Next Wave, 2023 Annual Report

Next Wave,

From the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin Nations, Next Wave is privileged to traverse the land and waterways of this continent of many nations – to share in the act of art making and culture building – grounded in values of justice, friendship and care. This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

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A note from the Board

Every year is a big year in the life of a small arts organisation.

The pace at which we work in the arts is extraordinary, in both good and bad ways. We constantly innovate and stay on the pulse of ideas, technologies and social movements. But, we also take on too much and often outpace our energies and collective wellbeing.

Three years ago, under new leadership, Next Wave made the decision to address our pace and consider what sustainability looks like in the life of an arts organisation and the careers of artists. We made the decision to invest in change because an organisation survives and thrives because it keeps evolving.

Looking back on 2023, we are proud of what we have delivered and the profound impact our work has had on the lives of artists. We remain steadfastly committed to artists in their early careers, providing the support they need to develop their creative practice. From exhibitions to performances, workshops to residencies, each initiative is a demonstration of our commitment to providing space for artists to gather, create, learn, organise, and relay.

We are so very fortunate to have a talented and dedicated team and Board here at Next Wave who believe in the vision of ‘a world shaped by artists’ and embody our values of justice, friendship and care in the work they do everyday.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Jamie Lewis, whose invaluable contributions have helped shape the foundation of our endeavors at Next Wave. While Jamie is on parental leave in 2024, we warmly welcome Jacina Leong as our Acting CEO.

Change does not come with a single step. It is constant, requires reflection and recalibration from time to time, and a community of people around it who believe in what we are trying to achieve. To our artists, supporters and funders who have come along on this journey, we thank you. As we enter our 40th year at Next Wave, we know there are many more big years ahead and we are ready to thrive.

Amrit Gill
Chair, Next Wave Board

A note from the CEO

Our vision is a world shaped by artists.

Writing this message from the position of Acting CEO/Executive Director, and interim steward of the organisation, as we prepare to celebrate 40 years of Next Wave in 2024, I have been thinking about 'a world' not in the singular – but always already plural. Worlds as plural, and by extension, the worlding and worldbuilding that artists actively shape in and through their practices, means possibilities.

Possibilities to learn, to listen, to witness how human and more-than-human worlds are shifting, amid climates of political, ecological, and social uncertainty.

Such worldbuilding is evident in programs such as A Rising Tide and Kickstart – recent and long-term initiatives by Next Wave that tap into this organisation's history as a launch pad for early-career practitioners and its ongoing commitment to mentorship and capacity building for emerging artists and arts workers. Initiatives that recognise the possibilities of multiple perspectives through long-form, intergenerational, intersectional, and transdisciplinary collaborations.

In 2024, Next Wave will celebrate 40 years, building on these initiatives, while reflecting on its past, present and future, including its transformation in 2021 from festival to annual programming. At the heart of this transformation is a recognition of a changed and changing arts sector, and an ongoing need to enact and model sustainable work conditions. To do so is not only a necessary investment in early-career practitioners – but a commitment to manifesting the kinds of arts organisations that our complex futures demand.

This is never easy work. Worldbuilding requires concerted and continual effort – both speculative and practical labours of care. I look forward to working with Next Wave staff and its extended community as we navigate the contours of this work.

Dr Jacina Leong,
Acting CEO/Executive Director

Background

For forty years, Next Wave has shaped the Australian arts landscape, playing a pivotal role empowering and elevating early-career practitioners, and advocating for the next generation of artists.

Incorporated in 1984 and emerging as a Narrm/Melbourne-based festival in 1985, for 35 years, Next Wave platformed and showcased contemporary, experimental, and bold new work by early-career artists through its biennial festival model – attracting local, national and international engagement.

In 2021, Next Wave took on a new strategic direction, moving away from the festival model to annual programming in direct response to artist and sector demands pre-dating the impacts of a global pandemic – including the need for sustainable working practices and the space, time and resources to support creative development.

To this day, as we head towards 40 years of operation, Next Wave's commitment has remained constant: nurturing early-career artists in the most crucial of moments as they develop their practice and skills.

"Our long-term investment in young people and early career artists is more important than ever to ensure the arts and cultural sector of the future is vibrant, equitable and strong."

