

CANBERRA POTTERS' SOCIETY INCORPORATED

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Supported by

ACT Government

Acknowledgement of Country

Canberra Potters acknowledges the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which we work, create and come together.

We extend our respect to ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging and recognise the ongoing cultural and spiritual connection of First Nations peoples to Country and that cultural practice and care for Country continues.

Acknowledgement of Funding

Canberra Potters Society Inc. acknowledges with thanks funding received from the ACT Government in 2025 under its Arts Organisation Investment Program for ACT arts organisations that manage an ACT Government arts centre. We manage the Watson Arts Centre, an ACT Government owned facility, under a licence to occupy the centre.

50 Canberra Potters 1975-2025

Cover Image: Hiroe Swen AM, 2025 Courtesy of the artist



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2
President and Chair	5
CEO and Artistic Director	6
About us	8
Our numbers	9
Our people	10
Operational Team	10
Staff and position changes 2025	10
Education Team	12
Artistic and Public Programs	13
Exhibition Highlights	13
Partnerships and Collaborations	16
Artists-in-Residence	17
Public Programs and Events	18
Canberra Potters Collection	18
Retail initiatives	19
Studio artists	20



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Contents

Education Program	21
Membership and Community	25
Stewardship	26
Strategic Partnerships	28
Outlook 2026	30
Our Strategic Plan 2026-2030	30
Mission	31
Vision	31
Our values	32
Strategic Goals	33
Financial Report	34
Governance	38
Progress on KPIs	43
Board Profiles	51
Board member terms of appointment	52
Board skills matrix	53
Board governance survey	54
Staff Profiles	56



Photograph: Tim Ngo

President and Chair

In 2025 we celebrated our 50th anniversary year and moved Canberra Potters forward in new and important ways. Sue Cant was our Acting CEO for the first half of 2025; she maintained our programs and commenced complex project work on our new website and the new Kiln Shed and Glaze Room project. The Board thanks her sincerely for her immense efforts. Sue was supported during this transition by Abbey Jamieson, our experienced Shop Manager and Class Assistant. Both Sue and Abbey remain valued members of our teaching team.

We welcomed our new CEO and Artistic Director, Jessi England, in July and recruited a talented new administrative and artistic team, including Fiona Veikkanen (Education Director), Dr. Liisa Naar (Gallery Manager), Leah Jackson (Acting Shop Manager) and Gemma Brown (Workshop and Facilities Coordinator). They join our immensely talented teachers, both new and continuing. With new staff and new skills came the opportunity for change. Our new website gives Canberra Potters and the Watson Arts Centre a new look and improved functionality. It is a major - and ongoing – investment for our members and across all our programs. Our new Kiln Shed and Glaze Room changed the way we use our technical spaces, as we added new electric, soda and raku kilns. We also worked with the artsACT and Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR) teams to develop architectural plans for renovating our office, retail and gallery spaces. With the retirement of our 50th anniversary logo, there will be an opportunity for a brand refresh in 2026.

We began the artistic year with a landmark retrospective exhibition, Endless Horizons by Hiroe Swen AM and celebrated the elevation of two Canberra Potters members and distinguished teachers, Cathy Franzi and Moraig McKenna, to the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC). Our 50th anniversary exhibition, Connecting Through Clay highlighted work by Honorary Life Members and alumni of our Artist-In-Residence program. The Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries, Michael Pettersson MLA, opened our new facilities and our 2025 Members' Exhibition in November 2025. This year we strengthened our focus on our artistic program quality, hosting two prominent international Artists-in-Residence: Aaron Scythe (New Zealand/Aotearoa) and Masaru Nishikawa (Japan).

Importantly, we worked together as a community to develop a new Strategic Plan (2026-2032) and a multi-year funding proposal to the ACT Government. The Board thanks the ACT Government for the funding that made all of these activities possible. We acknowledge the enormous efforts of our CEO and Artistic Director, our skilled teachers, dedicated staff and enthusiastic members and volunteers as we planned an ambitious future. I thank our Board members for extraordinary effort during this transitional year.

Veronica L. Taylor



Cathy Franzi, After the Fires, 2025 | Photograph: Tim Ngo

CEO and Artistic Director

2025 was a momentous year for Canberra Potters, celebrating an incredible 50 years as a membership-based organisation grounded in clay, community, creativity and learning. It was also a year of significant change, laying foundations for the next chapter in our history.

The opportunity to join such a vibrant, highly regarded, long-established and much-loved arts organisation has been exciting. To lead Canberra Potters at this time is a real privilege, after more than 25 years in leadership and management roles across the arts, cultural and creative industries. Canberra Potters is not only the ACT's pre-eminent ceramics organisation; it is also unique in Australia for its comprehensive range of ceramics programs and activities that serve the public and ceramic artists and makers at all levels of practice. Canberra Potters is also rare on the international stage. Interstate and international visitors and artists are struck by our facilities, the beauty of our location and the community of support that exists here.

I thank the Canberra Potters' Society Board, and particularly Professor Veronica Taylor, Nicole James and Moraig McKenna, for their support since I began in the role. I also extend sincere thanks to long-term Education Manager—and more recently Acting CEO—Sue Cant, who continues to be generous with her handover and organisational knowledge. Sue finished her substantive role as Education Manager in August 2025, but continues to bring her knowledge, creativity and love of clay to the organisation through class and workshop teaching.

The second half of the year brought significant operational staffing changes. We said goodbye to a number of long-serving team members and welcomed new staff into key roles. These departures and recruitments gave us an opportunity to reassess the organisation's operational and staffing needs. We farewelled long-time Finance Officer Kathy Vivian and Bookkeeper Jessica Lee, taking the opportunity to move these services to an offsite, contracted model and increase the digitisation of accounts and payroll processes. In the second half of the year, we began an extensive review of internal operations and processes, analysing operating expenses and income to support long-term sustainability and identify efficiencies.

Staffing changes across 2025 affected the operational team's capacity, particularly for events and public programs. As a result, we chose to pause *Fired Up* and deliver fewer artist talks and *Clay Conversations*. Changes in artists' availability also resulted in fewer residencies and amendments to the exhibition schedule.



Masaru Nishikawa, Patterned Horse, 2025 | Photograph [illegible]

Despite these challenges, in 2025 Canberra Potters welcomed a record number of visitors, offering outstanding opportunities to engage with art, craft and ceramics through our artistic and education programs, events and retail activities. In total, 12,248 people visited the gallery, shop and events, and 1,844 children and adults participated in term-based classes, courses, workshops and masterclasses —14,092 people overall.

Our artistic program of exhibitions, residencies and artist talks showcased the outstanding skills of our members, the strength of our residency program in attracting highly regarded international artists, and our commitment to collaboration through partnerships with local and national arts organisations. Our education program delivered 153 ceramic learning opportunities and 35,758 contact hours for 1,844 students (a 7% increase from 2025).

A partnership with the National Gallery of Australia delivered collaborative programs in association with the major exhibition *Ann Dangar*, as part of the National Gallery's 'Know My Name' initiative celebrating women artists.

We worked with strategic partner Strathnairn Arts to allow Masterclass participants to move between Canberra Potters and Strathnairn Arts as they experienced wood firing with our artist-in-residence Aaron Scythe (New Zealand/Aotearoa). The *SIXTY: The Journal of Australian Ceramics 60th Anniversary 1962–2022* exhibition, delivered in partnership with the Australian Design Centre (ADC) and the Australian Ceramics Association, brought the work of significant Australian ceramic artists to ACT region audiences as part of ADC's national touring exhibition and attracted interstate visitors. We thank guest curator Maricelle Olivier for installing this and our other exhibitions in the first part of 2025.

Canberra Potters' partnership with the ACT Government, through ArtsACT and Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR), and through our stewardship of the Watson Arts Centre, remains strong. In 2025 the redevelopment of the Kiln Shed and Glaze Room was completed as a major infrastructure improvement project.

The construction period significantly affected our operations, reducing firing capacity, kiln hire and weigh-and-pay services. We temporarily relocated our Glaze Room to the Members' Workshop, which limited Member Workshop access for some weeks. This investment, however, ensures Canberra Potters and the Watson Arts Centre site continue to grow as an outstanding local and national hub for learning and development in ceramic art, and that our facilities meet contemporary safety standards. Our thanks to Technical Officer Melissa Gabelle, who coordinates the firing of student work, the weigh-and-pay service and members' kiln access, for helping us navigate kiln use as a critical component of Canberra Potters' operations throughout the build.

The Kiln Shed project was officially launched on Thursday 6 November, in conjunction with the opening of the annual Canberra Potters Members' Exhibition by Michael Pettersson MLA, Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries, with senior representatives from ArtsACT and iCBR also in attendance.

Our new website was also delivered in 2025. Approved by the Board for development in 2024, the website went live on 12 June 2025. Content development, data transfer from the previous site, the addition of new functionality and refinements to the user experience will continue into 2026. The new website has presented challenges on multiple fronts, particularly for member access and data transfer. We thank our members for their patience during this period and acknowledge Board Member Nicole James for supporting the final stages of the build, and Acting Administration Officer Taryn Powick for her work resolving membership access issues.

The drafting of the new Strategic Plan 2026–2032, and the associated research and consultation, provided rich opportunities for reflection, inspiration and future thinking. We consulted with members, staff, and local and national art and craft sector representatives. The process celebrated the organisation's strengths and achievements while shaping priorities for the next chapter. We submitted our application for ArtsACT Arts Organisation Investment grant funding for 2028–2032, with outcomes to be announced in July 2026.

The year ended with the popular Canberra Potters Christmas Fair achieving record sales.

Jessi England

About us

Canberra Potters' Society Inc (Canberra Potters) is the ACT's leading ceramic arts organisation. We provide internationally recognised ceramics education, a full artistic program including artistic residencies and exhibitions, and an engaging program of community arts events.

As a not-for profit membership-based association we are supported by artsACT through grant funding from the ACT government, however we finance 80% of our activities through our own income streams. We are the sole tenant of Watson Arts Centre, stewarding this public facility on behalf of the ACT government.

