



Arts Law Centre of Australia

Annual Impact Report 2024

ARTS
+
LAW



Acknowledgement of Country

The Arts Law Centre of Australia (Arts Law) acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and all Traditional Owners of the country throughout the lands in which we live and work within Australia. First Nations peoples are the original artists and storytellers, expressing living and continuing culture that has enriched Australia for over 65,000 years. With an enormous debt of gratitude and an acknowledgment of our privilege in being welcomed into cultural spaces, we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection to land, place, waters and community.

We note that sovereignty has never been ceded. We pay our respects to them, their heritage, cultural and artistic expressions, and cultures, and to Elders past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document may contain the images or names of deceased persons.

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Our purpose

Arts Law is Australia's only community legal centre for the arts. We advise artists and arts organisations to ensure they understand their rights. We provide legal outreach, run workshops and offer free resources about contracts, copyright, defamation and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP).

Arts and culture are essential to a society's good health and wellbeing, economic sustainability, community connectedness and self-determined futures.

With more than 50,000 artists working in Australia – most earning less than minimum wage – our work increases artists' access to justice and leads to a vibrant and flourishing creative sector.

Mission

Empower artists and creative communities through the law.

Vision

Arts Law aspires to be widely recognised as the trusted source of advice for artists and creative communities and as the preeminent authority on artists' rights and art law in Australia.

Values

In delivering our vision, Arts Law is guided by the values of excellence, accessibility, empowerment of artists, integrity, collaboration and innovation.

The logo for Arts Law is set against a dark grey circular background. The word "ARTS" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below it, a yellow plus sign is centered. The word "LAW" is written in large, orange, sans-serif capital letters, positioned directly under the plus sign.

ARTS
LAW



Funding and supporter thanks

Arts Law thanks:

- The Attorney-General's Department
 - Creative Australia
 - Office for the Arts and Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support
 - Create NSW
 - Creative Victoria
 - Arts Queensland
 - Arts NT
 - Arts ACT
 - Arts Tasmania
 - Arts South Australia
 - APRA AMCOS
 - City of Sydney
 - Australian Government Solicitor
 - IP Australia
 - Community Legal Centres Australia
 - Community Legal Centres NSW
 - University of Sydney
 - University of NSW
 - University of Technology
 - University of Newcastle
- and the generous pro bono support of countless lawyers and their firms across Australia.

Executive reports

President

This last year has been a time of significant change for the organisation. Starting in late 2023 with the appointment of Dr Louise Buckingham as our new CEO, we have quickly made fundamental and necessary changes to the organisation's structure. This included making some employees redundant. In its restructured form Arts Law is now hiring additional staff.

The change was necessary and has led to an overall refreshing and rejuvenation of the organisation.

Changes this year have extended to the Board, with Alex Dworjanyyn appointed as the new company secretary. We have also been fortunate to have Jo Renkin, a partner of Lander and Rogers, Melbourne, join the Board. Jo has made extraordinary contributions in many areas that will benefit Arts Law, especially in relation to the restructure. We also welcomed Justice Kristina Stern of the NSW Court of Appeal who will bring her undoubted expertise to the Board's deliberations.

The Board farewelled Andrew Lu and Deb Camden, both stepping down after many years of service. The organisation could not have functioned without them and they will be greatly missed. Bobbi Murray, Brian Martin and Tony Chong also stepped down to focus on other commitments. Although they each served for a relatively short time Arts Law was all the richer for their participation. I wish all those who have left the Board our warmest best wishes for the future.

After a thorough review of Arts Law's financials as part of the restructure it is clear that the organisation is now on a much firmer footing. However, it must be acknowledged that these are difficult times for the country as a whole and for not-for-profits in particular. That said, there is no shortage of the generosity of spirit without which Arts Law could not function.

To that end it is with humility and gratitude that Arts Law simply says thank you to all of those who in one way or another provide the essential pro bono support that enables it to do its important work.

I look forward to a busy and productive year ahead.

The Honourable John Robertson Sackar, AOM, KC

President



CEO

Amid the structural changes Arts Law has navigated this year, we are proud to have maintained our vital services to Australia's vibrant art sector. We continue to focus on assisting the arts community, including First Nations artists and arts organisations, with accurate, quality legal advice.

In the past year Arts Law has delivered legal advice on almost 3,000 matters. We have also given accessible, practical workshops bridging the arts and the law in more than 40 locations and online.

Our clients consistently give us excellent feedback about the quality and appropriateness of our work and delivery.

We have kept up an active advocacy agenda. Arts Law made 10 submissions to government aimed at improving the rights of artists and their access to justice. We have also participated in the Australian Attorney-General's Copyright and Artificial Intelligence Reference Group (CAIRG) Steering Committee and Roundtable. Our collaborative work contributed to the government's commitment to honouring artists' rights. This includes being firmly against the introduction of a fair dealing exception for text and data mining.

