



**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY



Institute for Culture  
and Society

# Recalibrating culture: production, consumption, policy

## A RESEARCH REPORT

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the ARC Linkage Project (LP 130100253) *Recalibrating Culture: Production, Consumption, Policy* is to understand the work practices of artists and cultural practitioners who live and/or practice in Greater Western Sydney. The research aimed to find out about the nature of artistic and cultural practice, how that work is undertaken, where it is done, and what is needed for arts and cultural practice to happen and prosper.

Professors Deborah Stevenson and David Rowe from the Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) and a research team examined the changing modes of cultural activity and participation in Australia. The research consisted of a detailed online survey open for two months and drew 310 responses, of which 231 were eligible respondents who live and/or work in Greater Western Sydney. This number is large enough to draw reasonably robust conclusions and for these to apply to the larger population of artists and creative workers in the region. Semi-structured interviews with 21 participants were also undertaken over a two-month period. This report summarises the key findings, provides a more detailed analysis of them, and closes with a set of conclusions and recommendations.

As part of the attention being placed upon Western Sydney, the Deloitte's report *Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy — A Key to Sydney's Success* (2015) details the inequity of state and federal cultural resource expenditure in Western Sydney thus in its executive summary:

*On a per capita basis the Western Sydney Cultural Arts sector has been grossly under funded and supported ever since the region developed its first modern cultural institutions in the late 1980s and early 1990s.*

*Today Western Sydney represents 1 in 10 Australians yet attracts only 1% of Commonwealth arts program funding, and 5.5 % of the States Cultural Arts, heritage and events funding* (2015: 9).

While such funding inequity is serious, the *Recalibrating Culture* research suggests that artists and cultural practitioners do not view their lives entirely as being 'in deficit'. The respondents generally attempt to integrate their commitment to arts and culture into work from which they might, if desired or possible, make a living. For many, this impulse translates to feeling that they 'belong', and even more so for those who feel like 'outsiders' in society.

The findings here elucidate the sense of independence available to them as creative and cultural practitioners, and simultaneously highlight the paucity of creative resources available to the research participants. This combination suggests that there exists in Greater Western Sydney a highly adaptable group of people who are able to combine their passion for creative practice with a range of 'portmanteau' employment activities and economic resources to continue in their creative work. This is a response of a resilient group, although it must be acknowledged that it is also a mature, well-educated one (many of whom are retired or semi-retired) who are more likely to be respondents to survey and interview requests. Demonstrable issues of demography and social equity emerge as a result.

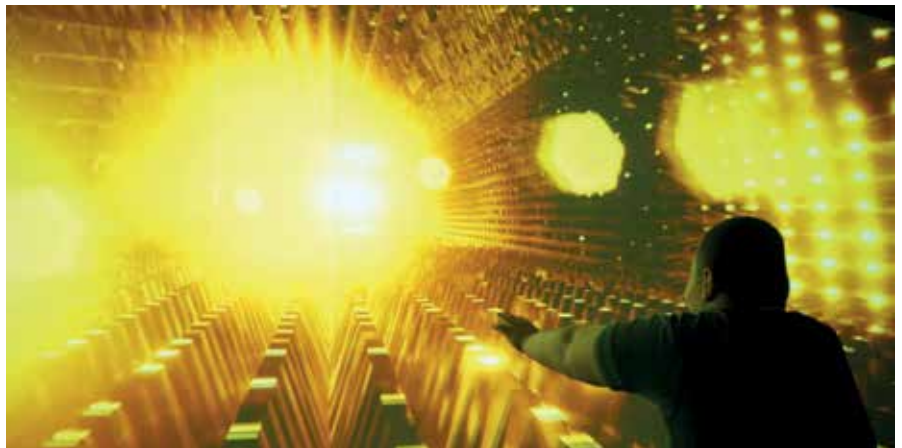
Younger people, especially those from working-class and disadvantaged backgrounds, are less well-positioned to take up creative work because of the lack of educational possibilities in the region (there is no dedicated art school in all of Greater Western Sydney) and the lack of support and associated low level of income in the arts. An ageing artist population supported by superannuation or a waged partner cannot sustain the creativity on which following generations can build. The resources allocated to the arts and cultural sector must take this (apparently widening) schism into account.

The *Recalibrating Culture* study found that artists and cultural practitioners commonly:

- collaborate across artforms, particularly in the Visual Arts and as cultural facilitators
- earn below the national artist average income for their arts practice
- seek part-time employment in the cultural sector if it is available
- encompass a range of artistic identities
- network within their artform and tend not to associate formally with cultural institutions
- deploy digital technologies for production if their work is screen-based
- use digital technologies to build new audiences.

This study highlights the immediate need for accessible and flexible spaces for cultural practice. The level of interest and support for location to Western Sydney by major and independent cultural institutions needs to be leveraged in ways that are not 'business as usual'. Cultural infrastructure projects have to consider how flexible and accessible creative working areas can be incorporated into their development. Professional artist residencies and sites for semi-formal training are key considerations to be taken into account. This level of interaction with the diverse population of artists and cultural practitioners would increase the profile of cultural infrastructure in the region and, in turn, generate dynamic creative centres with which Western Sydney could be identified.

Crucially, it is the artists and cultural practitioners, both singularly and in teams, who need to be recognised as the key existing creative infrastructure and sustainably supported as the creative leaders in the region.



*Links to Learning.* (2015). Information and Cultural Exchange, Granville Boys High School at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Photograph: Marian Abboud.



*Daisy Moon was Born This Way.* (2017). Joan Sutherland Performing Arts. Photograph: Alana Dimou.

# INTRODUCTION

## THE RESEARCH PROJECT AIMS

Greater Western Sydney is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. Commencing at Parramatta, Greater Western Sydney stretches to incorporate the Blue Mountains in the west, Hawkesbury in the north/north-west, and Wollondilly in the south/south-west (Fagan and O'Neill, 2015). Currently, 47 percent of Greater Sydney residents live in Western Sydney (Montoya, 2015). Over the next 20 years, Western Sydney's population is forecast to increase by 50 percent to approximately 3 million (Montoya, 2015). It is anticipated that more than half of the Greater Sydney population will reside in the Western Sydney region (NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2014). Western Sydney is very culturally diverse: it is home to NSW's largest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and is also one of the most multicultural regions in the state (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a; Centre for Western Sydney, n.d.).

Over the last decade, the number of Australians engaging in paid or unpaid cultural activities has increased by over 50 percent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007; 2011b; 2013). This rise has occurred despite falling attendances at more traditional arts forms such as ballet, theatre and classical music (Live Performance Australia, 2014). Western Sydney is acknowledged as having an active arts and cultural sector and is the location of a number of significant arts facilities, including Bankstown Arts Centre, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Riverside Theatres, and the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. According to the *NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework*, the sector has a key role to play in the development of the region (Arts NSW, 2015).

Reconceptualising cultural activity assists in the development of cultural policy and planning (Stevenson, 2000). The research undertaken in *Recalibrating Culture: Production, Consumption, Policy* focuses on artists and cultural practitioners, exploring their creative work and support systems. It advances knowledge and understanding of contemporary cultural employment and activity. Our findings provide the basis for a new approach to Australian cultural policy that reflects rapidly changing conditions in technologies, precarious income sources, portfolio practices, and working conditions for artists and cultural practitioners.

Professors Deborah Stevenson and David Rowe from the Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) and a research team examined the changing modes of cultural activity and participation in Australia. This project was funded by the Australian Research Council through its Linkage Project grant scheme in collaboration with seven industry partners. The senior researchers were joined by partners on the project from the City Councils of Auburn, Fairfield, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith and Sydney, the Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) and, later, by industry sponsor Arts NSW. Dr Jo Caust undertook the survey analysis and conducted and analysed the interviews, with Professor Deborah Stevenson, Professor David Rowe and Ms Cecelia Cmielewski (who

also provided research management of the project) structuring the overall research report, and providing theoretical, conceptual and empirical information and analysis. A case study analysis of the cultural economy of Australia's most dynamic urban area – Greater Western Sydney – was undertaken in the context of metropolitan Sydney. The research adds a deeper quality and value to 'broader-brush' national cultural statistics and current cultural mapping approaches.

The purpose of *Recalibrating Culture* is to understand the working context of artists and cultural practitioners who live and/or practice in Greater Western Sydney. The research aimed to find out about the nature of their practice, how they undertake their work, where they do it, and what is needed for their practice to prosper. Many artists and cultural practitioners volunteered to participate in this research. The participants responded to a detailed online survey and/or agreed to be interviewed, indicating the level of their commitment to cultural production in the region.

Research into working conditions and earnings of artists and cultural practitioners is usually undertaken nationally (Throsby and Hollister, 2003), as an aspect of wider cultural policy research undertaken at a local level (Yue, Khan and Brook, 2011), or in the context of cultural strategy reviews (Lally, 2004, 2006; Deloitte, 2015). Arts NSW is the main



Olivia Barbarto, All Saints High School. (2017).  
From *NEXT2017*, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre.  
Photograph: Courtesy Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre.

commissioner of arts and cultural reports into Western Sydney, the most recent being SGS Economics and Planning's *Mapping Arts and Culture in Western Sydney* (forthcoming, 2017). It is rare, however, to have an entire research project such as *Recalibrating Culture* focus on the practices and experience of artists in a particular region. This research undertook a survey process combined with interviews to generate a detailed picture of artists and cultural practitioners, of their environment and their needs in Greater Western Sydney. These data contribute to the basis on which local governments and agencies might act in an informed way to support and accommodate artists and cultural practitioners. The research also provides valuable feedback to the participants in appraising the ways in which their views fit in with, or differ from, the general artist/creative worker community.

The *Recalibrating Culture* project began in 2014. The survey was conducted in the second half of 2015, the interviews at the

beginning of 2016, and the report written at the end of 2016 and finalised in the first half of 2017. During the research period, Western Sydney received increased political attention regarding cultural infrastructure. The NSW government's announcement of its intention to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta is, in part, considered to be a response to the lack of cultural amenity in the region (NSW Government, 2015). In 2015, Arts NSW employed a dedicated Western Sydney staff member and established a Western Sydney Arts Fellowship, the first being awarded to Khaled Sabsabi (a partner on the *Recalibrating Culture* project), enabling him to focus solely on his practice for twelve months. During this time, the National Theatre of Parramatta was established and staged the first of several of its new productions (Froggatt, 2016). Both these examples demonstrate the dynamic possibilities for arts and culture in the region. A survey of national case studies, *Promoting Diversity of Cultural Expression in Arts in Australia* (Mar and Ang, 2015), highlights the various

conditions which encourage contemporary dynamic arts production and are pertinent to the results of the research findings.

The context of arts funding across Australia changed drastically during this time, with small-to-medium sized organisations and independent artists bearing the economic brunt of the reduced appropriation to the Australia Council in the May 2015 federal budget (Attorney General's Department, 2015). It has been claimed that up to \$300million has been removed from the arts in Australia since 2013 (Croggon, 2016). Therefore, the responses and findings of this research provide valuable insight into where targeted investment may provide the most benefit to cultural practice. While, in early 2017, those funds were substantially returned to the Australia Council, the longer-term impact of this disruption remains in question (Watts, 2017). This research provides a timely intervention in the matters under consideration for and by artists and cultural practitioners in Greater Western Sydney.



*CuriousWorks Stories Project*. (2014). Photograph: Courtesy of CuriousWorks.



# METHODOLOGY

## QUANTITATIVE

### Recalibrating Culture online survey

The first stage of the research involved an online survey with artists and cultural practitioners who live and/or practice in Greater Western Sydney. The survey provided quantitative (pro-forma answers) and qualitative data (open answers) about the respondents and their arts and creative practice. The aims of the research project and its survey were promoted by the research partners and other interested bodies via online bulletins, direct email contact and websites. Interested eligible participants were invited to become involved in the study by accessing an online survey link.

