Victoria Park Centre for the Arts + KENT STREET GALLERY

# Annual Report 2025–2026

## Victoria Park Centre for the Arts



# Executive Summary

This past year was a significant milestone in the life of our organisation. The final year of Jeremy Blank's tenure as the Director of the Victoria Park Centre for the Arts. The following is a fond recollection of his good work – alongside Leona Kuan, Siobhan O'Gara, Jae Criddle, Sally Bruce, Jonathan Stagg, Rowena Skinner, Peta Basell, and Susan Mitchell, and our board – building the Victoria Park Centre for the Arts into the organisation it is today.

We were awarded a grant from the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, and Sport to build a solar panel electric generating system that will help subsidise our operating costs. This small transformation will have large impacts on our ability to collaboratively program with emerging artists and local organisations.

Our Piano in the Park project was an exemplary community arts project – utilising the ABC's Pop-up Piano initiative to collaborate with local composer, pianist and teacher Vanessa O'Connor, with Vecchi Tonelli, and the Ellington Jazz Bar to present a series of community music performances and workshops. We continued our cultural community events supported by the Department of Communities, including community collaborations with Friends of Mexico, Joys of Women Italia, Gamelan Langen Swara, Yudha Bantono, and the Keszkeno Hungarian Folk Dancers & Hot Parika Musicians at the Hillview Intercultural Community Centre in the City of Canning. We also held four dinner storytelling events with local members of the Greek, Indian, Singaporean, and Malay communities at the Victoria Park Community Centre.

Our Create Connect program went from strength to strength offering over 100 workshops for people with disabilities. We also held an exhibition for people with Young Onset Dementia, and a celebration with the Town of Victoria park for International Day for People with Disabilities.

We hosted 30 exhibitions during the 2025 to 2026 period featuring over 200 artists and groups such as The WA Watercolour Society, Art Connection Collective, Create Connect, Peter Carlino, Barbara Maumill, Laura Ward, Jill Ansell, YODyssey, Perth Lego Users Group, Agnes Tregonning-Barwell, Jay Quin, Anna 'Marta' Martinova, and Cadia Annita, Joanna Hiu, Cally Nelson, Vic Park Printmakers, Brianne Sharp, Emma Purkis, Sarah Eve, Declan White, Natasha Holt, Nichlas Kirkness, Graham Lawrence Withey, Bryn Jones, Petra Drury, Loahna Brophy, Sim Singh, Lynley Jakowyna and MAANZ, Victor Ronan, Jasmine Lawson, Linda Eddy, Marcia Thompson, Joyce Nelson, Melissa Holland, Phillipa Butler, Moya Porter, Sylvia Robertson, Selena Lane, Harley West and Rosie Lane, Jessica Burford, Mia Frankowiak, Desiree Proctor, Alanna Dinning, Andie Gibson, Razannah Chota, Safeya Wright, Emma Thompson, Caroline Hartanti, Ellie Baker-Young and more. We featured five events during the Town of Victoria Park's Art Season 2026: P(ART)icipate: Lantern Making with Lewis Horne, Tracing the Invisible – North Metro Tafe Student Exhibition, the Unblock Your Creativity Project, Bounty Exhibition, and Longtable Bounty.

***Pictured cover:*** *Hungary Celebrations of Culture event, 2026, photo by Maree Laffan*

We have continued to host ongoing classes and workshops from the Victoria Park Printmakers, Jill Ansell, WA Mosaics, Creative Art Kids, and Michelle Culnane, keeping our Centre an active place of creative learning and skill exchange.

It is a large and wonderful legacy that Jeremy Blank leaves the Victoria Park Centre for the Arts. My time as Director had only just begun in the final weeks of last financial year, but in this short time I have witnessed some beautiful, sincere creative exchanges and a thriving local community of creatives. I am honoured to be inheriting the legacy left, and excited about the future that is to come.

Gok-Lim Finch, Director

*We pay our respects to the original custodians of the land upon which we meet – the Whadjuk people of the Bibbulmun nation. We acknowledge the significant and unique contribution First Nations people have made, are making, and continue to make, to the heritage, cultural identity, community and health of the country.*

*VPCA is a recipient organisation of funding from the Town of Victoria Park.*

*Below: Statistics from 2025-2026*

850 activities that improve access to arts, history, culture and education



Inclusive arts programs for people with disability





Emergent artist support

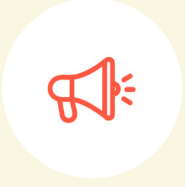


9+ different arts offerings

30 exhibitions featuring 200+ artist/exhibitors



Increased social media follower count by over 50%





8 Multicultural events



30 partnerships

# Our Board

**Brenda Kamau** Chairperson
**Greg Mahney** Deputy Chairperson
**Sophie Smith** Secretary
**Rowena Skinner** Treasurer
**Jill Turner** Board Member
**Kat Gregory** Board Member
**Sbarina Mena** Board Member