Arts Law has been busy raising awareness about promised standalone Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property legislation (ICIP). We have run sessions in capital cities, remote First Nations communities and online, collaborating with the expert working group and in state governments to ensure that community involvement is genuine. It is vital that the information and resources we provide

will help people understand what is at stake and how best to be respectful and to protect ICIP. We are also working strategically with the technology sector to improve practices globally that will affect Australian First Nations artists and communities.

Preparing the next generation of lawyers for this work is an area I am passionate about. Arts Law has been fortunate to draw on the talents of students, interns and practical legal training (PLT) candidates to share our work and mission. We have taught and lectured about these areas amongst arts and cultural organisations, in schools of art and design and law faculties at tertiary institutions.

As we head into another year of service delivery and advocacy, I want to give my heartfelt thanks to the 272 lawyers who volunteer their services so that Australia's arts community can access the justice they deserve.

I'd also like to thank our donors, the Hearts for Arts Law committee (HFAL) and our Arts Law Allies program for their significant efforts, together raising more than \$100,000 (and in the case of HFAL, doing so through fabulously fun events!). This extra funding means we are able to reach more artists all over Australia to assist them to get the legal advice they need.

Finally, thanks to the small but mighty dream team that is the Arts Law staff. They're an extraordinary bunch and we're thrilled to be working with each and every one of them.

Dr Louise Buckingham
Chief Executive Officer

Our work

Legal advice

Arts Law provides legal advice to artists and arts organisations across Australia. This essential service helps creative practitioners navigate complex legal issues that affect their artistic practice and business operations.

Depending on means testing requirements, our legal advice services may be free or at a low fee, thanks to pro bono support from our community of lawyers. Legal advice is delivered through confidential, one-on-one phone consultations. Clients can also request translators or support people to join their consultations.

Our lawyers provide advice on a wide range of legal issues affecting arts practice. We help clients understand their rights, interpret contracts and navigate legal challenges. While Arts Law does not provide representation in legal proceedings or drafting services we can connect clients with appropriate organisations or legal services better placed to assist them.

In 2024 we exceeded our service targets, assisting clients with:

- **2,903 legal issues**
- **953 document reviews.**

We also helped 53 organisations and individuals with best practice advice on working with artists.

Arts Law's legal advice service gives artists and arts organisations access to timely legal guidance, helping them protect their creative work and make informed decisions about their practice.

Outreach

Accessible legal advice is essential for artists but cost and distance can make this difficult for many. These obstacles are greatest for those living remotely. Letting artists know about the support available to them is an important part of what we do.

Arts Law's outreach program delivers support to communities that would otherwise not be able to access legal services.

In the past year we ran outreach sessions at:

- **23 regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**
- **18 art centres**
- **1 language centre**
- **2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events.**

We also ran 16 virtual workshops and clinics, enabling us to reach every Australian state and territory.





Client impact

‘Before I undertake any of my public art works I always get legal advice to understand the risks involved to me. We are so lucky as artists to have access to free legal advice. Arts Law were so helpful for the project. They gave me comprehensive advice as to what could happen in a legal manner, and this affected my decision as to where to carry out my work.’

Name withheld for privacy.

Artists in the Black

Now in its 20th year, Arts Law's Artists in the Black (AITB) program provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, arts organisations and businesses with legal advice, resources and professional development opportunities.

This service supports First Nations artists, filmmakers, musicians and arts organisations, building their capacity to avoid exploitation and use the legal system for their benefit.

In 2024 we supported **696 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** clients with legal advice. We did this through **1,250 telephone calls or meetings and 550 document reviews**. We also ran clinics and talks on Country, mostly through art centres.

We also supported First Nations artists with professional development events, with **561 artists and cultural practitioners attending one of 34 Artists in the Black workshops and webinars**, including the Digital Download program with Creative Australia.

Adopt-a-Lawyer

Our Adopt-a-Lawyer program provides vital legal support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres. Art centres (and one peak body) partner with a law firm for 3 years. This initiative streamlines our existing support model by ensuring continuity and meaningful relationships between art centres and law firms.

With 13 agreements currently in place, the program works to empower artists and creative communities through the law.

Client impact

'I was initially nervous about contacting Arts Law because I didn't know much about legal agreements. I needed help quickly to create an agreement between myself, as the Indigenous artist, and the fashion designer I was collaborating with.'

I thought it would take a long time, but Arts Law treated me with care and importance. They really had my back, handled my urgent situation seriously, and communicated well. We got everything done in time! The staff were wonderful and felt like friends when I talked to them.'

Mim Cole, visual artist

'Arts Law, through their Artists in the Black program, has been a solid support for mob, helping us navigate contracts, protect ICIP, and understand our rights. Their advice is clear, respectful, and made with us in mind. Access to affordable templates and legal support makes all the difference in an industry that's not always easy to navigate.'

