



MEDIA RELEASE

Grant to expand Armidale-based children's book festival

20 Nov 2019

More children in the New England and beyond will have greater access to cultural experiences following new funding under the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund.

Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, said the \$8,030 grant to the New England Writers' Centre based in Armidale will help fund an extension to local children's literature festival, Booked In, and its outreach to communities in the region.

Project description:

Funding will support the extension of the successful Booked In literature festival to centres outside of Armidale and district, including Tamworth, Glen Innes, Moree and Mungindi. Booked In is an annual children and young adult's literature festival. It features prominent visiting authors and illustrators as well as showcasing local creators. The festival offers talks, workshops, bookshop events and more. The outreach program will feature professional, published local authors and illustrators travelling outside of their home bases, which include Armidale, Walcha and Dorrigo.

"I have recently become reacquainted with children's literature and is so important that children start reading or are being read to at the earliest age possible," Mr Joyce said.

"There is nothing better than a child going to the bookcase, grabbing a book and coming over to have you read to them. You know it is from that seed, that further development in this wonderful facet of life, is derived."

The Regional Arts Fund supports sustainable cultural development in regional and remote communities by providing support to artists and organisations to create new works, develop skills and make connections across communities. Through the latest Regional Arts Fund round, the Government will provide more than \$1.1 million to support 71 regional arts and cultural projects.

Also funded in the New England under this round:

- Tamworth Regional Council (\$19,680): Sky Canvas: Telling our stories of the Sky, Land and People will be the first series of creative arts programs at the Tamworth Regional Astronomy and Science Centre (TRASC).
- Tamworth Regional Gallery (\$19,465): Collection Conversion – study of the region's identity through an exploration of six regional museums and their collections to develop a series of new

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Hon **Barnaby Joyce** MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

artworks that uniquely respond to each collection.

- Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council (\$20,000): Building Leadership in Aboriginal Arts and Culture. The project utilises arts and culture to build the cultural and economic capacity of Aboriginal cultural leaders in the Guyra and Tamworth regions.
- Aboriginal Regional Arts Alliance, Ashford (\$35,000): to increase employment and economic opportunities for Aboriginal artists in regional and remote NSW by building the capacity and creativity of Aboriginal communities through a series of professional and creative workshops

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