For more information on our board members visit:
https://vicparkarts.org.au/our-board-members/

# Our Staff Members and Volunteers

**Gok-Lim Finch** Director
**Leona Kuan** Administrator Coordinator
**Jae Criddle** Communications Officer
**Siobhan O'Gara** Communities Coordinator
**Sally Bruce** Finance
**Jonathon Stagg** Maintenance Officer

**Rowena Skinner** Founding volunteer
**Peta Basell** Gardening Volunteer
**Susan Mitchell** Shop Volunteer

# Cultural Performances and Dinners

Part of the Empowering Communities program, the Victoria Park Centre for the Arts works with with local community members and groups from diverse cultural backgrounds to promote inclusivity, increased intercultural awareness, and community participation. In the past year, we have presented, at the City of Canning's Hillview Intercultural Community Centre, Perth's largest Dia de los Muertos event with Friends of Mexico WA, an Indonesian celebration with Jatayu productions and the Gamelan Langen Swara Musicians, and a Hungarian celebration with the Keszkeno Hungarian Folk Dancers & Hot Parika Musicians. These events are coordinated with community administrator Maree Laffan. We have also had dinners presented with administrative assistance from Kerri Jefferis at the Victoria Park Community Centre by community members connected to Greece, India, Singapore, and Malaysia.







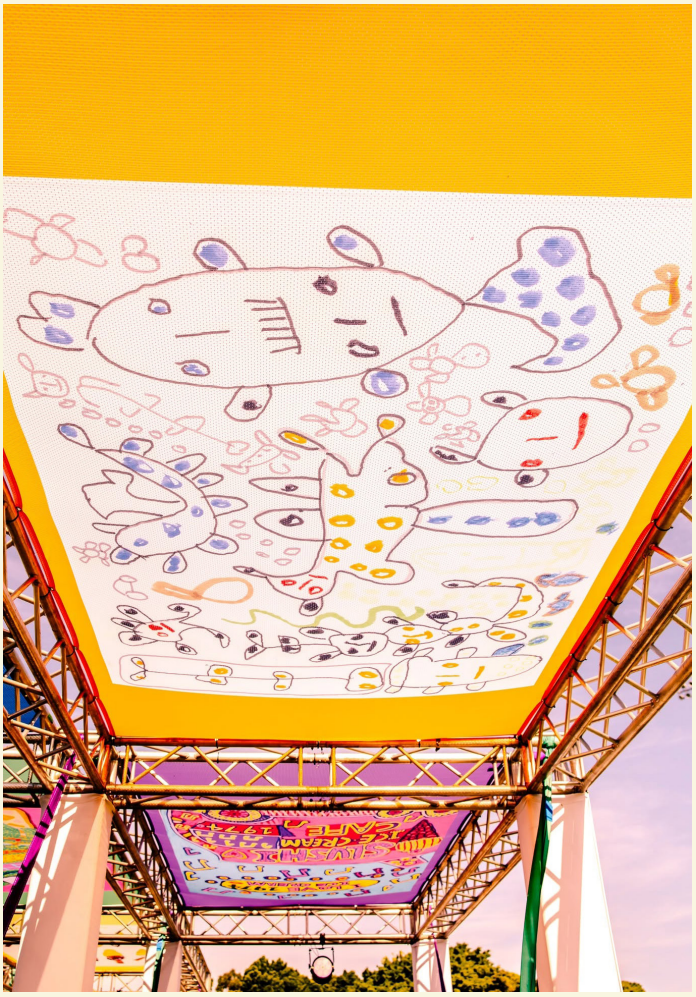


***Pictured top:*** *Indonesia Celebrations of Culture event (left), 2026, photo by Maree Laffan | South Indian Cultural Dinner (right), 2025, photo by Miwako Lucy |* ***Pictured bottom:*** *Malay Cultural Dinner (left) 2026, photo by Miwako Lucy | Italy Celebrations of Culture event (right), 2025, photo by Maree Laffan*

# Create Connect

Our Create Connect workshops for artists with disabilities continues to provide support. Our two lead artist facilitators, Rosie Vinicombe and Peter Carlino, programmed and facilitated over 120 workshops and curated an exhibition with our regular studio Create Connect artists.

In 2025 we collaborated with the Spilt Milk Music Festival to present a selection of works from Create Connect artists. Spilt Milk is a major annual Australian music festival established in 2016 by Kicks Entertainment, originally held in Canberra. They will be exhibiting large print-outs of four artworks by four artists from our Create Connect program.





