



Doug Alexander Prize winner 2023, *Alpine Snow Gums*, Maryke Henderson. (Image: Andrew Sikorski)

## FROM THE BOARD

Dear CPS Members,

2023 was another successful year led by our CEO Richard Thomas, his skilled staff, and our enthusiastic members and community.

It has been a pleasure to be part of such a strong and capable Board, the composition of which at the end of 2023 was:

<b>President</b>	Jill Farrelly	<b>Vice President</b>	Janet DeBoos
<b>Secretary</b>	Kerry Byers	<b>Treasurer</b>	James Reading
<b>Member</b>	Nicole James	<b>Member (Legal)</b>	Natalie Truong
<b>Member</b>	Victoria Richardson	<b>Intern/Observer</b>	Adeline Jeffery

Further information about the Board's work, qualifications and experience is provided in the Governance Statement.

Wil Trewartha and Christine Pearson resigned their positions in the latter half of 2023. We thank Wil and Christine for their contributions.

We welcomed James Reading (independent) as our Treasurer, Natalie Truong (independent) as our legal member, and CPS member, Victoria Richardson.

### 2023 in Review

As you will know CPS successfully applied in 2022 for a licence to operate out of the Watson Arts Centre to 2028 with a Deed of grant of \$200,000 a year (an increase of around \$80,000 a year). Even so, the Board and CEO still had a lot of work to do throughout 2023 to settle the details.

CPS continues to be financially solvent and ended 2023 with an operating surplus of around \$70k, notwithstanding the ongoing pressures of rising inflation.

The financial reserves the Board set up in 2020 were reviewed and updated again in 2023. The Board also decided to create a separate reserve to safeguard CPS employees leave entitlements such as Long Service Leave. They are all fully funded.

The Board continued its planning for CPS' 50th Anniversary in 2025, with that work led by Kerry Byers and Christine Pearson.

The Board undertook two other important pieces of work in 2023.

The first was *Developing Community Connections* which included: improving awareness of CPS, and developing a communication strategy, which established the need for a website upgrade.

The second was *Developing CPS Assets*: working with artsACT on the new kiln shed, building maintenance, pressing ahead with our equipment replacement program, and increasing staff capacity.

The Board can report that it has completed the equipment upgrade, which included a new kiln, new wheels and all associated equipment.

The Board also added a new goal in 2023 to reflect the fact that the Watson Arts Centre is owned by the ACT Government and that CPS manages it on the Government's behalf.

## 2024 Outlook

The Board now believes that all outstanding Deed and Licence and matters have been settled with artsACT. The outcomes are pragmatic and provide mutual assurance to CPS and artsACT about WAC usage and its governance.

The major priorities for 2024 agreed by the Board at its Strategic Planning Day (which included indicative budgets) were:

- redeveloping the CPS Website;
- completing the new kiln shed build by September;
- options to increase the capacity of the Board/CEO to meet artsACT's governance arrangements; and
- implementing the 50th Anniversary program in 2025.

The Board decided to increase class 2024 fees by 5% from Term 3. The Board considered a fee increase at its October 2023 meeting but decided to defer it for as long as possible to avoid imposing further cost burdens to the CPS community. The Board decided that it could no longer be deferred and that it would be unfair to leave such a sensitive decision to an incoming President and Board.

It is important to note that we have kept fees constant for two and a half years.

The updated 5 year CPS Business Plan for 2024-2028 is included in the AGM papers provided to CPS members.

As always we acknowledge the continued support of and interest in CPS of artsACT staff and the Minister for the Arts, Tara Cheyne, MLA.

  
Jill Farrelly  
President

2 May 2024

  
Kerry Byers  
Secretary

2 May 2024



Simon Ward Artist in Residence (l), Jill Farrelly CPS President with Joanne Searle winner of the Anne Langridge Surface Award Members' Exhibition 2023. (Image: CPS)



Opening of the Petal Kiln Fired Up 2023. (Image: Regan Pearse)

## FROM THE CEO

Throughout the year, our dedication to fostering creativity, nurturing talent, and enhancing community engagement has been unwavering. From revitalising our facilities to sustaining a vibrant community of artists and enthusiasts, our journey throughout the past year has been one of growth, innovation, and shared dedication.