In 2025 Canberra Potters celebrated 50 years as a membership-based organisation that has shaped ceramics in the ACT and beyond. Formed by thirteen potters who were recent graduates of the Canberra School of Art, we began as a support base for emerging professional potters and a place to offer pottery classes to the community.

From humble beginnings renting space from the Crafts Council of the ACT, we have grown into a 700+ membership organisation that fully utilises the Watson Arts Centre, a purpose-built facility that is home to an extraordinary range of ceramic programs and activities.

Key milestones in our history

1975 Canberra Potters' Society Incorporated established
2001 Canberra Potters takes over management of Watson Arts Centre
2008 A new 150m^2 kiln shed with upgraded power supply opens
2011 Five new studios and artist-in-residence accommodation completed
2014 ACT 'Key Arts Organisation' status achieved, and full-time CEO appointed
2025 50-year anniversary and new Kiln shed and Glaze Room open



Photograph: Veronica Taylor

Our numbers

Every year, Canberra Potters:

- Welcomes **10,000+ people** through our gallery and retail spaces
- Delivers learning programs to **2,000+ students**
- Supports **700+ members**
- Provides opportunities for **150+ artists and makers** to exhibit, develop professionally and generate income
- Generates **$80,000+** in direct income for artists and makers
- Delivers **38,000+ contact hours** across adult, children and professional development programs
- Hosts up to **5 artists-in-residence**
- Presents **6-8 exhibitions** showcasing ceramic arts and practice



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Our people

Operational team

Canberra Potters operational team is responsible for the business management, administration, operations and artistic and education program delivery of Canberra Potters in line with the current Business Plan. They report to the CEO and Artistic Director, who reports to the Board, and their work is governed by the Canberra Potters' Society Inc. Constitution, our Canberra Potters policies and by ACT Government funding and licensing agreements.

The CEO is the only full-time position. Following a successful first 6 months, Jessi England was confirmed as CEO and also designated with the new role of Artistic Director. All other staff, administrative, technical and teaching, are employed on a permanent part-time and casual basis. The operational team at the end of 2025 was employed 170 hours per week at 4.47 FTE. This was an increase of 0.72FTE from 3.75 FTE in 2024. Our operational team at the end of 2025 was:

CEO & Artistic Director	Jessi England
Education Director	Fiona Veikkanen
Gallery Manager	Dr Liisa Naar
Shop Manager (Acting)	Leah Jackson
Workshop and Facilities Coordinator	Gemma Brown
Technical Officer	Melissa Gabelle
Administration Officer	Taryn Powick
Workshop & Technical Assistant	Paul Dumetz
Bookkeeping Services	Linda Daniels

Casual staffing for workshop and technical assisting, workshop cleaning and weekend retail staffing accounted for an additional 24.5 hours per week (0.61 FTE). Our operational team casual staff members in 2025 included:

Workshop & Technical Assistants	Sarah Brown and Arlo Smith
Shop Assistants	Alice Bowers and Clover Linden

Volunteers
We also acknowledge with thanks the work performed by all of our volunteers throughout the year. In our anniversary year, and for delivering a very significant project, we recognize:

Canberra Potters Collection Volunteers
Amanda Andlee Poland and Barb Cressy

Staff and position changes in 2025

The Class Assistant role was disestablished in October 2025, following the conclusion of Abbey Jamieson' s time in the role. The Finance Officer and Bookkeeper roles were disestablished in August 2025, following Kathy Vivian's retirement and part-time staff members Jessica Lee's departure to take up a full-time role elsewhere.

The Board approved the creation of three new roles in 2025: the Workshop and Facilities Coordinator (0.39 FTE); a Marketing & Communications Manager (0.2 FTE)(to commence in 2026); and an Administration Officer (0.26 4 FTE) (incorporating some of the previous Class Assistant role duties).

The Workshop and Facilities Coordinator and Administration Office commenced in October 2025. Recruitment in 2026 will include the Marketing & Communications Manager, and permanent appointments to the Shop (renamed Retail) Manager and Administration Office roles.

Those changes are shown in detail on the following table.

Role/Changes to Role 2025	Staff member Dec 2025	2025 transitions	FTE Dec 2025
CEO and Artistic Director (previously CEO)	**Jessi England (Jul 2025 -)**	Sue Cant Acting CEO Jan-Jun 2025	1.0
Education Director (previously Education Program Manager)	**Fiona Veikkanen (Jul 2025 -)**	Sue Cant Apr 2028-Nov 2025	0.66
Class Assistant (disestablished Sep 2025)	n/a	Abbey Jamieson Oct 2020-Sep 2025	n/a
Gallery Manager	**Dr Liisa Naar (from Sep 2025)**	Substantive position Vacant; Guest Curator Maricelle Olivier Jan-Sep 2025	0.66
Shop Manager	**Leah Jackson (Acting) (Sep 2025 -)**	Abbey Jamieson Oct 2020 – Sep 2025	0.39
Workshop and Facilities Coordinator (new in 2025)	**Gemma Smith (Oct 2025 -)**	Taryn Powick (Acting) to Oct 2025	0.39
Technical Officer	**Melissa Gabelle**	Melissa Gabelle Oct 2023 –	0.47
Workshop and Technical Assistant	**Paul Demetz (Feb 2012 – present)**	Paul Demetz	0.24
Administrative Officer (new in 2025)	**Taryn Powick (Acting) Oct 2025 -**	n/a	0.26
Finance Officer (disestablished Aug 2025)	n/a	Kathy Vivian Jun 2019 -Aug 2025	n/a
Bookkeeper (to Aug 2025) **Bookkeeping Services Aug 2025 -**	**Linda Daniels Aug 2025 -**	Jessica Lee May 2023 - Jul 2025	n/a (Contractor)
Marketing and Communications Manager (new in 2026)	n/a	n/a	0.2

Education Team

Canberra Potters' Education team is led by Education Director Fiona Veikkenen. We are immensely proud of our more than 25 teachers and learning assistants, who are all talented and skilled artists, both professional and emerging. In 2025, long-time teacher and member Dr Cathy Franzi was elected to the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) – a singular mark of international esteem.

Our teachers and teaching assistants are employed on a contract basis to deliver year-round term-based classes, short courses, workshops, masterclasses and school-holiday programs. The quality and experience of our teaching team is a core organisational asset and there were no substantive changes to teaching staff in 2025.

Teachers

Elena Alvarado
Georgie Bryant
Joey Burns
Sue Cant
Alex de Vos
Helen Eatough
Cathy Franzi
Chris Harford
Maryke Henderson
Abbey Jamieson
Erin Kocaj
Jackie Lallemand
Katrina Leske
Maricelle Olivier
Anna O'Neale
Fran Romano
Mark Saunders
Jo Townsend

Learning Assistants

Emily Burgess-Orton
Paul Dumetz
Clover Linden
Tess Neill
Ayumi Robinson
Arlo Smith



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Artistic and Public Programs

Canberra Potters' Artistic and Public Programs encompass an interconnected program of exhibitions and public programs, programming partnerships, visiting artists-in-residence, resident studio artists, the representation of artists through the Canberra Potters Shop and markets, and events that showcase Canberra Potters and its community to the public.

At the heart of these programs sit the artists and makers whose creativity, knowledge, skill and commitment to practice form the foundation of our organisational purpose. Our program and facilities cultivate opportunities for professional development, experimentation, income generation and career sustainability for internationally regarded artists and craftspeople, through to emerging practitioners. Through the presentation of artists' work and through a range of audience engagement activities, Canberra Potters services its members, students and the broader public. Each year we continue to extend our local, national and international reach and impact as a successful, funded ACT arts centre and leading national ceramics organisation.

Exhibition Highlights

Our 2025 gallery program presented an ambitious slate of exhibitions that profiled internationally significant artists, celebrated the depth of artistic excellence within our membership, and reflected on the organisation's remarkable history. Together these exhibitions presented to audiences the breadth and contemporary relevance of ceramic arts practice to thousands of visitors to our gallery in 2025.

Endless Horizons: The Art of Hiroe Swen
9 January – 2 February 2025

The year opened with a profoundly significant exhibition celebrating five decades of artistic excellence by Hiroe Swen AM, one of Australia's most renowned ceramic artists. Hiroe is a Life Member of Canberra Potters and a teacher and mentor to many in our community. Born in Kyoto and trained in Japan, Hiroe has shaped generations of students in Canberra while continuing to refine her own distinctive practice, with contributions recognised at the highest levels by both the Australian and Japanese governments. *Endless Horizons* was Hiroe's final exhibition before her return to Japan and was accompanied by an artist talk that drew a deeply engaged audience of members, students and the wider community.



Robyn Campbell, First Light #2, 2025 | Photograph: Tim Ngo

Basara No Hono: Aaron Scythe Pop-Up Exhibition
19 – 22 June 2025

In June, Canberra Potters hosted a pop-up exhibition marking the conclusion of internationally acclaimed Aotearoa/New Zealand artist Aaron Scythe's three-month residency. With a career spanning more than three decades — including over ten years living and working in Japan — Aaron has developed a distinctive style fusing Japanese and Western traditions through striking painted surfaces, vibrant slips and innovative firing techniques. The exhibition presented a remarkable body of work created during his residency, including pieces fresh from a wood firing at Strathnairn Arts undertaken with several of his Canberra Potters students.

Connecting Through Clay: 50 Years of Canberra Potters
28 August – 21 September 2025

A flagship exhibition of the year, Connecting Through Clay celebrated the 50th anniversary of Canberra Potters as a vital part of the ACT's creative community since 1975. The exhibition featured 14 Honorary Life Members alongside 40 Australian and international artists drawn from the Canberra Potters Collection, paying tribute to the dedicated individuals — some involved since the organisation's founding — who have shaped its journey. Central to the exhibition's narrative was the Artist-in-Residence Program, which has been instrumental in cultivating artistic exchange, enriching the collection, and building Canberra Potters' national and international reputation.

Masaru Nishikawa: The Breath of Animals 動物の呼吸
29 September – 2 November 2025

Kyoto-based Masaru Nishikawa, one of Japan's most renowned and exhibited ceramicists, presented his first solo exhibition in Australia. Known for imaginative animal forms created through colour and hand-building techniques, Nishikawa's expressive and often humorous works introduced Australian audiences to the poetic and playful practice for which he is widely collected in Japan. The exhibition combined new works created during his 2025 residency at Canberra Potters with recent works made in Japan, providing a rare opportunity for local audiences to experience this internationally significant practice.