The survey was conducted using a SurveyMonkey site and was housed on the Western Sydney University web server. The anonymous survey (with a follow-up option) was open from the beginning of September 2015 until the beginning of November 2015.

The survey questions were developed with the aims of ensuring clear comprehension by the respondents, as well as enabling robust and considered responses. The survey addressed all artforms, modes of creative practice and financial concerns, and provided an opportunity for open responses. As a result, it was lengthy and some respondents chose not to answer all the questions, particularly those addressing sensitive financial issues. Nevertheless, most questions elicited at least 100 responses. This is still a significant sample size, and although the error bounds are larger for the smaller sample sizes, meaningful conclusions can still be drawn about the larger population of artists/creative workers.

The online survey was directed towards artists and cultural practitioners who live and/or practice in Greater Western Sydney and aimed to establish the extent to which they:

- conform to a 'crossover' or 'cross discipline' employment pattern
- encompass a range of artistic identities
- are networked rather than institutionalised
- are 'mixing up' original creative work, undertaking collaborative ventures, study, travel and research in a context in which new technologies (primarily digital) can open up new opportunities and build new audiences for artists
- are from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds
- benefit from targeted support from public cultural agencies.

The survey questions were grouped into sections and remain the key themes for the analysis of the responses:

- Respondents
- Demographics
- Creative activities
- Professional and social factors
- Income and hours worked
- Networking
- Arts organisations
- Resources

## QUALITATIVE

### THE INTERVIEWS

The intent of the qualitative process is to get a deeper understanding of issues at the heart of the research question/s but can only be touched on in surveys. Analysis of the interviews conducted for the project identified common emergent themes. The questions were directly connected to, or were driven by, issues that emerged in the quantitative findings.

The interviewees were asked a series of questions, not necessarily in the same order, about their practices, beliefs and the rationale for their activities. All interviewees were asked similar questions, with sufficient flexibility to encourage them to express fully their views and feelings on issues of importance to them. Two were interviewed by phone, one by Skype video internationally, and the remainder in person. The interview location was determined by the interviewee, and included a workplace, a Western Sydney University campus, and a convenient café. The hour-long, semi-structured interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and analysed to reveal the major issues and themes. Direct quotations from interviewees have been allocated a pseudonym (brief demographic information and relevant creative discipline(s) are presented in Table 6, Appendix 1). The first time that the interviewee is quoted, their principal practice (e.g., visual artist, performing artist or film/media artist) is also indicated.

This report summarises the key findings, provides a more detailed analysis of them, and proposes a set of conclusions and recommendations arising from the research.

## INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Western Sydney is a social, spatial and governmental entity that is not necessarily bound by cultural and class connections. It is widely seen as a community that is able to work across different generations and cultures, although the extent to which such a large, diverse geographical area can be characterised as a 'community' is clearly questionable. Many of the interviewees frame the area as a more tolerant and accepting environment of difference when compared with conceptions of Sydney (seen as the eastern and northern parts of the city, but especially the suburbs surrounding the central business district).



For example:

*... the intergenerational thing that I find happens more regularly in Western Sydney (Vince, visual artist).*

*... it's quite a common thing that we can all work together. We're all different ethnicities but we can still understand that same, similar stories. ... There's a sense out in Western Sydney that you can be your own identity and ethnicity, and celebrate it (Azra, film/media artist).*

In this report, we recognise that Western Sydney is commonly conceived, both by those who live and work there and those who do not, as being 'different' from the rest of metropolitan Sydney in various ways, including its demographic diversity, working-class solidarity, and even in its shared stigmatisation. Western Sydney, then, has both material and symbolic properties that are elusive and contradictory – indeed, David Burchell (2003), in his thoughtful book *Western Horizon*, suggests that it is best characterised by its many paradoxical dimensions. The communities that we most focus on here are brought together by a shared concern with making culture. They operate through regular and occasional interaction, as well as in the imagination. These sometimes-conflicting elements are held in productive tension, bringing to life the complexities that turn data into knowledge that 'breathes'.

This section summarises the key findings under their respective themes, with the quantitative followed by the qualitative summaries.

## A. RESPONDENTS

### Quantitative

The survey elicited a total of 310 responses, of which 231 were eligible respondents who lived and/or worked in Greater Western Sydney. This number is large enough to propose statistical conclusions that can be applied to the larger population of artists and cultural practitioners in the region. However, the likelihood of sample bias must be acknowledged, as the survey relied on participants finding and responding to it, while sample bias may have played a role regarding which questions were answered and which left unanswered. Statistical sampling method was used to calculate the representativeness of the survey respondents in relation to the total population of artists and cultural practitioners in Greater Western Sydney. The error bounds on the charts found in the quantitative analysis section (from page 16) indicate, with 95 percent confidence, the range within which the results regarding the general population of artists and cultural practitioners lie. All conclusions in this report take these error bounds into account. To reiterate, as the respondents volunteered to complete the survey and were not chosen at random from the larger population of artists and cultural practitioners in the region, the possibility of self-selection bias should be recognised when interpreting the survey results.

### Qualitative

21 interviewees were selected to recognise the diversity of the backgrounds of the respondents to the survey. The researchers were fully cognisant of the significant difference in demographic characteristics of those who live in the Blue Mountains, which forms part of the Greater Western Sydney Region, compared with those living in various other parts of Greater Western Sydney. The interviews were conducted in Parramatta, Penrith, Bankstown, Casula and Fairfield from April to May 2016. However, it should be noted that the extensive involvement of Blue Mountains residents in arts and cultural practice constitutes a research finding in its own right.

## B. DEMOGRAPHICS

### Quantitative

75 percent of respondents to the survey were female, with 70 percent born in Australia but 60 percent having at least one parent born overseas, and 12 percent of respondents do not speak mainly English at home. There were three respondents of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island heritage. The sample population was stable, with most respondents having lived and worked in the region for many years. The respondent group was generally highly educated, with 70 percent having a university degree or postgraduate qualification, and a further 20 percent with a diploma or technical qualification. Many had undergone specialist training. This survey population was not representative of Australia in general or of the Greater Western Sydney region in particular, in that the respondent cohort were predominantly Anglo-Celtic, older, middle-class and well-educated women. These respondents are clearly committed to arts and culture and, as will become clear, they form networks that support a range of cultural activities. But, as we will argue, they are not often at the centre of policy discourse surrounding the creative and cultural industries.

### Qualitative

Of the 21 interviewees, nine were female and twelve were male (43 percent female, 57 percent male). There were three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (one man and two women) interviewees. Seven interviewees did not have English as their first language. There were 16 interviewees whose heritage can be described as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). Seven of the interviewees were aged over 50 (33 percent). They all lived and/or worked in Western Sydney. As noted above, these interviews were conducted in Parramatta, Penrith, Bankstown, Casula and Fairfield. The different demographic profile of the interview cohort sought, as already acknowledged, to counter to some degree the dominant characteristics of the survey population.

## C. CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

### Quantitative

75 percent of respondents worked in multiple artistic or creative disciplines and most did so in a 'cross-cultural' or interdisciplinary manner. Most respondents spent at least some time working at home alone or in a shared studio space with others. Respondents saw digital technology as moderately important in creating their work, but it was viewed more as a means of communicating with others about their work and for promoting it.

In general, the respondents participated in more than one sub-category activity within each creative activity. The Dance, Design and Theatre disciplines had lower participation in multiple sub-categories than the other disciplines, particularly Digital, Music and Visual Arts.

The percentage of respondents participating in the digital artistic discipline was steady at about 40 percent until around age 45; it then reduced to about 20 percent for those over 60 years of age.

### Qualitative

Interviewees can be described as being passionate about their particular artform and spend as much time as they can pursuing it. This passion has determined the ways in which they live and the choices that they have made. Those engaged in Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultural practices emphasised the centrality of arts and culture to their lives. Several interviewees who are former refugees talked about the importance of being able to tell their stories through their engagement with the arts.

*I've always loved films... I want to make movies...* (Walid, film/video artist).

*I always danced* (Ursula, performing artist).

*I cannot go to bed without drawing every night* (Giuseppe, visual artist).

*I describe myself as a translator. I'm strangely effective at understanding what the community wants...* (Monique, visual artist).

These artists and cultural practitioners mostly embraced a collaborative approach to their work and acknowledged the advantages of working with others. There was widespread engagement in using new technologies, but generally as tools for promotion and communication of their work, rather than as integral to the work itself.

## D. PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS

### Quantitative

Respondents generally worked in multiple industry sectors, such as the commercial, professional (which includes working in local councils), and the volunteer sectors. Many would have liked to earn their income uniformly across all three sectors, but only 16 percent wanted to spend more than 50 percent of their time in the commercial sector.

### Qualitative

Several interviewees spoke of having a particular commitment to working with the community and talked about their roles in brokering relationships and facilitating arts activity. They described a practice of working inclusively with others to share knowledge and skills. Some interviewees worked in roles that 'support' or 'facilitate' arts/cultural activity. They took on these roles for a variety of reasons, such as a commitment to community engagement, wanting a steady income, or because they had moved consciously away from being a practising artist, but nevertheless wanted to stay active in the arts and cultural fields:

*I guess my practice is really driven... I am politically motivated, I am contextually motivated. Questions that arise to me as justice questions. Equity questions* (Helen, performing artist).

*I can give young people a positive taste and experience with what it means to be Aboriginal...* (Jack, performing artist).



Romaine Moreton in *One Billion Beats*. (2016).  
Campbelltown Arts Centre. Photograph: Heidrun Löhr.

## E. INCOME AND HOURS WORKED

### Quantitative

Despite being highly qualified, the artists and cultural workers in this survey were very poorly paid. Median income from artistic/creative activities was only \$15,000 per annum, and most respondents were forced to take other work to supplement their artistic income. This combination of activities brought their total income to about \$37,000 per annum. In 2009, an Australian artist earned a median creative income of \$7,000 and, on average, earned \$22,500 for fulltime practice (Throsby and Zednick, 2010).

Making a viable financial living was important to the respondents in order for their artistic/creative practice to survive, but their main focus was on their work, creative collaboration and recognition by family, peers, mentors and the community. A full-time job to support their arts practice was not stated as a priority.

As indicated in the survey responses, men worked slightly longer (30 hours/week) in their artistic practice than women (26 hours/week), and slightly less time (13 hours/week) in their other employment than women (14 hours/week).

### Qualitative

Practising artists did not usually receive a liveable income from their artistic work, and had to take on other work to subsidise their practice or were supported by a partner. The choice to live in the Greater Western Sydney region was, for some, also influenced by economic factors, principally the lower cost of housing. Unsurprisingly, concern was often expressed about the financial future, particularly in older age:

*I would say that per annum... about a quarter of my taxable income comes from dance and dance-related work (Jack).*

*... in terms of employment and income, I know it will continue to be precarious and when I am down and not happy, it really concerns me (Penny, performing artist).*

## F. NETWORKING

### Quantitative

Networking was very important for the respondents for both producing and marketing their work. The most important networks were local artist-focussed and personal. State and regional arts and business networks were not usually ranked as important by the respondents.

### Qualitative

The participants spoke about the 'networking' that they undertake, but several expressed a reservation about feeling compelled to 'network' as part of their activity in the arts:

*... it just kind of [is]... a bit emotionally draining. The whole notion of networking (Vince).*

Others saw networking as a way of keeping abreast of what was happening in their artform and were actively engaged:

*... yeah I'm really engaged... I do find myself at openings and things as a performer. But I absolutely do go and see stuff.... I'm always going to see work (Ursula).*



## G. ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

### Quantitative

The level of activity (and income) was similar in both the community and the not-for-profit arts sectors. The community sector in the arts is strongly subsidised and supported by government. Similarly, the not-for-profit sector also receives government support. However, the not-for-profit arts sector also generates other income, for example, from sponsors and ticket sales, and is able to maintain a high level of creative activity.

