

MEDIA RELEASE  
Friday 15 October 2021



## 2021 Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art opens

**Adelaide, Australia:** Tarnanthi, the Art Gallery of South Australia's festival of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art opens to the public today. Launched to people across the world via livestream last night with a performance by Electric Fields, Antara signers and Tjarutja Dance Theatre Collective, Tarnanthi features exhibitions, performances, artist forums and an art fair.

Tarnanthi 2021 features the work of more than 1400 artists aged 13 to 89-years from the length and breadth of Australia who reinvigorate culture through new works of art in 60 exhibitions and events at AGSA and across South Australia in more than 30 venues until 30 January 2022.

In 2021, the popular Tarnanthi Art Fair will launch as a 100% online event at 5pm today and will be open until Monday 18 October, offering audiences across the globe the opportunity to buy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art online, 24 hours a day. Since 2015, art totalling more than \$4 million has been sold at the Tarnanthi Art Fair, with all proceeds going directly to the artists and their community-run art centres.

Dr Jennifer Purdie, BHP Olympic Dam Asset President also made the important announcement at the launch last night that BHP will continue its support for Tarnanthi as Principal Partner for a further three years.

Purdie says, "We are incredibly proud of what BHP and the Art Gallery of South Australia have achieved together thus far. Tarnanthi's vision aligns with our priorities at BHP. Since our inaugural

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partnership in 2015, we have witnessed this partnership supporting 4,500 artists in their long-term economic empowerment, social and cultural well-being and pathways to self-determination, and the generation of more than \$7.5 million from the direct investment in 269 communities involved across Australia over the last four years. Through Tarnanthi's showcasing of contemporary art and culture, we look forward to greater long term, economic benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and communities across Australia."

With BHP's renewed support for a further three years, Tarnanthi will be presented as a major biennial statewide festival featuring exhibitions, artist forums and an art fair. Tarnanthi will expand its regional programming, continue its educational outreach and deliver statewide and national touring programs in addition to the biennial festival.

Hon. Steven Marshall, MP, Premier of South Australia says. "Tarnanthi is transforming South Australia's status as a destination for Aboriginal art and culture. Much more than a Festival, Tarnanthi happens everyday – in art centres, studios, galleries and classrooms across the country; and, through the art fair, we have the opportunity to bring important stories into our homes and support economic and creative empowerment for First Nations artists. Since 2015, Tarnanthi has enacted a revolution with close to \$100 million in economic expenditure generated in SA. I'm thrilled that BHP will continue to support Tarnanthi for a further three years."

Artistic Director, Nici Cumpston OAM says, "We are so pleased that the impact of Tarnanthi has been recognised with this continued partnership and we look forward to continue creating, lifechanging opportunities for artists and communities and new experiences for audiences."

AGSA Director Rhana Devenport ONZM says, "We applaud BHP for their continued support that propels Tarnanthi as the foremost platform for learning the rich stories embedded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. We thank our exceptional First Nations artists for their generosity in sharing these stories and their torrent of creativity."

Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art is presented by AGSA in partnership with BHP and with support from the Government of South Australia. For full program details, visit [agsa.sa.gov.au](http://agsa.sa.gov.au).

Tarnanthi in 2021 will be presented at part of the state's Bloom Spring Campaign, a new initiative by the State Government and South Australian Tourism Commission.

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**KEY DATES** Tarnanthi 2021 Festival Season | 15 October 2021 – 30 January 2022  
Tarnanthi Art Fair | Online | 15-18 October  
Panpapanpalya (ideas forum) | AGSA and online | 15 October  
Artist Talks | AGSA and online | 16-17 October

**MEDIA PORTAL** [agsa.sa.gov.au/about/media/tarnanthi-2021-media-portal/](http://agsa.sa.gov.au/about/media/tarnanthi-2021-media-portal/)

**SOCIAL MEDIA** @agsa.adelaide @tarnanthi #tarnanthi

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## TARNANTHI 2015 - 2020 AT A GLANCE

- 1.4 million people have attended Tarnanthi exhibitions and events
- 4,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists have been included in exhibitions, art fairs and events
- More than \$4 million of art has been sold at the Tarnanthi Art Fair, with all money going directly to artists and communities
- \$96.8 million in economic expenditure has been generated in South Australia since 2015 because of Tarnanthi
- International recognition for APY artists has soared through Tarnanthi, exemplified by the acquisition of the 1500-spear installation work *Kulata Tjuta: Kupi Kupi* by Swiss gallery Fondation Opale and by the 2020-21 exhibition *Kulata Tjuta* shown in Rennes, Brittany, and Le Havre, Normandy
- Over 27,000 students and teachers have attended Tarnanthi exhibitions, and tens of thousands more have benefited from AGSA's pioneering education program and book, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art in the Classroom*, which equips teachers to integrate First Nations art, culture and histories into daily classroom learning.

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Image caption: Electric Fields with Antara singers at the launch of Tarnanthi 2021, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, photo: Nat Rogers.