

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**  
**Artistic Director, Tarnanthi**  
**Festival of Contemporary**  
**Aboriginal and**  
**Torres Strait Islander Art**



celebrating  
10 years

17 Oct 2025 - 18

BHP

**AGSA**



**The Art Gallery of South Australia  
(AGSA) seeks expressions  
of interest from experienced  
First Nations visual art curators  
and artistic directors to be  
appointed to the role of  
Artistic Director, Tarnanthi.**

Members of Kuma Kaaru Cultural Services perform a smoking ceremony at the opening of the 2023 Tarnanthi Festival: photo: Nat Rogers



## About Tarnanthi

The Tarnanthi Festival, AGSA's celebration of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, is one of Australia's leading First Nations art events, presented every two years in South Australia. More than 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from across Australia have created works for and participated in Tarnanthi since its first festival in 2015.

The name Tarnanthi was suggested and endorsed by Elders of the Kurna People, the traditional owners of the Adelaide Plains. It means to emerge, come forth or appear, like the sun and the first light of day – a metaphor across cultures for new beginnings, new ideas and the agency of imagination.

Tarnanthi is founded on First Nations-led conversations and collaboration to reveal the cultural depth and creative diversity of contemporary First Nations art. It provides a richer understanding of First Nations art, cultures, histories, experiences and perspectives.

Tarnanthi promotes deep listening and long-term engagement with artists in the creation of new works and the ongoing development of their practices. It supports the production of work, travel and exhibition outcomes.

Tarnanthi encourages artistic excellence. It is a vital forum for First Nations artists and communities across the country to tell and share important stories.

Tarnanthi also presents an ethical Art Fair, Regional Tarnanthi, public program initiatives, touring exhibitions and an award-winning education program.

## Tarnanthi at a glance **Since 2015**

**10,000+**

First Nations artists have participated in Tarnanthi

**2.2 million**

people have attended Tarnanthi events and exhibitions

**\$130 million**

estimated economic expenditure has been generated

**\$9.5 million**

returned to community through sales at Tarnanthi Art Fair

**150+**

exhibitions at AGSA, festival partner venues and on tour

**43,000+**

students and teachers have experienced Tarnanthi

# Artistic Director, Tarnanthi

AGSA is introducing a four-year engagement for the Artistic Director, who will be responsible for leading the delivery of Tarnanthi Festivals in 2027 and 2029. The period of the Artistic Director's appointment will be 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2030.

Applicants interested in this opportunity are asked to provide a covering letter outlining their vision for the artistic direction of Tarnanthi (no more than 2 pages), together with a current CV (no more than 2 pages) highlighting their relevant professional experience, artistic leadership, and curatorial or programming achievements.

**Enquiries about this opportunity can be directed to**

Tansy Curtin  
Assistant Director, Artistic and Collection Programs  
Art Gallery of South Australia

E [curtin.tansy@artgallery.sa.gov.au](mailto:curtin.tansy@artgallery.sa.gov.au)  
T 0409 695 545

**Applications can be forward to**

[hr@artgallery.sa.gov.au](mailto:hr@artgallery.sa.gov.au) by 5pm on Monday 1 June 2026.





installation view: *Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi*, 2025, featuring *Wantili (Warntili, Canning Stock Route Well 25)* by Bugai Whyoulter; photo: Saige Prime

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Is this position identified for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?**

Yes, applicants for this position must be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

### **What is the term of engagement of the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi?**

The Artistic Director, Tarnanthi's engagement commences on 1 July 2026 and concludes on 30 June 2030. In this period, it is expected that the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi will curate and direct two biennial festivals scheduled for late 2027 and late 2029.

### **What are the working hours for the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi?**

It is envisaged that this will be a part-time role, with working hours that may increase and decrease month to month, year to year depending on the festival program and deliverables. The Artistic Director, Tarnanthi would be expected to be available for all programmed events (where possible) and during peak festival times.

### **When is the Tarnanthi Festival scheduled to open in 2027 and 2029?**

The Tarnanthi Festival is scheduled for early October 2027 to mid-January 2028 and early October 2029 to mid-January 2030. These dates may be refined in consultation with the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi.

### **What is the remuneration for the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi?**

An attractive remuneration for the delivery of each biennial Tarnanthi Festival will be negotiated with the successful candidate and will be reflective of the time commitment, knowledge, and expertise required of the role. In addition, a travel budget of \$25,000 (ex GST) per biennial festival will be provided.

### **Is it possible for the Tarnanthi Festival to be led by a small curatorium (team) rather than one single Artistic Director?**

Yes, however the fee and travel budget as outlined above are fixed and would need to be shared between members of the curatorium.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Is the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi expected to live on Kaurna Yarta (Adelaide)?**

No. If the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi is based interstate, remote working is feasible. However, negotiated periods of time including periodic visits to AGSA for on-site festival development activity and work will be required.

## **What are the key deliverable components of a Tarnanthi Festival?**

We welcome the vision of the new Artistic Director, Tarnanthi to develop and scope the key deliverables for the Tarnanthi Festival. The five biennial festivals delivered between 2015 – 2025 consisted of:

- A major exhibition in AGSA's temporary exhibitions galleries complemented by important project exhibitions.
- A highly successful Art Fair (off-site from the Gallery and held annually from 2015–2025. From 2027, the Art Fair is proposed for biennial delivery).
- Regional Tarnanthi projects and exhibitions, in addition to regional and national touring projects.
- Partner projects – exhibitions associated with Tarnanthi and programmed by galleries and art spaces across metropolitan Adelaide and regionally.
- Education and Public Programs reaching thousands of students, young people and the wider public.

## **What are the key internal AGSA relationships?**

### **Who does the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi report to?**

The Artistic Director, Tarnanthi reports to AGSA's Assistant Director, Artistic and Collection Programs, and has a close liaison with the Director and Deputy Director of AGSA. The Artistic Director, Tarnanthi will also work closely with AGSA's First Nations Advisory Council.

## **Is there a team that works alongside the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi?**

Tarnanthi is a whole-of-organisation commitment and is delivered by every department across AGSA. The Artistic Director, Tarnanthi will work closely with:

- AGSA's Executive Management Team
- Producer, Tarnanthi
- Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art
- Exhibitions management staff
- Marketing and Communications staff
- Various project staff

## **Is the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi responsible for the administrative management of staff?**

No. However, the Artistic Director, Tarnanthi will offer vision, inspiration, guidance and collaborative support to all staff involved in delivering the Tarnanthi Festival and its projects.

## **What are the key external relationships?**

Tarnanthi is an outcome of long standing and deep engagement with a great number of partners. The Artistic Director, Tarnanthi will engage with Country Arts SA and the Tarnanthi Regional Curator as well as maintain and expand relationships with artists and community, arts colleagues, government and funding partners in the delivery of successful festivals.