Aaron Scythe [illegible] Hono, 2025 | Photograph: Taryn Powick

Canberra Potters 2025 Members' Exhibition
6 – 30 November 2025

The annual Members' Exhibition remains the largest dedicated ceramic exhibition in Canberra and a defining moment in our gallery calendar. The 2025 edition featured over 140 works by 65 artists drawn from our membership of more than 700, demonstrating current trends in contemporary ceramics and the inexhaustible breadth of practice across clays, making methods, decorating approaches and firing techniques. A suite of prizes was awarded with the support of the Canberra Potters Society Board and our generous sponsors, including Walker Ceramics, Keane Ceramics, Northcote Pottery Supplies, The Australian Ceramics Association, Craft & Design Canberra and The Curatoreum. The major prize --the Doug Alexander Award, which is supported by the Canberra Potters Society, was awarded to artist Malcolm Cooke by guest judge, Vicki Grima AO.

Canberra Potters Student Teacher Exhibition
26 June - 3 August 2025

Canberra Potters' annual Student Teacher Exhibition is a vibrant showcase of work created by our dedicated students and inspiring teaching artists. This much-loved exhibition highlights the diversity of ceramic practice taught and nurtured in our studios — from hand building and wheel throwing to surface design and sculptural exploration. The exhibition also demonstrates that our learning programs support all levels of experience, from first time makers to professional artists expanding their skills and knowledge.

The Bald Archy Prize 2025
7 June - 23 February 2025

Presented in partnership with the Museum of the Riverina, Canberra Potters again hosted the launch of Australia's premier satirical art prize, the Bald Archy Prize. Created in 1994, the prize celebrates portrait painting through humour, satire and caricature. Following its opening at Watson Arts Centre, the exhibition embarks on a year-long tour of regional New South Wales and Victoria, concluding at the Museum of the Riverina. Sitting outside the gallery program's primary focus on ceramics, the hugely popular exhibition draws new local and interstate audiences to Canberra Potters, broadening the reach of the organisation.



Vicki Grima AO and Doug Alexander Award Winner, Malcolm Cooke, 2025| Photograph: Tim Ngo

Programming Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnerships were central to the strength of the 2025 program, extending the reach of the gallery and connecting our audiences to nationally significant institutions and projects.

SIXTY: The Journal of Australian Ceramics 60th Anniversary 1962–2022

Presented in partnership with The Australian Ceramics Association as a special Australian Design Centre on Tour project, SIXTY acknowledged a milestone anniversary for The Journal of Australian Ceramics. Across 176 issues and close to 20,000 pages, the Journal has documented the history and achievements of ceramics in Australia, addressed significant issues of its time, and shaped how ceramics is positioned within Australian art. The artists selected for SIXTY represent contemporary peers and those who came before them, all with strong and enduring connections to the Journal. The exhibition was complemented by artist talks delivered by Patsy Hely and Greg Daly, providing local audiences with insight into the practices of two influential Australian ceramicists.

National Gallery of Australia

In February 2025, the National Gallery of Australia partnered with Canberra Potters to deliver a highly successful two-day short course inspired by the work of Australian ceramic artist Anne Dangar and in conjunction with a major exhibition of her work presented at the National Gallery of Australia from 7 December 2024 – 27 April 2025. Presented across both the National Gallery and Canberra Potters workshops, the program combined curatorial expertise with hands-on ceramic practice, offering participants a rich learning experience. Each workshop was led by Maricelle Olivier and Joey Burns, both reachers at Canberra Potters. The partnership with a national institution brought new audiences to Canberra Potters and increased awareness of the organisation, while enabling the National Gallery of Australia to co-deliver a participatory public program directly engaged with ceramic making.

Strathnairn Arts

Our partnership with Strathnairn Arts in 2025 proved invaluable, providing access to wood-firing facilities and enabling programming that would not otherwise be possible within our own footprint and facilities. The collaboration was central to the success of Aaron Scythe's residency, with a partnered wood-firing masterclass delivered at Strathnairn that allowed participants to work alongside Aaron and produce pieces using traditional wood-firing techniques. The resulting works featured prominently in the Basara No Hono pop-up exhibition. The partnership reflects the strength of cross-organisational collaboration within the ACT visual arts sector and the shared commitment of both organisations to expanding professional development opportunities for ceramic artists in the region.

Our continuing partnership with the Museum of the Riverina supports the national tour of the Bald Archy Prize, ensuring that work launched at Watson Arts Centre travels to audiences across regional New South Wales and Victoria over the course of the touring year.

Craft + Design Canberra

Annually Canberra Potters partners with Craft + Design Canberra (CDC) as part of the Craft + Design Canberra Open Studios and Organisation weekend. The event in early November sees artists and art organisations across the ACT open their doors to the public giving audiences the chance to engage directly with artists, designers and craftspeople and to experience the vibrancy and proliferation of creativity and skill located in the region. CDC has been a long-term supporting partner of the annual Members Exhibition, sponsoring the Craft + Design Emerging Contemporaries Award with the prize being representation in the CDC annual Emerging Contemporaries Exhibition. In 2025, four Canberra Potters emerging artists were recipients of the award, and their works will be featured in the 2026 opening exhibition at CDC.

Museum of the Riverina

Our continuing partnership with the Museum of the Riverina supports the national tour of the Bald Archy Prize, ensuring that work launched at Watson Arts Centre travels to audiences across regional New South Wales and Victoria over the course of the touring year.

Artists-in-Residence

The Artist-in-Residence Program continued to deliver outcomes that crossed both our artistic and education programs, offering artists the opportunity to live and work in the Canberra Potters community for up to three months. Offering a purpose-built ceramic studio and facilities, onsite accommodation and a stipend towards making costs, the residency continues to build Canberra Potters' national and international reputation as an outstanding ceramic residency opportunity. The public engagement requirements of the exhibition including artist talks, masterclasses and exhibitions, bring the work of two internationally regarded artists directly to Australian audiences and the Canberra Potters community.

Two international residencies anchored the year. Aaron Scythe's three-month residency culminated in the *Basara No Hono* pop-up exhibition and a partnered wood-firing masterclass with Strathnairn Arts. Masaru Nishikawa's three-month residency produced new work for his Australian solo debut and was accompanied by a masterclass that connected participants with one of Japan's most respected contemporary ceramic practices.

Beyond their artistic outputs, both residencies generated meaningful opportunities for skills exchange, mentoring and dialogue between visiting artists, our resident studio artists and the wider membership — reinforcing the residency program's long-standing role in cultivating artistic exchange and contributing to the depth of the Canberra Potters Permanent Collection.



Aaron Scythe at Strathnairn Arts, 2025 | Photograph: Jacky Lo

Public Programs and Events

Artist Talks

Public programs accompanied each major exhibition and provided multiple points of entry for diverse audiences. Artist talks by Hiroe Swen AM, Patsy Hely, Greg Daly and visiting curators, alongside masterclasses delivered by Aaron Scythe and Masaru Nishikawa, brought significant national and international voices into direct conversation with our community.

Open Days

In 2025, the Craft + Design Canberra Open Studios event and the national Australian Ceramics Association (TACA) Open Studio Weekend coincided on 7-8 November. Our Canberra Potters Shop and Gallery were open and Studio Artist Everything Flows opened their studio. Craft + Design and TACA branding and coordinated marketing helped us to bring new audiences to Canberra Potters and Watson Arts Centre for exploration and conversations with makers.

Canberra Potters Collection

The Canberra Potters Collection comprises nearly 300 ceramic works spanning the organisation's 50-year history, from the Canberra Potters Society's beginnings in the early 1970s to the present. Built through visiting artist workshops, residencies, master tutor engagements, acquisitions and donations, the Collection holds nationally significant works by esteemed Australian studio potters and international artists, providing a valuable snapshot of contemporary ceramic practice and an important cultural asset. Volunteer members Amanda Andlee Poland and Barb Cressey have made an invaluable contribution through their weekly commitment to researching and cataloguing the collection through the public portal eHive and improving the collection storage and long-term preservation of the works. We anticipate celebrating and launching the digital collection and introducing a new Collection Policy in 2026.

Donations

We acknowledge with thanks significant donations in 2025 to the Canberra Potters Collection: an anonymous donation of a significant work from the Hiroe Swen retrospective; the gift of a full set of Doug Alexander table ware commissioned and donated by Mr and Mrs xxx and significant gifts from artists-in-residence Masaru Nishikawa (Japan) and Aaron Scythe (New Zealand/Aotearoa).



Doug Alexander, Cupacumbalong: Table setting, 1976. Gift of Graham and Helen West, 2025 | Photograph: Nicole James

Retail Initiatives

The Canberra Potters Shop and markets continued to provide vital representation, sales and visibility for member artists, complementing the gallery program and contributing to artists' income generation and career sustainability.

In 2025 we generated over $80,000 in sales that went directly to artist and maker members through the Shop, Christmas Fair and Members' Exhibition.

Shop

The Canberra Potters Shop featured the work of 32 member artists as well as works by 10 national and international artists-in-residence, providing customers with the opportunity to purchase handmade ceramic works 11 months of the year. Sales of clay, ceramic glazes and tools to students, members and the public continued to be an important – both to make specialist ceramic materials accessible to participants in our Education Programs and as a source of revenue to support our operations.

Markets

In 2025 the annual Christmas Fair featured the work of 18 members artists and was the most successful Christmas Fair to date. A sold-out preview event opened the Christmas Fair, followed by strong attendance across the 10 days of the event. This special December event transforms the gallery into a curated ceramic market with a beautiful array of handmade ceramic products available for Christmas gifts. Our increased focus on social media promotion of the featured artists and the event contributed to its success.



