



Five Year Business Plan

2024-2028

Supported by



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.

Executive Summary

Canberra Potters was formed in 1975 as a support base for recently graduated potters and to provide development opportunities to the local community. It has since grown to be the region's largest provider of independent pottery experiences. We have already started planning for our 50th anniversary in 2025.

We enter 2023 excited to rise to the three challenges set out in the Minister's Statement of Ambition to create, develop and promote arts culture in the ACT.

We are an ACT-funded Arts Centre responsible for creating, developing and promoting the arts through ceramics. We aim to be an exemplary steward of the Watson Arts Centre, which is a purpose-built facility that includes workshops, studios, residences, a kiln shed, gallery and shop.

Our six goals support the Minister's Statement of Ambition for the arts in the ACT:

1. Be a leading ceramic arts hub
2. Be a leading ceramics-focused exhibition space
3. Be a vibrant, inclusive community venue
4. Be a recognisable presence in the ACT and Australian arts community
5. Be an exemplary steward of the Watson Arts Centre facility
6. Be a sustainable arts organisation characterised by best practice governance



Our pursuit of excellence is founded on an excellent artistic program: we will deliver diverse, inclusive and accessible programs that create a range of visual and creative experiences for members, artists, and the wider community. Artistic and creative direction is provided through our people and our professional ceramicists. We are committed to inclusive and accessible programs.

The Canberra Potters Board, CEO and staff aim to achieve best practice governance standards for Not-for-Profits as set out by the Australian Institute of Company Directors, which includes a clear focus on financial sustainability.

Goal 1: Be a leading ceramic arts hub

Canberra Potters aims to deliver ceramics programs that are both innovative and exciting. We use our skills, knowledge, experience and facilities to do so.

GOAL 1		Be a leading ceramic arts hub				
By		Delivering dynamic, innovative and inspiring ceramics programs				
Program	Measure	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Development Pathways for Ceramic Artists	Adult contact hours	28,200	28,200	28,200	28,200	28,200
	Children contact hours	4,425	4,425	4,425	4,425	4,425
	Holiday contact hours	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850
Masterclasses & Workshops	Contact hours	3,900	3,900	3,900	3,900	3,900
Artists in Residence	Number of Residencies	5	5	5	5	5
Studio tenancies	Occupancy rate (%)	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
Strategy	Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
COVID-19 Preparedness	Effective Lockdown and opening plans	Implement as necessary	Implement as necessary	Implement as necessary	Implement as necessary	Implement as necessary

Development Pathways for Ceramic Artists

Canberra Potters offers a tiered development program to a wide range of artists. This program offers skills development for children and adults catering to beginners through to professional ceramicists.

We have a dedicated team of instructors, workshop technicians, assistants, administrators and managers. Our network of local, national and international ceramics practitioners means that we can meet the needs of special interest groups.

Masterclasses

Canberra Potters invites leading national and international ceramicists to host our Masterclasses, Summer and Winter Intensives. These are a series of professional development opportunities for both emerging and established artists in the region.

They are designed for the accomplished ceramicist, and provide opportunities to explore different techniques and first-hand insights into how each "Master" works.

Workshops

Our workshops expose artists to new techniques, emerging technologies and professional practice. They cover a wide range of practice that appeals to all levels of ability. Workshops are hands-on and aim to create an environment of inspired creative development.

Artists in Residence (AIR)

Canberra Potters reputation as a destination for a residency is growing. It directly supports the ACT's AIR Policy.

Residencies of up to two months are offered through the ANU Emerging Artist Support Scheme to support students' transition to professional practice.

Longer residencies of up to three months are available for established national and international ceramicists. Since its inception in 2012 the program has welcomed artists from America, Canada, India, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and across Australia.

Studio Tenancies

Canberra Potters has seven purpose-built studios that support established and emerging artists.

Studios are offered for a year with an option to renew for a further year. A mix of artists working in a stimulating environment encourages personal growth, interaction with the ceramics community and a pathway to establish themselves as professional potters.

Applications are assessed on criteria such as artistic merit, commitment to arts practice and demonstrated need for a studio.

Goal 2: Be a leading ceramics-focussed exhibition space

Canberra Potters is committed to providing an arts space for a wide range of exhibitions, including for national and international artists. We are committed to establishing our gallery as the leading gallery to exhibit ceramic art in the region, particularly for emerging and mid-career artists.

Canberra Potters welcomes opportunities to collaborate with other artists or organisations to mount exhibitions that include complementary art forms.

GOAL 2		Be a leading ceramics-focussed exhibition space				
By		Delivering dynamic, innovative and inspiring exhibition programs				
Program	Measure	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Ceramic-centric exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	6	6	6	6	6
National and international artist exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	2	2	2	2	2
Collaborative multidisciplinary exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	2	2	2	2	2
CPS curated Exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	2	2	2	2	2
All programs	Number of visitors	7,500	8,000	8,500	9,000	9,500

Goal 3: Be a vibrant, inclusive community venue

Canberra Potters believes that the arts are an important part of all communities.

We provide a place for people who are passionate about ceramics to develop and discuss their practice. We also think that our passion can inspire the potters of tomorrow.

With that end in mind, our programs encourage experimentation and provide anyone willing to have a go with the skills to take their practice as far as they would like it to go.

