

Dear Members

The COVID-19 pandemic made it a turbulent year for the Canberra Potters as well as for all other arts organisations. We have no doubt that it would have been even more difficult without the decisive action that the Board, CEO and the CPS staff took under Velda Hunter's leadership in the first half of 2020.

The composition of the Board during 2020 was:

President	Jill Farrelly	(Velda Hunter 1 January to 26 June 2020)
Vice President	Jo Searle	
Secretary	Kerry Byers	(Nicole Hoffman 1 January to 3 August 2020)
Treasurer	Melissa Stenfors	
Member	Tessa Hoser	
Member	Don Porter	
Member	Nicole Hoffman	(3 August to 31 December 2020)

## 2020 in Review

A review of CPS's 2020 activity (attached) shows that COVID restrictions had a major impact on normal operations during 2020. The restrictions affected the number of workshops, classes, exhibitions and member events we could offer. They also affected class sizes and visitor numbers.

Nonetheless financial assistance from the ACT and Federal Governments helped CPS weather the storm: CPS continued to be financially solvent and ended 2020 with cash reserves of around \$450,000. A more detailed explanation will be provided by our incoming Treasurer, Wil Trewartha.

Finally, the Board commenced the development of an updated CPS Business Plan in the second half of 2020: the 2021-2025 Business Plan is now available on our website. The Board also reviewed CPS's governance arrangements.

## 2021 Outlook

While the effects of COVID have diminished, they continue to linger. Even so we know COVID could return just as suddenly as it did in 2020 (or some other unpleasant surprise). With that in mind the Board decided to set aside a Prudential Reserve of around \$130,000 from CPS' cash reserves. This is designed to allow CPS to continue to function for 10 weeks with no revenue.

The Board knows that CPS' infrastructure and equipment is ageing and in need of replacement. We recently decided to create a Capital Expenditure Fund of up to \$180,000 from CPS' cash reserves to make sure that resources are available to meet the costs of new wheels, kilns and infrastructure as and when needed. We expect that members will begin to see new and improved equipment start to appear later this year and throughout 2022.

Melissa Stenfors, Don Porter and Nicole Hoffman have stepped down from the Board. They each made an important contribution. We thank them so much for their time, energy and commitment on behalf of CPS and its members.

We take this opportunity on behalf of the Board to thank CPS members for their understanding during what has been a difficult time. Let's not forget though that our people - our staff and our teachers - have been at the pointy end of it all and rose to the challenge.

We also acknowledge the interest in CPS taken by the Minister for the Arts, Tara Cheyne MLA, who accepted the Board's invitation to attend the 2020 member's exhibition and toured CPS last week; the latter attracting significant media coverage.

*Signed*

*Signed*

**Jill Farrelly**  
President

**Kerry Byers**  
Secretary

19 April 2021

# CPS ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2020

## Our Purpose

**To develop Canberra Potters Society and Watson Arts Centre into a dynamic, innovative and inspiring arts centre of excellence; to support personal and professional development at all levels of ceramic arts practice; and to engage the community through arts, exhibition and retail experiences.**

## Continue to be a leading ceramic arts hub

GOAL 1	Continue to be a leading ceramic arts hub		
By	Delivering dynamic, innovative and inspiring ceramics programs		
Program	Measure	2020	2019
Masterclasses & Workshops	Number of hours	540	2495
	Number of enrolments	30	226
Artists in Residence	Number of Residencies	0	5
Studio tenancies	Occupancy rate (%)	64%	57%
Classes	Adult class contact hours	12744	25594
	Child class contact hours	2349	6048
	Holiday class contact hours	368	661

### Masterclasses & Workshops

COVID restrictions, including on interstate travel, limited our capacity to offer our usual array of masterclasses and workshops.

### Classes

COVID also affected the number of programs we were able to offer. For example, Term 2 had to be closed altogether. Class sizes also needed to be reduced.