It is not possible on the basis of this survey to evaluate return on investment for local government support for arts and creative activities – this was not a major concern of the research. It can, though, be noted that local government invests in both the community and not-for-profit sectors, and both have greater participation by the respondents than in the commercial sector. The research found that respondents looked to local government more readily than to federal and state governments for support. Their local government and its spaces and initiatives were important to the respondents.

### Qualitative

The interviewees had, freely or of necessity, made the decision to work and/or live in the Greater Western Sydney region. On the whole, they believed that they receive many intangible rewards for doing so. Whether they were brought up in or moved to Western Sydney, most now strongly identified with it, regardless of their original economic or cultural motivations. Several described an environment that they felt provided more freedom artistically, and which supported both risk and diversity.

Identifying themselves as different from 'mainstream culture' (which they interpreted as homogeneous and conformist) was valued by these interviewees in Western Sydney, where they saw themselves as in some way different:

*... I love it out here. It's a mix of people* (Jack).

*... there's this sense you can move freely without having to be faced with mainstream Australia* (Azra).

There was also a consistent emphasis on a 'divide' between what happened in the West and what happened elsewhere in Sydney. The interviewees often expressed a strong sense that what they did was both undervalued and under-resourced.

*I do feel like there's a divide, at least for me – I don't know how the other arts workers and artists feel – between stuff that happens in the city and the stuff that happens out west* (Daichi, film/media artist).

*... the equity between how much funding the galleries and the institutions in Sydney get as opposed to Western Sydney – there's quite a huge gap. A huge divide.... I don't think the issue is accessibility. It's more like investment from government. Because, I mean, art is accessible in Australia but it depends on where you are or where it's located* (Sol, visual artist).



*Jump First Ask Later*. (2015). Powerhouse Youth Theatre. *Jump First* is a collaboration between Force Majeure and the DMC Crew. Photograph: Helen Tran.



Zanny Begg in *1001 Nights* (video still). (2015). From *1001 Nights in Fairfield: Little Baghdad*. Presented by PYT in association with STARTTS. Photograph: Courtesy of the artist.

## H. RESOURCES

### Quantitative

The resource needs identified as most imperative were financial support, help in selling and promoting work, discounted supplies or services, opportunities to network with peers, and opportunities to meet with others or show to audiences. Those respondents from non-English speaking backgrounds particularly identified opportunities to meet with other artists and to network outside their group as important; however, they did not rate specialised services relating to language.

### Qualitative

The interviewees noted that some local governments (e.g., Fairfield, Liverpool, and Penrith) in the region supported different cultural and arts practices. However, they also observed that getting practical outcomes at local government level involved much lobbying, persuasion and communication. They expressed a desire to see more long-term investment and better planning, and wanted to be a part of the decision making in the creative and cultural development of Western Sydney:

*I think the experience of Western Sydney's been really interesting because still, in terms of people speaking for the region, no one bothers to talk to the region. It's always somebody outside (James, visual artist).*

The interviewees generally reported feeling hampered and frustrated in their work by the current lack of cultural facilities in the Greater West Sydney region. In particular, they expressed preferences for permanent working spaces, including artists' studios, workshops, and storage, exhibition, teaching and performance spaces. Many expressed a sense of frustration over the slow progress of investment in cultural facilities in the region:

*I think Parramatta's really in need of an arts centre (Vince).*

*I can't see why major performing arts companies can't grow and live in Western Sydney (Sol).*

There was also a clear sense that the interviewees wanted usable spaces and not expensive, inaccessible 'white elephants'. As well as spaces to work and exhibit, access to training was also seen as critical:

*... one of my key concerns is there isn't really any tertiary education for art in the region (Vince).*

## SUMMARY

The Deloitte report (2015) detailed the inequity of state and federal cultural resource expenditure in Western Sydney, and may have had some influence on the interviewees' responses. However, the *Recalibrating Culture* research suggests that respondents do not view their lives as being 'in deficit'. The findings elucidate the sense of independence respondents feel as creative and cultural practitioners, and simultaneously highlight the paucity of creative resources available to the research participants. This highly adaptable, resilient group of people combines their commitment to creative practice with a range of 'portmanteau' employment in order to continue in their creative work. However, this is also an older, well-educated group of respondents with a reasonable level of financial security, many of whom are semi-retired.

By contrast, younger people are less well-positioned to take up creative work because of the lack of educational opportunities in the region (for instance, as stated above there is no major art school in Western Sydney) and limited levels of support for, and low level of income in, the arts. An ageing artist population, supported by superannuation or a waged partner, is not one that can sustain a creative culture in the longer term. The resources allocated to the arts and cultural sector must take this (seemingly widening) schism into account.





Parramatta Lanes Festival. (2016).  
Photograph: George Gittany.



## DETAILED FINDINGS

### A. RESPONDENTS

The survey was directed towards those who reside or work in Greater Western Sydney and identify as an artist or cultural practitioner. Of the 310 responses, 231 are included in the analysis as they meet these criteria. However, not all respondents answered all questions (hence the variable numbers in the charts below).

The interviewees were asked about their attitudes to arts and culture in general and to Western Sydney in particular. Their responses revealed considerable dedication to pursuing their creative careers, as well as a sense of isolation and lack of recognition from much of the arts and cultural sector in Sydney.

Most interviewees made a conscious decision to work and/or live in the region and believed they receive many intangible rewards for doing so. Originally, they may have chosen the region for economic or cultural reasons (for example, not being able to afford to live and/or work in the more expensive eastern and northern parts of Sydney). But, whether having been brought up in or moving to Greater Western Sydney, most now identified strongly with the region. They described an environment that they believed provides relative freedom artistically, and which supported both aesthetic risk-taking and cultural difference. The survey respondents frequently identified themselves as being outside 'mainstream' culture, and saw this as a positive attribute because of a common self-apprehension of those associated with Western Sydney as being in various ways 'different'. However, there is also an emphasis on a divide between what happens in the West and what occurs elsewhere in Sydney, and strong feelings that what they do is both undervalued and under-resourced.

The sense of difference and freedom from scrutiny that many interviewees believed Western Sydney offered is well represented in the following interview quotations:

*... I made a choice to live in the region. I also made a particular choice to work in the region. So that's been a very specific choice (James).*

*... I love it out here. It's a mix of people (Jack).*

*... there's this sense you can move freely without having to be faced with mainstream Australia (Azra).*

Of course, material circumstances also played a significant role in where interviewees lived and worked.

*... It's because I knew I could own my house a lot quicker (Matthew, visual artist).*

*... we weren't able to afford living in the Inner West... I live at Liverpool (Giulia, visual artist).*

The cultural needs of Western Sydney influenced many to stay in the region and to dedicate themselves to assisting in the redressal of this situation of under-provision; they believed the region was disenfranchised on many levels and that they had to try to help remedy this 'deficit'.

*I see that working in the cultural sector really is about, in the work I try and do, is about access and equity, and in a sense cultural democracy.... that comes from growing up in Western Sydney, with very poor cultural services, with very poor cultural programs, with very poor educational program (James).*

Being born or growing up in the West consistently created a sense of belonging to the region among those interviewed for the project:

*... I sort of grew up in Western Sydney - came, left and came back to it. But I always found that Western Sydney was my home and so I reside here now (Pablo, visual artist).*

*... It's not like a conscious choice - I'm going to live in Western Sydney. This is home territory (Penny).*

As the quotation immediately above indicates, returning to Western Sydney or remaining there was not necessarily a matter of conscious decision-making - some of the interviewees had a deeply-held but largely unexamined topophilic (that is, love of place) commitment to the region as 'home'. Although in some cases this might be a post-hoc rationalisation, as the opportunities to live elsewhere are limited by employment, housing costs, and familial and friendship networks, it was clear from the research that Greater Western Sydney exerts a powerful emotional pull on those involved in arts and cultural practice in the region (as it does on many of those with connections to other fields - see Burchell, 2003).

## B. DEMOGRAPHICS

### B1. Age as of January 1, 2015

Of the respondents, 3 percent were aged between 15 and 25 years; 22 percent were between the ages of 26 and 35 years; 23 percent were between 36 and 45 years; 31 percent were between 46 and 60 years; and 21 percent were aged over 60 years. The median age of the survey respondents was relatively high (see Chart 1), with more than half of the 194 respondents who supplied their age being over 45. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in June 2014, the median age (the age at which half the population is older and half is younger) of the NSW population was 37.9 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

Please indicate your age as of 1 January, 2015 (194 respondents)

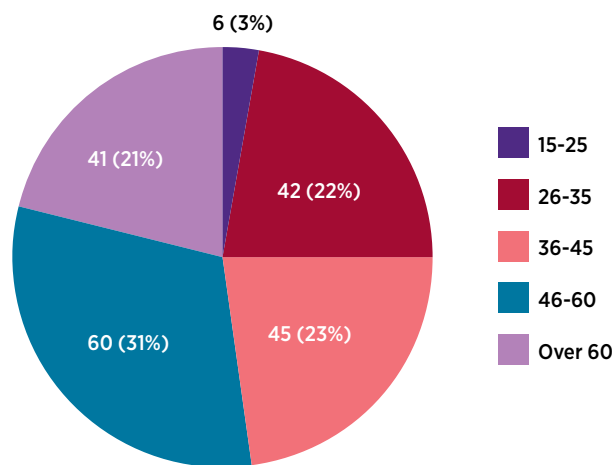


Chart 1: Age of Respondents

### B2. Gender

Of those respondents who indicated their gender (for the purposes of the survey, sex and gender were treated as synonymous), 70 percent were female (see Chart 2). Older women were over-represented in the survey, which may have been a limitation of the pattern of participation, but also indicated that they were a key group among artists or cultural practitioners in Greater Western Sydney.

Please indicate your gender (188 respondents)

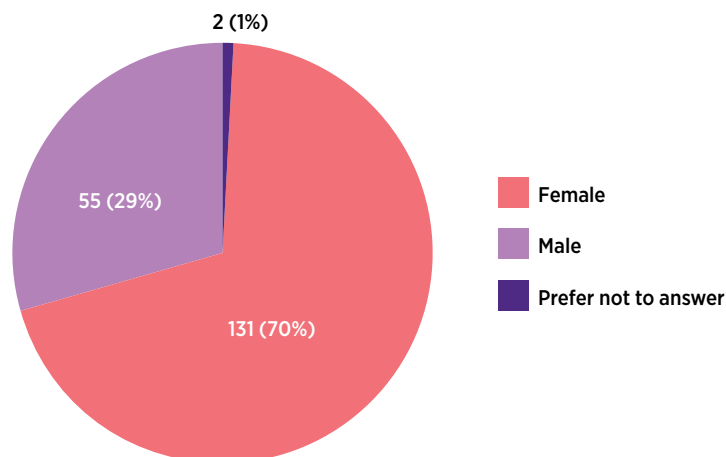


Chart 2: Gender of Respondents

### B3. Respondents of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Descent

Three survey respondents identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent. This percentage of valid survey responses (1.29 percent) was slightly lower than both the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in New South Wales (1.9 percent), and that of the Greater Western Sydney population (1.7 percent) (Profile.id, 2011a).

#### B4. Country of Birth of Respondents

Of those who responded, 74 percent were born in Australia and 26 percent were born overseas. This compares to the national figure of 28 percent of Australians being born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). It also compares to 30 percent of the New South Wales population and 44 percent of the Greater Western Sydney population born overseas (Profile.id, 2011b).

