

## **ADFAS Northern Rivers: Young Arts Award 2023**

Back in 2018, ADFAS Byron Bay, as it was then called, seized on the opportunity to provide much needed local community backing for the Annual Bangalow Music Festival, as a potential opportunity for partnership building to increase our profile within the local region. Initial contact and follow-up discussions with the producers - Southern Cross Soloists, revealed the opportunity for a mutually beneficial arrangement. ADFAS promotion of the Festival to its members and the setting up of an annual Young Arts Award, was rewarded by an increased profile for ADFAS via public acknowledgement of our support to SXS's emerging musicians.

Being a small society with limited funds, we use takings from our monthly raffle, to fund the monetary award. Since 2018, we have presented the award to aspiring young musicians drawn from the local community – violinists, flutist, two pianists and an aspiring young composer.

The 2023 ADFAS Northern Rivers Young Arts Program presented young Murwillumbah local, Robert Smith, with a \$500 scholarship to further his music studies and contribute to travel costs to benefit his career. Robert, 23, is an extraordinarily gifted violinist who has performed widely across Australia.

Though completing his undergraduate degree with distinction at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, Robert continues to study at the Conservatorium with renowned Australian violinist, Michele Walsh. He is an active member of the Australian Youth Orchestra and is currently the Concertmaster of the Sydney Contemporary Orchestra.

Southern Cross Soloists artistic director, Tania Frazer believes the ADFAS scholarship highlights the amazing talent coming out of the Northern Rivers, with Robert a great role model for the region's budding crop of musicians.

Robert was most appreciative of the award and has offered to perform for ADFAS - now Arts National members and hold a master class with younger students at the Lismore Conservatorium of Music.

ArtsNational Northern Rivers is planning to increase the value of the award in 2024 and to broaden its reach into the local arts community.

Dianne Stuart: Chair 2023.