



15TH NATIONAL
RURAL HEALTH
CONFERENCE
Better together!

24-27 MARCH 2019
Hotel Grand Chancellor
Hobart, Tasmania



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MEDIA RELEASE

6 February 2019

Arts and health in Hobart

The importance of arts and artistic performance in building better and healthier communities will again be recognised with presentations and performers at the 15th National Rural Health Conference.

It would not be a Rural Health Conference without an arts and health stream - and this year's Conference in Hobart is no exception.

The 15th Conference is being held from 24 – 27 March 2019 and local artist and Arts and Health Co-ordinator, Kelly Drummond Cawthon, has developed a program that includes local, national and international performers and artists in a program that promises a wide variety of exciting content opening up the world of arts and health.

The National Rural Health Alliance sees the linkage between arts and health as a key element in building wellbeing and health for all Australians.

While the program features the creativity of many local artists, it has also attracted an international component with presentations and performances by Jill Sonke, Director of the Center for Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida, USA. Jill is active in research, teaching, and international cultural exchange. Her current research focuses on the arts and health communication, the arts in public health, and the effects of music on cost and quality of care in emergency and trauma medicine.

National Rural Health Alliance Chief Executive Officer, Mark Diamond said the arts is an essential element in promoting health and wellbeing.

“The performing and visual arts in particular provide a deeply meaningful and powerful form of expression of one's own sense of wellbeing. There is something that is shared between us that builds a sense of connection with others, with our feelings and our experiences,” Mr Diamond said.

“In addition, arts activities are a potent force for community development, to support and sustain communities and to develop their capacity to deliver health-promoting lifestyles.”

Some of the arts and health highlights include:

- Josh Arnold, well-known songwriter and music video producer, The Outback Fella, will lead a pre-conference song writing workshop for delegates who will rehearse the composition and perform it in a plenary session on the final day with some local primary school children;

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- Second Echo Ensemble makes dance work about life, about its surroundings, its imaginings, its rhythms, its angers and its celebrations and will present a short excerpt from its work *By my hand*;
- The Mambo Africa Trio offers distinct multi-instrumental talents of a group that marries Flamenco, Samba, High Life with the music of Malawi and South Africa; and
- Liz Lea is a performer, choreographer and producer who specialises in working with classical Indian dance and martial arts. *RED* explores Liz's journey and experiences with endometriosis.

There will also be a series of presentations on arts and health. These include:

- The Regional Arts Fund – health and wellbeing through creative engagements;
- *Deadly Threads* – Using creativity, culture and pyjamas to connect community to hospital;
- The Mental Health Rural Arts Show; and
- Storytelling – the conduit to good health and prosperity for rural Australia.

“It is really important to recognise the contribution arts and performance makes to these communities and regions,” Mr Diamond said.

“The National Rural Health Conference highlights and celebrates this contribution.”

The full program can be found on the Conference website at www.ruralhealth.org.au/15nrhc

To register for the 15th National Rural Health Conference, go to the following link:

<https://nrha.eventsair.com/15th-national-rural-health-conference/register/Site/Register>

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