– Next Wave board member, Amrit Gill

Radical Hospitality: Kain Na Tayo
photo by Kenneth Suico

2023 at a glance

$297,439

paid to artists

101

artists supported to develop, test and deliver new work as part of our artistic program

125

multi-artform events presented

256

days of venue space provided to independent practitioners and peer organisations for creative development at Brunswick Mechanics

71

unique venue hires

2023 audiences at a glance

45.8%

identify as female

27%

identify as male

55.3%

identify as LGBTIQ+

38.1%

identify as a person of colour

42.1%

identify as culturally or linguistically diverse

27.2%

identify as gender diverse

1.6%

identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

20.8%

identify as a person with disability

Data collected from audiences is voluntary and therefore not all audiences who attend our events are reflected in these statistics.

Opening night of *To pitch a tent, to pull it back down* by TIDAL, photo by Mae Hatric

2023 communications at a glance

38,224

followers on social media

19,082

monthly social media impressions

1,509

monthly social media engagements

5,525

monthly social media video views

8,166

monthly page views on Next Wave's website

1,861

monthly site users on Next Wave's website

4,000

subscribers to our monthly newsletter

38.1%

of subscribers open our newsletters on average

Next Wave's communication channels experienced a period of flux in 2023 due to staffing changes. While this resulted in some communication gaps, the Next Wave team effectively maintained our external communications channels – including our social media accounts, our regular EDMs, and our website. Next Wave also commissioned local videographer Banalarama to produce a video series about our Producers in Residence, which to date, have been watched more than 5,000 times on social media.

Programming and Creative Development Highlights

Guided by our values of Justice, Friendship, Care, in 2023, Next Wave committed to a full program of activities to showcase Brunswick Mechanics as a space of creative development, experimentation, and community connection – for artists and a broader community of practitioners – while concurrently implementing our state and national reach.

Radical Hospitality: Kain Na Tayo! with Saluhan Collective (Brunswick Mechanics)

Kain Na Tayo! invited audiences to explore issues of climate crisis and consumption through diasporic and intergenerational perspectives – working with artists, chefs, musicians and storytellers to guide audiences through a series of installations and performances, illustrating the ingenuity of Filipino food culture.

"I loved the chance to hear from artists I was unfamiliar with and be given a lens into their cultural and creative experiences. I also really enjoyed the dining element of the event and the opportunity to sample new dishes from a cuisine I haven't had much exposure to."

– audience feedback

Photos by Kenneth Suico

Next Wave Festival 2020 presentations (Brunswick Mechanics and PICA)

In 2023 we presented the last two projects originally commissioned for Next Wave's 2020 festival:

Under My Tongue by Belinda Locke, which premiered at Brunswick Mechanics in July to coincide with Disability Pride Month. Using performance to unearth invisible challenges that people face in their lives every day, and drawing from anonymous submissions about real-life experiences, *Under My Tongue* delved into the politics of connection, the aesthetics of access, and the unseen aspects of people's identities, histories, and emotional lives.

Dead Ends and Detours by Bruno Booth, a joint commission by Next Wave and the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art. *Dead Ends and Detours* placed audiences in a wheelchair and demonstrated that disability is not a dirty word. Playful and subversive, this interactive outdoor installation invited passers-by to compete in an obstacle course in the Perth Cultural Centre.

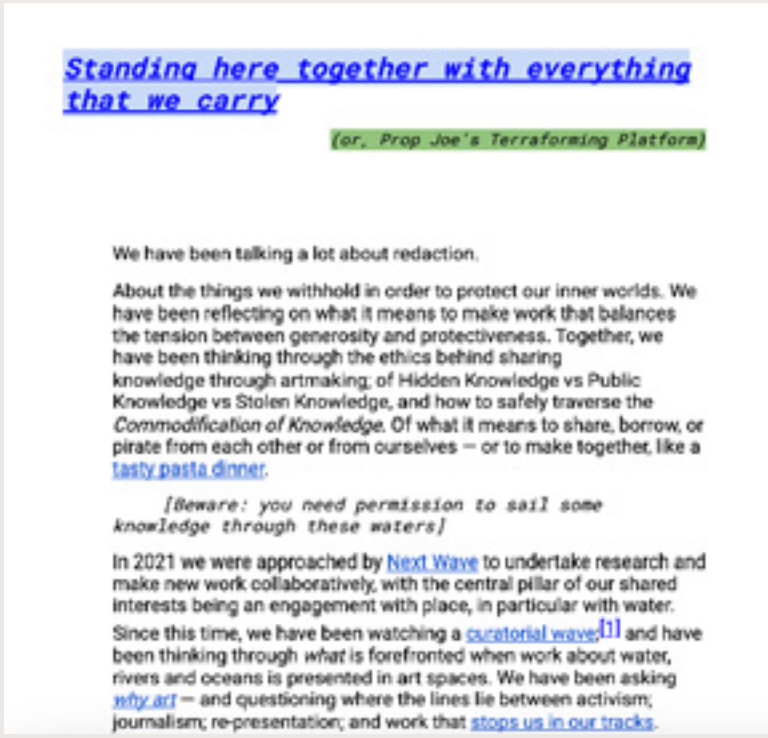
Top and middle: *Under My Tongue* performance and *Under My Tongue* exhibition, photos by Margherita Coppolino.

