

*June 2025*

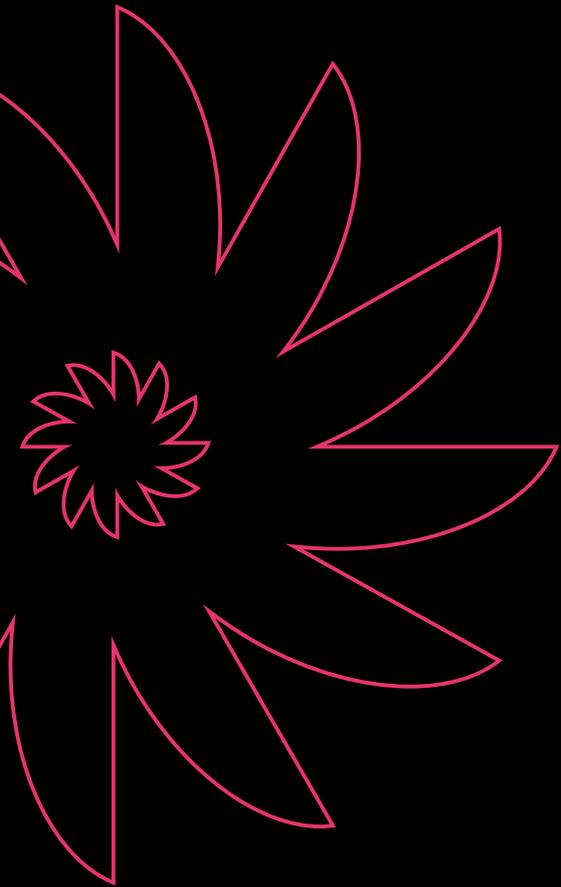
# 2025 BARKING GECKO ARTS



*Evaluation Report:  
Regional Teaching Artist Training  
Program*

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# Introduction and Background

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In 2025, Barking Gecko Arts delivered a five-day intensive Regional Teaching Artist Training Program at the Subiaco Arts Centre from 12 - 16 May, supported by the **Creative Learning Partnerships Grant** through the **Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries**. The initiative aimed to strengthen regional artists' teaching capacity, build confidence, and equip them with practical facilitation strategies for working with young people in educational and community contexts.

Led by experienced Teaching Artists **Ariana Paganetti** and **David Williams**, the program combined experiential learning, peer collaboration, and reflective practices. Although the program was unable to pay participants a daily wage, it offered fully subsidised travel logistics, accommodation, and per diems for participants, removing financial barriers and supporting equitable access for regional artists to engage meaningfully.

Of the 8 participants, a total of **7 participants** completed both the pre-post-training surveys, providing valuable data on the program's effectiveness and impact.

Participants of this year's cohort included: Mireia Gonzalez (Kalgoorlie), Zoe Waterstrom Muller (Karratha), Sherrise Todd (Dunsborough) Astrid Chapman (Meekatharra), Yazmin Ryan (Albany), Anne Sorenson (Albany), Vicky Biorac (Kununurra), Michele Laine (Bunbury).



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# Program Structure

02



## Day 1: Foundations of Teaching Artistry & Facilitation Techniques

- Introduction to Teaching Artistry: The role and responsibilities of a Teaching Artist.
- Understanding Young People: Child development, learning styles, and engagement strategies.
- Creating Safe & Playful Spaces: Group dynamics.
- Experiential Activities: Icebreakers, trust-building games, and movement-based exercises.



## Day 2: The Creative Toolbox – Storytelling, Movement & Play (Entry Points)

- Storytelling as a Catalyst for Creativity: Techniques for engaging young minds.
- The Power of Play: Using improvisation, movement, and theatre games to spark imagination.
- Facilitating Exploration vs. Directing Outcomes: Encouraging agency and self-expression.
- Hands-on Session: Participants design and lead short storytelling & movement-based activities.



## Day 3: Workshop Design & Adaptability

- Lesson Planning for Engagement: Structuring workshops for different age groups.
- Adaptive Facilitation: Responding to different learning needs and group energy.
- Managing Challenges: Strategies for handling disruptions, disengagement, and emotional responses.
- Interactive Lab: Small groups create, and present workshop plans with feedback.



## Day 4: Practice & Reflection – Co-Facilitation & Feedback

- Co-Facilitation Sessions: Lead a segment of a workshop with facilitator and peer feedback.
- Self-Reflection & Growth: Identifying strengths and areas for development.
- Navigating the Teaching Artist Career: Professional pathways, self-care, and maintaining creative energy. A discussion on vicarious trauma and safeguarding, delivered by highly skilled psychologist and coach, Shona Erskine.