### Studio Tenancies

Shared tenancies continued to support our artists, and reflect our role as a leading ceramic arts hub and are a significant part of our vibrant creative community.

Studio holders during 2020 were Leslie Lebkowicz, Phoebe Breen, Raj Reddy, Andres Caycedo, Steve Roper, Colin Jefferson, Lea Durie, Julie Pennington, Jackie Lallemand, Sue Peachy, and Lucy Ings.

All eligible tenants received COVID rent relief from the ACT Government.

### Artists in Residence

No residencies were offered due to international and national travel restrictions. However, the residence was occupied by our technical manager who acted as the on-site caretaker. The studios were also offered to local artists for short periods.

## Be a leading ceramics-focused exhibition space

GOAL 2	Be a leading ceramics-focused exhibition space		
By	Delivering dynamic, innovative and inspiring exhibition programs		
Program	Measure	2020	2019
Ceramic-centric exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	7	6
National & International artist exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	1	2
Collaborative multidisciplinary exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	0	4
CPS curated exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	6	4
All Programs	Number of visitors	3488	11743

### Gallery Exhibitions

Seven exhibitions were held in 2020 all of which were ceramic-centric (this compares to ten in 2019, of which six were ceramic-centric). Highlights included Prue Venables' ADC Living Treasures exhibition, Distant Visions which exhibited CPS' collection, Chef & the Potter as well as exhibitions featuring the work of Rob Linigen and Steve Roper, the student-teacher and CPS members exhibitions.



Sarah Schmidt, Jeff Mincham, Jill Farrelly  
**Shop**

The shop represented 25 local potters and ten Artists in Residence which is the same overall as in 2019 (28 and seven respectively).

A portfolio of artist interviews and in-house videos was created to engage visitors and promote the artists represented in the shop.



**Steve Roper – Twirling Head**



**Steve Roper - Doug Alexander Award Recipient with Morag  
McKenna & Rebecca Edwards**

## Be a vibrant, inclusive community venue

GOAL 3	Be a vibrant, inclusive community venue		
By	Meeting the needs of the ceramics community and members through programs that are vibrant, accessible and inclusive		
Program	Measure	2020	2019
Community events	Number of events	2	3
	Number of participants	1000	1100 (ex Christmas Fair)
Inclusion: Special group events	Number of events	2	4
	Number of participants	35	74
Member events	Number of events	0	9
Membership	Number of members	471	479

### Membership

Our membership as of 31 December 2020 was 471 and consisted of 303 singles, 43 families, 46 seniors, 68 concessional students and 11 life members.

Four new life members were inducted at the 2020 AGM in recognition of their contributions to CPS and to ceramics:

- Marlene Flanagan;
- Cathy Franzi;
- Chris Harford; and
- Sara Hogwood.

### Member and Community Events

COVID restrictions meant that events were limited. However, highlights included the Australian Ceramics Association Open Studio in November and our Christmas Market which was held over five days and hosted 22 artists/makers who sold pottery and ceramics worth over \$33,000.

### Inclusion and Access

Canberra Potters provides access to all levels of skill and ability. Courses are developed with the Education Program Manager and designed to meet students' specific needs. Although affected by COVID, CPS still managed to provide two standalone courses for 20 vulnerable people and to enable 15 people with disabilities to participate in mainstream courses in consultation with their Care Plan Managers, as part of their self-managed care plans.

## Be a recognisable brand in the ACT and Australian arts community

GOAL 4	Be a recognisable brand in the ACT and Australian arts community		
By	Providing exciting experiences for makers and audiences, as well as bringing makers and audiences together		
Strategy	Measure	2020	2019
Engagement	Email subscribers	1206	720
	Social media followers	2800	2057
	Newsletters	7	7
Media	Reviews, interviews	5	5
	Media releases	6	16

### Engagement and Media

There was a significant increase in online traffic during COVID which reflected work to improve our website that had experienced some difficulties due to the amount of traffic, and increasing interest in what we offer on social media.