Led by Sue Cant CPS continued to enrich its education programs, catering to a diverse range of interests and skill levels within our community. Our program included several successful initiatives like the tandem Summer School with Ruth Ju-shih Li and Alex De Vos. The return of the Market Ready Mentoring course proved the most successful yet with all students participating in the popular Emerging Makers Market. Our teaching cohort, of 22 talented teachers, delivered exceptional learning experiences across adult, children's and specialist short courses throughout the year. Collaborations with organisations like the Tuggeranong Arts Centre expanded teaching mentorship opportunities.

Our gallery program ably curated by Katrina Leske featured many significant highlights. We welcomed the return of the *Bald Archy Prize* a satirical caricature painting prize, *Variations* new work by one of Australia's leading wood firing exponents Susie McMeekin and the unexpected hit *Emerging from the Earth: Clay and Flowers* a collaborative exhibition between six florists and six potters. Our efforts were recognised and celebrated through extensive media coverage and high attendance at key events, reinforcing our position as a prominent destination for ceramic focussed exhibitions and activities.

The Shop, managed by Abbey Jamieson, thrived in 2023, showcasing the work of over 40 members and recent visiting artists. An expanded range of clay, tools and artists supplies has made the Shop a preferred destination for the those with an interest in pottery and ceramics. The Shop recorded increased revenue and foot traffic particularly during events such as *Makers Markets* and *Fired Up*, underscoring CPS's role as a vibrant hub for artistic expression and retail experiences.

The Artist in Residence program remained a cornerstone of CPS's commitment to fostering creativity and collaboration. Notable

recipients included Molly Desmond, Ruth Ju-shih Li and the highly anticipated residency with Kazuya Ishida, delivering enriching experiences for both artists and the community. Our studio tenancies remained consistent throughout the year and many of our studio tenants held successful exhibitions both locally and nationally.

We were pleased to welcome Melissa Gabelle who took on the running of the kiln room and between her Dan Venables and Paul Dumetz continued our commitment to providing safe, state-of-the-art pottery facilities.

During the year adjustable tables were added to both workshops, installation of a new Raku kiln and transition to Shippo wheels, enhanced the experience of our members. Additionally, the approval of funding for the kiln shed upgrade signifies a new chapter of growth and development for CPS.

CPS organised many engaging events and forums, fostering dialogue and collaboration within the artistic community. Initiatives like *Clay Conversations* and the *Market Ready Open Forum* provided valuable platforms for exchange and learning, reinforcing CPS's role as a catalyst for creative exploration and professional development. We once again dazzled audiences during the electrifying *Fired Up* extravaganza and provided numerous artists selling opportunities at the ever-popular *Makers Markets*.

Our membership base remained strong, reflecting the continued support and enthusiasm for our programs and initiatives within the community.

Our successful financial year showcased our financial resilience amidst evolving market dynamics. Despite facing increased operating costs, our adept financial team of Kathy Vivian and Jessica Lee under the watchful eye of our Treasurer and Board resulted in a strong annual performance.

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support we receive from artsACT and Arts Minister Tara Cheyne. We were also successful in funding applications through the Disability Inclusion Support scheme and Events Canberra bodies.

I'd like to express my gratitude and support I have received from an engaged and active Board and in particular Jill Farrelly and Kerry Byers whose terms are ending this year. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff, talented artists, loyal members, many volunteers and supportive community partners. Together, we have demonstrated resilience, creativity, and a shared passion for the arts, laying a strong foundation for continued success in the years to come.

Richard Thomas, CEO

Z May 2024



## CPS REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2023

***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.***

**GOAL 1** Continue to be a leading ceramic arts hub by delivering dynamic, innovative, and inspiring ceramics programs.

Program	Measure	2023	2022	2021
Masterclass/ Workshops	Number of hours	2,185	1,152	924
Artists in Residence	Number of Residencies	4	5	3
Studio tenancies	Occupancy rate (%)	100%	100%	100%
Class contact hours	Adult	35,424	34,830	24,105
	Children	4,212	4,010	3,379
	Holiday	1,280	448	320

### Masterclasses & Workshops

We offered a full program of masterclasses and workshops throughout 2023 including Summer School with Ruth Ju-shih Li and Alex de Vos and Winter School with Kazuya Ishida. Masterclasses and short courses included our popular Market Mentoring Course, Intro Intensives, Glaze Practice, Wheels Intensive, Gas and Electric Kiln Firing a pop-up Ephemeral Flower masterclass with Ruth Ju-shih Li and Abundant Application masterclass with Maricelle Olivier.

