

REGIONAL ARTS DEVELOPMENT FUND (RADF) 2025-2026 MAJOR ROUND TWO

L&C | 79/6/8 | #7891197

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Approves establishing RADF Major Round Two agreements for a total of \$116,825 (ex GST) from the 2025/26 RADF budget for the following applicants and amounts:

Applicant	Amount (ex GST)
Molly Pointing	\$11,700
Leon Tussie	\$6,800
Cristina Bevilacqua	\$12,000
John Eaton	\$12,000
Emma Rehn	\$5,500
Bus Stop Films	\$12,000
Kathryn Laughton	\$11,978
Album Registry PTY LTD trading as Yarner	\$12,000
JUTE Theatre Company	\$12,000
Monica Stevens	\$8,847
India Collins	\$12,000
Total	\$116,825

2. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters relating to the above agreements.

INTERESTED PARTIES:RADF Committee:

Belinda Simonsen

Daniela Vavrova

Elizabeth Rennie

Russell Milledge

Rose Rigley
Mounira Almenaar
Monica Stevens
Virginia Birt

Recommended Applicants:

Molly Pointing
Leon Tussie
Cristina Bevilacqua
John Eaton
Emma Rehn
Bus Stop Films
Kathryn Laughton
Album Registry PTY LTD trading as Yarner
JUTE Theatre Company
Monica Stevens
India Collins

Note: The identification of interested parties is provided on a best endeavours basis by Council Officers and may not be exhaustive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) is a four-year partnership between Council and Arts Queensland (2024–2028), with joint funding provided to support arts and cultural initiatives through grant programs and initiatives managed by Council.

On 22 May 2026, the RADF Committee met to provide joint recommendations for the 2025/26 RADF Major Round Two. The RADF Committee comprises artists and arts officers with diverse backgrounds in arts and cultural practice. Members bring expert knowledge to the assessment process, individually reviewing all applications before coming together to collectively deliberate and provide informed recommendations.

Council received thirty eligible applications for the RADF Major Round Two, requesting a total of \$299,526 (ex GST).

The RADF Committee has recommended eleven of these projects for funding, totalling \$116,825 (ex GST).

BACKGROUND:

There are two Major Grant Rounds annually, that cover a wide range of artistic activities and disciplines. Applicants can apply for a grant of up to \$12,000 (ex GST). This grant provides funding for projects and programs that create vibrant arts and cultural experiences, including but not limited to:

- Performances and exhibitions
- Skills and professional development opportunities for artists
- New works that extend artists and art forms
- Community arts and cultural development
- Initiatives that strengthen cultural tourism and enhance cultural programs.

The total budget for the entire 2025/26 RADF program is \$240,000 (ex GST). This amount comprises the following contributions:

Contribution	Amount (ex GST)
Arts Queensland	\$120,000
Cairns Regional Council	\$120,000
Unspent funds from 2024/25 FY carried over	\$10,483
Total Budget 2025/26	\$250,483

The overall 2025/26 RADF program budget is currently underspent by \$43,250. Some of the remaining funds will be used to support the eleven recommended projects for Major Round Two which is \$26,825 overbudget. This will leave the RADF budget with a surplus of \$16,425 (\$43,250 - \$26,825 = \$5,942).

Pending Council's endorsement of the recommendations in this report, the 2025/26 RADF program budget will be allocated as outlined below.

Activity	2025/26 Budget	Allocated	Balance
Major Round One	\$90,000	\$68,422	\$21,578
Major Round Two	\$90,000	\$116,825	-\$26,825
Individual Professional Development	\$10,000	\$16,730	-\$6,730
Small Arts Grants	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
Flame.Arts Access Leg-Up Grants	\$9,100	\$6,456	\$2,644
RADF Committee Fees	\$6,300	\$5,950	\$350
Creative Learning	\$11,000	\$0	\$11,000
Business of the Arts	\$13,600	\$9,675	\$3,925
Arts and Disability	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
Unspent funds from 2024/25 FY	\$10,483	\$0	10,483
Total	\$240,000	\$234,058	\$16,425

COMMENT:

The eleven recommended applications scored highly for merit and alignment with RADF criteria, demonstrating High Quality, Strong Impact, and Sustainable Value. They comply with RADF guidelines and support both Council and State Government arts and cultural

priorities.