#### In which country were you born? (184 respondents)

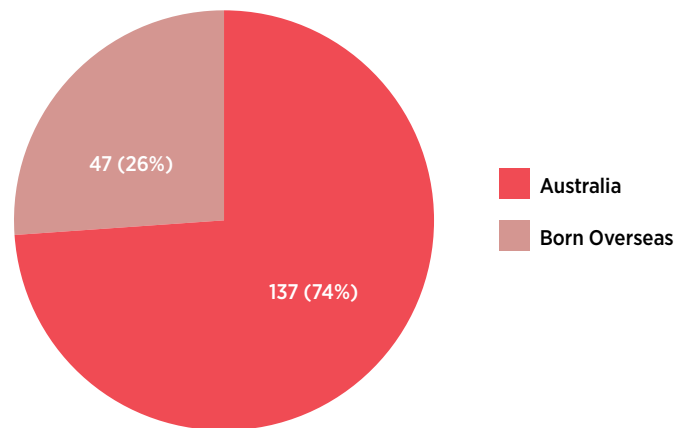


Chart 3: Country of Birth of Respondents

#### B5. Country of Parents' Birth

Among respondents, 14 percent had one parent born overseas, with 48 percent having both parents born overseas. Combined, these figures are higher than the national figure of 44 percent for those who have at least one overseas-born parent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a).

#### In which country were your parents born? (185 respondents)

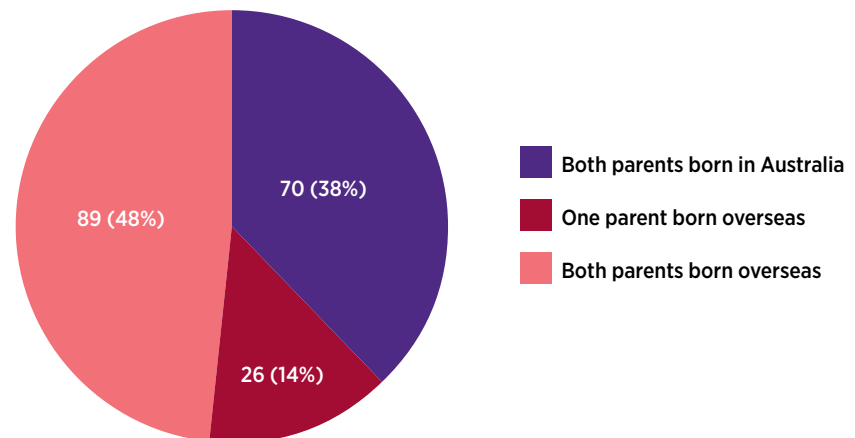


Chart 4: Country of Parents' Birth



## B6. Language Spoken at Home

English was the main language spoken at home (88 percent of respondents), with 11 percent speaking a language other than English (1 percent preferred not to answer). This is a more Anglophone demographic composition when compared to the overall New South Wales context, where 73 percent speaks English at home and 23 percent speaks a language other than English at home, or the Western Sydney context, where 50 percent speaks English at home and 45 percent speaks a language other than English at home (Profile.id, 2011c).

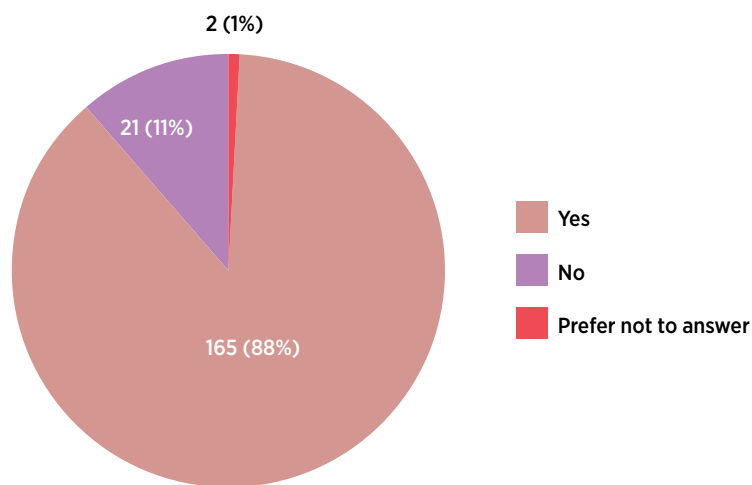
Other than English, there were 15 different languages comprising the main languages spoken at home among respondents. The largest language groups among them were Arabic (four respondents) and Spanish (three respondents). Other languages spoken at home included Cantonese, Croatian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Korean, Macedonian, Punjabi, Tamil and Vietnamese. The 12 percent of artists in the study from a first-generation, non-English speaking background was higher than that of a national study, which found that 8 percent of professional artists were of a non-English speaking background (Throsby and Zednik, 2010).

Artists often chose to live in the region where their parents settled upon arrival from a different country, staying in the region because of their identification with a particular cultural or ethnic community, and wishing to retain close ethnic and kinship ties:

*We stayed with my uncle in Western Sydney for a month until we found a house to rent ... there's a lot of Iraqis here (Fahim, film/media artist).*

*... it's always been Western Sydney because a lot of the Vietnamese population is out here (Azra).*

### Do you speak mainly English at home? (188 respondents)

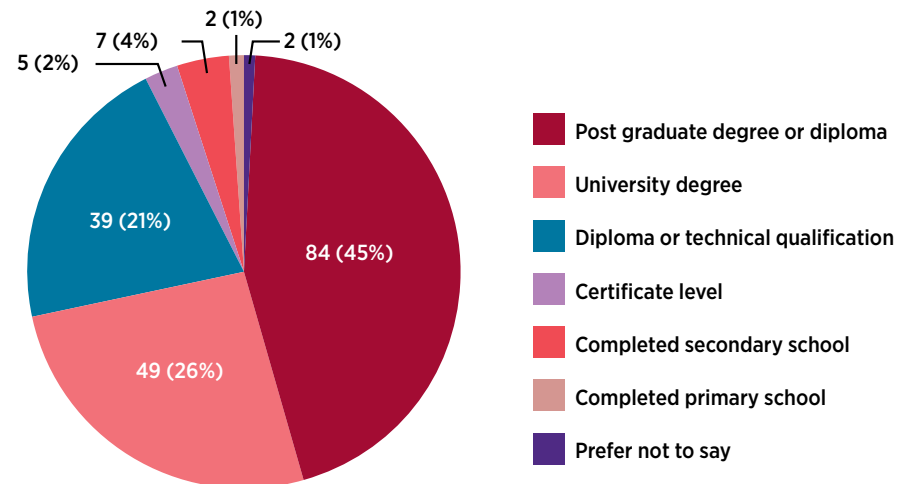


**Chart 5: Language Spoken at Home**

### B7. Highest Level of Education Completed

The respondent group was highly qualified educationally, with more than 70 percent having a university degree or higher qualification, and a further 21 percent holding a diploma or technical qualification.

#### What is the highest level of education you have completed? (188 respondents)



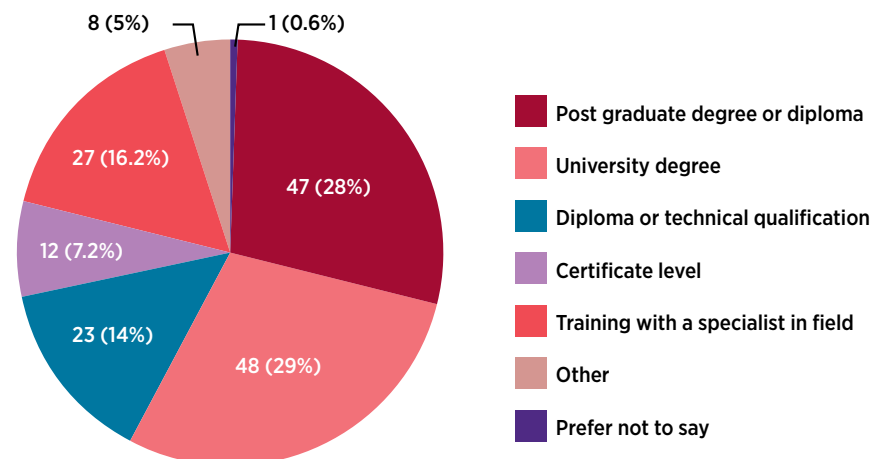
**Chart 6: Highest Level of Education Completed**

### B8. Type and level of specialised training

The chart below shows the levels attained by those who have undertaken specialist training.

Almost all the respondents who answered this question had undergone some form of specialised training in their artistic/creative practice. As noted, most held a diploma or higher qualification. A significant number had also undergone training with a specialist in the field (16 percent). The interviewees described the different ways in which they applied their training, and revealed that there are also extensive 'informal' skills exchanges with particular groups.

#### Have you undertaken any specialised training in your creative/artistic practice? (166 respondents)



**Chart 7: Type and Level of Specialised Training**

The interviewees described their commitment both, to particular and general aspects of their culture, and to working with others in sharing that knowledge, including working in communities which were socially and culturally marginalised:

*... the focus is working with young people out this way. Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people... Arts and culture-based programs to nurture Indigenous culture... (Jack).*

*... my interest in migration and storytelling marry all that together (Daichi).*

*I engage with local Aboriginal girls... and they do lots of performances, mostly at community level (Ursula).*

*I almost exclusively work with non-classically trained performers or unorthodox performers (Fazal, performing artist).*

Several interviewees had views about what is needed in the future to support creative practice in Western Sydney. The absence of any formal tertiary training in the arts in the region was a major concern, for instance:

*... one of my key concerns is there isn't really any tertiary education for art in the region (Vince).*

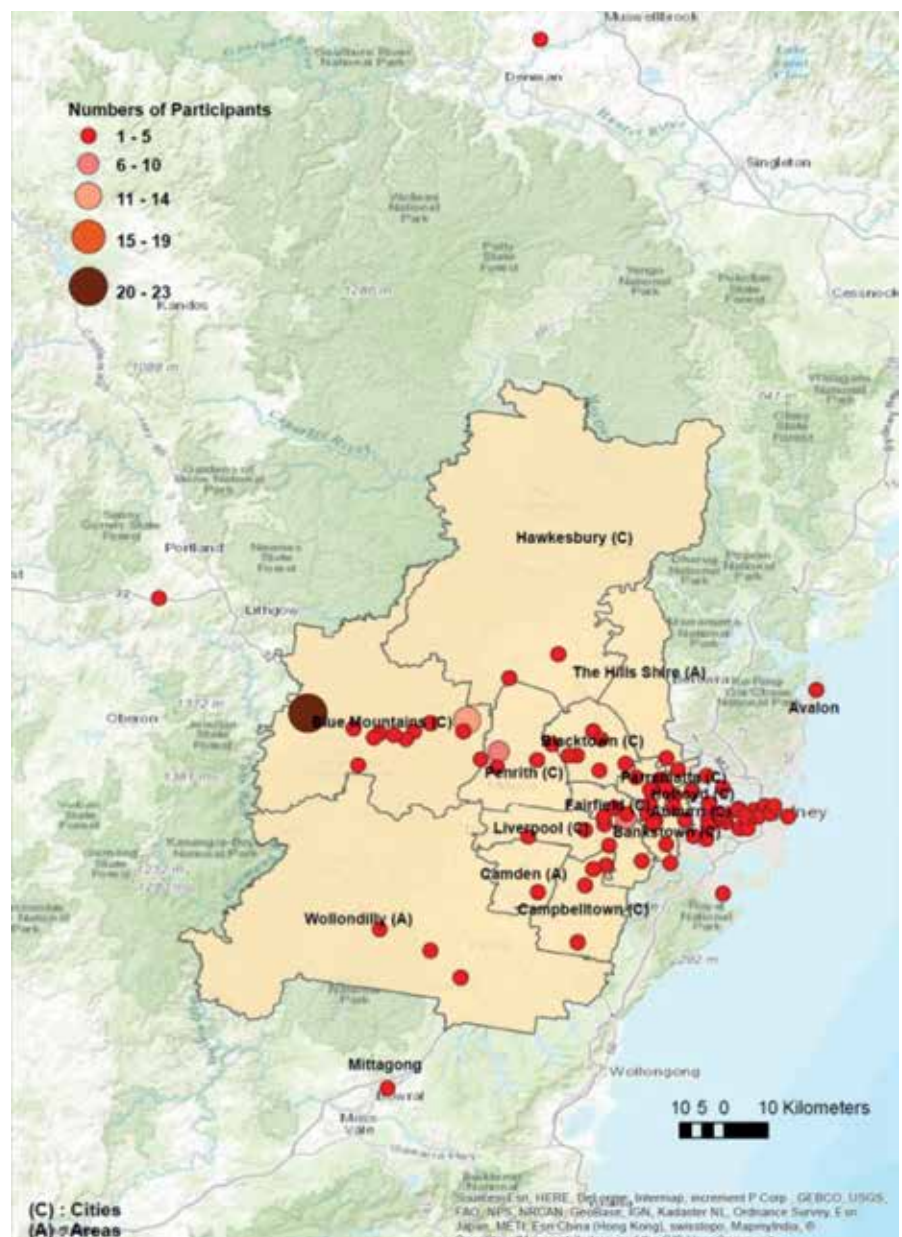
## B9. Post Code and Suburb Name of Primary

### Living Location as of January 1, 2015

Map 1 (plotted using a geographic information system) shows the postcodes where the survey research participants live.