### Classes

Classes at Canberra Potters returned to full attendance and their popularity was enduring over the year. Our weekly class program consisted of over 30 adult and child classes spanning a nine-week term.

The program delivered a range of classes to suit all levels of competency from novice to expert. Additionally, special interest, short and intensive courses helped develop identified skills in response to student interests.

Our education outreach program provided specially tailored courses to school and college students, volunteer organisations, professional groups and private sector businesses.



Children's Holiday class Autumn 2023. (Image: CPS)

### Studio Tenancies

Our tenants were unchanged during 2023. Month to month tenancies were offered in a dedicated workshop space to artists waiting for studios or not requiring a long-term placement. Our tenants reflect our role as a leading ceramic arts hub and are a significant part of our vibrant creative community.

Studio holders during 2023 were Maricelle Olivier, Tanya McArthur, Julie Pennington and Sue Peachy. Short term rentals were undertaken by Jackie Lallemand, John Heaney, Jacky Lo and Karen Cromwell.



Studio tenant Maricelle Olivier demonstrating at Fired Up 2023. (Image: Regan Pearse)

## Artists in Residence

There were 4 artist residencies during 2023. Ruth Ju-shih Li (Taiwan/Australia), Molly Desmond (EASS), Kazuya Ishida (Japan) and Simon Ward (UK).



Artist in Residence Kazuya Ishida, 2023. (Image: CPS)

**GOAL 2 Be a leading ceramics-focused exhibition space by delivering dynamic, innovative, and inspiring exhibition programs.**

Program	Measure	2023	2022	2021
Ceramic-centric exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	9	10	8
National & international exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	3	2	2
Studio Collaborative multidisciplinary exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	3	2	1
CPS curated exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	4	3	3
All programs	Number of visitors	11,523	8,461	7,997



Gallery Manager Katrina Leske and artist Susie McMeekin at the opening of Variations 2023. (Image: CPS)

## Gallery Exhibitions

The gallery program comprised 9 exhibitions in 2023 all of which were ceramic-centric. Our gallery profile continues to grow, and we attracted 3 national exhibitors.

Highlights included the return of the Bald Archy Prize featuring the work of some of Australia's leading satirical artists. We were excited to present recent work by renowned Australian wood firer Susie McMeekin and enjoyed the unexpected collaborative success of *Emerging from the Earth: Clay & Flowers* featuring the work of 12 local potters and florists.

## Shop

The shop represented 39 local potters and 6 AIR artists (a decrease of 2 local artists from 2022) and 7 AIR artists. The decision to decrease the number of artists represented was made to ensure all artists had a fair amount of display space in the Shop. This has also accommodated a more comprehensive range of work from represented artists.

Tool sales have increased 162% from 2022. This is due to the increased range of tools available for purchase for students and members in person and through the online shop. The Canberra Potters Shop holds the most comprehensive range of ceramic tools in Canberra.

Clay Away kits are continuing to sell for people who are new to clay and want to test the waters prior to enrolling in a class, corporate events, hen's nights and children's parties.



**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**



Graduates of the Market Ready Emerging Makers Market Program (l to r): Sandra Sterland, Jo Townsend (course convenor), Stephanie Johnston, Jaqui Keogh, Sandie Johnston, Tara Cheyne (Minister for the Arts), Colette Steindl, Sue Cant (Education Program Manager), Andrea Baldry. (Image: CPS)

**Member and Community Events**

Program	Measure	2023	2022	2021
Community events	Number of events	3	5	3
	Number of participants	3,359	3,410	3,427
Inclusion: Special group events	Number of events	10	5	4
	Number of participants	122	89	36
Member events	Number of events	12	12	3
Membership	Number of members	648	666	534

We held a full program of member and community events in 2023. Including: Fired Up, 3 exhibition floor talks, 3 community markets, 6 Clay Conversations, and our studio holders took part in the TACA and Design Canberra open days program.