Five of the eleven recommended applications applied for additional Cairns Regional Council Arts and Cultural Assistance In-Kind support for venue hire and assistance.

Should Council approve the following RADF Committee recommendations, all successful applicants will be notified through letters of acceptance and payments to be completed within 30 days. Officers will continue to provide advice and guidance to unsuccessful applicants concerning future grant applications.

Applicant	Amount Recommended	Project Title
Molly Pointing	\$11,700	<i>The She Shed Documentary</i>
Leon Tussie	\$6,800	<i>From Berlin to Cairns: Releasing the Archipelago Iguana Soundsystem Album</i>
Cristina Bevilacqua	\$12,000	<i>SKIN ~ FILTERS</i>
John Eaton	\$12,000	<i>Other Norths</i>
Emma Rehn	\$5,500	<i>The Study of Houses: Ecological Homes of Far North Queensland</i>
Bus Stop Films	\$12,000	<i>Lights, Camera, Cairns: Inclusive Film Production with Local Crew and Public Showcase</i>
Kathryn Laughton	\$11,978	<i>Kulara: Dramaturgical Development and Creative Lab</i>
Album Registry PTY LTD trading as Yarner	\$12,000	<i>UNCONVERTED - an Absurdist Dramey</i>
JUTE Theatre Company	\$12,000	<i>Three Dresses World Premiere Season - Foyer activation</i>
Monica Stevens	\$8,847	<i>The Brown Blouse – script writing intensive</i>
India Collins	\$12,000	<i>re VULVA lution</i>

Refer to:

- **Attachment 2** for more details on the recommended projects.
- **Attachment 3** for a list of projects not recommended.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: (Recommended)

That Council:

1. Approves establishing Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) agreements for a total of \$116,825 (ex GST) from the 2025/26 RADF budget for the following applicants and amounts:

Applicant	Amount (ex GST)
Molly Pointing	\$11,700
Leon Tussie	\$6,800
Cristina Bevilacqua	\$12,000
John Eaton	\$12,000
Emma Rehn	\$5,500
Bus Stop Films	\$12,000
Kathryn Laughton	\$11,978
Album Registry PTY LTD trading as Yarner	\$12,000
JUTE Theatre Company	\$12,000
Monica Stevens	\$8,847
India Collins	\$12,000
Total	\$116,825

- Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters relating to the above agreements.

Option 2:

That Council does not endorse the recommendations and adopts an alternative funding allocation.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

The RADF Committee is guided by Terms of Reference that stipulate the need to adhere to confidentiality, as well as to report potential or perceived conflict of interest regarding assessment and recommendations. When matters of conflict arise, the Committee member does not take part in the decision-making process.

It has been confirmed that none of the applicants has an overdue grant acquittal through RADF or other Council grant streams.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

- RADF grants are administered across two rounds within the financial year (Round 1 in Oct and Round 2 in April of the following year)
- \$90,000 is available in each round, however these amounts can change in response to an increase or decrease in applications (i.e. forward commitments made or underspend carried forward).
- An overview of the current round is below:

2025/26 RADF Major Round Two (this round)	
2025/26 Major Round Two budget	\$90,000
Re-allocated from 2025/26 RADF budget surplus	\$32,767
Recommended in this report	\$116,825
Balance (carry forward)	\$5,942
2026/27 Major Round One budget (for April 2027)	\$90,000
Adjusted 2026/27 Major Round One budget	\$95,942

Community and Cultural Heritage Focus:

The RADF program enhances the capability, capacity and wellbeing of local community organisations and individuals.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The recommended applications align with the Council's Corporate Plan, the 2022 Strategy for Culture and the Arts and the Year Five Report Card recommendations:

- Robust Economy: Supporting a diversified and growing economy.
- Design for Liveability: A place-based approach that celebrates our community.
- Community and Culture: Fostering a vibrant, healthy, and inclusive community.