Christmas Market, 2025 | Photograph: Nicole James

Studio Artists

Four onsite purpose-built ceramics studios at Watson Arts Centre enable ACT-based artists to take their practice to the next stage. The studios are leased for a three-to-five-year period and offer a supportive and affordable environment fully equipped for ceramics practice. In 2025, Julie Pennington and Sue Peachey completed their maximum five-year terms as studio artists and they departed in September and October, respectively. Studio artist Maricelle Olivier ended her tenancy early to take parental leave. Jacky Lo (Everything Flows Studio) is in the second year of his tenancy. In addition to his use of the studio throughout the week, Jacky has actively contributed to the Canberra Potters community as a member, an artist and as a kiln packer, adding to the vibrancy and community spirit of our facility.

We opened applications in late 2025 for artists to apply for either single or shared tenancies (maximum two artists per studio). Ahead of the application process, the Board reviewed and approved increased rental rates to align with like offerings in other ACT Government supported studios spaces and to account for increased administrative costs and outgoings.

New tenants were selected through a competitive application process in December 2025. The 2026 Studio Artists will be Annie Parnell, Isabelle Chen and Sarah Brown (shared), and Lia Tajcnar and Leah Jackson (shared); new licences will be executed and registered with artsACT in 2026..



Maricelle Olivier in her Canberra Potters Studio . Image courtesy the artist. | Photograph: Regan Pearse

Education Program

Canberra Potters is unique in the ACT and in Australia, offering students the opportunity to learn in a leading centre of ceramic excellence, where students encounter the full breadth and depth of ceramics as a creative and technical practice, with students continuously exposed to the work of nationally and internationally renowned potters. In 2025, we continued to strengthen the connection between our education, gallery and retail spaces. Encouraging students to engage directly with tools, materials and to look at our exhibitions and handle members' work in our shop creates a learning ecosystem that helps stimulate and grow ceramic practice beyond the classroom.

The Kiln Shed upgrade created some disruption for our classes during the year, but this was an important investment in the long-term safety, efficiency and sustainability of the facility. Teaching staff and students showed considerable patience and adaptability throughout this period. The new Kiln Shed and Glaze Room have already had a positive impact on studio operations. The Glaze Room, which has plumbed sinks, light, space and heating has been particularly well received. In time, it will enable us to expand our glaze course offerings.

The new Canberra Potters website rollout has created ongoing challenges for education staff and students. We are continuing to improve functionality for enrolments and class administration and appreciate the patience and feedback of users during this transition.

A huge thankyou goes to the Canberra Potters Education Team whose energy, flexibility and generosity made 2025 such a strong and successful year. The range and depth of learning opportunities on offer is something to be genuinely proud of across all levels of the program.

The strength of this program comes from shared effort, curiosity and generosity across all levels of participation. We look forward to continuing to develop and refine the Education Program in 2026, and welcome ongoing ideas, feedback and collaboration as it continues to evolve.



Photograph:Tim Ngo

Term Classes

The backbone of the education program at Canberra Potters is our term-based classes, running seven days a week and led by an extraordinary range of teachers and class assistants. These classes span introductory to advanced levels, allowing children, teens and adults to build skills in wheel throwing, hand building, and expressive sculpture. They offer structured technical learning while also fostering creativity, experimentation, and a strong community of makers. Across the year, these classes continue to be the core space where skills are built, ideas are developed, and studio culture is strengthened.

Term-based classes rare our largest area of activity (over 85% of the courses we offer) and the primary source of education income. Running continuously across the year, these classes provide stability within the program while supporting a wide range of learning experiences. This consistent offering allows for both structured skill development and long-term engagement, with many students returning term after term to build on their practice.

Short Courses

The short course program continues to play an important role within the broader education offering, providing opportunities for focused skill development beyond the term-based structure. Participants have the chance to expand their technical skillset, test new ideas, and engage with different ways of thinking about making.

Short courses also serve as an accessible entry point for new audiences, including those who may not be ready to commit to a full term. In 2025 we offered a 4-class *Introduction to Wheel Throwing* course for this reason. *Getting the Most out of Canberra Potters Glazes* was another successful short course run over two weekends. Participants were guided through the fundamentals of glaze theory, focusing on how to apply and test premixed Canberra Potters glazes -- all from the comfort of the new Glaze Room.

Children's and Teens' Classes

Pathways classes for teens (14–18 years) have provided an important bridge into adult learning, supporting young people to build skills, confidence and independence within a structured studio environment. These classes continue to play a key role in developing the next generation of makers.

Children's classes remained extremely popular, with strong demand across both term and holiday programs. Holiday workshops continue to provide an accessible and engaging entry point into clay for new participants, offering one-off experiences that are playful, skill-building and highly inclusive.

Accessibility

Canberra Potters remains committed to universal access within the education program, with classes open to all and designed to support a range of abilities while maintaining a shared studio experience. We work to create a welcoming and supportive environment for participants with diverse learning and access needs. The Continuing Clay with Additional Support class, led by teachers Jo Townsend and Fran Romano (supported by wonderful class assistants), is designed to provide a more supported learning environment, while remaining integrated within the broader class program. These classes take a flexible approach, allowing participants to work at their own pace with support as needed.

NDIS client classes continue to expand access, supporting more inclusive participation and ensuring that the program remains open to a broader and more diverse community.

Supporting diverse access needs can present ongoing challenges. These include balancing individual support requirements within group teaching contexts, ensuring staff and teaching teams are adequately resourced and trained, and adapting studio spaces and processes where possible.

Exhibition opportunities

A highlight of the year was the Student Teacher exhibition. It was a major celebration of learning, experimentation and achievement. The exhibition clearly demonstrated the strength of the Education Program and the way ideas evolve over time within the studio environment, moving from instruction into individual expression. We congratulate the many students who received awards at the exhibition this year.

Masterclasses

This year's visiting artist program brought an exceptional line-up of masterclass opportunities, offering access to both established international practitioners and significant collaborative projects.

In early 2025, we also hosted a significant collaboration with the National Gallery of Australia focused on Anne Dangar, bringing together historical research, contemporary interpretation and studio-based making across two inspiring days. This program created a valuable bridge between institutional collections and lived studio practice, allowing participants to respond directly to Dangar's legacy through clay.

The five-day *Wild Clay Masterclass* with Lea Durie was a standout offering. Lea presented an immersive exploration of material, place and process. Working directly with locally sourced clays, participants engaged in a deeply hands-on and investigative week of making. The intensity of the program supported a rich studio environment, where experimentation and shared learning were at the centre of the experience.

International and interstate visiting artists continued to be a major highlight of the year. Aaron Scythe's eight-week course provided sustained engagement with form, surface and the philosophy of making, offering participants the rare opportunity to develop work over time within a guided, critical framework. In addition, his two-day intensive workshop (delivered in partnership with Strathnairn Arts) opened access to a broader group of participants, sharing key aspects of his practice in a concentrated format.

We also welcomed Masaru Nishikawa for a five-day course, which offered an exceptional opportunity to engage with refined technical approaches to mould-making and subtle surface treatments. His teaching brought a strong focus on precision, restraint and sensitivity in making, and the course was particularly valuable in strengthening international connections within the program. This was a rare and valuable opportunity for participants to learn directly from an internationally respected master ceramic artist, whose sculptural practice offered a distinct and highly refined approach to form and surface. Masaru was supported in class planning by class assistant Ayumi Robinson and in delivery by experienced teacher Helen Eatough and by Veronica Taylor, who generously provided interpreting. Their contributions were key to enabling meaningful exchange and maintaining the integrity of the teaching.



Masaru Nishikawa Masterclass 2025 Photograph: Nicole James



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Membership and Community

Membership

We maintain rolling membership renewals, meaning that members can renew at any time and that we do not have a fixed membership census date. Averaged over the year, our membership includes 700+ individuals, ranging from beginners to full-time professional potters and internationally regarded ceramic artists, creating a diverse and supportive community.

On 31 December 2025 our membership was approximately 700, a decrease of 9 from the same period in 2023. This includes 14 Honorary Life Members. We anticipate a slight decrease in membership in 2026, following increases to class fees because there is a direct link between class numbers and class participants who take out memberships while learning with us.

Fee increase pause

To recognise and support members during our 2025 anniversary year, we paused increases to the membership fee, term classes and other services, such as kiln firing and weigh and pay.

Membership administration

From 2025 the Board invested in a part-time administrative position with a focus on supporting membership inquiries, renewals and transitioning membership functions to the new website. We thank Taryn Powick for acting in this role very effectively in 2025. We will be recruiting for a permanent part-time staff member in 2026.

50th Anniversary events

We created and used a special 50th anniversary logo for 2025 on our marketing materials and some merchandise and will retire this in 2026. Our key anniversary events in 2025 were the exhibition of work by Honorary Life Members, curated by guest curator and studio-holder Maricelle Olivier and our 2025 Members' Exhibition and Kiln Shed opening celebration (November 2025).

Our Members' Exhibition was installed by new Gallery Manager Dr Liisa Naar and volunteers. It was opened by the Arts Minister, Mr Michael Petersson MLA, and featured the award of the Doug Alexander Prize, judged by Vicki Grima OA, to Malcolm Cooke. The Board increased the value of the Doug Alexander award to $5000.

We deferred our planned 50th anniversary dinner to 2026, with the intention of having this celebration close our anniversary year and launch our new Strategic Plan and its implementation.

Fired Up

We paused the very popular *Fired Up* community event in 2025 while we filled our operational staff positions. The Board approved funding and a plan to present *Fired Up* in 2026.

Stewardship

Watson Arts Centre

Kiln Shed and Glaze Room project

We completed a major capital project in 2025, expanding the footprint of the Kiln Shed and significantly improving our professional ceramics facilities. The new purpose-built Kiln Shed extends past the existing shed, which has been refurbished to house a new Glaze Room, Materials Store and Technical Workshop space. The project addresses long-standing capacity and constraints in two of the most heavily used areas of Watson Arts Centre and makes work in those spaces significantly safer and more comfortable. This strengthens the infrastructure underpinning our Education and Artistic program and our services to members.

We are grateful to all the professional colleagues within artsACT and Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR) who stewarded this project and to AMA Projects, who delivered the project for the ACT Government. We acknowledge the foresight of our previous Board and CEO, who negotiated the project plan completed in 2022–23 by AMA, including preliminary design and costing. We thank the ACT Government for allocating capital funding to the project in 2024–25 and 2025–26 under its Asset Renewal Program. Development Approval was secured in January 2025; construction commenced on site in February 2025; and the new Shed was occupied in June 2025, with the site formally handed over to Canberra Potters in mid-July 2025. The Kiln Shed was officially opened by the Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries, Michael Pettersson MLA, on 6 November 2025.