***Pictured:*** *Spilt Milk Festival 2025, photos courtesy of Spilt Milk | Artists: David Brandstater (left), Janine Noonan (right)*

# Kent Street Gallery Programs







We provided 22 exhibitions to over 150 artists during the 2025/26 exhibition period, which is more than any other gallery in the Perth metro area. These exhibitions predominantly featured young and emerging artists, allowing our Kent Street gallery spaces to provide a platform for new, emerging, and exciting contemporary art. Our highlights of the year include:

In March, we hosted two exhibitions, Joanna Hiu's **Blooming Suburbs Series 1: Victoria Park**, and Cally Nelson's **Understory** which were our most commercially successful and popular exhibitions in the past year, both having strong attendance and sales, and both artists actively organising community engagements such as artist talks and workshops during their exhibitions.

For Art Season 2026 we hosted two exhibitions, an exhibition from our local printmakers, Tracing the Invisible: Light, Shadow, and an exhibition from the North Metropolitan TAFE diploma photography students, Time: An Analogue Exploration.

Our NAIDOC 2025 exhibition was delivered in partnership with Bush Blossom Gallery and proudly sponsored by Monadelphous. Monadelphous is a local Victoria Park headquartered mining services business who has supported/sponsored VPCA's NAIDOC programme since 2022. We exhibited Brent Johnson, Margaret Eades, Maggie Minmarrier, Doreen (Margillee) Maree Harris.

***Pictured, top to bottom:***

*'Acid Utopia: Judgment Day' Lyle Branson, Anthony Kelly, Guillermo Kramer, Peter Carlino, 2025 | 'Heartland' Barbara Maumill, 2025 | 'Understory' Cally Nelson, 2026*

# Piano Projects

VPCA Communities coordinator Siobhan O'Gara collaborated with local piano teachers and musicians to present a showcase of local talent celebrating the arrival of a community piano provided to VPCA by ABC as 1 of 19 donated pianos across Australia. The performance featured the young French Perth resident Maya, who performed in the ABC's first episode of The Piano in Sydney as well as local musicians and former WAAPA senior staff performing. The event was a free ticketed event, with full attendance.

With the support of a ToVP arts grant, this project was developed to feature further performances from Anna Sleptsova, Tommy Seah, and Dr Gaby Gunders. As well as a collaborative event with The Ellington Jazz Bar Club with Anna Sleptsova and Tommy Seah performing with their young mentees, including Maya Portella-Schulz who featured on the ABC iView series 'The Piano'. Maya was a recent finalist in the French Prodigies series in Paris.

The VPCA also collaborated with local composer, pianist and teacher Vanessa O'Connor. Vecchi Tonelli, a public performance of classical music with students from Modena Conservatory of music, Italy. Supported by the Italian Ministry of University and Research as part of its initiative to promote Italian culture and language abroad. This was part of an Australian tour including Sydney & Melbourne. The event sold out and was accompanied by a masterclass with Italian pianist from the conservatorium.





***Pictured:*** *Piano in the Park Ellington Showcase (left), 2026, photo by Maree Laffan | Piano in the Park mentoring session with Gaby Gunders (right), 2026, photo by Maree Laffan*

# Community Workshops and Art Programs

We have continued to host regular workshops and community events from Victoria Park Printmakers, the Mosaic Group WA, Jill Ansell, Michelle Culnane, Textiles, Talk and Tea group, Comhaltas Perth, and Creative Kids

Ursula Frayne Catholic College worked with VPCA to host an art exhibition and related workshops for students of their visiting artist in residence John Adams, from South Africa. The VPCA organised a community photography exhibition entitled Your Voice in Pictures with Connect Victoria Park.

# Collaborators and Partners

We thank everybody below for their support and commitment to the Centre in 2025-26.

- Town of Victoria Park
- Department of Communities
- Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, and Sport
- Department of Home Affairs
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Pop-Up Piano)
- Monadelphous Group
- Nulsen Disability Services
- People Kind
- Victoria Park Community Centre
- Kate Doust MLC
- Hannah Beazley MLA
- City of Canning | Hillview Intercultural Community Centre
- United in Diversity
- Vic Park Pride
- Perth LEGO Users Group
- Bush Blossom Art Gallery, Kalgoorlie
- John Curtin Gallery | Curtin University
- Oxlades Art Supplies
- South Perth Learning Centre
- Jacksons Drawing Supplies
- Young Onset Dementia (YODyssey)
- Early Start Australia
- Vic Park Printmakers Group
- Vic Park Writers Group
- WA Portrait Artist Jill Ansell
- WA Mosaic Art
- Arts Creative Hub
- Perth Transport Authority
- Michelle Culnane, Drawing with Children
- Creative Kids Arts Club
- Vic Park Community Events Forum
- Maestria Productions
- The Colour Society of Australia
- Carers WA
- WWLAC · Perth Comhaltas Inc.
- Novel Writers in Quiet Places
- Mosaic Association of Australia & New Zealand (MAANZ)
- Soroptimists Perth
- Eugenia Schettino, Spanish Classes
- Co-Dependents Anonymous
- Peter Zappa
- Eucalypt Homewares
- Malini Parker