

MORE SUPPORT NEEDED: ARTISTS

By Rachel Loveday

Despite evidence showing that Australians are embracing the arts more and more over time, practicing artists believe that more public support is needed for artists to fully express their creativity and talent.

Kathy Keele, the CEO of the Australian Council of Arts spoke at the opening of the Regional Arts Australia National Conference, a gathering of artists, art workers, volunteers and policy makers at Launceston on Thursday.

During her speech, she presented figures from the council's academic research that showed that the Australian views on the arts is moving towards a more positive direction and away from the view that artists are pretentious as more Australians are becoming engaged in art, both as audience members and artists, especially with more opportunities present on the internet.

However, practicing artists at the University of Wollongong believe that more support is needed, especially financially.

"More job opportunities for artists would be good," creative writing student, Rachel O'Reilly, 19, of the Blue Mountains said.

Fellow creative writing student, Matilda Grogan, 20, of Wollongong also agreed that more funding for artists is needed as her and a group of her classmates were having a bake sale to fund their magazine launch.

"We're not getting any funding from the uni, so we have to raise enough money to have it (the magazine) printed and to hold a launch party," she said.

Veronica Carroll, former high school visual arts teacher, now Education Officer at the Wollongong Art Gallery, believes that there should be more educational opportunities for artists, such as workshops that the gallery holds for primary school children in the school holidays.

"The workshops give children the opportunity to explore different types of art, which they can carry on at school and at home," she said.

Despite the increase in support, which both Matilda Grogan and Rachel O'Reilly fully appreciate, they also believe that there will always be people who dismiss art and will not give it the support it needs.

"I think that some people overlook art because to them it doesn't serve a practical purpose in ones' life," Ms Grogan said.

“I don’t think the arts will ever be as well facilitated as law or the sciences because it’s not deemed in society as being important or relevant. But the views have definitely improved,” Ms O’Reilly said.