Transition from artsACT to Infrastructure Canberra

2025 saw the asset custodianship of community arts facilities owned by the ACT Government transfer from artsACT to Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR). Policy and funding responsibility for arts facilities, along with sector engagement, remains with artsACT, while infrastructure and property services — including site maintenance and licensing — are now delivered by iCBR. Canberra



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Potters' relationship with iCBR is managed through the Customer and Asset Management (CAM) branch within the Delivery – Places and Spaces Division, which provides property services on behalf of the ACT Government across an extensive portfolio of commercial, government, community and arts buildings.

As part of this change, arts centres are now required to pay the first $500 of all reactive maintenance work, and to fund six-monthly Emergency Evacuation Training sessions for all available staff at $930 per session. Details of further changes are still emerging. In addition to the financial implications, the transition has resulted in some delays in responses to maintenance and repair requests and a reduction in visibility on the status of work orders, particularly for more complex or multi-contractor jobs. Canberra Potters will continue to work constructively with both artsACT and iCBR through 2026 to ensure the new arrangements support the ongoing care of Watson Arts Centre and the delivery of our programs.

Future building improvements

In 2024-25 our then CEO, Richard Thomas, began negotiation with artsACT for plans to upgrade the office spaces in the Watson Arts Centre main building. In 2025, the Board worked with Acting CEO, Sue Cant, to expand the scope of the plan. We were supported by the artsACT team in partnership with iCBR, who facilitated approval and funding for full architectural plans for further upgrades to Watson Arts Centre.

Plans have been developed for two stages: Stage 1 would upgrade the area of the building that includes the retail area (shop), staff workspaces, library and members' kitchen – with particular attention to disability access and work health and safety for staff. Stage 2 would deliver upgrades to the Gallery and what is now our storage room, creating a dedicated space for the Canberra Potters Collection. Further stages (not yet designed) would address equipment storage, a multipurpose room for meetings and education activities, and upgrades to the lighting and pathways around the perimeter of the site. In 2026, we will work with artsACT to build the business case for this work to be funded by the ACT Government, anticipating that some components will be co-funded by Canberra Potters.



Photograph: Veronica Taylor

Strategic Partnerships

Canberra Potters' impact in 2025 was strengthened by a further developing a network of strategic partnerships at local and national levels. Our local and national strategic partnerships include those with the ANU School of Art & Design, Craft + Design Canberra, Strathnairn Arts, Canberra Glassworks, The Australian Ceramics Association, alongside supplier partnerships with Walker Ceramics, Keane Ceramics and Northcote Pottery Supplies. In addition to strengthening strategic partnerships, opportunities for future strategic and programming collaborations with other ACT based arts organisations were also explored.

Significantly, 2025 also saw artsACT-funded arts sector organisations begin meeting regularly to work together on shared issues, building greater sector coherence and a stronger collective voice. The group is focused on more effectively communicating and advocating to local and federal government on matters that affect our viability and impact — including property and facilities management, sustainable funding, support for artists and arts workers, and meaningful consultation on arts and cultural policy. Through this forum, organisations are sharing intelligence, coordinating responses to government processes, and exploring opportunities for joint advocacy. For Canberra Potters, participation in this group is an important strategic investment in the broader health of the ACT arts ecosystem and our ability, alongside our peers, to influence positive change for the sector.

Australian Craft and Design Centre Network

Canberra Potters is a member of the Australian Craft and Design Centre Network (ALDCN), a national network of leading craft and design organisations — including Jam Factory, Craft Queensland, Guildhouse, Design Tasmania, Craft Victoria, Australian Tapestry Network, Craft + Design Canberra and Canberra Glassworks — working together to strengthen the cultural, creative and economic impact of the sector. Through ACDCN, members foster cross-organisational partnerships and national connectivity, identify opportunities for makers and designers, cross-promote exhibitions, programs and residencies, share technical and organisational expertise, and advocate for the sector to government, industry and the public. In 2025 ACDN was reignited as a working group, meeting quarterly and on a needs basis when issues or opportunities affecting the craft and design sector arise.

Craft + Design Canberra

At a programmatic level, Canberra Potters is committed to an ongoing partnership with Craft + Design Canberra through the annual Open Studios and Organisations event in November and the biannual Craft + Design Festival, with both events identified as high priorities within our artistic and public programming. The partnership also includes Craft + Design Canberra's sponsorship of the annual Canberra Potters Members' Exhibition through the Emerging Contemporaries Award. In 2025, four exhibiting artists were awarded the opportunity to present their work at the Emerging Contemporaries exhibition in early 2026, creating valuable pathways for emerging professional arts practice and reinforcing the ACT's position as a national centre for craft and design.

Canberra Glassworks

As two of the ACT's leading craft-based organisations, Canberra Potters and Canberra Glassworks (CGW) share a long-standing relationship grounded in mutual respect and a commitment to material exploration, artist development and the preservation of specialist skills. In 2025 our organisations took steps to deepen this relationship through the development of a shared artist network, with reciprocal artist visits, demonstrations and introductions to technical capabilities scheduled to commence in 2026. By aligning facilities, skills and professional networks, CGW and Canberra Potters are investing in a collaborative framework that supports artists at all stages of practice, encourages cross-disciplinary innovation and reinforces the ACT as a national centre for craft and design.

Strathnairn Arts

Canberra Potters and Strathnairn Arts are both grounded in building community through creativity and making. Many Canberra Potters members are also members of Strathnairn Arts, with a number of Strathnairn studio holders being ceramic artists deeply involved with Canberra Potters — effectively creating a shared community across our two organisations. In 2025, we collaborated with visiting New Zealand artist and Canberra Potters Artist in Residence Aaron Scythe to deliver a significant collaborative wood-firing event. This program has set the tone for future collaboration, and we are now planning joint short courses, workshops and public events across our two sites from 2026 onwards. We are also working together to share facilities, technical knowledge and administrative processes, including kiln licensing and WHS frameworks — supporting shared outcomes while strengthening each organisation's unique offering.

ANU School of Art & Design

The ANU School of Art & Design and Canberra Potters share a long-standing partnership. Canberra Potters is a founding supporter of the School's Emerging Artists Support Scheme (EASS), established in 1988, and currently provides an artist-in-residence and exhibition opportunity for an ANU graduate working in ceramics through the scheme. The partnership is set to expand in 2026, with Canberra Potters introducing membership discounts for ANU students and recent graduates, providing access to ceramics facilities and extended artistic and technical learning opportunities during and post study. Planned initiatives also include Canberra Potters staff presenting at ANU student lectures and lunchtime talks, and coordination around visiting artists, residencies, masterclasses and talks. Connecting our programs and people will build activity and membership for Canberra Potters and support capacity development and professional practice for local students and emerging artists.



Jodie Cunningham, Craft + Design Canberra CEO presenting Emerging Contemporaries Award at 2025 Members' Exhibition to Sarah Brown. | Photography Tim Ngo

Outlook 2026

Our Strategic Plan 2026-2030

The Board planned to create a new Strategic Plan in 2025, following recruitment of a new CEO. This process was accelerated by the ACT Government request to arts organisations to submit funding applications for 2028-2032, 12 months earlier than expected. We needed to develop both a Strategic Plan and a multi-year funding application by November 2025.

Consultation Process

The Board led consultation with members through both a Members survey, and in-person consultation sessions. We received 115 responses to the survey (16% of our membership), which is a relatively high response rate for an online survey. Members made detailed suggestions and requests, which we value as feedback and will work through in 2026. The CEO and Artistic Director led consultation with staff and information sharing with other arts organisations and collaborators.

We had very high levels of engagement by the Canberra Potters community and a wealth of ambitious and creative ideas and proposals. While not all of these appear in the Strategic Plan, we have captured all of those ideas and will draw on them in annual implementation plans.
The draft Strategic Plan is available on the Canberra Potters website. It is a dynamic document and will be considered at the May 2026 AGM.

A feature of the Strategic Plan work was the shared ambition to elevate our organisation to become a pre-eminent centre for the ceramic arts that attracts attention and engagement locally, nationally and internationally. Our refreshed Vision, Mission and Values are set out on the following pages.

i



Connecting Through Clay 2025 | Photograph: Nicole James

Our vision

Build a nationally and internationally recognised centre of excellence for ceramics.

Our mission

Canberra Potters supports its members and the wider community through world-class ceramics education at all levels. We support learning and experimentation, promote mastery and innovation, and encourage the professional development of ceramic artists at all career stages. Our artistic program and exhibitions attract a diverse range of national and international ceramic artists. Our events build community, inspire creativity, and ensure sustainable stewardship of Watson Arts Centre.



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Our values

Exploration

We embody creativity, innovation and mastery and innovation in all that we do. Our programs and people are inspiring.

Authenticity

Our work is grounded in purpose and integrity, honouring traditions of clay while embracing contemporary practices.

Inclusion + Diversity

Our membership is inclusive and welcoming - clay connects us across ages, abilities and backgrounds.

Integrity

We are responsible stewards of our organisation, its finances, our facility and our environment.



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Strategic goals 2026–2030

Excellence
(Our overarching goal)

Be a nationally and internationally recognised centre of excellence for ceramics practice that attracts leading artists and is a cultural destination in Australia's arts capital.

Innovation + Diversity
(Our artistic program)

Foster contemporary ceramics practice and champion artistic diversity, experimentation and exchange.

Skills + Inclusivity
(Our education program)

Elevate our world-class ceramics education program and foster wellbeing through clay for all learners.

Vibrant Community
(Our Membership and community engagement)

Cultivate an engaged membership that respects cultural connection and diversity. Connect with and build community.

Stewardship + Sustainability
(Our governance and management of our people, assets and facility)

Exemplify leadership in good governance, arts centre stewardship, sustainability and strategic partnerships.