Bottom: Bruno Booth and his work *Dead Ends and Detours*

Completion of TIDAL research commissions (Mission to Seafarers and online)

TIDAL launched in 2021 as a new major commissioning program responding to the provocation ‘art as public space’ and the locality, community and cultural context through long-form research, development, iterative outcomes and artist-led interventions into civic infrastructure – involving artists Aaron Claringbold, Eliki Reade, Jack Mitchell, and Rebecca McCauley.

Our TIDAL research commissions wrapped up in May 2023 with *To pitch a tent, to pull it back down* at Mission to Seafarers – an exhibition about language, mapping, and the power in withholding or sharing knowledge; of artmaking and the sacred, and what it means to relate to a place in shifting times – and **a collective essay published on the All School website**.



Standing here together with everything that we carry

(or, Prop Joe's Terraforming Platform)

We have been talking a lot about redaction.

About the things we withhold in order to protect our inner worlds. We have been reflecting on what it means to make work that balances the tension between generosity and protectiveness. Together, we have been thinking through the ethics behind sharing knowledge through artmaking; of Hidden Knowledge vs Public Knowledge vs Stolen Knowledge, and how to safely traverse the *Commodification of Knowledge*. Of what it means to share, borrow, or pirate from each other or from ourselves – or to make together, like a tasty pasta dinner.

[Beware: you need permission to sail some knowledge through these waters]

In 2021 we were approached by Next Wave to undertake research and make new work collaboratively, with the central pillar of our shared interests being an engagement with place, in particular with water. Since this time, we have been watching a curatorial wave[1] and have been thinking through *what* is forefronted when work about water, rivers and oceans is presented in art spaces. We have been asking *why art* – and questioning where the lines lie between activism; journalism; re-presentation; and work that stops us in our tracks.

Top and middle: *To ptich a tent, to pull it back down* exhibition, photos by Mae Hatrick.

Bottom: the collective essay on the All School website, *Standing here together with everything that we carry*

Completion of Producers in Residence commissions

The Producer in Residence program, generously supported by VicHealth through their Future Healthy initiatives, was established in partnership with Next Wave to amplify the voices and ideas of young Victorians to dream, build and connect in and through arts and cultural experiences.

In 2023, the Producers in Residence program saw three artists (Leigh, Tarryn and MaggZ) embark on a year-long journey of designing and curating projects with/for/by young people. Between them, bringing relationships across communities, knowledge across waacking, writing for theatre and TV, visual art and storytelling, and explorations into identity through the work of remembering, reclamation, regeneration, and revitalisation.

> "This was a great way to explore dance performance with purpose."
>
> *– audience feedback on World+ Event*

From top: MaggZ at *World+ Event*, photo by Judd Abello; the launch of Leigh's *Ubuntu* magazine, photo by Akwal Magek; Tarryn at their Radical Hospitality event, photo by Jane Fitzgerald

All School (various including online)

All School is an artist-led learning program by Next Wave, designed to facilitate knowledge sharing and idea swapping.

All School returned in 2023, kicking off the year of programming with All School *CRIT CLUB* events held simultaneously in Melbourne, Canberra and online. 2023 also saw us facilitate our first All School *EXCHANGE* – taking five Next Wave artists to Larrakia Country/Darwin for MarketMarket, as part of Darwin Festival.

> "Works of art presented carried themes across from each other but explored them (and ideas of hybridity) in distinct ways. Energy in the room was fun, supportive, interested from audiences, and open minded."
>
> *– audience feedback on Crit Club*

Top and middle: All School *EXCHANGE*: *MarketMarket* activities at Rapid Creek Markets, photos by Paz Tassone.

Bottom: A screen grab from All School *CRIT CLUB*

Completion of 2021–2023 Kickstart program and Artistic Directorate term

Next Wave is focused on building stronger, more collaborative, and sustainable experiences for early-career artists and their communities.

