



## New arrivals at Metro Arts – incoming artists and staff appointments announcement

**MEDIA ALERT: FOR RELEASE ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2026**

**Metro Arts reveals a slate of incoming supported artists and new team members.**

On Wednesday 13 May, 2026, Metro Arts, long-standing incubator and launchpad for Queensland's contemporary independent artists, released a slate of new artist residencies, along with new senior staff appointments to help drive a new wave of energy at the much loved West End arts centre.

Metro Arts CEO Kieran Swann said, "Metro Arts has always played a particular role in Queensland's independent arts sector: backing artists at pivotal moments to take risks and contribute to our future cultural life. As an incubator, Metro Arts centres artist development as our core business. Making space for creatives to experiment and develop ideas, gives rise to new works each year, and this year we have a stunning mix in development."

Swann said, "While most residency and artist development work is invisible, Metro Arts is dedicated to sharing a range of open studios, work-in-progress showings, and artist talks that run through the year and shed light on live artistic process."

### **New Visual Artists in Residence**

Boneta-Marie Mabo is a Aboriginal, Munburra/Nywaigi and Torres Strait, Meriam woman as well as being of South Sea Islander descent. Walking in the footsteps of her grandfather, the late Eddie Koiki Mabo, she is an activist and a passionate prison abolitionist which is reflected in her recent works. In her 6-month residency, she will expand her research-led project, *Colonial Threads: Next Chapter* investigating the historical and ongoing incarceration of Aboriginal children in Queensland.

Sha Sarwari's work is informed by his lived experience as a Hazara born in Afghanistan and now based in Australia. Exploring themes of displacement, memory, and identity, Sarwari will develop a new body of work centred on the concept of fragmented belonging.

Tay Haggarty's artworks centre queer abstraction, the contrast between grit and polish, surveillance culture, imagined futures and queer time. Their time in residence brings further voices into the mix - through ongoing collaborations with artists Kirralee Robinson and Cassandra Loutit; and an ambitious new community project with Brisbane's trans communities.

Evidencing Metro Arts' commitment to even the most emerging of artists, recent graduate Ellen May Anderson examines our relationship to bodily enhancement. In response to exponential advancements in medical technologies for body adjustment, Anderson will further investigate the concept of the 'post-human'.



## New team members

Coinciding with the new residents, Metro Arts welcomed newly appointed Curator, Rachel O'Reilly, and Marketing and Development Manager, Ann McLean.

"We are excited to welcome Rachel O'Reilly and Ann McLean. These high calibre appointments provide Metro Arts with a depth of knowledge and strong instincts at this key moment in the organisation's growth.

"Rachel O'Reilly brings an extraordinary breadth of experience to Metro Arts, spanning internationally regarded institutions through to deeply place-based collaborative work in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Across exhibition-making, public programs and artist development, she has a rare ability to connect with and challenge artists at every stage of practice. We're excited by the depth of thinking and ambition she brings to this next chapter of the Metro Arts visual arts program.

"Ann McLean has played a significant role in Queensland's cultural sector across communications, fundraising and strategic development, helping grow organisations including Brisbane Writers Festival, Ausdance Queensland and Brisbane Open House. She also has a long relationship with Metro Arts, contributing to projects and programs across many years, so it feels especially meaningful to welcome her formally into the team at this exciting moment for the organisation.

"With a new cohort of artists entering development alongside the arrival of Rachel and Ann to the Metro Arts team, there's a real sense of momentum and fresh energy around the organisation right now. We're looking forward to gathering with the broader arts community at our June Town Hall to celebrate these artists, share new projects and partnerships, and continue opening up conversations about the valuable role Metro Arts plays in the future of Queensland's cultural life."

Metro Arts' incoming Artists in Residence join a range of new art and performance projects that have been hard at work in Metro Arts' studios and theatre since the start of 2026:

- Leading artist, Roxanne McDonald and emerging playwright Waverley Stanley Jnr collaborate on *Nana Kaandi*, an underdog story about ageing, family history and the legacies we leave behind.
- Singer/songwriter/actress Megan Sarmardin explores the loss of stories held by an ageing family member in, *Sundowning*.
- Phi Shandy's work, *Humming to the Moon*, takes us back to 1990 summer holidays with her Uncle Hummy.
- Mitchell Currie's *DUGGAI*\*employs contemporary dance to reimagine ancestral wisdom through the lens of contemporary fears and unresolved histories.
- Much-loved Metro Arts regulars, Counterpilot returns to develop a new interactive performance, *Disgusting Human Mouth*, exploring AI and relationships.
- Natano Fa'anana, Bizzi Lavelle and Garrett Lyon join forces to create an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Pasifika music-theatre work, *The Lublies*, set in a travelling boxing tent.
- Experimental danceartist, Lily May Potger, collaborates with Miles Dunne and Nadeem Tiafau Eshraghi on a dark, intimate work that reveals a mythological creature in *Cloven*.
- Siyavash Doostkhah's new work, *Running with Wild Horses* immerses audiences in the life experiences of an Iranian-born activist.

The program of new works sees Metro Arts collaborating with local and national organisations including QPAC, BEMAC, The Empire, Redlands Performing Arts Centre, ACE Gallery and Vitalstatistix.

# Metro Arts

More information now available via <https://metroarts.com.au/discover-metro-arts/about-us/>

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## Images available

[Boneta Marie Mabo - image](#) caption: Boneta Marie Mabo, NGV.

[Tay Haggarty - image caption](#): Tay Haggarty, The Buddy Princess, IMA by Bin Doraho.

[Rachel O'Reilly - image](#) caption: Rachel O'Reilly, Curator, Metro Arts, by Michelle Grace-Hunder.

## Get in touch:

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## About Metro Arts

### Metro Arts centres Australian artists and experimentation.

In 2026-27, Metro Arts is embarking on a deliberate “rewiring” of our operations, programming and partnerships. This transformational process is strengthening internal systems, deepening philanthropic relationships, embedding entrepreneurial and sustainable practices, and refining strategy to better support artists and future-focused practice. These efforts lay the foundation for the organisation’s next chapter as we approach our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Brisbane’s Cultural Olympiad for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

With a profound 45-year legacy, Metro Arts is at the forefront of nurturing Australian creative talent, serving as an incubator and launchpad for some of the country's finest artists. Metro Arts is equipped with state-of-the-art galleries, artist studios and theatre facilities, all located along the old Peters Ice-cream Factory Lane, within the thriving West Village precinct in West End. Their workshop facility at Norman Park provides vital space for visual artists to create, build and experiment supported by Brisbane City Council.



Australian Government



Australian Government

Visual Art, Craft and Design Framework



Queensland  
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Metro Arts Program is supported by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its funding and advisory body. Metro Arts is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and the Visual Art, Craft and Design Framework, an initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments. The

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Metro Arts Creative Development Program and Artist in Residence Program is proudly supported by Brisbane City Council. Metro Arts Visual Arts (MAVA) Substation is assisted by Brisbane City Council.