Report Card Recommendations:

- Provide grant streams and pathways to support and sustain the region's creative industry professionals.
- Maximise and leverage the collective appeal and significance of Cairns' rich and diverse community-driven festivals and link more closely with visitor economy and tourism objectives.

Policy:

#3620658 Cairns Regional Council's RADF Committee Terms of Reference General Policy:

"The RADF Grants program was established in 1991 as a state and local government partnership to support professional artists and arts practitioners living in regional Queensland. The program focuses on the development of quality arts and arts practise for regional communities."

CONSULTATION:

Council delivered two four-hour grant writing workshops with the community prior to the round closing, and the assessment of applications was undertaken by members of the RADF Committee with the following expertise:

- Daniela Vavrova – Museums/Galleries
- Russell Milledge – Multi-media
- Rose Rigley – Visual Arts
- Mounira Almenaar – Film/Screen

- Belinda Simonsen – Community Cultural Development
- Elizabeth Rennie – Music
- Monica Stevens – Performing Arts
- Virginia Birt – Creative Writing

Nine applications were identified as presenting conflicts of interest for individual assessors. In accordance with established protocols, all assessors who declared a conflict recused themselves from evaluating the relevant submissions by leaving the room during both the assessment and decision-making processes.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Interested Parties

Attachment 2: Recommended for funding

Attachment 3: Not Recommended for funding



Karen Le Roy
Executive Manager Creative Life



Destry Puia
Director Lifestyle & Community

Attachment 1: Interested Parties

RADF Committee:

Belinda Simonsen
Daniela Vavrova
Elizabeth Rennie
Russell Milledge
Rose Rigley
Mounira Almenoar
Monica Stevens
Virginia Birt

Recommended Applicants:

Molly Pointing
Leon Tussie
Cristina Bevilacqua
John Eaton
Emma Rehn
Bus Stop Films
Kathryn Laughton
Album Registry PTY LTD trading as Yarner
JUTE Theatre Company
Monica Stevens
India Collins

Attachment 2: Recommended for Funding

Applicant	Amount requested	Project Title and Outcome	Amount recommended
Molly Pointing	\$11,700	<p>The She Shed Documentary</p> <p>Jane Mitchell founded She Shed Cairns, a women-only space created in response to the absence of safe places for women to gather. This documentary explores how the Shed became a lifeline for women seeking purpose and belonging, while revealing the pressures, resilience and fragility behind sustaining a volunteer-run community space.</p> <p>Anticipated outcome: The project is anticipated to deliver meaningful social, cultural and creative benefits for the Cairns community, strengthening both community wellbeing and the regional screen industry. By sharing stories of belonging, resilience and everyday creativity, the documentary will spark conversations about isolation and community care while offering a practical model for establishing women-led spaces in other Far North towns. The production builds regional industry capability by employing and upskilling a female crew, generating paid work, screen credits and long-term pathways for women in film.</p>	\$11,700
Leon Tussie	\$6,800	<p>From Berlin to Cairns: Releasing the Archipelago Iguana Soundsystem Album</p> <p>This project funds mixing, mastering and digital release of the Archipelago Iguana Soundsystem album - original world/electronic percussion music recorded in Berlin through international collaboration - plus two free community showcase concerts in Cairns, bringing the finished work home to local audiences.</p> <p>Anticipated outcome: By completing and releasing the album locally, the project is expected to enrich Cairns' musical landscape by showcasing internationally developed music through a distinctly Cairns lens. By finalising the album's post-production in Cairns and presenting it through two free concerts, the project brings world-class creative work directly to the community, strengthening the city's live-music scene and generating artistic</p>	\$6,800