Operating for 20 plus years, Kickstart is a long-form residency program (18 months) that prioritises time and relationships, and that supports early-career artists to dream and make where they are, in place, within their context and communities. In 2021, Next Wave welcomed the following artists through to our Kickstart cohort: Delali Zevon-Aniakwah (ACT), Jocelyn Tribe (NT), Rachael Anderson (SA), Kartanya Maynard (TAS), Devika Bilimoria and Amias Hanley (VIC), Ivy Mutuku (VIC), Prue Stevenson (VIC), Elham Eshraghian-Haakansson (WA), Rhanjell Villanueva (QLD) & Re-Right Collective (NSW). These artists were mentored by our Artistic Directorate.

Kickstart 2023 showings included:

— *Burial* by Kickstart artists Devika Bilimoria and Amias Hanley (presented at Brunswick Mechanics, Narrm/Melbourne, 15 February 2023)
— *Anvár* by Kickstart artist Elham Eshraghian-Haakansson (presented in Yagan Square, Boorloo/Perth, during March/April 2023)
— *Fiddle, Twiddle and Tune* by Kickstart artist Prue Stevenson (presented at XYZ Studios, Narrm/Melbourne, 5–6 October 2023)

Our 2021–2023 Artistic Directorate also wrapped up their term in August 2023. Over the past two years, our 8 Artistic Directors (Amaara Raheem, Daley Rangi, Dominic Guerrera, Kristi Monfries, Naina Sen, Nathan Stoneham, Theia Connell and Tian Zhang) curated events and mentored a Kickstart artist, offering local perspectives on practice and communities across the country.

> “Kickstart was a great long-form opportunity that fostered time, space and community in developing and presenting our ambitious project. It gave us access to producers, insightful workshops and introduced us to other a cohort of incredible artists.”
>
> *– Devika Billmora and Amias Hanley, Kickstart artists 2021–23*

Kickstart 2021–2023

Delali Zevon-Aniakwah (ACT)

Devika Bilmoria and Amias Hanley (VIC)

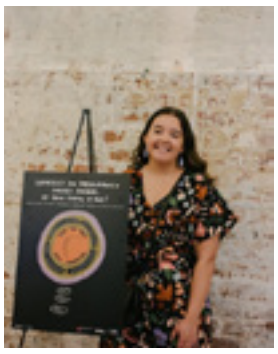
Elham Eshraghian-Haakansson (WA)

Ivy Mutuku (VIC)

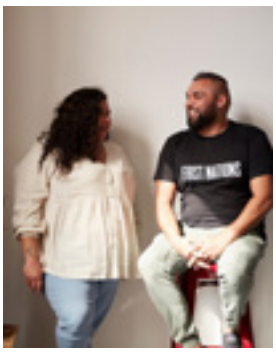
Jocelyn Tribe (NT)

Kartanya Maynard (TAS)

Prue Stevenson (VIC)



Rachael Anderson (SA)

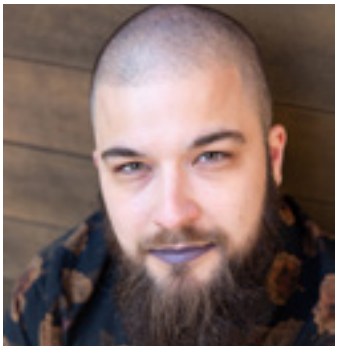


Re-Right Collective Carmen Glynn-Braun and Dennis Golding (NSW)

Rhanjell Villanueva (QLD)

Artistic Directorate 2021–2023

Amaara Raheem (VIC)



Daley Rangi (WA)

Dominic Guerrera (SA)

Kristi Monfries (ACT)

Naina Sen (NT)

Nathan Stoneham (QLD)

Theia Connell (TAS)

Tian Zhang (NSW)

Images supplied by artists

Top left: *Anvár* by Kickstart artist Elham Eshraghian-Haakansson, photo by Aaron Claringbold.

Bottom left: *Fiddle, Twiddle and Tune* by Kickstart artist Prue Stevenson, photo by Pia Johnson.

Above: *Burial* by Kickstart artists Devika Bilimoria and Amias Hanley, photo by Renee Stamatis.

Launch of Young Artistic Directorate: A Rising Tide

A Rising Tide is a leadership and curatorial development program, initiated in partnership by Next Wave and VicHealth and involving four early-career practitioners, Banda, Matisse Laida, MaggZ, and Lydia Tesema—collectively known as the Young Artistic Directorate.