The respondents lived mainly in an east-west corridor between Sydney and the Blue Mountains, with the main concentrations being in the Sydney area, the Inner West and Parramatta/Fairfield regions, the Blacktown/Penrith regions, and the Blue Mountains. There was also a strong contingent living south of the east-west corridor in the Bankstown/Liverpool/Campbelltown area. Valid responses to the survey required that participants to live and/or work in Greater Western Sydney. Questions about Western Sydney also prompted responses from the interviewees regarding what they deem to be distinctive about the region. Given that it is

**Map 1: Greater Western Sydney: Primary Living Locations of Survey Respondents**



a geographically and demographically vast and diverse area, Western Sydney cannot be categorised as one place; rather, it is many places. Interviewees frequently emphasised this elusiveness of 'the West', although in other discursive contexts they ascribed a particular character of place:

*There's so many Western Sydneys now as well. And so many South-western Sydneys. They're worlds within themselves (Penny).*

*... in terms of community, there's actually more communities out in Western Sydney (Azra).*

While there was recognition that Western Sydney is characterised by the co-location of many communities, there were also aspects of Western Sydney that were seen as particular to, or different from, other parts of the Sydney metropolitan region. Therefore, a strong sense of community came through in the interviews:

*... I appreciate this sense of community and belonging I have in Western Sydney (Daichi).*

*I'll always come back to community. This is like part of me (Fahim).*

This was a community not necessarily bound by cultural and class connections, but rather one able to work across both different generations and cultures. This 'community' was framed as a more tolerant and accepting environment of difference than can be found elsewhere in Sydney:

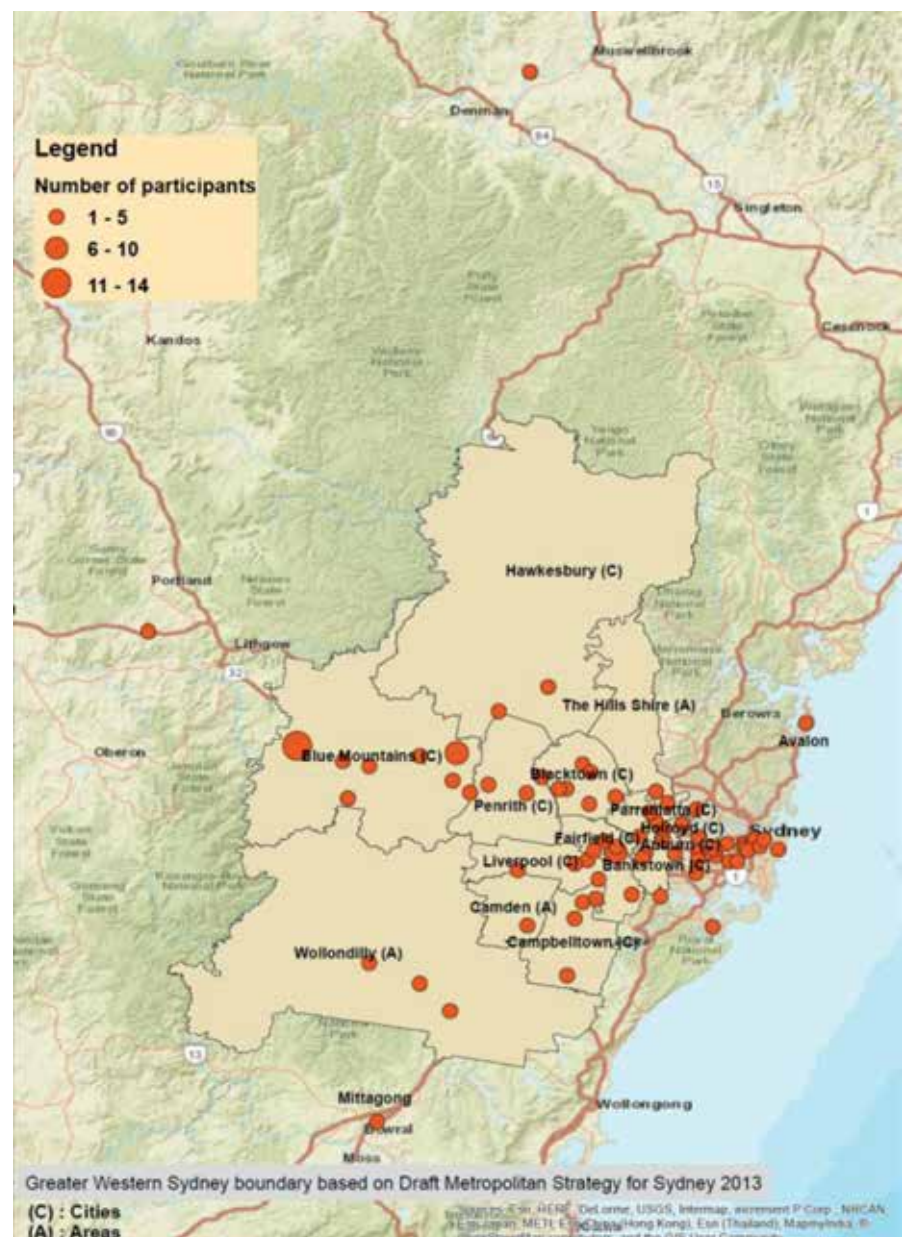
*... the intergenerational thing that I find happens more regularly in Western Sydney (Vince).*

*... it's quite a common thing that we can all work together. We're all different ethnicities but we can still understand that same, similar stories... There's a sense out in Western Sydney that you can be your own identity and ethnicity, and celebrate it (Azra).*

## B10. Living Location of Respondents by Gender (Female)

Postcodes where the female research participants live are plotted on Map 2a. The results here are noticeably similar to Map 1 (which details the overall number of respondents); this is due to the high percentage of female respondents.

Map 2a: Living location of female respondents

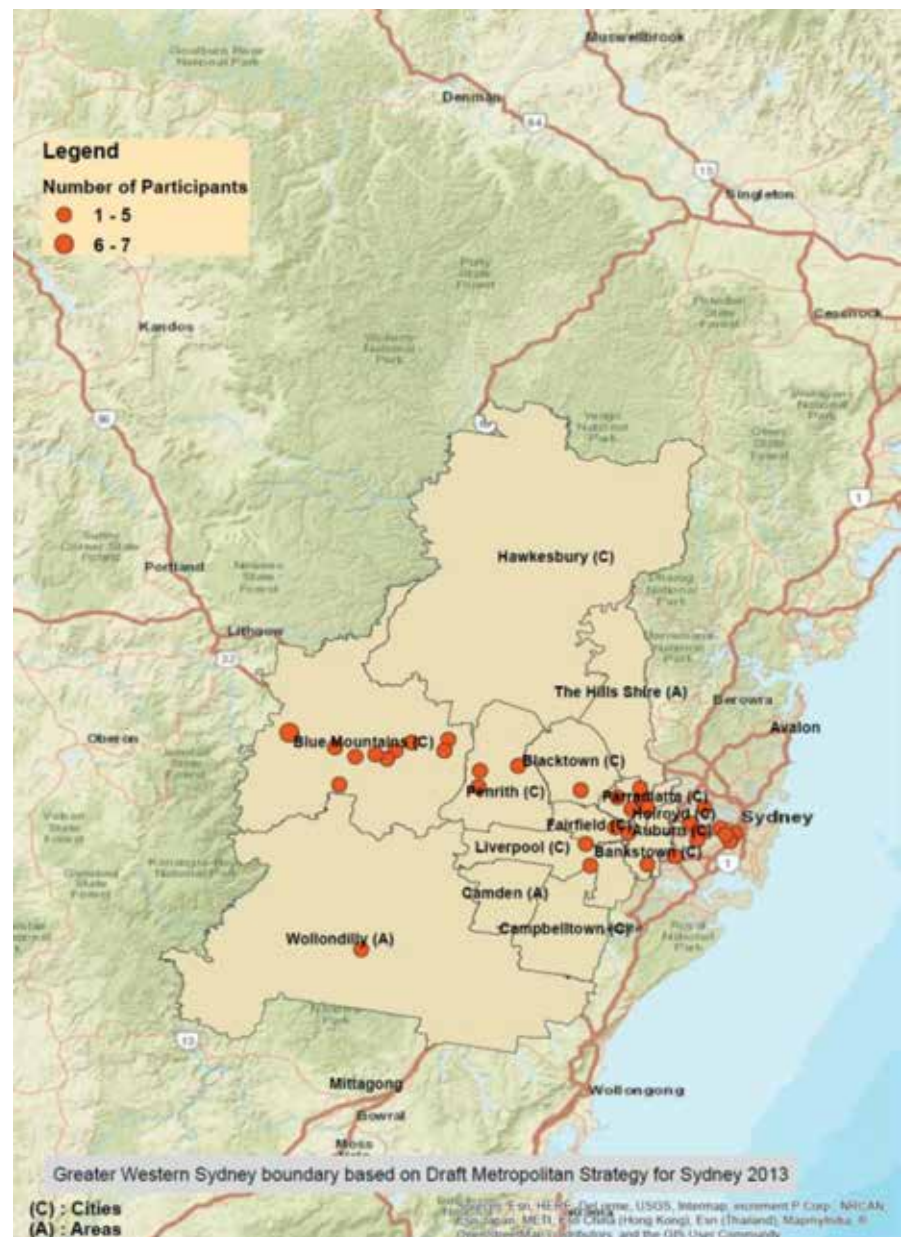




### B11. Living Location of Respondents by Gender (Male)

Postcodes where the male research participants live are plotted on Map 2b. The male participants mostly live along the east-west corridor from Sydney to the Blue Mountains, with a smaller proportion living south of this corridor.