## Day 5: Independent Facilitation & Final Showcase

- Independent Workshop Delivery: Lead a full session with facilitator and peer feedback.
  - Creative Problem-Solving: Real-time adjustments and adapting to unexpected challenges.
  - Final Reflections & Next Steps: Personal action plans for future facilitation.
  - Closing Celebration: Sharing experiences and fostering peer connections.
- 



## Assessment

Program evaluation was conducted using a matched pre-post-survey approach. Participants self-assessed their confidence across seven teaching areas before and after the training using a 5-point Likert scale. Post-surveys also included open-ended questions to gather qualitative feedback on program impact, application intentions, and overall experience.



## Reflection

To accommodate different preferences and accessibility needs, surveys were offered in both hard copy and digital formats. This flexible delivery ensured all participants could engage with the evaluation process in a way that suited them best. In addition to the formal surveys, a Reflective Diary was provided as a personal tool for participants to capture insights, observations, and key moments throughout the training. While not collected as a formal evaluation instrument, it was included to support ongoing self-reflection and professional growth. This diary helped artists process their experiences in real-time and served as a valuable complement to survey-based feedback. Quantitative analysis focused on the shifts in self-reported confidence, while qualitative analysis drew on participants' reflections to provide narrative insight into their learning journey.

# Confidence Growth

Participants reported significant increases in confidence across all seven teaching areas.



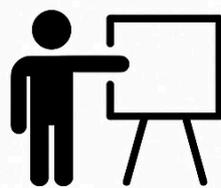
**+58%**

Facilitating young people



**+100%**

Using storytelling and play



**+39%**

Designing workshops for young people



**+41%**

Engaging different types of learners



**+68%**

Adapting to learning needs



**+96%**

Creating inclusive and accessible environments



**+36%**

Building student engagement



These improvements suggest the training successfully equipped artists with key facilitation strategies and pedagogical understanding.

# Participant Rating and Reflection



## Participant Reflections (Selected Quotes)

- “This program reframed the way I see facilitation — I now see myself as a guide, not just a deliverer.”
- “The peer-led learning and safe space created by the facilitators helped me step out of my comfort zone.”
- “It’s rare to have such a generous space for regional artists to feel seen, heard, and empowered.”

## Post-Survey Impact Ratings

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that:

- The training improved their ability to design inclusive, engaging workshops.
- They felt more equipped to manage challenges in facilitation settings.
- They felt part of a supportive peer network.
- They were motivated to apply their learning within the next 12 months.

## Ratings of the program’s effectiveness (on a scale of 0 - 5):

AREA	AVERAGE RATING
Overall program	5
Facilitation	5
Hands-on/practice-based learning	4.9
Opportunities for reflection and feedback	4.9
Peer connections	4.9
Practical relevance to participants' work	5

# Summary

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## Conclusion

The Barking Gecko Arts Regional Teaching Artist Training Program delivered strong outcomes for regional WA Teaching Artists. It boosted their confidence in workshop design, inclusive facilitation, and adaptive strategies. Participants also formed valuable peer networks and reported strong motivation to integrate their learning into future work with young people. Given the measurable growth and positive qualitative feedback, the program demonstrates excellent value as a professional development model for regional artists. Ongoing support and follow-up opportunities would further sustain and amplify its impact.



# Case Study 1



07

Following the Regional Teaching Artist Training Program, several participants have already taken up new opportunities with Barking Gecko Arts and beyond. This section highlights how the program has supported artists to deepen their practice, expand their networks, and step into new teaching roles across Western Australia.

## Zoe Waterstrom Muller – Karratha, WA



Since completing the Barking Gecko Regional Teaching Artist Training Program in May 2025, Zoe Waterstrom Muller has been engaged as a Teaching Artist Assistant on the Woodside Arts Access Initiative Residency in Karratha by Barking GeckoArts. In this role, Zoe supported the delivery of drama-based workshops for local young people. A passionate emerging artist and proud Karratha local, Zoe has been involved in numerous plays and musicals since the age of 11, winning multiple state and school drama awards, including the 2024 YOHFest Top Health Score Award. She has directed local theatre productions, facilitated improv classes, and is currently developing acting workshops for youth in her community. Zoe's drive to expand high-quality arts access in regional areas, combined with the skills gained during the program, have made her a vibrant and capable contributor to place-based arts education.

### 1. What's one key thing you learned during the Regional Teaching Artist Training Program that you've applied in your current work with young people?

One key thing I learnt during the Regional Teaching Artist Training Program that I have applied in my current work as Teaching Artist is being able to adapt to teach different demographics of people and learn how to work with the group dynamics of a class. This important when teaching regionally because there is a lot more people from different backgrounds and cultures, as well as people who have additional needs. And if I didn't learn how to work with that and be adaptable my job would not be done as well as it should be.

### 2. How did the experience of training alongside other regional artists shape your confidence or approach as a Teaching Artist?

Training alongside other regional artists was really helpful for me as a young and new Teaching Artist to gain some insight from a bunch of people which diverse experiences and different art forms that they teach. Whilst doing the training I was the youngest participant, so being able to make connections and get advice from more experienced Teaching Artists helped boost my confidence in my skills and knowledge, as well as it gave a safety net to fall back on if I ever need some advice.