**Inclusion and Access**

Canberra Potters continues to work to provide access to people of levels of skill and ability. Courses are developed with the Education Program Manager and designed to meet students' specific needs. CPS provided 2 standalone courses for 24 vulnerable people and supported in excess of 100 adults and children living with disabilities to participate in mainstream courses at Canberra Potters during the year. The Education Team has developed strong working relationships with Support Services across Canberra.

**Membership**

Our membership as of 31 December 2023 was 648 and consisted of 321 singles, 93 families, 138 seniors, 20 senior families, 65 concessional students and 11 life members.

**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	2023	2022	2021
Engagement	Email, social media subscribers	11,081	10,342	8,790
	Member Mailouts	62 (open rate 63.6%)	53 (open rate 53.5%)	24 (open rate 40.5%)
Media	Reviews, interviews	11	5	3
	Media Releases	12	11	9

**Engagement and Media**

All of our exhibitions and events were supported by media releases, social media promotion and member engagement through newsletters, website and onsite contact. We were excited to hold our third Fired Up Winter Festival.



Local media coverage for gallery event. (Image: CPS)

**GOAL 5 Be an exemplary steward of the WAC facility by ensuring it is efficient, effective, safe and accessible.**

Strategy	Measure	2023	2022	2021
Efficient, effective, and safe	Maintenance under Licence (>98%)	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023
	Repairs & Replacement under Licence (>95%)	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023
Complaints	Formal complaints from Licensor (<1%)	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023
Breach of Licence	Licence Clauses 17, 19 (Nil)	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023
New Kiln Shed Build	In consultation with artsACT	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023

**GOAL 6 Be a sustainable arts organisation characterised by best practice governance. By adopting best practice Board, financial and people practices**

Strategy	Description	2023	2022	2021
COVID	Respond to and address risks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Best practice governance	Annual review of governance against AICD principles	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Implement Board submissions processes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Update 5 year Business Plan	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sustainable finances	An annual surplus of 6%+	6.5%	11.1%	1.9%
	Own-source revenue of >75%	80.6%	86.9%	74.4%
	Set aside funds for Prudential, CAPEX Reserves	Reserves intact	Reserves intact	Reserves intact

**The response to COVID**

CPS staff, led by the CEO, continued again to manage COVID risks and minimise their impact through the COVID-19 Response Plan, Safe Operation Plan and Return to Work Plan.

**Sustainable finances**

The Board reviewed its policies to ensure CPS' long term financial sustainability and continues to set aside funds for:

- A Capital Expenditure Reserve. The CAPEX reserve provides CPS the capacity to replace equipment essential to members such as wheels and kilns, and for leasehold improvements.
- A Prudential Reserve. This provides CPS the capacity to ride out unexpected events (such as COVID) for up to 10 weeks with no income; and
- A Staff Entitlements Reserve which ensures our staff's leave entitlements are protected.

**Best practice governance**

The CPS Board has conducted an annual survey of Board members since 2020. The survey is based on the Australian Institute of Company Directors Governance Principles and Practices and is used by the Board to identify areas that could be improved.

Since 2020 action has been taken to strengthen Board processes, business planning, financial management, Board-CEO delegations, risk management, and cyber security.

The 2023 survey indicates that our practices were sound overall with an average score of 4.5 on a scale of 5 (see the table below).

AICD Principles	2023	2022	2021	2020
<b>Overall Rating</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.8</b>
1. Purpose & strategy	4.6	4.5	4.3	3.8
2. Roles & responsibilities	4.5	4.2	4.5	3.5
3. Board composition	4.3	4.1	4.2	3.6
4. Board effectiveness	4.6	4.2	4.4	3.8
5. Risk management	4.4	4.1	3.3	3.7
6. CPS Performance	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.3
7. Accountability, & transparency	4.6	4.6	4.3	3.9
8. Supporting practices	4.5	4.2	3.8	3.5
9. Conduct & compliance	4.7	4.5	4.0	4.3
10. Culture	4.4	3.9	3.6	3.4