**Map 2b: Living location of male respondents**

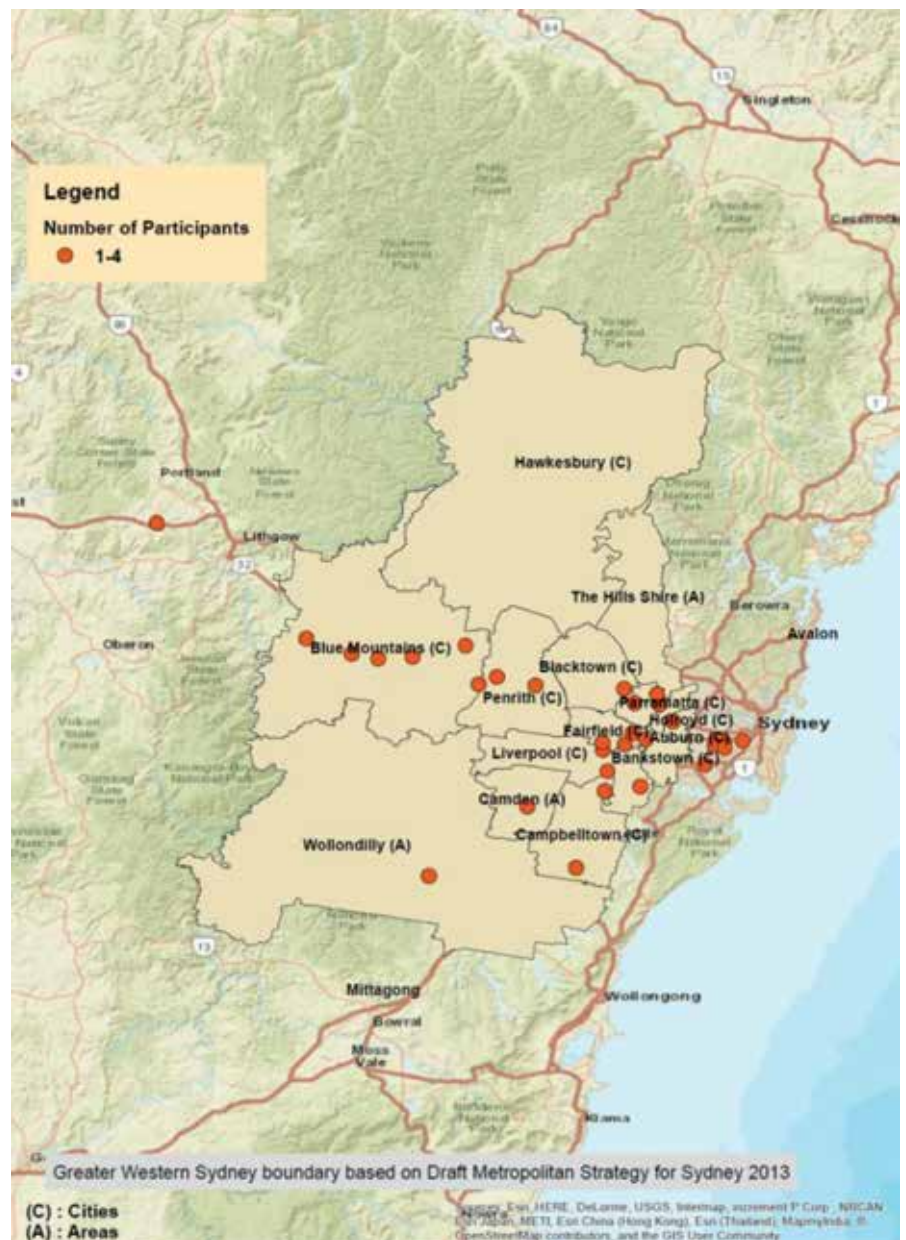




### B12. Living Location of Overseas-Born Respondents

The postcodes of overseas-born participants' residences are presented on Map 3. The distribution of overseas-born respondents is generally similar to that of the total respondents, recognising the overall demographic diversity of the region.

### Map 3: Living Location of Overseas Born Respondents

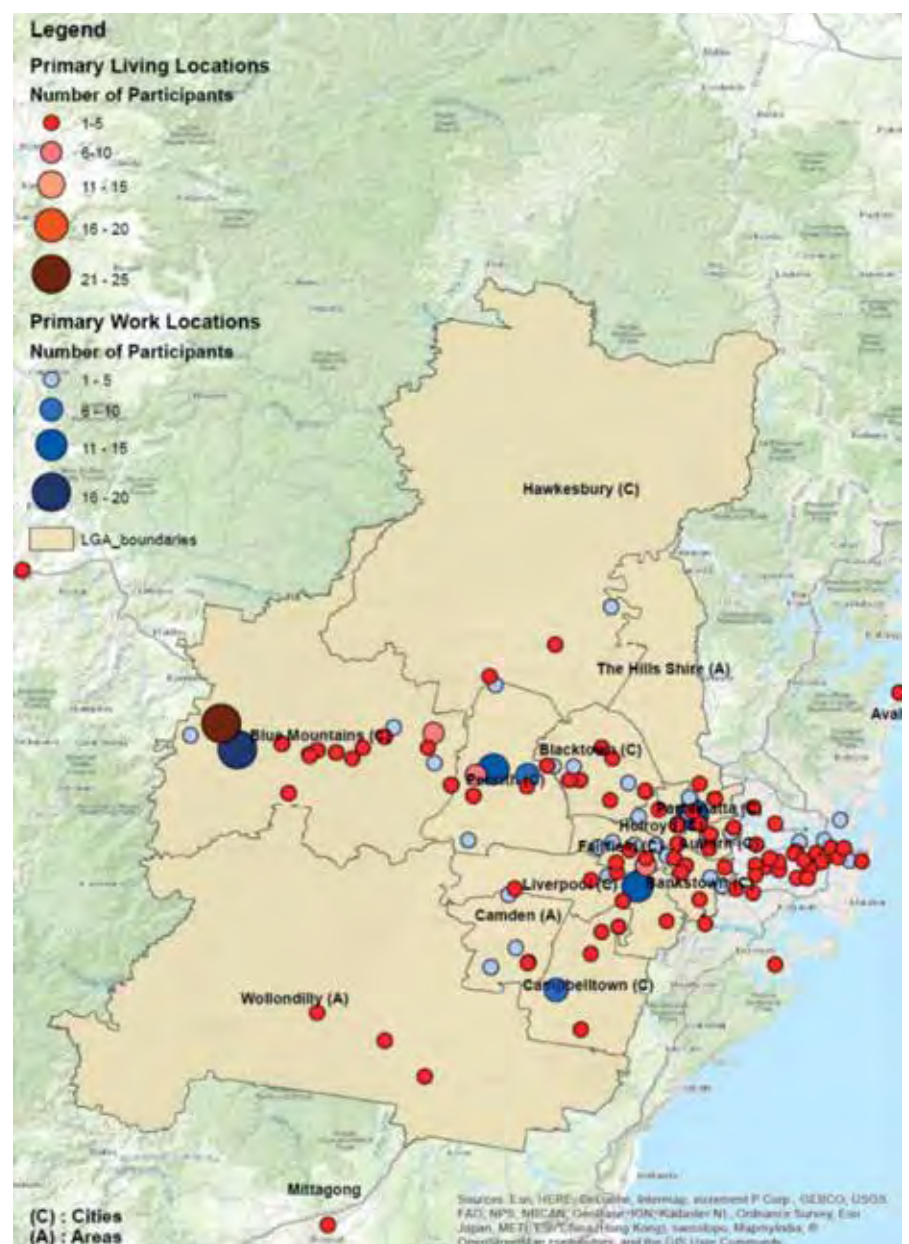


**B13. Post Code and Suburb Name of Residence and Primary Engagement in Creative Practice**

Map 4 shows where respondents lived and where they primarily engaged in their creative practice.

The spatial distribution of where respondents worked is similar to where they live, but there is a gap in the inner west (for example, in the suburbs of Chippendale, Marrickville and St Peters) where respondents tended to live but not work. It is not clear whether this split between home and work sites was the result of choice or necessity. Further research may reveal whether a preference to live closer to the inner city, for example, may coincide with the greater availability of work, spaces and cultural networks further to the West.

**Map 4: Post Code and Suburb Name of Residence and Primary Engagement Site of Creative Practice**



#### B14. Living in, and Creative Production in, Greater Western Sydney

77 percent of respondents both lived and worked in Greater Western Sydney. Of these, 62 percent of respondents had lived in Greater Western Sydney for 11 or more years. This survey finding indicates considerable stability in the co-location of domicile and creative practice in the region

If you live in Greater Western Sydney region and do most of your creative/artistic work outside of this region, please indicate how long you have lived at this location.  
(144 respondents)

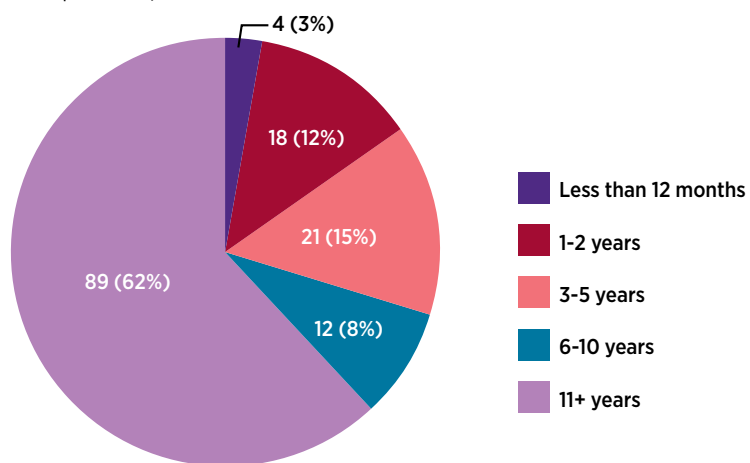


Chart 8. Living in, and Creative Production in, Greater Western Sydney

#### B15. Living in, and Creative Production outside, Greater Western Sydney

23 percent of respondents lived in Greater Western Sydney and worked outside the region. Most of the respondents in this group had lived in Greater Western Sydney for less than 10 years.

Of those who worked outside the region, 16 percent worked in Sydney, 2.8 percent elsewhere in New South Wales, 1.7 percent interstate and 2 percent in an international location. Most of the 32 respondents who had lived in Greater Western Sydney for less than 5 years previously lived elsewhere in Sydney. A few had lived interstate and only three overseas. It is apparent, then, that survey participants had not been very geographically mobile during their lives, and most had returned to their city of origin or of earlier residence.

If you live in Greater Western Sydney region and do most of your creative/artistic work outside of this region, please indicate how long you have lived at this location.  
(32 respondents)

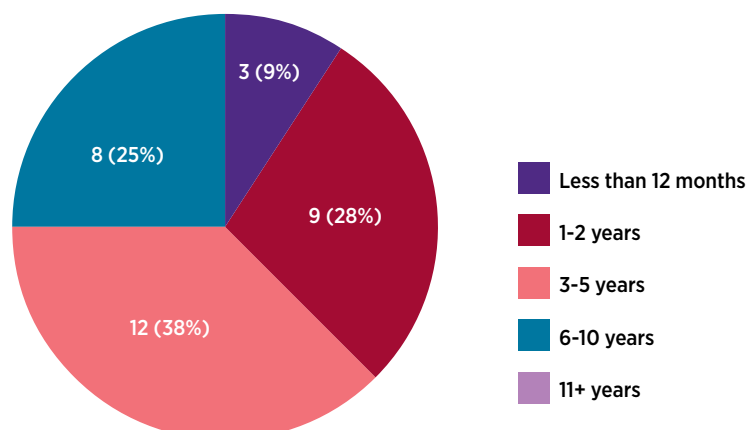


Chart 9. Living in, and Creative Production outside, Greater Western Sydney

### B16. Living Outside, and Working in, Greater Western Sydney

41 percent of respondents who lived outside Greater Western Sydney but worked in the region had been doing so for more than 10 years, indicating a pattern of considerable stability in living and working arrangements.