Implementation Process

The implementation process in 2026 involves:

- Implementation plans for all our programs (artistic, education, retail, marketing and communications, facilities and governance)(by June 2026);Annual implementation plans that build on these
- Marketing and Communications strategy: translating our Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Goals into all our communication channels and materials;
- Responding to ACT Government funding announcement (anticipated July 2026) and re-assessment of our strategy as required; and
- Annual Members' Survey and publication of those results (mid-2026).



Ruth Ju-Shih Li, 2022 Canberra Potters Collection

Financial Report

How we are funded

Canberra Potters is predominantly self-funded. Since 2014 we have generated 75% or more of our own income. In 2025 we were 81% self-funded; currently this is just under $1m per annum.

We receive funding from the ACT Government that is important for our operations. Under our current grant from the ACT Government as managers of an arts facility, we receive:

- cash: approx. $215,00 per annum (2026 and 2027)
  - This equates to the salary and on costs for our CEO (FTE 1.0) and Gallery Manager (FTE 0.6) -- but not our programs , activities and other salaries;
- in-kind contribution: provision of the Watson Arts Centre at nominal cost.

The ACT Government grant is impacted by inflation (it is not automatically indexed). Our costs are directly affected by cost-of-living increases and staff contracts linked to CPI increases.

We have an urgent need to renovate the ageing main building at the Watson Arts Centre in order to make it disability accessible, provide healthy working conditions for staff, and fully activate the gallery and the gardens as a world-class visitor destination. Investments in the Watson Arts Centre infrastructure come from different parts of government and need a separate business plan, funding application and negotiation.

Funding environment

Along with Megalo Access Arts Inc; PhotoAccess Inc. and Canberra Glassworks Ltd, we are an arts organisation specialising in a specific artistic medium (ceramics). Among the Arts Centre Investments made by the ACT Government during our current grant period (2023-2027), Canberra Potters (along with Strathnairn Arts) receives the smallest allocation ($210,000 from 2023, currently $215,000, increased from $130,000 in 2021).

We have addressed this in our 2025 budget submission to the government for 2028-2032, requesting both a significant increase in our base level funding and regular indexation of the grant. However, we know that the total number of arts organisation funding requests submitted is about 60% greater than the available funding envelope. For us to realise our ambition to become a nationally and internationally recognised centre for excellence in the ceramic arts we will need to diversify and increase our sources of funding.

How we performed financially in 2025

Our Treasurer's Report accompanies this Annual Report.

Income

Overall, we earned about 10% more income in 2025 compared with 2024, with a significant increase in Workshop and Classes income (approx. $100,00). Our commissions on sales were significantly more in 2025, due to success with exhibitions and the Christmas Fair. Ordinary retail income is not growing at the rate that is desirable and so the Board provisioned for some investment in refitting the shop in 2026, along with new retail income targets from 2026 onwards.

Expenses

Our largest expense is salaries and wages and these increased significantly in 2025 (by $108,000, or 14%). This was due to higher salaries to support recruitment of new staff; and the addition of 0.75 FTE in new staff positions in 2025. This also resulted in flow-on increases to superannuation, workers' compensation insurance, and operational expenditure such as new computers.

Some of our recurrent expenses increased significantly: our IT provider doubled their fees in mid-2025, reflected in increased internet and website costs. We will review our IT procurement in 2026. Our repairs and maintenance costs increased, in part due to a change in policy by the ACT Government (see the Stewardship section of this report). Our Artist-in-Residence costs were higher in 2025, reflecting the real travel and exhibition costs of hosting international artists.

Deficit

Our operating budget for 2025 shows a deficit of $52,127 (or 4.4% of gross income). The deficit represents both planned capital expenditure of approximately $30,000 (our website and purchase of a new large electric kiln) which does not appear in the operating budget); capital expenditure on some Kiln Shed fit-out (difficult to predict because we could not control the timing of the build) and recurrent expenditure of approximately $22,000 (the expense of recruiting a new operational team and some loss of income from the interruption of the Kiln Shed build). The planned capital expenditure (website and kiln) is also reflected in a significant increase in our depreciation ($41,852 in 2025, a 44% increase on 2024).

Although our final budget position in 2025 did not meet our the KPI agreed with the ACT Government of maintaining a 6% surplus for our operating budget, the deficit result was better than expected. If we deduct the planned capital expenditure and the increase in depreciation (totalling approx. $72,000) the operating result would be a 1.69% surplus, in a year with significant operational disruption.

We have reported our financial decisions to the ACT Government in our regular meetings with the artsACT team and they have indicated that, while an operating surplus is desirable, a deficit is also acceptable where reserves are healthy, and the financial decisions are well-explained.

Unplanned recurrent expenditures

Unplanned expenditure in our operating budget in 2025 included:

- Costs of recruiting four new operational staff in 2025;
- Legal fees to review and redraft outdated contracts for new operational staff; and
- Overlap in salary obligations between commencing staff and retiring and departing staff with leave entitlements.

Unplanned capital expenditures

Unplanned capital expenditure in in 2025 included:

- Moving and rebuilding the Soda Kiln in connection with the Kiln Shed build and in anticipation of classes beginning in January 2026; and
- Some equipment and fit-out of the new Glaze Room (with some expenditure deferred to 2026).

Financial reserves

The financial reserves the Board set up in 2020 were reviewed and updated again in 2025. These were fully funded at the end of 2025 and appear in our audited accounts as a retained surplus of $681,320 (of which $607, 500 is cash) (or approximately 6 months' operating expenses). This compares to $733,447 in 2024, an 8% decrease in reserves. We aim to maintain the current level of reserves through interest on our fixed term deposit; increasing income; and budgeting for a surplus to the extent possible, recognising that we will require at least $50-60,000 per annum in capital expenditure.

In 2025 we drew on our reserves in the following ways:

Capital Expenditure Reserve: the CAPEX reserve provides us with the capacity to replace equipment essential to members such as wheels and kilns, and for leasehold improvements. We drew against this reserve in 2025, as described as described in the section below.

Prudential Reserve: this provides Canberra Potters the capacity to ride out unexpected events (such as COVID) for up to 10 weeks with no income; and

Staff Entitlements Reserve: this ensures our staff's leave entitlements are protected. We drew against this reserve in 2025 to fund entitlements for staff movement and retirement.

Audited financial results 2025

Our auditor's report accompanies this Annual Report.

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Strategic Investments

Our final budget position in 2025 reflects the following Board decisions:

Staff salaries and benefits

One of our priorities is to provide fair wages and working conditions for our arts sector employees, consistent with the relevant awards and with NAVA guidelines [1]. In 2025 the Board approved CPI-linked wage increases and increased annual leave allowances in core administrative, artistic and technical roles
We needed to go to market for new staff in 2025 without being able to compete with salary levels in the ACT or Commonwealth public service. To ensure that we have the talent we need, the Board:

- enhanced remuneration by increasing the annual leave allowance for permanent staff;
- created a benefits plan for operational staff working more than 20 hours a week to allow them to access term classes;
- added paid hours for teaching staff to attend education team meetings;
- budgeted paid time for class preparation for teachers from 2026; and
- planned for a new Volunteer Policy in 2026 to ease pressure on paid staff during public events and busy periods.

New staff roles

Departure and retirement of long-serving staff members exposed gaps in our skills and time allocation – particularly the need for better marketing and communications to support our Education and Artistic programs. The Board approved the CEO and Artistic Director's proposed staffing plan which created three new roles, described above in the Staff section. This added approx. 0.75 FTE in 2025.

The new part-time Workshop and Facilities Coordinator role also addresses financial and site risks by allowing us to better manage our facilities and assets, improve work health and safety and anticipate repairs and maintenance.

Capital expenditure

We developed and used a detailed multi-year capital expenditure budget that helps to plan and sequence the purchase of equipment, major repairs and investment in our facilities. In 2025 this included:

- Replacement of our largest electric kiln (the FiredUp kiln installed in the new Kiln Shed in July 2025).
  - We chose a kiln with maximum capacity at a price point that was possible within our 2025 budget. However the Board's preference going forward is to purchase Australian-manufactured products wherever possible.
- A new website and ancillary software and hosting services.

[1] NAVA Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design (updated to 2025), 8. Payments

Financial Governance

Finance Committee

Our Finance Committee started work in 2025 (Rachael Axford, Sam Chard and Chair, Veronica Taylor). The Committee meets ahead of each Board meeting to review financial performance and to assess CEO and staff requests for variations to the planned budget.

Financial system redesign

In 2025 we commenced work with our accountants, Grainger and Co., to re-design our budget to more precisely allocate income and expenses to cost centres (e.g. Education Program, Artistic Program, Site Maintenance and Management, Public Events/ Community Outreach, Governance). That work is scheduled for completion in Q2 2026.

Investment policy

We moved our cash reserves to a fixed term account with Macquarie Bank in Q3 2025 that offered a better interest rate in 2025 than the Commonwealth Bank, which is where our operating accounts are held. Staff departure and the difficulty of changing signatories with the Commonwealth Bank meant a delay in moving those funds and approximately 4 months between one term deposit ending and the new account commencing.

Diversifying own source income

To ensure financial sustainability into the future and rebuild reserves, the Board committed to:
·diversifying and growing our income sources, while maintaining a ratio of at least 75% own-source income;

- ·set annual targets for grant income;
- maintaining and building retained surpluses through own source revenue of at least $50-60,000 per annum to enable investment in equipment, site and facilities improvements
- applying for DGR status in 2026, to open new opportunities for support and philanthropic fundraising; and
- leveraging strategic and commercial partnerships (including suppliers, tertiary institutions, galleries, arts organisations, and wellbeing/community agencies) to seek sponsorship, grants and other funding opportunities

Efficiency and cost-reduction

In 2025 the Board worked with the CEO and Artistic Director to find some efficiencies and cost reductions by:

- Filling our bookkeeping role vacancy with a contracted service and disestablishing two permanent part-time roles; and
- Budgeting for new business software in 2026 to reduce time sheet processing time.

Fee increases in 2026

Fees other than class fees had not been increased annually, although our staff contracts assume salaries will rise with CPI increases, subject to satisfactory performance. In 2025 we had increasing inflation and energy costs as well as higher salaries and new professional roles that were needed following departures of long-term staff. We also had to maintain and replace equipment in conjunction with the kiln shed build. Our financial analysis showed that we would need to increase prices in 2026. The Board resolved to do this across all our services from 2026.