## 2023 CPS GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

POSITION	HOLDER	TERM ENDS	QUALIFICATIONS	BIOGRAPHY	MEETINGS (ELIGIBLE)
<b>President</b>	Jill Farrelly Member	2024 AGM	BA (Psychology) AICD Member	Jill is a retired State, Territory and Commonwealth (PM&C and DSS) Senior Executive with 30 years' experience in strategy formulation, budget management, policy development and service delivery.	8/8
<b>Deputy President</b>	Janet DeBoos Life Member	2024 AGM	Bachelor of Science Bachelor of Arts Diploma of Education	An eminent international potter in her own right, Janet is an Honorary Senior Lecturer and past Emeritus Fellow at the ANU. She was Head of Ceramics at ANU for over 15 years, was a Council Member of the International Academy of Ceramics and has been a member of the Academy since 2003.	8/8
<b>Secretary</b>	Kerry Byers Member	2024 AGM	BA (Arts/Psychology) Grad Dip Community Counselling	Kerry is now retired after an extensive public sector career in Human Resources leading injury prevention and rehabilitation management.	8/8
<b>Treasurer</b>	James Reading Independent	2025 AGM	Chartered Accountant Bachelor of Commerce Bachelor of Economics	James has 12 years' experience in a wide variety of finance roles, including senior positions in international finance in the UK.	3/3
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Nicole James Member	2024 AGM	Bachelor of Science Master of Business Administration	Nicole is an environmental scientist with over 20 years' experience in environmental planning, management and policy development. This spans several states and both public and private sectors. Nicole co-owns and manages several businesses.	8/8
<b>Ordinary Member (Legal)</b>	Natalie Truong Independent	2025 AGM	Bachelor of Laws, High Court Register of Practitioners, Admitted to Practice NSW Supreme Court, Unrestricted ACT Practicing Certificate AICD Graduate	Natalie has 20 years' experience as a lawyer, including as a General Counsel, Senior Legal Counsel and Company Secretary. She served on the Board of Music for Canberra from 2017-2019, including as Vice Chair and Secretary.	4/4
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Victoria Richardson Member	2025 AGM	Diploma (Visual Arts) Diploma (Screen & Media)	Victoria is a Service Designer within the Australian Public Service. she blends her background in game design and visual art to better understand user experiences.	2/2
<b>Board Intern</b>	Adeline Jeffery Member	The Board Intern is an observer	Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship Bachelor of Visual Arts	<i>The Intern position was created to provide an opportunity for recent ANU School of Art and Design graduates to experience how the Board's work at first hand. It is a pathway for young ceramic artists who aspire to work in arts administration.</i>	7/7
<b>Ordinary Member (Legal)</b>	Michael Flynn Independent	2023 AGM	Bachelor of Laws	Michael is an experienced public and private sector ACT legal practitioner, now retired. He brings to CPS	3/3



				his legal skills and experience on other Not For Profit Boards.	
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Christine Pearson Member	Life Resignation	BA Visual Arts (Ceramics, Art History)	Christine is a potter who has been an active member of CPS since its inception and is a former President. She is a businesswoman involved principally in international travel.	<b>3/3</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Wil Trewartha Independent	Resignation	Chartered Accountant Bachelor of Commerce Master of Applied Finance (in progress)	Wil is an accountant with eight years of professional experience and excellent accounting skills. He would like to contribute to the ACT community where he grew up.	<b>5/5</b>

			1. Clause 4.18 of the CPS Constitution sets out CPS policies and procedures.
<b>Conflicts of Interest (COI)</b>	<b>Policies</b>		2. The President establishes whether there are any conflicts of interest at the start of each Board meeting. This is a standing item on the agenda and the result is recorded in the minutes.
	<b>3rd Party Transactions</b>		There were no 3rd party (or related party) transactions in 2023 (compared to nil in 2022, 2021 and 2020).
	<b>COI Events</b>		There were no conflicts of interest raised in 2023 (compared to one in 2022 and nil in both 2021 and 2020).

<b>CPS Constitution</b>	<b>Changes</b>	There were no changes to the CPS Constitution in 2023. The CPS Constitution was modernised with effect from 19 March 2017. There have been no changes since then.
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	2023	2022
<b>Number of Submissions</b>		
<b>Strategic Submissions</b>	19	23
<b>Operational Submissions</b>	20	15

## The Board in 2023

The Board met 8 times in 2023 (the Constitution requires four meetings) and the AGM was held on 4 May 2023.

The Board and AGM considered 20 operational reports (15 in 2022) and 19 strategic submissions (23 in 2022) during the year.

The dates of Board meetings during 2023 and attendance of eligible Board members is provided above.