If you live elsewhere but primarily do your creative/artistic work in the Greater Western Sydney region, please indicate how long you have been working in the region.  
(39 respondents)

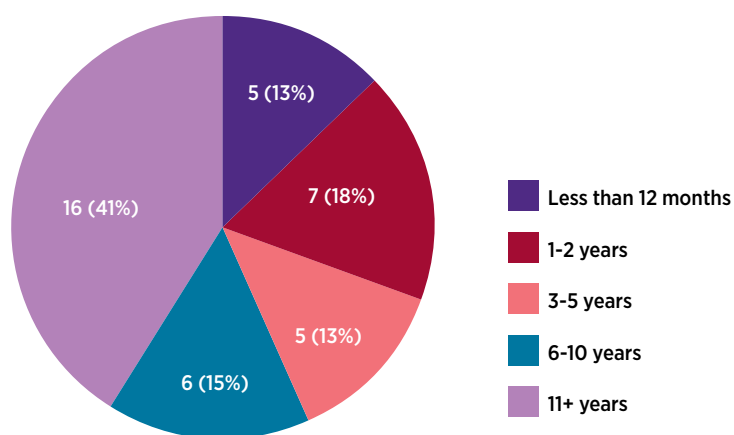


Chart 10. Living Outside, and Working in, Greater Western Sydney

### B17. Creative Work Undertaken in Various Regions

As was anticipated given the nature of this survey, most of the work (77 percent) was undertaken by respondents in Greater Western Sydney, with 16 percent of work undertaken elsewhere in Sydney.

Wherever you live can you indicate what percent of your work is undertaken in which region?  
(Chart shows the average distribution of responses from 144 respondents)

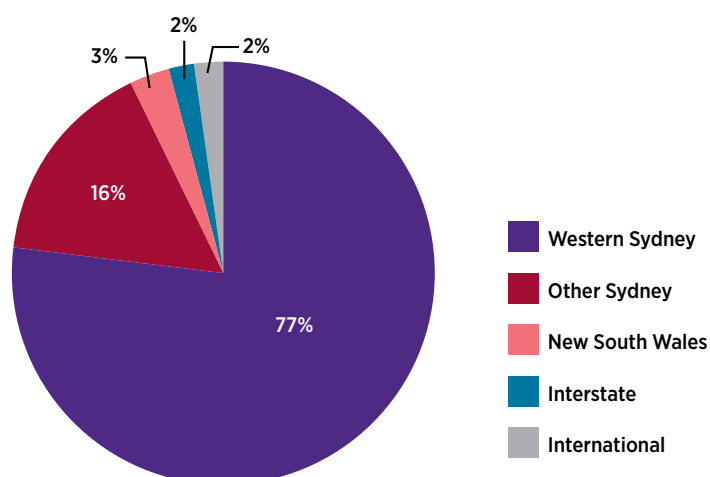


Chart 11. Creative Work Undertaken in Various Regions

By practising in the West of Sydney, several interviewees asserted that there were fewer constraints for those working in arts and culture:

*... I think that there's a stronger sense of freedom in the work. There's less regimentation in the work. It's less hide-bound by tradition (James).*

*... being based out at Western Sydney is an asset because I feel like people are more free, in the sense that they have the time to sit and discuss ideas (Azra).*

*... Developing creative opportunities. Being able to take risks (Pablo).*

Instead of seeing themselves as the 'other', these interviewees expressed a sense of not being confined by conventional framings of arts practice. This view asserts that it is an advantage being away from the arts and culture milieu which dominates the East of

the city, as it enables artists and cultural workers to have more creative space to 'do their own thing'. It was felt that in Western Sydney there is less pressure to conform, allowing the creation of an environment that supports both risk and difference. At the same time, however, there was often a feeling that living and working in the West was a factor in producing not only physical distance from the inner city but also marked differences in culture and resourcing:

*I do feel like there's a divide, at least for me – I don't know how the other arts workers and artists feel – between stuff that happens in the city and the stuff that happens out West (Daichi).*

*... the equity between how much funding the galleries and the institutions in Sydney get as opposed to Western Sydney – there's quite a huge gap. A huge divide... I don't think the issue is*

*accessibility. It's more like investment from government. Because I mean art is accessible in Australia but it depends on where you are or where it's located (Sol).*

This notion of a divide was further illustrated by a feeling of invisibility, with a view that much of what does happen in Western Sydney is not sufficiently recognised or valued. Interviewees holding this position expressed a desire for the formal acknowledgement of arts practice in the West by drawing attention to what is already happening there:

*I would just love to see what's already existing being celebrated (Vince).*

It can be seen from these participant responses that, while many of them relish the sense of aesthetic and social separation that attends living and practising in Greater Western Sydney, there is a cost both in terms of resources and recognition.

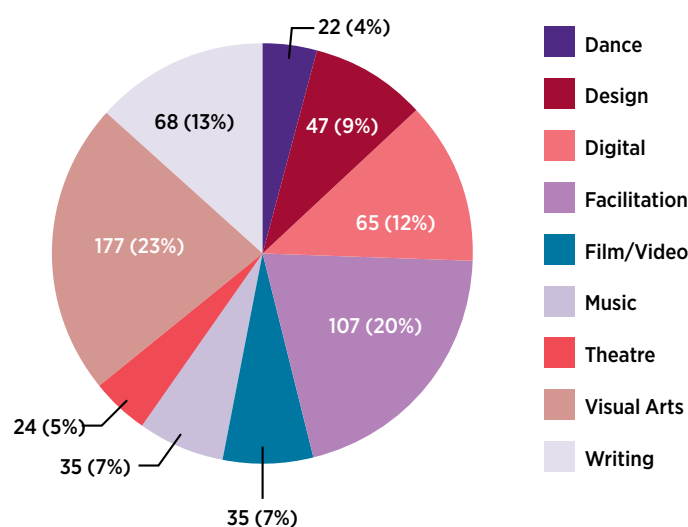
## C. CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

This section describes respondents' artistic/creative practices, and how and where they went about them. Respondents were asked to identify any of the indicated disciplines in which they participate: that is, Dance, Design, Visual Arts, Facilitation, Film/Video and Music. The respondents were also asked to identify any sub-categories of disciplines in which they were involved – for example, in Dance, the subcategories are ballet/classical, contemporary and folk.

### C1. Respondents Working in Each of the Nominated Artistic Divisions

The majority of respondents (75 percent) reported working in more than one discipline. The most popular activities were Facilitation of the Arts and Visual Arts, with more than 65 percent undertaking some of their work in these disciplines. Dance and Theatre, with less than 15 percent participation, were the least common activities among respondents.

**Which activities describe your creative/artistic practice? Select any that apply.**  
(165 respondents, 41 identify one discipline only, 124 identify multiple disciplines)



**Chart 12. Respondents Working in Each of the Nominated Artistic Divisions**



The interviewees expressed a strong attachment to their particular artform, and reported spending as much time as they could pursuing activities such as painting, film/music making, dancing, or a mixture of arts practices. This commitment has determined, to a significant degree, how and where they live and the life choices that they have made. Responses suggested that their identity is connected with their arts and cultural practice and is central to their everyday existence. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and cultural practitioners, in particular, emphasised the centrality of arts and culture to their lives. Several interviewees who are former refugees talked about the importance of being able to tell their stories through their engagement with arts and culture.

There are many different ways of framing the work of the interviewees. For example, in some cases, there is an emphasis on forging connections and relationships, particularly in different parts of the community:

*I'm building conversations, building relationships and developing skills with community organisations, individuals and groups* (Penny).

*I describe myself as a translator. And by that I mean I'm strangely effective at understanding what the community wants* (Monique).

*... my practice is, in this role, to assist people to realise a seed of an idea and to just slowly develop it and see where it takes them* (Walid).

Others were proactive within their art and community, developing new work and helping others to make their own work. They can be described as "cultural brokers" in Richard Kurin's (1997) use of the term; that is, as someone who translates aspects of one culture for another group:

*I'm kind of the person that makes stuff happen* (Ursula).

*I'm a film maker but I'm also a cultural practitioner, a workshop facilitator* (Azra).

*first of all I organise exhibitions, I curate exhibitions... I teach* (Matthew).

*sometimes my job is a coordinator, some of it's a curator, sometimes it's a director* (Raymondo, performing artist).

*I have a very, very deep personal commitment to capacity-building within the sector* (Shereen, performing artist).

There are also those who talked about why they loved the arts or their cultural practice in greater detail:

*I'm a lot into painting. I love to paint* (Carol, visual artist).

*I'm a collector. .... I have an extensive art collection* (Sol).

*I've always loved films... I want to make movies* (Walid).

*I always danced* (Ursula).

*I could not stop drawing... I explore all the possibilities in art. I cannot go to bed without drawing every night* (Giuseppe).

*I just loved stitching and working with fabric* (Monique).

There is a sense here among the participants that their enthusiasm for their art has, as noted earlier, influenced many of their life choices. Hence, they have tried to integrate their passion for arts and culture into work from which they can make a living. This combination and coordination has translated into feeling that the intermeshing of art and work enabled a sense of 'belonging' for those who otherwise felt like an outsider:

*I was embraced in that contemporary arts world ... My weaknesses in that other world were my strengths in that world* (Fazal).

*I discovered after three years that I am not a scientist... I was always a creative inside* (Monique).

For others, arts and cultural practice was an alternative to their previous career:

*it was really just something that I got in my heart. I had done everything I really wanted to do in corporate life* (Matthew).

This negotiation of commitments and identities emerged repeatedly in the data. For those engaged in arts and cultural practice, there was a common commitment to it as a 'vocation' that needed to be accommodated in the face of other areas of their lives and their associated, sometimes conflicting, expectations and demands.

## C2. Cross-correlations between Disciplines

Many respondents identified with multiple disciplines. This section looks at those in any two disciplines in order to highlight the strongest correlations between disciplines. The data have been 'normalised' according to the maximum number of respondents that could be in any pair: that is, the percentage of respondents in any pairing compared with the maximum pairing is shown. For each discipline, the median percent interaction with all the other disciplines is presented, a calculation that is useful for identifying which discipline has the strongest interactions with other disciplines.

The level of multi-disciplinary activity is generally high for all possible discipline pairings. Respondents working in Facilitation of the Arts and in Visual Arts are, it is shown, the most likely also to be working in other disciplines.

### Respondents Engaged in Multi-Disciplinary Activity

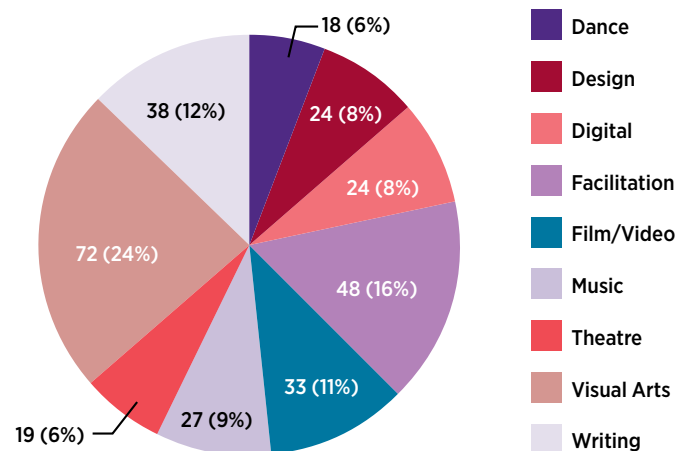
	Dance	Design	Digital	Facilitation	Film/Video	Music	Theatre	Visual Arts	Writing
Dance	100	59	68	86	55	45	32	55	50
Design	59	100	77	77	54	46	63	85	62
Digital	68	77	100	75	86	57	71	78	62
Facilitation	86	77	75	100	77	77	92	64	72
Film/Video	55	54	86	77	100	46	58	86	74
Music	45	46	57	77	46	100	54	80	66
Theatre	32	63	71	92	58	54	100	79	83
Visual Arts	55	85	78	64	86	80	79	100	75
Writing	50	62	62	72	74	66	83	75	100
Median	55	62	73	77	66	56	67	79	69

**Table 1. Pairs and Number of Respondents Engaged in Multi-Disciplinary Activity**

### C3. Practice in a Cross-cultural or Interdisciplinary Mode

78 percent of those working in more than one discipline are doing so in a cross-cultural (meaning across cultural forms) or interdisciplinary way. The most popular cross-cultural or interdisciplinary activity was Visual Arts, with 74 percent of respondents undertaking some of their work in this area and in this manner. Facilitation of the Arts was also important for about 50 percent of respondents, while Dance and Theatre were the least common activities, with less than 20 percent participation of respondents.