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	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Community events	Number of events	6	6	6	6	6
	Number of participants	4,250	4,500	4,750	5,000	5,250
Inclusion: Special group events	Contact Hours	3,025	3,025	3,025	3,025	3,025
Inclusion: Children, youth and seniors	Contact Hours	13,325	13,325	13,325	13,325	13,325
Member Events	Number of events	80	80	80	80	80
	Number of participants	800	800	800	800	800
Centre visits	Number of visitors	29,235	29,985	30,735	31,485	31,485
Membership	Number of members	650	665	675	690	705
Strategies	Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
A graduate career program	Jointly with Tertiary institutions in the region	Feasibility study				

Goal 4: Be a recognisable presence in the ACT and Australian arts community

Canberra Potters believes that there is a fine line between artistic integrity and mass appeal. We also believe that a presence is more than a logo – it's being known for what you actually do.

Canberra Potters is about providing opportunities for makers – from the novice to the master – to grow their practice. We aim to create opportunities to bring makers, audiences and communities together.

GOAL 4		Be a recognisable presence in the ACT and Australian arts community				
By		Providing exciting experiences for makers and audiences, as well as bringing makers and audiences together				
Strategies	Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Community Engagement	Email Subs	2200	2420	2660	2930	2930
	Social Media	8790	9665	10630	11695	11695
	Newsletters	24	24	24	24	24
Media Engagement	Articles	5	5	5	5	5
	Media Release	12	12	12	12	12
A collaborative development program	Develop opportunities	Continue to Implement				
A Canberra Potters line of products	CPS themed products	Continue to Implement				
After dark events, night markets, etc	A series of regular events	FIRE UP!	FIRE UP!	FIRE UP!	FIRE UP!	FIRE UP!
Canberra Potters collections, catalogue	Consolidate collections	Continue to Implement				
Canberra Potters 50th Anniversary	Develop a series of events	Planning	Implement			
Redevelop CPS Website	Improve user experience, functionality	Implement				



Our strategy is to bring artists, makers, audiences and communities together by creating value and opportunities that meet the different needs of these groups

Goal 5: Be an exemplary steward of the Watson Arts Centre facility

Canberra Potters originally operated out of the ACT-owned Watson Arts Centre as a co-tenant.

CPS has operated and managed the Watson Arts Centre as the sole tenant on behalf of the ACT since 2001 and has developed the Watson Arts Centre into an essential part of the Territory's arts ecology.

As we approach our 50 year anniversary, Canberra Potters significance in the wider national and international ceramics community is undisputed.

We take our role as the custodian and steward of the Weston Arts Centre seriously.

GOAL 5		Be an exemplary steward of the Watson Arts Centre facility				
By		Ensuring it is efficient, effective, safe and accessible				
Strategies	Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Efficient, effective and safe	Maintenance under Licence	>98%	>98%	>98%	>98%	>98%
	Repairs & Replacement under Licence	>95%	>95%	>95%	>95%	>95%
Complaints	Formal complaints from Licensor	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Breach of Licence	Licence Clauses 17, 19	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
New Kiln Shed Build	In consultation with artsACT	Implement as agreed	Implement as agreed			

Goal 6: Be a sustainable arts organisation characterised by best practice governance

Canberra Potters believes that Not-for-Profit organisations must be based on sustainable finances, robust Board processes and a highly motivated CEO and staff.

GOAL 6		Be a sustainable arts organisation characterised by best practice governance				
By		Adopting best practice Board, financial and people practices				
Strategies	Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Best Practice Governance	Annual review against AICD Principles	November/ December	November/ December	November/ December	November/ December	November/ December
	Implement review priorities	Succession Planning				
Sustainable Finances	Annual Surplus	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
	Own-source Revenue	>75% of Revenues	>75% of Revenues	>75% of Revenues	>75% of Revenues	>75% of Revenues
	Capital Expenditure Program	Implement				
	Build a Prudential Reserve of 30% of annual expenses	27%	30%	30%	30%	30%
	Maintain a Employee Entitlements Reserve	Per 2023 Balance Sheet	Per 2024 Balance Sheet	Per 2025 Balance Sheet	Per 2026 Balance Sheet	Per 2027 Balance Sheet
Business and Governance Structures	HR policies	Review				
	Dust Safety	Implement				

Sustainable Finances

Canberra Potters' annual surplus target and cash reserves are designed to:

- maintain a long term capital expenditure program to ensure that cash is available to repair, replace or upgrade CPS equipment when it is required;
- build a Prudential Reserve to ensure that CPS can better manage financial shocks such as COVID-19. It will be based on being able to cover the expenses of around 2-3 months of normal operations with no revenue. The fund will be built over time to 30% of annual expenses by 2025;
- maintain working capital sufficient to pay staff, buy inventory, meet current liabilities, and other day to day operating expenses;
- maintain and improve equipment for the community and members;
- provide a reserve for CPS employees' accrued leave entitlements.

CPS Own-Source Revenue

CPS has built a diverse own-source revenue base which includes the development and events programs, kiln hire, membership revenue and retail sales. These are in addition to ACT Government's Grant.

CPS Board policy is to generate own-source revenue of at least 75% per year.

Robust Board Processes

Canberra Potters has a strong Board that seeks to promote diversity, competence, compliance and accountability.

However the Board is not complacent and is committed to pursue best practice. To that end we have benchmarked Board practices annually since 2020 against the Australian Institute of Company Directors governance principles for Not-for-Profit organisations. We will implement changes agreed by the Board through that process and review our performance annually.

Our People

Canberra Potters recognises that the quality of its programs depends on the commitment, skills and artistic contribution of our people: our CEO, artists and arts workers.

We will make sure that Canberra Potters remains an attractive place to work for people who are passionate about pottery, ceramics and the arts.