

# ArtSound

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2023



*ArtSound Studios; photo by Michael Crowe*

ArtSound Annual General Meeting, 27 June 2024, Eastlake Football Club, ACT

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This report (other than ArtSound's 2023 financial statements) is online at  
<https://artsound.fm/about/governance>

Report written and compiled by Chris Deacon, Neil Doody, Julie Finch-Scally, Tim McNamara.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Australian Capital Territory is Ngunnawal Country. ArtSound acknowledges the Ngunnawal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Canberra region, a meeting place of many Aboriginal groups. ArtSound acknowledges the many millennia of strong cultures of First Nations peoples, their caring for Country, and their enduring arts practices. ArtSound acknowledges its responsibility to share in promoting and celebrating First Nations cultures for the benefit of all who live on Ngunnawal country.

## ArtSound AGM 2024 President's Welcome

2023 was a celebratory year for ArtSound. The station turned 40. Who would have thought when the small group of interested people started the organisation forty years ago in Curtin, it would still be going strong, in 2023?

ArtSound wanted to make it special, so there was a Grand Opening by Rebecca Vassarotti, the ACT Minister for Environment and Heritage, in the Manuka Arts Centre Gardens. Chris Deacon gave a talk on the setting up of ArtSound, which was then called Canberra Stereo Public Radio; Bart Meehan was the MC, and we had James Monroe, a young cellist who had taken part in the 2022 ACT Young Virtuoso Awards, to entertain. It was a successful afternoon, and everyone looked forward to the year.

Poetry has long been prominent on the ACT arts scene, and with the assistance and encouragement of Peter Monaghan, poetry was introduced once a week on Arts Café in 2022. Out of this, in 2023, grew the program Poetry on the Radio. Many visiting poets now grace the corridors of ArtSound being interviewed about themselves and how and what they write, and reciting their work for broadcast.

Our entertainer at the Grand Opening, James Monroe, took part again in the 2023 ACT Young Virtuoso Awards and came second. The winner, Connor Whyte, a classical guitarist, headed to Brisbane for the National Finals thanks to a donation from The Gallery of Small Things. Both Connor and James were provided with a monetary prize from our generous supporter, Rotary Club of Belconnen. The ACT Young Virtuoso Awards are always a stimulating event. Seeing these young musicians perform for radio is rewarding and our judges, Sally Greenaway and Marián Budoš, find it sometimes difficult to evaluate.

Later in the year, ArtSound held a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner. The Yacht Club in Yarralumla was the chosen venue and it was a successful evening. Once again Chris Deacon provided the entertainment by playing tapes of interviews and advertising of yesteryear. The 40 to 50 people attending the function all had a great time and it was a perfect wrap up for ArtSound's fortieth anniversary.

## 2023 Annual Report

This report from the ArtSound Board of Management covers the 2023 calendar year (with some notes about 2024, to date) and should be read in conjunction with the financial statements and auditor's report appended below.

Included within the report are some notes about just some of the developments at ArtSound during the first half of 2024.

### Executive Summary

Due to ArtSound's alternating yearly elections, the 2023 Board consisted of Gabe Caddy, Chris Deacon, Eleanor Lewis, Songfa Liu and John Worcester, who were joined after the elections by Neil Doody, Julie Finch-Scally, Saad Khalid, Peter Monaghan and Stuart Warner, whose terms continue through 2024-25. At the first meeting of 2024 Songfa Liu resigned from the Board due to ill health. The decision was taken to ask Tim McNamara to join the Board to fill Songfa's place, which he accepted.

At the first meeting of the new Board in July 2023 Julie Finch-Scally was elected Chair of the Board; Chris Deacon, Vice-President; Neil Doody, Secretary; and Saad Khalid, Treasurer.

The Board's main concern was raising money to keep the station on air, as well as the need to replace equipment in the studios and master control room, and to acquire a new transmitter. The decision was taken to work towards increasing donations, encouraging more sponsorship and applying for as many grants as possible. Starting in the New Year (2024), new ideas and fundraising approaches were introduced, and separate money is being raised to upgrade the studio equipment while we also seek to make the ArtSound name better known for sponsorship. This is paying off as donations are pouring in to help with the equipment upgrade, and ArtSound is being recommended by current sponsors to other organisations.

The use of the recording studios is slowly building up, and having Tim Austin as the Audio Engineer has made it easier to hire out the studios any day of the week. Tim enjoys working with the equipment ArtSound has and is working on ways to promote what ArtSound can create in the recording studio. Several organisations are applying for grants to use our studios for recording audio books and special recordings.