A Rising Tide encourages experimentation and risk-taking in curating, community building and culture-making, and is guided by Next Wave's Young Creative Lead, Nickila De Silva. A Rising Tide emerged in response to a sector need for mentorship and capacity building for early-career artists and community organisers. This includes learning how to advocate—as an early-career practitioner—for accessible, culturally safe, and ethical working conditions, and how to navigate presumptions about young people that can negatively impact early-career participation and engagement in the arts.

As a convener, Next Wave—whose values are grounded in justice, friendship, and care—supports this through several methods: intergenerational and transdisciplinary collaborations, long-form and intersectional relationship building, and exploring experimental practice. Sometimes this looks like sharing food, hanging out and making art together.

As an inaugural program, A Rising Tide taps into Next Wave's commitment to support a world shaped by artists, and its forty-year history as a launch pad for early-career practitioners.

Anthony Bandalan

Lydia Tesema,

Matisse Laida

MaggZ

Top: Nickila at the Future Reset Youth Summit.
Middle: the Young Artistic Directorate, Banda, Lydia and Matisse photographed by Daneil Temesgen, MaggZ supplied by artist.
Bottom: Matisse at All School *LAB*, Radical Hospitality in 2022, photo by Mae Hatrick.

Next Wave's Young Creative Lead and Young Artistic Directorate, photo by Tallulah.

Looking ahead

2024–2025 Kickstart cohort

In early 2024, Next Wave is welcoming a bright new cohort of experimental early-career artists to Kickstart, our flagship development program.

“We’re thrilled to announce the 2024–2025 Kickstart cohort, a brilliant group of individual artists and collectives whose practice is embedded in – and shaped – by community, experimentation and non-conventional knowledges,” said Next Wave Lead Program Producer Frances Robinson.

“By investing in early-career artist development, and taking the pressure off presenting polished, final outcomes – we equip our artists with the skills, networks and resources needed to imagine a more sustainable career.”

In 2024, we will welcome:

— An.Other collective (NSW/VIC)
— Ellamay Fitzgerald (QLD)
— Georgia Lucy (TAS)
— Jayda Wilson (SA)
— Jen Datu (WA)
— Rachel Morley (VIC)
— Rarriwuy Hick (NT)
— Sophie Dumaresq (ACT)

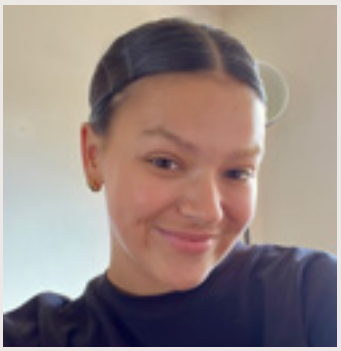
Read more about our 2024–2025 Kickstart artists.

Support for a Gold Coast-based artist to participate in Kickstart by Next Wave has been made possible through the City of Gold Coast Arts and Culture Unit and Generate GC. Generate GC is a City of Gold Coast initiative produced by Situate Art in Festivals. Support for a local Victorian artist to participate in Kickstart has been made possible through the City of Wyndham.

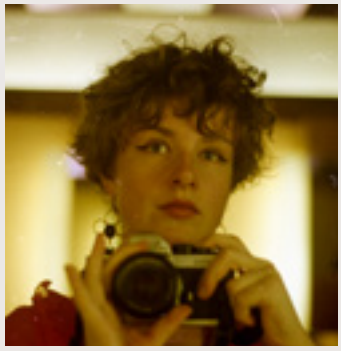
An.Other Collective (NSW/VIC)

Ellamay Fitzgerald (QLD)

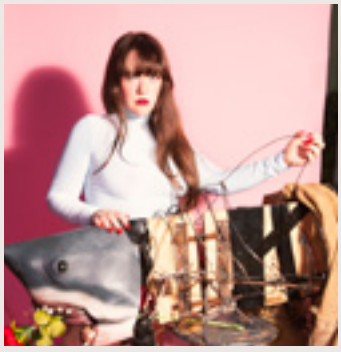
Georgia Lucy (TAS)


Jayda Wilson (SA)

Jen Datu (WA)


Rachel Morley (VIC)

Rarriwuy Hick (NT)

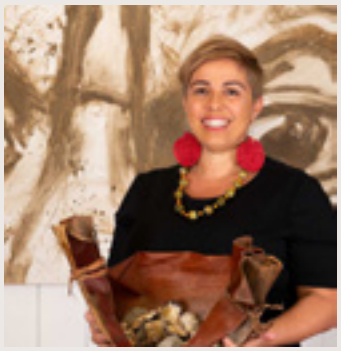

Sophie Dumaresq (ACT)

Kickstart artists will be guided, mentored and supported by the 2024–2025 Artistic Directorate cohort, and encouraged to develop, experiment and share their practice with local and national audiences. They will also be supported by Next Wave's producers and learn from each other through a series of facilitated workshops and exchanges.