Applicant	Amount requested	Project Title and Outcome	Amount recommended
		and economic benefits through paid opportunities for local musicians and arts workers. Demonstrating that globally informed, high-calibre music can be produced and celebrated in Far North Queensland, ultimately, the project builds pride, visibility and momentum for Cairns' contemporary music culture.	
Cristina Bevilacqua	\$12,000	<p><i>SKIN ~ FILTERS</i> (exhibition)</p> <p><i>SKIN ~ FILTERS</i> is a photographic mixed-media exhibition by Cristina Bevilacqua exploring identity, vulnerability and the psychological toll of digital filters on self-worth. Twelve community members become subjects across two striking series, with an accompanying workshop program open to all ages and abilities, sparking vital conversations across regions and communities.</p> <p>Anticipated outcome: The project is expected to create a meaningful social impact by sparking honest community conversations about identity, self-worth and the influence of digital filters. The project strengthens the regional arts sector through collaborations with creative practitioners and has an expanded reach across the region including Cairns and the Tablelands Regional Gallery. Community workshops deepen the project's impact by offering a safe space for people to explore themes of beauty, mental health and self-acceptance. Overall, the project is anticipated to elevate local contemporary art, empower participants and audiences, and position Cairns as a leader in creative responses to digital-age wellbeing.</p>	\$12,000
John Eaton	\$12,000	<p><i>Other Norths</i> (exhibition)</p> <p>An exhibition at NorthSite Contemporary Arts of hand and laser cut abstract work drawn from motifs of the FNQ landscape and its environmental forces. Works will be titled in collaboration with the public during the exhibition and workshop. The laser cut work will be used towards proposals for Public Artworks.</p>	\$12,000

Applicant	Amount requested	Project Title and Outcome	Amount recommended
		<p>Anticipated outcome: The project is expected to strengthen Cairns' cultural landscape by inviting the community into an accessible, participatory, contemporary abstraction exhibition engaging interactive discussions and a Rorschach-style process to spark visitor curiosity to interpret and respond to an expanded idea of landscape. The aluminium works, acting as prototypes for future public art opportunities, position the project as a catalyst for long-term creative development in the region. Overall, the project is anticipated to deepen community engagement, broaden artistic dialogue and seed new possibilities for Cairns-based public art.</p>	
Emma Rehn	\$5,500	<p><i>The Study of Houses: Ecological Homes of Far North Queensland</i> (exhibition)</p> <p><i>The Study of Houses</i> is a collaborative art project about homes and connection to place, explored through the unique ecosystems of Cairns. This project will create and exhibit artworks of environmental homes, placing ideas of community and belonging within the intricate networks that link together animals, plants, environments, and people.</p> <p>Anticipated outcome: The project is expected to deepen Cairns' connection to its local environments by using the familiar idea of "home" to make ecological concepts personal and emotionally resonant. Through community idea-sharing sessions, collaboration with local researchers and the creation of new artworks, the project aims to help audiences recognise how Cairns' ecosystems; urban, terrestrial, coastal and marine, form part of their shared neighbourhood. The exhibition will spark reflection on belonging, place and environmental care. By offering partners free access to the finished artworks for outreach and education, the project's impact will extend beyond the exhibition. Overall, it is anticipated to strengthen community identity, build ecological awareness and contribute to Cairns' creative vibrancy while supporting the growth of a local artist.</p>	\$5,500