Nicole Monks, artist

Education and workshops

More than **2,500 artists and arts workers** have benefited from **72 professional development events** over the past year. Our programs aim to equip artists and art organisations with confidence and practical knowledge of the law.

We offer a range of workshops and webinars that share complex legal concepts in a way that is relatable and easy to understand.

Arts Law believes that the more artists understand their rights, the better equipped they are to build sustainable art practices. By listening to the needs of artists we create professional development menus that matter, helping them understand the legal issues they are most likely to face.

In addition to these workshops and webinars, our website is a reliable way for the arts community to access trusted legal information when they need it. People come to our website to get free resources, purchase contract templates and to apply for legal advice sessions. In the past year **1,022 low-cost sample agreements** were purchased from our site.

Our website currently has hundreds of free info sheets, low-cost contract templates, legal explainer videos, podcasts, case studies and articles showcasing arts law in practice.

Free resources published in 2024 include:

- Insurance Handbook
- Tattoos IP and Law Info Sheet
- Protest Art Info Sheet
- Protest Writing Info Sheet
- Protest Music Info Sheet
- Social Media T&Cs Info Sheet
- ICIP Info Sheet
- Generative AI Info Sheet
- Making Artwork for Reconciliation Action Plans
- Statutes of Limitations.

We aim to update the site in the coming year to ensure it stays useful, up-to-date and relevant for our audience.



Advocacy

As well as directly supporting artists and arts workers, Arts Law works within the sector to advocate for their rights. In 2024 we made 10 submissions to government aimed at improving the rights of artists and their access to justice.

We also advocate for recognition, respect and better protection for Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. A current initiative is the Fake art harms culture campaign to raise awareness around the widespread sale of works falsely claiming to be by First Nations artists.

Another area of advocacy is around prizes and competitions. In the past year we reviewed the terms and conditions of 8 prizes and competitions for artists.

As Australia's only community legal centre for the arts we are uniquely positioned to connect the arts and legal communities.



Pro bono support

Arts Law is fortunate to have generous pro bono support from lawyers and law firms across Australia. In the past year we had the support of **272 pro bono lawyers** delivering free and low-cost services to our clients. It is impossible to quantify or value this generosity in straightforward economic terms, but our best guess values this at well over \$6,929,225.

We celebrate the extraordinary generosity of our volunteer lawyers, firms and other professionals at our annual Pro Bono Awards. The support of Australia's legal community makes our work at Arts Law possible.

Find a full list of lawyers who provided pro bono support at the end of this report.

Client impact

A published author contacted Arts Law about a contractual dispute involving delayed payments and unpaid royalties.

We connected the client with solicitors for an initial consultation on contractual rights, mediation and enforcement options. They were then referred to a lawyer for ongoing advice during negotiations to address the contract breaches, successfully recovering a significant portion of outstanding funds.

'If I had known earlier about the Arts Law Centre, most of this nightmare would have been avoided.'

Name withheld for privacy.



'Since attending the workshop, I have gained a much broader understanding of my rights as an artist. I feel more grounded and confident in navigating arts law, setting boundaries and protecting my work through copyright and agreements.'

This knowledge has empowered me to support other artists on their journeys, encouraging them to feel no shame in asking for agreements or confidently saying yes or no.'

Emily Rose, multimedia artist

Thank you

**Our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated volunteer lawyers,
firms and other professionals that make Arts Law's work possible.**

