookkeeper Alison White, who knows our organisation well, always responds immediately to queries, and lets us know if anything needs attention.

Mary French  
**ACT Natimuk Treasurer**



## Arapiles Community Theatre

### Balance sheet for the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>Asset</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash at bank ACT 151903317		18,972	59,191
Cash at Bank Min 153041546		20,607	16,874
Cash at Bank FRINJ 149559122		8,304	8,544
Cash at Bank PUB 161871223		12,206	6,140
Sandhurst term deposit		142,474	91,451
		<u>202,563</u>	<u>182,200</u>
Trade Debtors		0	0
Income receivable		0	0
GST Input tax credit		3,620	0
Expenses Paid In Advance			1,153
		<u>3,318</u>	<u>1,153</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u>206,183</u>	<u>183,714</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade Creditors		907	791
GST Payable		302	1,337
Income received in advance		64,200	69,927
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<u>65,409</u>	<u>72,055</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>140,774</u>	<u>111,659</u>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained surplus		140,774	111,659
<b>Net worth</b>		<u>140,774</u>	<u>111,659</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

## Arapiles Community Theatre

### Income statement for the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>Income</b>			
Event Income		515	0
Activities & Services Income		105	0
Sponsorship			
Donations		6,500	1,285
Fundraising		1,042	0
Foundations		0	0
Interest Received		414	807
Sundry Income		645	
Brokerage fees (commissions)			0
Creative Victoria operational grants	4	127,098	22,901
Creative Victoria SIF1			18,732
Creative Victoria SIF2		17,828	5,222
Other Vic State Agencies		9,711	
Local Government operational grants		0	0
Festivals Australia		0	0
Project Grant Creative Victoria	3	0	0
Project Grants other Vic State Agencies		40,720	0
Project Grants Local government		5,000	0
<b>Total Income</b>		<u>209,578</u>	<u>50,345</u>
<b>Expense</b>			
Allowances & on costs wages & fees		99,123	4,916
Artist develop & mentorship			0
Artist/musician fees		39,797	1,196
Community Education projects			0
Creative Personnel			0
Insurance		1,800	905
Legal, Finance & Governance		467	1,310
Management & Administration		5,634	23,906
Marketing & Business Development			
Marketing & Promotions		4,245	3,191
Office consumables & resources			2,427
Production & Technical		14,763	0
Production & Exhibition stage costs		2,831	0
Rent & Running costs		1,156	4,226
Sundry expenses		2,816	700
Storage			0
Travel & Touring costs		4,050	40
Travel for administration			
Venue & Exhibition space costs			0
Workshops, Classes & Seminars		3,781	7,528
Total expenditure		<u>180,463</u>	<u>50,345</u>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>		<u>29,116</u>	<u>0</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements





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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

ACT Natimuk would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of Creative Victoria through the Organisation Investment Program and Strategic Investment Fund.

**CREATIVE VICTORIA**

*Splash of Circus/Circus Club* was made possible through support from VicHealth, Reimagining Health Grants program.



ACT Natimuk would like to thank Regional Arts Victoria for their continued support.



*The Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund is provided through Regional Arts Australia, administered in Victoria by Regional Arts Victoria.*

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Festivals Australia program – *Bamboo: Exquisite*.



Natimuk Open Studios Art Trail was made possible through support from Horsham Rural City Council via their Community Development grant.



**Horsham Rural City Council**  
urban rural balance

Goatfest prizes are sponsored by Climbing Anchors. We thank them for their support.



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*ACT Natimuk would also like to thank all of the volunteers and audiences that support our work.*