Applicant	Amount requested	Project Title and Outcome	Amount recommended
Bus Stop Films	\$12,000	<p data-bbox="639 264 1150 360"><i>Lights, Camera, Cairns: Inclusive Film Production with Local Crew and Public Showcase</i></p> <p data-bbox="639 398 1230 701">Bus Stop Films delivers a new inclusive film production and public Showcase in Cairns where people with disability co-create an original short film alongside paid local industry professionals. The project generates paid screen industry employment and formal career pathways, including the Inclusive Producers Attachment, culminating in a vibrant-open-to-all community premiere.</p> <p data-bbox="639 734 943 768">Anticipated outcome:</p> <p data-bbox="639 770 1238 1406">The project is expected to strengthen the region's creative ecosystem by producing a new inclusively made short film that places local young adults with intellectual disability or autism at the centre of a professional production. Supported by paid Cairns film professionals, the project will build participants' confidence, communication skills and industry-recognised screen credits while expanding the local workforce's inclusive-practice capability. A fully accessible public Showcase will bring community members together to celebrate Cairns stories on screen and strengthen local industry networks. Overall, the project is anticipated to grow employment pathways, deepen community belonging and embed inclusive filmmaking as a core part of Cairns' developing screen sector.</p>	\$12,000
Kathryn Laughton	\$11,978	<p data-bbox="639 1447 1158 1514"><i>Kulara</i> Dramaturgical Development and Creative Lab</p> <p data-bbox="639 1547 1238 1850">Kulara is a new theatre work about displacement, belonging and community fracture, informed by first-hand accounts of Tinaroo Dam. Led by Cairns-based dramaturg Kathryn Ash-Laughton, the project combines online development with a Cairns creative lab with local actors, culminating in a public reading and second draft with international relevance.</p> <p data-bbox="639 1883 943 1917">Anticipated outcome:</p> <p data-bbox="639 1919 1230 2047">The project is expected to bring an important regional story of displacement, memory and connection to Country into a shared creative space led by local artists. Through a rigorous</p>	\$11,978

Applicant	Amount requested	Project Title and Outcome	Amount recommended
		development and consultation process with Dulgubarra-Yidinji Elders, the project will deepen cultural understanding while honouring lived experience. A creative lab with emerging Cairns actors will strengthen local performance pathways, culminating in a public reading that invites the community into the work's evolution. Overall, the project is anticipated to enrich Cairns' performing arts sector, build local capacity and lay the foundation for a compelling new work with future national and international potential.	
Album Registry PTY LTD trading as Yarner	\$12,000	<p><i>UNCONVERTED - an Absurdist Dramedy</i></p> <p>Absurdist Dramedy 4 x 7-10min web series Double divorced at 40, Meredith is determined to become a lesbian.</p> <p>Anticipated outcome: The project will produce a high-quality, locally made digital released web series that places FNQ storytelling on a global platform. By employing a Cairns screen crew, offering micro-attachments to emerging practitioners and engaging experienced local artists in key roles, the project will build industry capacity and create meaningful professional pathways. Its community premiere will give Cairns audiences early access to a story that reflects women's lived experiences with honesty and humour. Overall, the project is anticipated to elevate local talent, expand opportunities for women in screen, and contribute to a bold, self-sustaining film culture in Cairns.</p>	\$12,000
JUTE Theatre Company	\$12,000	<p><i>Three Dresses</i> World Premiere Season - Foyer activation</p> <p>For the premiere season of <i>Three Dresses</i> at Bulmba-ja, Lia Pa'apa'a will design and lead a foyer activation creating an inclusive pre-show environment for young audiences and their families. Through tactile, sensory and culturally responsive engagement experiences, the activation will deepen connection to the show while supporting accessible audience participation.</p> <p>Anticipated outcome: The project is expected to create an inclusive, culturally grounded theatre</p>	\$12,000

Applicant	Amount requested	Project Title and Outcome	Amount recommended
		<p>experience for Cairns by offering children and families, including neurodivergent audiences, a gentle, sensory-aware entry point into the story before they enter the theatre. Developed through workshops in Hope Vale with local children and shaped in collaboration with Autism Queensland and the production's creative team, the foyer activation will translate the world of the play into a tactile, play-based environment that reflects First Nations storytelling, community voices and the themes of family, memory and Country. Presented throughout the Bulmba-ja season, it will strengthen cultural connection between Cairns and Hope Vale, support local artists, and model inclusive theatre practice as an integral part of high-quality regional performance.</p>	
Monica Stevens	\$8,847	<p><i>The Brown Blouse</i> – script writing intensive</p> <p>A one-week script writing intensive with experienced writer Anna Yen focuses on Monica's first script, <i>The Brown Blouse</i>. The dedicated time will raise the play's artistic standard with attention to the structural flow between scenes and acts. A showcase will end the week with an audience and peer evaluation.</p> <p>Anticipated outcome: The project is expected to develop <i>The Brown Blouse</i> into a polished, production-ready script that reflects the region's Aboriginal and Chinese histories through authentic, community-connected storytelling. The intensive writing week with Anna Yen will strengthen structure, character and dramatic clarity, while the November Indigenous-led creative development will build skills, create local artistic employment and model culturally sensitive process. A public script reading will invite community feedback, grow early audience interest and support future presentation pathways. Overall, the project will expand Cairns' performing arts capacity, elevate intercultural First Nations narratives and contribute a new locally led work with meaningful cultural value.</p>	\$8,847