The reduction in the number of media releases reflects the number of events that could be publicised.



Chef & the Potter Artist Talk with Chris Harford and Johnson McDonald



Maryke Henderson talking to presenter from Art Sound FM on Open Day 2019

### Be a sustainable arts organisation characterised by best practice governance

GOAL 5	Be a sustainable arts organisation characterised by best practice governance.		
By	Adopting best practice Board, financial and people practices		
Strategy	Description	2020	2019
COVID	Respond to and address COVID risks	Completed	n/a
Best practice governance	Review governance against AICD principles	Completed	n/a
	Implement Board submissions processes	Completed	n/a
	5 Year Business Plan	Completed	n/a
Sustainable finances	Set aside funds for a capital expenditure program	Completed	n/a
	Set aside funds for a prudential reserve	Completed	n/a

## **The response to COVID**

CPS staff, led by the CEO, responded swiftly and effectively to manage COVID risks and minimise their impact, including to:

- Create a COVID-19 Response Plan, Safe Operation Plan and Return to Work Plan;
- Provide staff with work from home standards and safety guidelines;
- Install compliance signage throughout the facility;
- Install a caretaker and onsite security during closure;
- Secure COVID funding from the ACT and Commonwealth governments; and
- Provide members and visitors with information throughout the year.

## **Best practice governance**

The Board undertook a number of initiatives to maintain or improve CPS governance arrangements including:

- a survey of CPS governance practices against the Australian Institute of Company Directors best practice principles and practices was undertaken in the latter half of 2020. The survey found that our practices were sound overall with an average score of 3.8 on a scale of 5. It also identified areas for improvement which will be the Board's focus in 2021.
- the Board adopted timeliness standards for presentation of papers to the Board. The Board also adopted a new coversheet for Board submissions that: requires clear recommendations; an assessment of whether the proposal is consistent with CPS' Constitution, ACT Arts Policy, and KAO funding guidelines; whether it is in the interests of members; risks; and impact on our costs and income.
- the Board developed a new five-year Business Plan for 2021 to 2025 in the latter half of 2020. The Plan was finalised and agreed at the Board's first meeting in 2021.

## **Sustainable finances**

The Board agreed to and will implement a number of proposals to ensure CPS' long term financial sustainability including:

- setting aside funds from our financial reserves for a capital expenditure program. This will ensure that we are able to fund the replacement of ageing equipment such as wheels and kilns, as well as for leasehold improvements.
- setting aside funds from our financial reserves for a "Prudential Reserve". This will ensure that we are able to ride out unexpected events such as COVID for 10 weeks.
- setting an annual target of a 5% surplus.

## The Board in 2020

The Board met six times in 2020 (the Constitution requires it to meet at least four times) and the AGM was held on 26 June 2020.

The Board and AGM considered 20 operational reports and 8 strategic submissions during the year.

The dates of Board meetings during 2020 and attendance of eligible Board members is provided in the table below (NE means not eligible).

Date	CPS Member	13/2	2/4	16/3	AGM 26/6	22/7	17/9	19/11	Total
Board Member									
Jill Farrelly (President)	Yes	NE	NE	NE	NE	1	1	1	3/3
Velda Hunter (President)	Yes	1	1	1	1	NE	NE	NE	4/4
Jo Searle (Vice President)	No	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7/7
Nicole Hoffman (Secretary/Member)	No	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	5/7
Kerry Byers (Secretary)	Yes	NE	NE	NE	NE	1	1	1	3/3
Melissa Stenfors (Treasurer)	Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	5/7
Don Porter (Member)	Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7/7
Tessa Hoser (Member)	Yes	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	5/7
David Leake (Member)	Yes	1	1	1	1	NE	NE	NE	4/4
<b>Regular Reports</b>		4	2	3	3	2	3	3	<b>20</b>
<b>Strategic Submissions</b>		0	1	0	0	0	4	3	<b>8</b>