### 3 . What does it mean to you to be able to deliver arts experiences in your own community?

To be able to deliver arts experiences in own community means world to me because it means I get to give others the opportunities within the arts that we currently do not offer or ave within my community. Also to be able to share my knowledge and experiences with other young artists like myself and encourage others to do the same.



### 4 . How rare or common are arts training opportunities like this in your region?

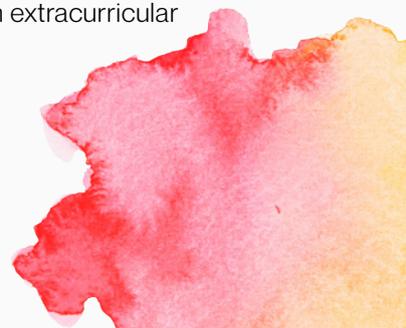
Arts training opportunities like this in my region are almost impossible to find.

To be able to do the training in Perth through Barking Gecko Arts was an experience I thought I would never get the opportunity to have. My main art form which is drama, is currently only available to youth in my region (Karratha) through school education, so the only drama Teaching Artists in my community are school teachers.



### 5 . Why do you think it's important for regional artists to have access to this kind of training?

It is super important for regional artists to have access to this kind of training so that arts opportunities are given to local regional artists and not artists who have travel to our region. Promoting the arts within can help give youth like myself the opportunity to have a job they love and are passionate about. Jobs to do with the arts in regional communities is rare especially one you get paid for. The arts are also very important to promote creativity within young minds and to help them find out what their talents and passions are especially in a community where sports are the main extracurricular activities given to kids and where trades are the most common jobs.



# Case Study #2

09



## Sherrise Todd



Since completing the Barking Gecko Regional Teaching Artist Training Program in May 2025, Sherrise Todd has been engaged as a co-facilitator on the AWESOME Schools residency program, travelling from Dunsborough to contribute her visual arts expertise. A passionate regional artist with a background in early childhood education, Sherrise has spent the past nine years running art classes and creative workshops for children and young people living with disabilities. Her practice centres around acrylic painting on canvas, and she brings both pedagogical knowledge and artistic skill to her facilitation. The program supported Sherrise to refresh her classroom practice and build confidence in student engagement and behaviour management—skills she is now applying to support inclusive, high-quality arts experiences for young people in regional communities.

### **1. What's one key thing you learned during the Regional Teaching Artist Training Program that you've applied in your current work with young people?**

The confidence and ability to facilitate inclusive team building and scene-setting games and activities with my regional groups. David and Ariana brought so much to the program to demonstrate, share and encourage us to participate and execute fun, meaningful games and activities I have already applied in my teaching. Seeing and hands-on 'doing' in the program has given me the confidence to use these activities with current students.

### **2. How did the experience of training alongside other regional artists shape your confidence or approach as a Teaching Artist?**

The training was an amazing opportunity to support, collaborate, share experiences and network with other Teaching Artists in what can be an isolating field. Because regional Teaching Artists often work alone with groups, the program was incredibly beneficial for collegiate discussion, sharing of knowledge and ideas in running fun and engaging workshops back in our regional centres. The hands-on approach in the training gave us the opportunity to test out our new skills in a safe and kind environment, ready to take them back and apply them in our own practice.



### 3. What does it mean to you to be able to deliver arts experiences in your own community?

Being able to deliver arts experiences to my community is essential. The more I engage creatively with people the more I see the benefits gained from participating in an arts activity. I believe staying connected to creative, slowed, and 'in the flow' experiences is imperative to our overall well-being as humans. Access to these experiences should be made available to everybody, especially those living in the regions where access to facilities may be restricted due to geography and other factors.

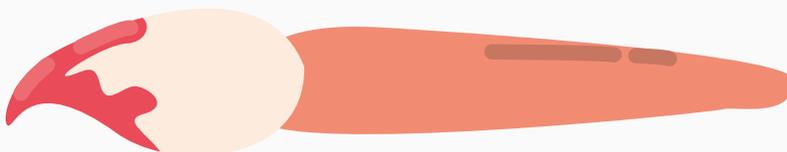


### 4. How rare or common are arts training opportunities like this in your region?

I am not aware of any arts training opportunities like this in my region.

### 5. Why do you think it's important for regional artists to have access to this kind of training?

It is incredibly important regional artists have access to this kind of training because it can be very isolating in the regions due to a number of factors (location, access to resources, geography, funding). The training provided gave us not only the opportunity to upskill in current teaching pedagogies and activities, but provided an invaluable space to workshop together, sharing experiences and challenges in a Teaching Artist context. Access to this training supports Teaching Artists to ultimately provide a high level of creative learning experiences (and well-being) for regional communities.



# BARKING GECKO ARTS



GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of  
**Local Government, Sport  
and Cultural Industries**

 **upbeat**  
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