Howard Adams

Andrew Ailwood

Ethan Aitchison

Beril Akbulut

Aleena Akram

Sana Ali

Molly Allen

Emma Anderson

Lucinda Anderson

Silje Anderson-Cooke

Daniel Anstey

Anne-Marie Arabatzis

Phoebe Arcus

Charlotte Baddeley

Derek Baigent

Ellen Baker

Grace Ball

Ruby Ballantyne

Andrew Banks

Garry Beath

Tahlia Beeson

Cassandra Bell

Jamee Bender

Sanya Bhatnagar

Isabella Bicego

Jake Blundell

Janene Bon

Katarina Bonatakis

Annabel Bramley

Phoebe Brosnan

Elizabeth Burrows

Ava Cadee

Andrew Cameron

Andrew Cardell-Ree

Wesam Chami

Julie Cheesman

Mimi Chester

Kimberley Ching

Samantha Chiu

Shaun Chng

Emmanuel Choi

Christopher Chow

Rachel Chua

Sophie Ciufo

Gillian Clyde

Harry Condon

John Corker

Lucy Cottier

Tim Craven

Grace Crowley

Justin Cudmore

Rebecca Currey

Luke Dale

Stephanie D'Amelio

Audrey Daoud

Jen Davidson

Anika de Pietro

Alexandra De Zwart

Sarah Denton

Hasmindar Dhillon

Steven Digby

Kristy Dixon

Stephen Dodd

Chelsea Donoghue

Guy Donovan

Jamie Doran

Theo Dorizac

Thomas Du

Ben Duff

Jacinta Dzarir

Lucinda Edwards

Lisa Egan

Lisa Egan

Jonathon Ellis

Lee Elsdon

Glen Falkenstein

Daniel Fane

Peter Ferraro

Zoe Firmin

Megan Fitzgerald

Tom Fletcher

Vincent Floro

Kaelah Ford

Liliana Freeman

Alexandra George	Lyn Kemmis	Alberta McKenzie
Dean Gerakiteys	Karen Keugh	Moira McKenzie
Lisa Giardini	Kamran Khalid	Nicola McMahon
Maddie Gill	Cathy Kim	Cailin Meade
Ethan Graham	Joy Kim	Srishti Mehta
Martin Grassi	Stephen King	Vanessa Mellis
Grace Griffiths	Dudley Kneller	Paul Mersiades
Kelly Griffiths	Eugenia Kolivos	Shariqa Mestroni
Jeren Gul	Emma Kong	Kara Mezinac
Jonathan Hadley	Sam Kormin	Angus Michael
Capucine Hague	Cassandra Krylov	Lauren Miller
Luke Hall	Krystal La	Vanessa Miller
Juliana Hasham	Lynette Ladham	Melissa Miller
Steve Hatzipavlis	Maggie Laing	India Monaghan
Luke Hawthorne	Jessica Laverty	Kate Morton
Baopu He	Cailin Le Cerf	Sophie Mortsyn
Bruce Heddle	Sheenae Le Cornu	Tehlyn Murray
Kristina Hewetson	Sam Lee	Kai Nash
Julian Hewitt	Jed Lehmann	Addison Naylor
Ava Hill-de Monchaux	Natasha Li	Stuart Neil
Raymond Huang	Michelle Li	Claire Newhouse
Natale Ilardo	Joey Lim	Amelia Newswan
Karla Jeffrey	Michael Lin	Aleks Nikolic-White
Emma Johnsen	Rachael Lopez	Thea Noone
Stella Johnson	Jesse Loudovaris	Melinda Norquay
Tom Johnston	Edward Lyons	Georgina O'Farrell
Rachel Johnston	Lawrence Mai	Liam Ogburn
Max Jones	Charles Marques	Marina Olsen
Caroline Judd	Nathan Mattock	Rafael Owen
Hannah Kaine	Alexander Mau	Antoine Pace
Eshani Kandaneeratchy	Ben McDermott	Greg Palumbo
Ged Kane	Ian Mcdonald	Rose Pardey
Dominic Henley Katter	Jade McGlyn	Evelyn Park
Jasleen Kaur	Glenn McGowan	James Parker

Joel Parsons
Ruth Parsons
Neha Pillalamarri
Natanya Pinto
Shannon Platt
Tsai Po
Richard Potter
Laksha Prasad
Anika Prasad
Indi Prickett
Amy Pun
Jonathan Qian
Jason Qian
Shimona Rastogi
Robert Reed
Caitlyn Reid
Stephanie Rocher
Keith Rovers
Belyndy Rowe
Samantha Rutherford
Katie Saliba
Tom Salmon
Darren Sanicki
Stephanie Scott
Gabrielle Shina
Jessie Shu
Tamara Simms
Rebecca Slater
Carlie Smart
Jessica Smith
Michaela Smith
Rob Sosnowski
Anna Spies
Michael Squires

Talia Srage
Zoe Stathis
Dusan Stevic
Emily Stone
Dave Stott
Dominic Sweeney-Nash
Natalie Tan
Matthew Taylor
Jo Teng
Lynn Teo
Edward Thien
Claire Thurstans
Esther Ting
Brendan Tomlinson
Sebastian Tonkin
Vanessa Truong
Lauren Trute
Edward Upfold
Tay Vakeeswaran
Mandy van den Elshout
Janine van Eyk
Stacey Vaz
Isabel Wang
Tamsin Webster
Stephanie Werner
Ella White

Sharna White
Mary Whitehead
Ryan Whittard
Shehana Wijesena
Anoushka William
Jonathan Williamson
Kelly Williamson
Sue Williamson
Evan Willis
David Wilton
Imogen Wirth
Jenny Wong
Weng Yi Wong
Mark Woodberry
Evie Woods
Henry Wrench
Mitchell Wright
Tasman Wylie
Charlotte Wylie
Jonathan Xian
Sam Xiang
Arden Yeh
Chantelle Yeung
Desmond Yong
Meggie Zhang
Katherine Zheng





Empowering
artists and
creative
communities
through the law



