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GOVERNMENT BACKS ENTERPRISE, INNOVATION, AND INCLUSION WITH MUCH NEEDED FACILITIES IN WYNYARD

Big hART's Artisan Precinct has received over \$9.5 million in federal funding as part of the regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (rPPP) to build a social enterprise hub in Braddon, North West Tasmania — and work is already well underway.

“We weren't sitting around waiting for government money,” said Scott Rankin, Director, Big hART, “the Artisan Precinct is up and running. This funding helps us complete what our community has already started.”

The Artisan Precinct is a partnership between Big hART and North West Support Services (NWSS). Located in Braddon — a community facing high unemployment, low educational attainment, and entrenched generational poverty — the Precinct directly confronts these challenges by doing what governments alone cannot: building a place where people learn, make things, start businesses, and find their footing.

Funding will support the construction and fit-out of six workshops, a dedicated First Nations workshop, a commercial greenhouse, an Artisan Hub, a Precinct Caretaker Residence, and sustainability infrastructure — a physical foundation for lifelong learning and genuine economic participation.

“Without innovative thinking, this region is dead in the water — and innovation comes from creativity,” said Artisan Pathways Producer, Dudley Billing. “We're not teaching young people what to think. We're teaching them how to think. We're teaching them to give it a go and backing their right to learn.”

The Precinct centres on the lost trades and crafts — the industrial arts, the skills and handiwork that AI cannot touch, the things our grandparents built and made. Not nostalgia — necessity. As a pilot model for left-behind places, it creates a critical link between education providers, disability services, and local employers to shift intergenerational underemployment by backing local innovation. Artisan supports people to trust their enterprise ideas and reimagine how they can participate in the local economy.

Micro-enterprises already operating out of the Precinct include First Foods, Artisan Greencare, Wedgetail Works, Hartland Boats, and Tunapri — small businesses helping young people make their skills pay. Additional enterprises in development include stone masonry, stained glass, and ceramics. Artizine, the project's community publication, is part of the fabric of the whole.

Program funding received from Ian Potter Foundation and State Growth has allowed us to shape the programs and develop the vision and the relationships. The backing from the RPPP now means we can scale our vision to full effect. We'd like to thank all partners involved.

“This funding gives our community a chance to lean into its strengths,” said Billing. “The trades that built this region can carry it forward — hand built, handmade, ultra-local, and built to last. That's the Artisan Precinct.”

As Big hART celebrates its 35th year of delivering projects in Tasmania, and exporting its work nationally, in the Pacific, PNG and China, Artisan marks an excellent opportunity for Big hART to celebrate and extend its work here on the North West Coast where the organisation was founded.

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