Applicant	Amount requested	Project Title and Outcome	Amount recommended
India Collins	\$12,000	<p data-bbox="639 264 1007 297"><i>re VULVA lution</i> (exhibition)</p> <p data-bbox="639 331 1225 667"><i>re VULVA lution</i> is an immersive, multidisciplinary exhibition combining installation, textiles, sculpture, living plants, and performance. Framed as a construction site, it explores transformation, repair, and future-building. Through collaboration and audience participation, the project invites the community to engage with processes of growth, regeneration, and shared experience.</p> <p data-bbox="639 701 943 734">Anticipated outcome:</p> <p data-bbox="639 734 1238 1413">The project is expected to deliver an ambitious, immersive exhibition that brings audiences into a living, evolving installation shaped by collaborative making, material transformation and cross-disciplinary exchange. Through months of shared development with regional and national artists, the project will build local skills, create paid opportunities, and deepen professional networks. Its participatory, sensory-rich environment, incorporating reclaimed materials, living plant systems and interactive elements, will offer Cairns audiences new, accessible ways to engage with contemporary art, while public programs extend learning and connection. Overall, the project is anticipated to elevate regional artistic visibility, foster sustained collaboration and position Cairns as a hub for innovative, interdisciplinary practice.</p>	\$12,000

Attachment 3: Not Recommended for Funding

Applicant	Amount requested	Project Title
Nikki Fort	\$4,685	<i>I'm Still Here</i>
Elleni Georgeena Adams	\$11,850	<i>EP Music Production/Music Video</i>
Elina Passant	\$5,207	<i>Career development duel project</i>
Robert Ng	\$12,000	<i>A Quiet Storm: The Yang Project (Soul/Funk EP)</i>
Candice Foo	\$12,000	<i>A Quiet Storm: The Yin Project (Pop/R&B EP)</i>
Ryan Bowater	\$12,000	<i>FNQ Live Music Pathways</i>
Teiria Ketu	\$12,000	<i>Play it forward</i>
Gordonvale District Chamber of Commerce Inc.	\$12,000	<i>Gordonvale Cultural Precinct Business Plan</i>
Susan Prince	\$12,000	<i>FATE Collective Exhibition</i>
Topaz Hall	\$10,226	<i>Liminal EP Release</i>
Riley Stannard	\$10,298	<i>Luv Music</i>
Daniela Vavrova	\$5,820	<i>Tides of Memory Interactive Map</i>
Sandra Rato	\$11,275	<i>Humanity ReFramed - The Human Story Project</i>
Susan Mitchell	\$3,258	<i>Publishing on a Shoestring Workshop</i>
Sonya Kremser	\$7,000	<i>Edelweiss Cultural Dance Program: Preserving Bavarian Traditions in Cairns</i>
The Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc	\$11,836	<i>Chinese Culture & Heritage Centre Exhibition Installation Project</i>
Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre	\$10,256	<i>Zen Zen Zo Roving Performance to enrich Cairns Festival 2026</i>
Khalida De Ridder	\$9,000	<i>Professional Development and Repertoire Expansion for String Educators and Performers in Cairns</i>
Drum Infinity: Mugendai Inc	\$9,990	<i>Drum Infinity Mugendai 10th Anniversary Live - Past Present and Future and Let's Try Taiko Public Workshops</i>