It has been a slow process, but in the past few months we've been heartened by the increase in sponsorship requests and studio bookings. ArtSound also seems to be being thought of kindly by organisations that provide grants. We now seem to receive fewer rejections which is a positive sign.

Those people standing for re-election at this year's elections are wished the best, and the remaining Board members look forward to working with all those elected.

## **President's Report**

It has been a year since I was elected as the Chairperson of the ArtSound Board and the year has been exciting and fun. Many things have happened which have led to the name of ArtSound becoming more prominent in Canberra and the surrounding region. I have quite often been surprised and delighted when I tell people I work at ArtSound Community Radio and they say, "Oh we always listen to that station" or "It's always on in the car". Not only is this heartening, it also proves that what ArtSound is trying to achieve is happening.

ArtSound is part of the community and earlier this year, the Canberra Services Club that has owned the property on the corner of Canberra Avenue and Manuka Circle (next to the Oval) since WWII, had placed an application with the ACT Government to have the land deconcessionalised. Its desire was to build a boutique hotel above a new club on the land. ArtSound joined a couple of other groups such as Friends of Manuka Pool and the Griffith, Narrabundah Community Association in formally opposing the idea. ArtSound's main concern was the prolonged noise disturbance during digging for an underground carpark, as the vibrations could echo through the studios. As yet, we have not received any notification from the ACT Government as to its decision on the proposal, but the Club is organising meetings with the interested parties. No one seems to know what the outcome will be, but ArtSound is doing its bit as a community leader.

### **How is the station running?**

Late last year, ArtSound introduced a Standards and Training Committee, and this year revitalised the Fundraising Committee. Both have been working hard in their said fields and a separate report from each committee along with one from the Program Committee can be found in this report.

More and more phone calls and emails are being received from listeners who not only listen during the day, but through the evening into the early hours of the morning. Many people write to say they enjoy the programs and the music being aired, some ask for the title of the piece they have heard. Whenever we receive this feedback, members of our Welcoming Committee, who take care of the

reception area in the studio foyer, forward these messages to the specific presenter. I feel sure it gives them a lift to know that people appreciate their program.

The Board and all the committees have been working hard during this past year, not only raising money, but also reaching out to gain more members and volunteers. Recently you will have heard several new voices on the airwaves. This is due to the diligence of the Standards and Training Committee giving willingly of their time to train a group of people, with a three hourly, four week, Radio Broadcasting Course. This was no small achievement and a big thank you has to be passed on to all those who took part. Having spoken with the attendees of the course, each of them was thrilled at the experience of those training them and the knowledge that was imparted. Each trainee had to put together a program and be assessed, which as nerve racking as it was taught them a lot. All passed and are now assisting with several of ArtSound's programs.

The Fundraising Committee, since starting in January, has worked with new ideas. We've had Garden Concerts in the summer months. Now the Fundraising Committee is working towards Winter Concerts — in an inside venue, of course. A Rookies Podcast Competition is encouraging High School students to enter and become involved with ArtSound. We now even collect those 10c return cans and bottles. Every amount, no matter how small, helps improve our income statement.

The Program Committee deserves a lot of praise for its introduction of new programs such as Poetry on the Radio, Leaves of Bluegrass, Celtic Heartbeat, ArtStarter and Driveway. Attracting presenters who are available from 5 to 7pm on a weekday has turned out more difficult than I think the Program Committee expected, so to encourage volunteers to take part, Driveway started slowly, and is gradually gaining more presenters for that time slot. Having Driveway at that time in the evening means the repeat of Arts Café is being phased out. Speaking with many people, I am aware that the Arts Café repeat has many followers. We are looking for another place for the encore to air. The Program Committee's persistence should be applauded. The creation of these new presentations is finally achieving results. ArtSound is presenting many programs that cannot be heard on any other radio station.

Over this past year, ArtSound has developed a new sound. The music and spoken word being presented on our station has a different ring. Suddenly we have become the arts station that those who premiered the station envisaged. All presenters have their own vision of what the listeners to their programs enjoy. Our classical presentations extend from the medieval period through to some quite modern 21st century music. ArtStarter brings the up-and-coming Australian musicians to the airwaves. Arts Café can bring an African beat or Latin American sound along with the current musicians playing at Smith's Alternative that weekend. Senior Memories, Friday Night Live and Down

in the Basement have strong followings. Each program has its own sound and that sound has encouraged listeners of all ages to tune into ArtSound. As one of our younger presenters told me several months ago, friends, who regularly listened to our station, had said, 'You never know what you will hear on ArtSound'.