Governance

Board membership 2025

Following the May 2025 AGM, our Board membership was:

President	Veronica Taylor
Vice President	Moraig McKenna
Secretary	Adeline Jeffery
Treasurer	Rachael Axford (Independent)
Member	Nicole James
Member	Sam Chard (Independent)
Member	Michelle Watson

Moraig McKenna was elected Vice President of the Board at the May 2025 AGM. We also celebrated her election to the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) in 2025. Michelle Watson stepped down as Secretary (while remaining an Ordinary Board Member) following the AGM and the Board welcomed Adeline Jeffery as the new Secretary. Nicole James will complete the maximum two terms as a Board Member in 2026, and we will seek nominations to fill that role at the 2026 AGM.

The Board Skills Matrix is shown at the end of this report, following the Board profiles.



Fired Up 2021, Canberra Potters. Photograph: Martin Ollman

Board member succession planning

The Board actively considered succession planning in 2025, noting that at least 3 positions are likely to conclude maximum terms in May 2028 if those Board members are re-elected in 2026. Board member terms are shown on the table below. We also noted that one Board member will conclude their maximum term in May 2026. The Board resolved to advertise widely, for both immediate and future vacancies through an EOI process internally with members and externally through other networks. Board member terms are shown at the end of this report.

Skills/role gaps

The identified skills gap that the Board seeks to fill in 2026 will be marketing, communications and business management. Although not a constitutional requirement, we will also seek an independent Ordinary Member with legal/regulatory skills (noting that the Chair has these skills and that we have used our external legal advisors, BAL, for independent legal and compliance advice in 2025).

Board diversity

As a result of Board changes, we now have a Board that is diverse in experience and skills and somewhat diverse in age, but that lacks gender balance. The Board has also resolved to seek qualified candidates who will give us gender, age and professional background diversity.

Board-led governance work

In 2025, the Board oversaw a complete update and redraft of administrative, artistic and technical staff contracts, with teaching contracts scheduled for revision in early 2026.

The Board also introduced a Policy register and review cycle. In 2025 the Board completed review, drafting and adoption of the following policies:

- Working with Vulnerable People
- Board conflicts of interest
- Staff conflicts of interest
- Staff benefits policy

The Board resolved to establish an Artistic Advisory Committee in 2026, to advise the CEO and Artistic Director on the Artistic Program and to develop or refresh criteria for competitive opportunities in the Artistic Program and provide selection panels for those opportunities. The Committee's Terms of Reference will be finalised in 2026.



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Risk and Resilience

The Board reviews risks at every meeting and its risk policy annually. Mitigation strategies start with regular CEO reporting on, and Board review of, our risk policy and risk register at regular intervals. Our experience navigating change over our 50-year history, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrates our capacity to adapt and remain resilient through periods of uncertainty.

Risk type	Risks identified in 2025	Mitigation strategies
Financial	Reduced government funding, failure to maintain margins and reserves, cost of living pressures on members and program participants, energy costs	Diversifying own-source revenue (including setting targets for grants and philanthropic sources and completing DGR application); diversifying class offerings; building healthy reserves; working proactively with accountants and auditors to identify and address potential problems
Operational	People/Staff turnover	Attention to staff WHS and working conditions Review of staff roles and functions;staff succession planning
	Facilitiesfacility failures, ageing infrastructure, safety or security incidents	Investing in robust systems; maintaining repair and replacement schedule
Reputational	Program quality issues, misconduct, governance failures, change in perception by members, community or partners, including government	Regular review of program quality; robust governance including full use of feedback mechanisms; transparent communication with members, partners and stakeholders
External	Changed government priorities, increased competition, and demographic shifts	Regular environmental scanning and response; attention to relationship with artsACT and iCBR; active collaboration with other ACT arts organisations; sharing information with national arts organisations

Conflict of Interest Report

Policies

Clause 4.18 of the Canberra Potters' Society Inc. Constitution sets out the Canberra Potters' policies and procedures.

The President and Chair 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.
In 2025 the Board developed and introduced new and more detailed conflict of interest policies for the Board and for staff and volunteers. Those policies build on and are consistent with clause 4.18 of the Constitution. The new policies were developed to increase transparency and robustness of processes in situations in which opportunities and programs which are selective, e.g. studio tenancies, teaching opportunities, exhibitions and markets, or which would confer benefits on Board members or staff members wishing to participate in them.

Third party transactions

There were no third party (or related party) transactions in 2025 (compared to nil in 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021 and 2020).

COI events

There were no conflicts of interest raised in 2025 (compared to nil in 2024, 2023, one in 2022 and nil in both 2021 and 2020).

Canberra Potters' Society Inc. Constitution

There were no changes to the Canberra Potters' Society Inc. Constitution in 2025. The Constitution was modernised with effect from 19 March 2017. There have been no changes since then.

Board Meeting Effectiveness

The Board met 6 times in 2025 for regular Board meetings (the Constitution requires four meetings). Additionally, the Board held 3 longer strategic planning sessions in order to prepare the Strategic Plan draft and the funding submission to the ACT Government. The 2025 AGM was held on 14 May 2025. The dates of Board meetings during 2025 and Board member attendance are shown below:

13 February 2025
20 March 2025
19 June 2025
19 August 2025
18 September 2025
22 October 2025
18 December 2025

Current Board member	Meeting attended/eligible to attend
Nicole James	7/7
Adeline Jeffery	7/7
Veronica Taylor	7/7
Rachael Axford	6/7
Sam Chard	6/7
Moraig McKenna	3/4
Michelle Watson	6/7

The Board considered 15 operational reports and 8 strategic submissions during the year.

Number of submissions	2025	2024	2023	2022
Strategic Submissions	**8**	14	19	23
Operational Submissions	**15**	12	20	15

Board governance survey

The 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 to identify areas that could be improved.

The Board uses the survey to strengthen Board processes, business planning, financial management, Board-CEO delegations, risk management, and cyber security.

The 2025 survey indicates that our practices were sound overall with an average score of 4.1 on a scale of 5. Full results are shown in the table following the Board Skills Matrix at the end of this report



Photograph: Tim Ngo

Our progress on KPIs

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

Program	Measure	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Masterclass / Workshops	Hours	**1500**	2,208	2,185	1,152	924
Artists in Residence	Residencies	**2**	4	4	5	3
Studio tenancies	Occupancy rate (%)	**80%**	100%	100%	100%	100%
Classes	Hours: Adult	**29,997**	29,212	35,424	34,830	24,105
	Children	**7,357**	5,278	4,212	4,010	3,379
	Holiday	**1,017**	1,268	1,280	448	320
	Contact hours total	**38,371**	**35,758**	**40,916**	**39,288**	**27,804`**



Christmas Market, 2025 Work by Chris Harford | Photograph: Nicole James

Education Program	Measure	2025	As % of Program participation	2024-2021
Adult	**No. of Participants**		66.3%	
Short courses/masterclasses		**113**	6.1%	not previously reported in this format
Term classes: Introduction		**378**	20.5%	as above
Term classes: Foundation and Continuing		**733**	39.7%	as above
Children	**No. of participants**		33.7%	
Teens term classes		**51**	2.8%	as above
Children's term classes		**477**	25.9%	as above
Total class participation		**1,844**	100%	

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

Program	Measure	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Ceramic-centric exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	**6**	10	9	10	8
National & international exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	**3**	4	3	2	2
Studio Collaborative multidisciplinary exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	**4**	2	3	2	1
Ceramic-centric exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	**6**	10	9	10	8
Canberra Potters' curated exhibitions	Number of exhibitions	**4**	2	4	3	3
All programs	Number of visitors	**14,092**	10,761	11,523	8,461	7,997
	Gallery, Shop, Events	**12,248**	Not broken down by visitor type in prior years			
	Education Programs	**1844**	Not broken down by visitor type in prior years			

GOAL 3:
Be a vibrant, inclusive community venue by meeting the needs of the ceramic community and members through programs that are vibrant, accessible and inclusive.

Program	Measure	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Community events	No. events	**1**	3	3	5	3
	No. participants	**201**	3,601	3,359	3,410	3,427
Inclusion: Special groups	No. events	**12**	12	10	5	4
	No. participants	**140**	143	122	89	36
Member events	No. events	**6**	12	12	12	3
Membership	No. members	**700**	709	648	666	534



Masaru Nishikawa Masterclass participants, 2025. | Photograph: Nicole James

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.

Program	Measure	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Engagement	**Email, social media subscribers**	**13,453**	12,061	11,081	10,342	8,790
	Instagram followers	**6552**				
	Facebook followers	**4582**	Not broken down by type in prior years			
	LinkedIn followers	**69**	Not broken down by type in prior years			
	Email database recipients	**2250**	Not broken down by type in prior years			
Engagement	**Member Mailouts (open rate)**	39 (44%)	72 (66.74%)	62. (63.6%)	53 (53.5%)	24 (40.5%)
Media	**Reviews, interviews**	**14**	13	11	5	3
	Media Releases	8	14	12	11	9

GOAL 5:
Be an exemplary steward of the Watson Arts Centre facility by ensuring it is efficient, effective, safe and accessible.

Program	Measure	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Efficient, effective, and safe	Maintenance under Licence (>98%)	Met	Met	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023
	Repairs & Replacement under Licence (>95%)	Met	Met	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023
Complaints	Formal complaints from Licensor (<1%)	Met	Met	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023
Breach of Licence	Licence Clauses 17, 19 (Nil)	Met	Met	Met	New in 2023	New in 2023
New Kiln Shed Build	In consultation with artsACT	Complete 2025	Met	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

Program	Measure	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
COVID	Respond to and address risks	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Best practice governance	Annual review of governance against AICD principles	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Implement Board submissions processes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Update 5-year Business Plan	**New draft strategic plan Nov 2025**	Scheduled for mid-2025	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sustainable finances	An annual surplus of 6%+	**(4.4%)**	79.3%	80.6%	79.2%	86.8%
	Own-source revenue of >75%	**81%**	Reserves intact; will be drawn against in 2025	Reserves intact	Reserves intact	Reserves intact
	Set aside funds for Prudential, CAPEX Reserves	**Reserves used and maintained**	79.3%	80.6%	79.2%	86.8%

Board profiles

The current Board has a wide range of skills and experience, outlined in the biographical summaries and skills matrix below.