Across the 18-month program, there will be multiple ways for Kickstart artists to explore their experimental practice – both individually and collectively with the rest of their cohort – through development and work-in-progress showings.

Our 2024–2025 Artistic Directorate are Bruno Booth (WA), Libby Harward (QLD), Lucy Bleach (TAS), Marian Abboud (NSW), Rosealee Pearson (NT), Sally Golding (ACT), Yuhui Ng-Rodriguez (VIC) and Yusuf Hayat (SA).

Bruno Booth (WA)



Libby Harward (QLD)

Lucy Bleach (TAS)

Marian Abboud (NSW)

Rosealee Pearson (NT)

Sally Golding (ACT)

Yuhui Ng-Rodriguez (VIC)

Yusuf Hayat (SA)

On left: the 2024–2025 Kickstart cohort (Ellamay Fitzgerald photo by Buzz Gardiner, Georgia Lucy photo by Rémi Chavin, Jen Datu photo by Badlands, Rachel Morley self-portrait)

On right: the 2024–2025 Artistic Directorate (Bruno Booth by Emma Dolzadelli (Minderoo Foundation), Libby Harward by BJ Murphy, Marian Abboud by Anna Kucera, Sally Golding by Grace Costa)

Staff

Jamie Lewis
CEO/Executive Director (on parental leave from December 2023)

Jacina Leong
Acting CEO/Executive Director (interim from November 2023)

Vivian Cooper
General Manager

Nisha Madhan
Lead Creative Producer

Frances Robinson
Lead Program Producer

Maddie Lakos
Communications & Development Manager

Emma McManus
Creative Producer: Public Programs

Nickila DeSilva
Associate Producer: Communications & Engagement

Andrew Goddard
Production Coordinator

Natalia Sledz
Business & Operations Coordinator

Board members

Amrit Gill (Chair)

Kate Robinson (Deputy Chair)

Hannah Jensen (Treasurer)

Bec Cole

Nicole Smith

Jodee Mundy OAM

Casual staff

Cameron Harris

Shan Dante

Pranati Narayan Visweswaran

Chas Maher

Daniella Raniti

Tanya Rayzman

Isabella Darcy

Jamie Brown

Sarah Aiken

Georgie Bright

Lily Morris

Jessica Tanto

Lina Buck

Transitioning staff

Next Wave thanks and acknowledges the work of the following staff who finished in their roles in 2023:

Jacqueline Hanlin
General Manager

Brigitte Trobbiani
Communications & Development Manager

Haneen Martin
Creative Producer

Navera Johari
Associate Producer: Communications & Engagement

Next Wave staff at our 2023 program launch, photo by Mae Hatrick.

Partners

Funding partners

Creative Victoria
Creative Australia
VicHealth
Merri-bek City Council
City of Melbourne
Deakin University
City of Wyndham
City of Gold Coast

"By partnering with Next Wave, we are proud to support initiatives that harness the transformative potential of the arts to create positive social change and promote equitable access to cultural opportunities."

– Kevin Kapeke, Lead, Neighbourhood and Built Systems, VicHealth

Event partners and collaborators

PICA (Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts)
Centre for Projection Art
FRAME
Saluhan Collective
Generate GC
ACCOMPLICE
Darwin Festival
Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres
You Are Here
Seaweed Appreciation Society
New North

Design partners

Public Office

Hospitality partners and foodie friends

Noisy Ritual
Mountain Goat
Islands of the Moon
Mabu Mabu
Rapid Creek Markets

"Radical Hospitality was amazing to work with as the event created a great opportunity to tie in art with food that some may have never tried before.

If given the chance to work with Next Wave again, we would definitely take it as they just know how to create the mood to enhance enjoyment for their patrons."

– Chian Ting, Co-owner and Director of Nimbo Cloud

Next Wave,

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Get in touch

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LinkedIn	@NextWave
Twitter	@next_wave