Unfortunately, due to many of our listeners living in New South Wales, it is very difficult for ArtSound to ever arrive at an accurate ratings figure. We have to be content with remarks made about what we play and the people who ring to donate and tell our receptionists that they never listen to any other station. As one lady told me: 'Thank God for ArtSound. It is with me every day'.

Further encouragement comes from the impressive number of entries to such initiatives as our Senior Memories Short Story and Knit a Beanie competitions.

There is no doubt the name ArtSound is increasingly broadly heard. More and more radio listeners are discovering us, and we are also capturing a younger audience. As I tell everyone, ArtSound will still be here in another 40 years. I won't be, but the station will. And we have our volunteers, committees and board members to thank for that. ArtSound is here to stay, and everyone involved deserves accolades for all the time and hard work donated to helping us achieve this goal. I feel sure all our listeners would join me in saying thanks for a job well done and keep up the good work.

Julie Finch-Scally  
President

## **2023 Programming Committee Report**

Programming Committee (PC) members during 2023 were Neil Doody, Peter Monaghan, John Worcester and Stuart Warner. We note the contribution of all members in the smooth and productive running of the committee over 2023.

The committee met monthly throughout 2023. We have been conducting a review process for ongoing ArtSound programs and for most of our meetings we have invited program coordinators to attend — one at a time — to gain their perspective on various aspects of their programs. This has been a valuable exercise, giving coordinators a platform to inform the PC about their program's overall health — presenter numbers, alignment with program briefs, and any issues they see arising from their program and, indeed, other station factors.

During 2023 we finally began to implement a live program on weekday afternoons, where once upon a time Disc Drive ran. The new program is called Driveway (ask our presenters where that name came from) and is intended as a sort of entrée into ArtSound's specialist music programs. Driveway is

not yet operating every weekday, but that is our intention once new presenters join the crew, included some who qualified through the Introduction to Broadcasting course. We also reinstated a specialist bluegrass program, Leaves of Bluegrass. ArtSound has missed covering this important folk genre for some years and we are privileged to have a renowned specialist, Rich Pascal, as host and programmer.

We have also made some adjustments to weekend programming to accommodate the end of Broadway Musical Yearbook, sent advisory notes to program coordinators to pass on to presenters, and brought in new Community Radio Network (CRN) programs — check out Dirt Music late on Saturday nights.

## **Fundraising Committee Report**

Early in 2024 the Fundraising Committee was re-established. Five members, Gabe Caddy, Mark Borowik, Chris Bell, Wylie Pang and Julie Finch-Scally formed the committee and began looking into ways more money could be raised for ArtSound.

The regular functions that have been a success over the past few years were adopted and worked on. The Music Trivia Quiz night had already been planned and with the hard work of Brian Leonard, Gabe Caddy and Ainsleigh Sheridan the preparations for the evening were well underway late last year. The sales of tickets were surprising and with the Sale of the raffle tickets and the wonderful array of prizes, gathered by Ainsleigh, ArtSound raised a massive \$4,459. The Trivia Quiz team feel they have found the winning system and are looking to implement the same success next year. Our thanks go to Brian, Gabe and Ainsleigh along with Stuart Warner who was assisting with sound, and Sue Leonard who helped with the adjudication. Well done peoples, a valiant effort.

ArtSound needs to upgrade its equipment. The Fundraising Committee suggested a GoFundMe campaign. With the excellent announcement on air, written and recorded by Neil Doody, and replaced in June with a line for End Of Year taxation deduction, the money has been trickling in. Some people, who didn't want to pay the fee to GoFundMe have made straight donations, so the money we have received, is rising to a useful amount.

Garden Concerts on a Sunday Afternoon were set up last year and have been successful. With the introduction of providing glasses of wine and nibbles, the money received has increased. But, Garden Concerts can only be held during the warmer months. The Fundraising Committee felt the concerts should be carried on in winter, so it has been investigating the possibilities of using a club in the city.



With the assistance of Rafael Florez, we are working on running two or three concerts during Winter and trying to establish this as a Winter part of the ArtSound annual Fundraising.

There will be another Radiothon. This has become a yearly event, and although money is being raised for the equipment upgrade, ArtSound needs the money for everyday expenses that is generated from the Radio-thon. This year it will be held in October, and the Committee is now working on prizes for the event and promotion. As a team we look forward to working with all the Presenters who we hope will get behind the 10-day event and assist us to raise as much money as possible.