President and Chair of the Board: Veronica Taylor

Canberra Potters' Member; Finance Committee, Appointments Committee
Bachelor of Arts (Hons), Bachelor of Laws, Graduate Certificate (Interpreting & Translation), Master of Laws, GAICD

Veronica is a Professor of Law and Regulation and government advisor in the fields of regulation and governance. She has 15 years' experience as a Director of for-profit and for- purpose companies, associations and government entities and more than 30 years' experience of strategic planning, budget oversight and managing people and culture.

Vice President: Moraig McKenna

Canberra Potters' Member; Chair, Artistic Advisory Committee
Master of Arts (Research)(Ceramics)

An internationally known ceramic artist, Moraig has been working as a studio potter for 30 years and has exhibited widely both in Australia and overseas with work in private collections in the US, Singapore, China and Europe and the public collection of Canberra Museum and Gallery. She has worked extensively in the arts and museums sectors in Canberra, most recently as Assistant Director at Craft + Design Canberra. She has been a member of Canberra Potters since 2002 and in 2024 received the Doug Alexander Prize – the most prestigious award for a Canberra Potters' member. She is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics.

Secretary: Adeline Jeffery

Canberra Potters' Member
Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship Bachelor of Visual Arts

Adeline is an ACT Government public servant with experience in government consulting and supporting the delivery of government priorities. She has a background in the implementation and evaluation of programs, management of projects and visual communication.

Treasurer: Rachael Axford

Independent Member; Finance Committee

Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting and Management), Certified Practicing Accountant
Rachael is an experienced accountant with a background in banking in the UK and extensive experience in the not-for-profit sector, predominantly in schools, in Australia. With a strong focus on financial management, budgeting, and compliance, Rachael brings a wealth of expertise to the role of Treasurer.
Ordinary Members

Michelle Watson

Canberra Potters' Member; Appointments Committee
Bachelor of Visual Arts (Ceramics)

Michelle is a highly experienced educator with 38 years of service teaching Visual Arts to secondary students in ACT government schools. Over her career, she held executive teacher roles for 20 years, providing leadership in key areas including Human Resources, International Student Programs, Special Education, and as Head of Faculty for Arts and Technology.

Nicole James

Canberra Potters' Member; Appointments Committee
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.

Sam Chard PSM

Independent Member; Finance Committee, Appointments Committee
Bachelor of Arts (Visual)(Hons), Graduate Certificate (Market Research), GAICD

Sam is a senior Commonwealth public servant currently in the Department of Industry, Science and Resources. She has extensive experience in integrity, risk and professional conduct

Board member terms of appointment

Current member	Appointed	Term ends	Extended to
Nicole James	Dec 18, 2022	AGM 2026	n/a
Adeline Jeffery	Mar 19, 2024	AGM May 2025	AGM May 2027
Veronica Taylor	May 10, 2024	AGM May 2026	renominating
Michelle Watson	May 10, 2024	AGM May 2026	renominating
Rachael Axford	Nov 21, 2024	AGM May 2026	renominating
Sam Chard	Jan 1, 2025	AGM May 2026	renominating
Moraig McKenna	AGM May 2025	AGM May 2027	



Jacky Lo, Woodfired Tea cup with Haku-Oshi, 2025 (#86) | Photograph: Tim Ngo

Board Skills Matrix

	Veronica Taylor	Moraig McKenna	Adeline Jeffery	Rachael Axford	Nicole James	Michelle Watson	Sam Chard
Skill Set	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Member	Member	Member
accounting				Y			
arts administration		Y					
budget management	Y			Y	Y		Y
ceramics	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
commercial law	Y						
communications					Y		
corporate governance	Y				Y		Y
curating	Y	Y				Y	
disability and inclusion						Y	Y
membership organisations	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	

Board Skills Matrix (2)

	Veronica Taylor	Moraig McKenna	Adeline Jeffery	Rachael Axford	Nicole James	Michelle Watson	Sam Chard
Skill Set	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Member	Member	Member
government relations	**Y**		**Y**				**Y**
human resources	**Y**		**Y**				**Y**
marketing					**Y**		
policy advocacy		**Y**					**Y**
risk assessment	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**		**Y**
sponsorship	**Y**	**Y**			**Y**		**Y**
stakeholder engagement		**Y**			**Y**		**Y**

Board Governance Survey

AICD Principles	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Overall Rating	**4.1**	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.1	3.8
1. Purpose & strategy	**4.3**	4.2	4.6	4.5	4.3	3.8
2. Roles & responsibilities	**3.4**	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.5	3.5
3. Board composition	**4.3**	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.2	3.6
4. Board effectiveness	**4.3**	4.1	4.6	4.2	4.4	3.8
5. Risk management	**3.7**	3.6	4.4	4.1	3.3	3.7
6. Canberra Potters Performance	**4.6**	4.4	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.3
7. Accountability & transparency	**4.1**	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.3	3.9
8. Supporting practices	**3.6**	4.0	4.5	4.2	**3.8**	3.5
9. Conduct & compliance	**4.4**	4.4	4.7	4.5	4.0	4.3
10. Culture	**3.9**	3.8	4.4	3.9	3.6	3.4

Staff Profiles

CEO & Artistic Director: Jessi England

Jessi leads Canberra Potters and has overall responsibility for strategy, operations, business management, and artistic and learning programs. She works closely with the Board to set the organisation's vision and direction, ensuring Canberra Potters delivers on its mission as a leading centre for ceramics committed to excellence and innovation, community engagement, and the professional development of members. With more than 25 years' experience across the cultural sector and creative industries, Jessi has held senior roles in not-for-profits and government institutions and worked as an independent consultant. Her expertise spans strategic planning, organisational development, programming, marketing, partnerships, philanthropy, and sector advocacy. Jessi represents Canberra Potters locally and nationally, building networks and partnerships that expand opportunities for artists, students, and the community.

Education Director: Fiona Veikkanen

Fiona leads Canberra Potters' education program, managing classes, workshops and masterclasses for children and adults. She works with staff, teachers and visiting artists to ensure programs are high-quality, innovative and welcoming. Fiona supports course design, teacher development and student engagement, helping to foster a dynamic and inclusive learning environment. Fiona brings experience across visual arts, education, sustainability and small business. Previously, she led community initiatives in urban agriculture, sustainable transport and climate engagement at the Canberra Environment Centre and worked in public programs at the National Gallery of Australia. She holds a Visual Arts degree (Sculpture) and a Diploma in Sustainable Living and has also co-owned and operated a local restaurant.

Gallery Manager: Dr Liisa Naar

Liisa manages the Canberra Potters Gallery, the Artist-in-Residence program and associated events and contributes to the management of the Canberra Potters Ceramics Collection. Working closely with CEO Jessi England, Liisa develops and delivers the annual artistic program to reflect contemporary ceramic practice and its relationship to other art forms, attract leading Australian and international ceramic artists, and foster curatorial excellence across exhibitions and the permanent collection. Liisa brings experience across arts management, design, architecture and academia. Her work for cultural organisations has been recognised through national design and publishing awards. She is committed to connecting ceramic artists and makers with audiences and to supporting strong artistic outcomes through the gallery program.

Workshop & Facilities Coordinator: Gemma Brown

Gemma coordinates facilities and site operations, supporting the presentation, upkeep and safe use of workshops and associated areas, and assisting with the maintenance of the Watson Arts Centre grounds and facilities. Her role supports Canberra Potters' operations as a specialist ceramics centre.Gemma is a practising ceramic artist and arts worker with experience at Strathnairn Arts Association, Clay Studio Canberra and Walker Ceramic Supplies, and previously served as a board member for Designed Objects Tasmania. She brings technical expertise in ceramics and a commitment to supporting the operation and development of studio and arts facilities. Gemma holds a Certificate IV in Visual Arts (Ceramics) from TasTAFE and a Bachelor of Visual Arts from the Australian National University and is currently a studio holder at Strathnairn Arts Association.

Technical Officer: Melissa Gabelle

Melissa supports Canberra Potters' technical operations, managing kilns, clays, slips, glazes and materials to keep workshops running smoothly. She oversees kiln maintenance and bookings, clay recycling and the ordering of essential supplies, ensuring reliable facilities for students and members. A practising potter, Melissa combines technical expertise with hands-on experience to support staff, teachers, students and members.

Shop Manager: Leah Jackson (Acting)

As Acting Shop Manager, Leah welcomes the public to the retail shop and gallery spaces and assists with sales and enquiries for tools, clay and gifts. She manages day-to-day shop operations and stock and works closely with represented artists to curate a high-quality range of handmade ceramics and pottery-making supplies. Canberra Potters' retail shop serves the public and students and contributes to the organisation's financial sustainability. Leah brings more than 25 years' experience in the arts and crafts sector and maintains an active ceramic practice.

Administration Officer: Taryn Powick (Acting)

Taryn provides administrative and member-support services, including administrative support to the CEO, website administration, maintenance of the member database, and responses to member and public enquiries. With a background in governance and organisational systems and processes, she supports Canberra Potters' day-to-day operations. Taryn is also a practising ceramic artist, producing colourful functional ware and sculptural work. She is driven by experimentation and ongoing learning, exploring new techniques, materials and ideas.

Workshop & Technical Assistant: Paul Demetz

Paul supports the Workshop and Facilities Coordinator and Technical Officer in their duties. His knowledge of workshop practices and contemporary ceramic processes supports the safe and efficient operation of workshop areas. Paul has a long association with Canberra Potters and regularly assists with term and school-holiday teaching programs. He is a practising ceramic artist whose work is also represented in the Canberra Potters Shop.

Canberra Potters' Society Inc

SIGNED for and on behalf of Canberra Potters' Society Inc ABN 65 491 135 689 by duly authorised representatives who warrant that they have the authority to sign this report on behalf of Canberra Potters' Society Inc.

		Signature	Date
President	Veronica L Taylor		
Secretary	Adeline Jeffery		
Treasurer	Rachael Axford		



Photograph: Tim Ngo