If people have any different ideas on raising money that we could implement, please contact the Fundraising committee. We now have the van up and running and are available for outside broadcasts. Other community stations charge for this use. So can ArtSound.

The re-establishment of the Fundraising Committee has been worthwhile and is starting to bear fruit. If you have time do come and join us. We meet once a month on a Monday. Contact us through [admin@artsound.fm](mailto:admin@artsound.fm)

## **2023 Standards and Training Committee Report**

The Standards & Training Committee had 6-7 members over the last year and its major achievements were:

### **Introduction to Broadcasting course**

The committee developed and delivered a four session Introduction to Broadcasting course that covered the following topics:

- What is radio broadcasting?
- History of ArtSound FM
- Studio operations
- Program planning
- Program presentation
- Scripting
- Maximising your voice.

The course was delivered over four consecutive Tuesday nights to 11 participants who — with one exception — were totally new to ArtSound FM. The course was facilitated by committee members Tim McNamara (Training Coordinator), Betsy Dixon, Eleanor Mitchell Jones and Judy Baker. There were guest speaker contributions from: ArtSound's Technology Manager Chris Deacon; broadcasters Brian Leonard and Paul Conn; and professional voice actor Liz Landford. The course was a mixture of instruction and practical activities. Participants also received handouts and other learning resources.

Members of the Committee then provided supervised practice sessions to seven of the participants leading up to skills assessments that resulted in six new volunteers being placed on ArtSound programs: ArtStarter, Down in the Basement, Driveway, World Vibe and Senior Memories. One participant is still working towards assessment and program placement. The course received very positive feedback from participants and there is enough demand to deliver the course a second time later this year.

### **Music Interviewing workshop**

The Training Coordinator liaised with the Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO) to organise delivery of a Music Interviewing workshop. This was delivered by an external CMTO trainer over two consecutive evening sessions to 12 ArtSound volunteers. The workshop covered:

- Securing the interview
- Research and preparation
- Conducting the interview
- Pre-recorded vs. Live interviews
- Post interview follow up

The workshop was a mixture of information and practical activities, and participants received a resource booklet. Evaluation feedback praised the value of the workshop.

### **Upskilling seminar**

The committee organised a one day Upskilling seminar predominantly focused on technical skills. This was facilitated one Saturday by the ArtSound Technical Manager with assistance from the Training Coordinator. The seminar was attended by 15 station volunteers.

The seminar set out to cover the following areas:

- Introduction to Radio
- Improved studio operations
- What to do if something goes wrong
- What makes a program interesting
- Presenters' responsibilities
- Putting a program to air
- On air tips and tricks
- Legal/licence obligations

The seminar was informal, involving much discussion that led to the participants asking many questions about other areas of broadcasting that were then covered by the Technical Manager.

The Standards and Training Committee are satisfied with its achievements.

Tim McNamara  
Chair, Standards and Training Committee

## Technology Team Report

2024 saw further development of ArtSound FM's facilities and capabilities with a major focus on planning for the digital transformation of the studios and master control, and replacement of the ageing transmitter at Black Mountain.

Our main transmission facilities operated at 100% reliability except for (in the case of FM) minor planned antenna maintenance outages conducted by Broadcast Australia International at Black Mountain. Our 90.3MHz service experienced an outage of several days in late June 2023 due to component failure in the transmitter. The service was restored following emergency repairs to the transmitter off site.

ArtSound's backup facilities and emergency power ensured that ArtSound continued to supply broadcast program despite an increasing number of planned and unplanned power outages.

With development and operating funds diminishing, a major effort was put towards assisting in fundraising efforts for which I thank Peter Monaghan's invaluable assistance. This involved identifying and sourcing new forms of major donor and foundation support for the station, as well as seeking grant funding intended to support the stations operations and urgent upgrades of key station infrastructure.

As part of that exercise, we drafted the following documents:

*ArtSound Strategic Plan Status 2023-2027; ArtSound Risk Management Plan 2023; ArtSound Arts Investment Path 2023-2026; ArtSound Development and Operations Path 2023-2026; ArtSound Technology Development Plan 2023; ArtSound Broadcast Chain 2023*

These documents were critical inputs towards both successful and unsuccessful major grant applications during FY 2022/2023 to which we devoted major resources.

In 2022, we foreshadowed the need to urgently seek funding to replace the main transmitter, upgrade the studio consoles, and to refurbish the outside broadcast van. Significant progress has been made on all three fronts.

First, we researched possible transmitter replacements and sought quotations from vendors. This involved extensive discussions with other stations and vendors leading to the selection of the new generation Nautel 3KW transmitter. The intention was to apply for Round One Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) grant funding early in the new year (2024) to support its purchase (approximately \$36K). We expect that acquisition of a new transmitter will offer several benefits – higher power and coverage, 10-15 year longevity, improved audio quality and reliability, text information, online remote control and monitoring, and a reduced carbon footprint through

efficiency advances. Our application also included a request for funding new DAB+ monitoring and backup equipment, along with support for a range of general operating expenses.

Second, we completed a twelve-month evaluation of broadcast consoles and arranged an MoU with 1CMS to collaborate on this and other projects. A detailed specification for the future studio configuration (channelisation plans, network requirements, audio sources distribution, audio input and output cabling etc.) was developed in 2023. This was subsequently used to seek quotations and develop budgetary estimates for the project. At the time of writing, candidate solutions have been identified for the digitisation of the station's studio and master control facilities, funding is being sought and some demonstration equipment has already been obtained. Subject to the outcome of our fundraising efforts, plans involve the upgrade of consoles, studio desks, microphone arms and monitor speakers in up to four studios. The matter is urgent, as our current hand-built consoles are showing signs of age.

I am pleased to report that with the assistance of the ACT Government's Community Services Directorate, and thanks to Rotary Belconnen, we were granted approximately \$6,000 to refurbish the van, including repairs, insurance, paint restoration, signage, insurance and registration costs. This was to be completed by 1Q2024. To avoid blowing the budget, we undertook to remove the old signage and do the paint restoration ourselves over three weekends.

Through another ACT Government grant, we were able to upgrade the standard and reliability of our outside broadcast (OB) capability with a new codec/mixer, 4G router, and headsets. Plans are underway to increase the frequency and variety of OB's when the van is ready to go, and the weather improves.

In other projects, training was provided to a volunteer specialist to manage the digitisation and storage of the station's rare sound archives. Thanks to 1CMS, we have also been offered an "apprentice" technical officer to mentor. Marvin Jiang has been contributing several hours a month towards assisting with technical projects at ArtSound.

Studio console training was provided for a volunteers training course and technical assistance was provided on numerous occasions to various presenters, both on site and remotely. Technical support was provided again for the Young Virtuoso of the Year Competition live broadcast. I attended the annual Technorama Conference in Sydney in November 2023 to maintain industry contacts and update knowledge of recent technical developments affecting community radio stations.

In collaboration with Peter Monaghan, a Programming Committee member, I continue to provide (often daily) remote scheduling and maintenance of ArtSound's prerecorded programs and music database, including backups, quality control and emergency response. I also undertake (on a

voluntary basis) any commercial audio services work that is not able to be done by Tim Austin. That can include book readings, music group recordings and digitisation of tapes for outside clients.

We have also been required to step in to provide urgent technical support to resolve various web site, email and membership software transition issues that ArtSound faces due to the departure of previous volunteer coordinators.

Among projects still under development are provision of program audio on demand (to enable storage and replay of past programs – testing in progress), upgrade of studio and office PCs (hardware and software), provision of solar power at the studios, expansion of on-air digital reporting/interviewing capabilities and completing the phone system software upgrade.

In news just in, I am pleased to advise that ArtSound's funding request to the CBF (early 2024) referred to earlier, has been successful. Under an agreement signed this week, the CBF will provide funds of \$211,444.00 plus GST over three years. This will enable replacement of the superseded transmitter over the next few months, improve transmission link redundancy and subsidise transmission and operational expenses at our three sites. Multi-year funding support from the CBF for the first time in our history, will provide some financial predictability and reduce administrative burden. It will also allow us to capitalise on fundraising momentum that has been achieved to date towards the future studio upgrades. We thank the CBF for their generous assistance.

I am most grateful to the members of ArtSound's technology team who have provided valuable assistance during 2022/23. To Rodger Bean I make a special mention for his ongoing assistance with maintaining our transmission facilities and Jon Glanville and Marvin Jiang for their support of our IT development projects. Finally, the financial support of Sunni Zhong, the software maintenance advice of Anna Italiano in Perth and Peter Monaghan's ongoing grant-writing, newsletter and recording services support of the Technical Team is hereby acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

Chris Deacon OAM  
Manager Technology