Which activities describe your creative/artistic practice? Select any that apply.  
(97 respondents)



**Chart 13. Practice in a Cross-cultural or Interdisciplinary Mode**

For some, however, a focus on one artform developed into another kind of practice – such as developing an interest in an artform other than the one they began in, or embracing a more multi-disciplinary approach. Several interviewees moved from being practising artists to teaching, directing or nurturing others in their craft or artform. They had realised that, while they wanted to work in ‘the arts’, they did not necessarily want to continue to be an artist. This decision was also in several cases driven by a need to make a better living and to have a more ‘normal’, or perhaps, ‘stable’ existence:

*I don't really consider myself an artist anymore. I'm more of a curator and arts worker (Daichi).*

*I just felt dance wasn't enough for the ideas I was interested in to work with (Raymondo).*

*... originally I trained to be in theatre. To be a performer ... I've really worked since, as a career, in curatorial practice (James).*

Collaboration emerged as a common feature of how many artists and arts workers undertook their work in Western Sydney. This approach may relate to the high level of

community engagement in work processes which was common to the practice of many of the interviewees. It may also constitute a strategy to reduce creative isolation and to be able fully to realise a creative project:

*the more and more I've discovered that it is important to be part of a community and that the making experience isn't done in isolation (Vince).*

*it's important to me to be able to understand the diversity of experiences and... that contribute to our community. And I can only do that really by working in partnership (Monique).*

*I think the most effective way forward is that actually companies bring expertise together around a community desire and actually work together (Helen).*

Others talked about collaboration as an added input enabling them to achieve better work outcomes:

*I work personally better in a collaborative way .... I like the idea of bouncing ideas (Jack).*

*I actually am very collaborative in nature because I will ask people for suggestions (Shereen).*

*Yeah, I love working as a team. Yeah.... when you work as a team it's so much easier to do something (Fahim).*

This flexibility is an indication also of the importance of creative networks that consistently emerged as an important feature of the lives of artists and cultural practitioners, and which many emphasised as being particularly strong in Western Sydney.

#### C4. Cross-correlation between Disciplines

Respondents who worked in any two disciplines in a cross-cultural or interdisciplinary way were asked to identify the strongest correlations between disciplines.

The table below shows the ratio of the number of respondents who said that they were working in such a way, and the total number of respondents in a discipline regardless of how they are working (converted to a percentage). As previously noted, the median percentage interaction with all the other disciplines is found.

#### Respondents Engaged in Cross-cultural or Interdisciplinary Activity

	Dance	Design	Digital	Facilitation	Film/Video	Music	Theatre	Visual Arts	Writing
Dance	82	36	36	64	45	41	45	59	45
Design	36	51	32	34	37	29	38	43	32
Digital	36	32	37	26	57	37	46	25	23
Facilitation	64	34	26	45	60	49	63	34	37
Film/Video	45	37	57	60	94	46	50	69	54
Music	41	29	37	49	46	77	42	63	43
Theatre	45	38	46	63	50	42	79	50	50
Visual Arts	59	43	25	34	69	63	50	62	41
Writing	45	32	23	37	54	43	50	41	56
Median	45	35	34	43	52	42	48	46	42

Table 2. Pairs and Number of Respondents Engaged in Cross-cultural or Interdisciplinary Activity

The amount of cross-cultural or interdisciplinary activity was lower than that for multi-disciplinary activity (as seen in Table 1), but was still substantial. Respondents working in Film/Video and Theatre were the most likely to be also working in a cross-cultural or interdisciplinary way. Respondents working in Design and in Digital were the least likely to be working in this way.

Many interviewees felt strongly that arts and cultural practice needs to be inclusive and to reflect the diverse experiences of the group. Their focus, therefore, was on working with communities to get other perspectives seen and voices heard:

*We need real stories. There are a lot of stories that are untold, they are inside people and you don't know it (Fahim).*

*... it's just more about having a voice really ... I realised how important it is to have your voice heard because it represents all these other people that are the underdogs (Azra).*

*I can give young people a positive taste and experience with what it means to be Aboriginal (Jack).*

*I do see arts as part of people's cultural wellbeing (Penny).*

Several interviewees described making art which connected with audiences that are not already privileged. This work has political ramifications:

*I don't want to create art for people with rich pockets. I want to create art for those who don't have a voice (Walid).*

*I guess my practice is really driven ... I am politically motivated, I am contextually motivated. Questions that arise to me as justice questions. Equity questions (Helen).*

The skills required to work and communicate with different communities or across cultures are frequently emphasised in a manner that one interviewee describes as 'brokering':

*I have a really slow approach... what are you doing and why are you doing it and how are you doing it? (Penny).*

*... translating between the two so that they understand each other (Monique).*

*... essentially, I think I'm working in multicultural performance ... to do the brokering you have to have an understanding of the art forms of the communities and all that kind of stuff. A bit of history (Raymondo).*

## Creative Sub-categories

Each of the nine artistic/cultural practice areas listed in the survey has been divided into sub-categories for additional analytical purposes. Most survey respondents indicated that they participated in more than one sub-category, and the survey then asked them to identify from the list what these areas were.

The following charts show the number and percentage of respondents in each sub-category, with one chart per artistic/creative discipline. The average number of sub-categories of an artistic/creative discipline in which each respondent is involved is also calculated.

### C4.1 Dance

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the Dance sub-categories. In total, 22 respondents participated in Dance, and on average, they were involved in 2.0 sub-categories each.

#### Number and percentage of participants in Dance sub-categories

(22 participants, 2.0 subcategories per participant)



Chart 14. Participants in Dance Sub-categories

C4.2 Design

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the Design sub-categories: 47 respondents participated in Design, and on average, they were involved in 2.1 sub-categories each.

Number and percentage of participants in Design sub-categories  
(47 participants, 2.1 subcategories per participant)

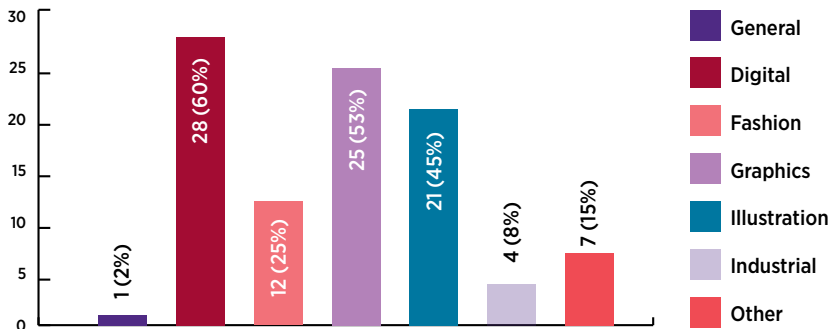


Chart 15. Participants in Design Sub-categories

C4.3 Digital

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the Digital sub-categories, with 65 respondents participating in Digital, and on average, being involved in 2.8 sub-categories each.

Number and percentage of participants in Digital sub-categories  
(65 participants, 2.8 subcategories per participant)

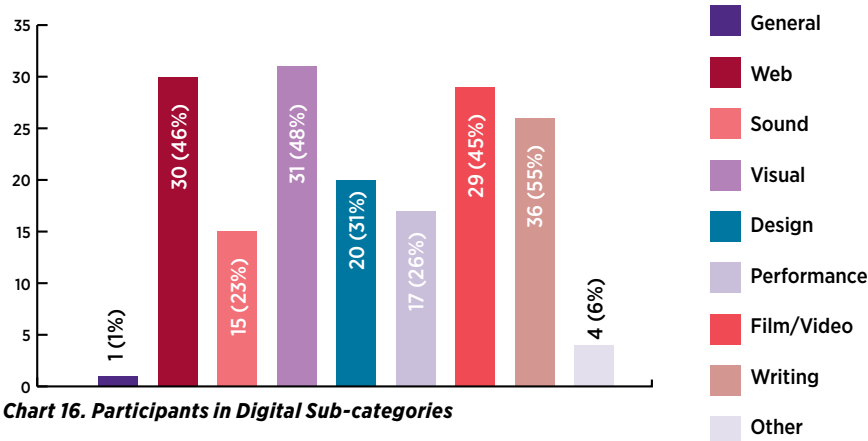


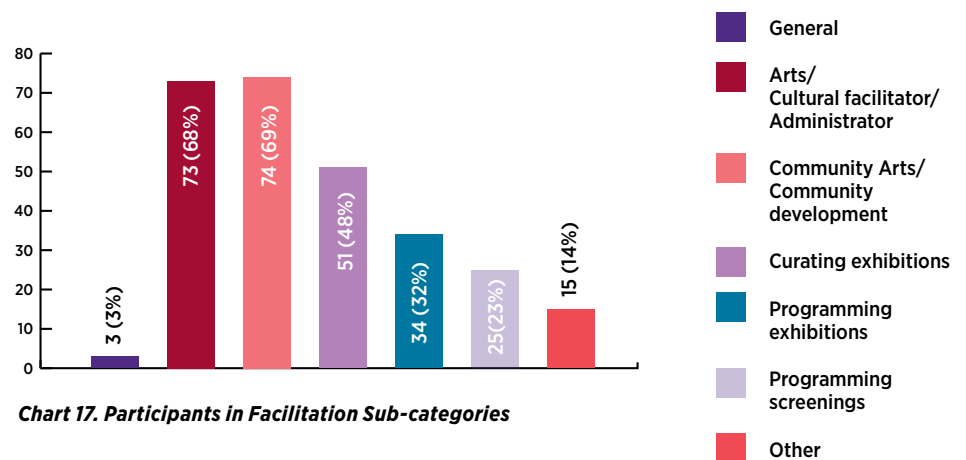
Chart 16. Participants in Digital Sub-categories



#### C4.4 Facilitation

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the Facilitation sub-categories: 107 respondents participated in Facilitation, and on average, were involved in 2.6 sub-categories each.

**Number and percentage of participants in Facilitation sub-categories**  
(107 participants, 2.6 subcategories per participant)

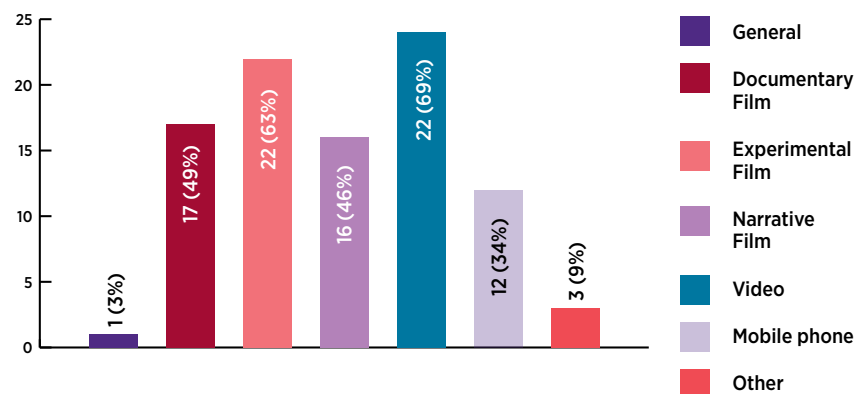


**Chart 17. Participants in Facilitation Sub-categories**

#### C4.5 Film/Video

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the Film/Video sub-categories, with 35 respondents participating in Film/Video, and on average involved in 2.7 sub-categories each.

**Number and percentage of participants in Film/Video sub-categories**  
(35 participants, 2.7 subcategories per participant)



**Chart 18. Participants in Film/Video Sub-categories**

#### C4.6 Music

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the Music sub-categories: 35 respondents participated in Music, and on average, were involved in 2.9 sub-categories each.

##### Number and percentage of participants in Music sub-categories

(35 participants, 2.9 subcategories per participant)

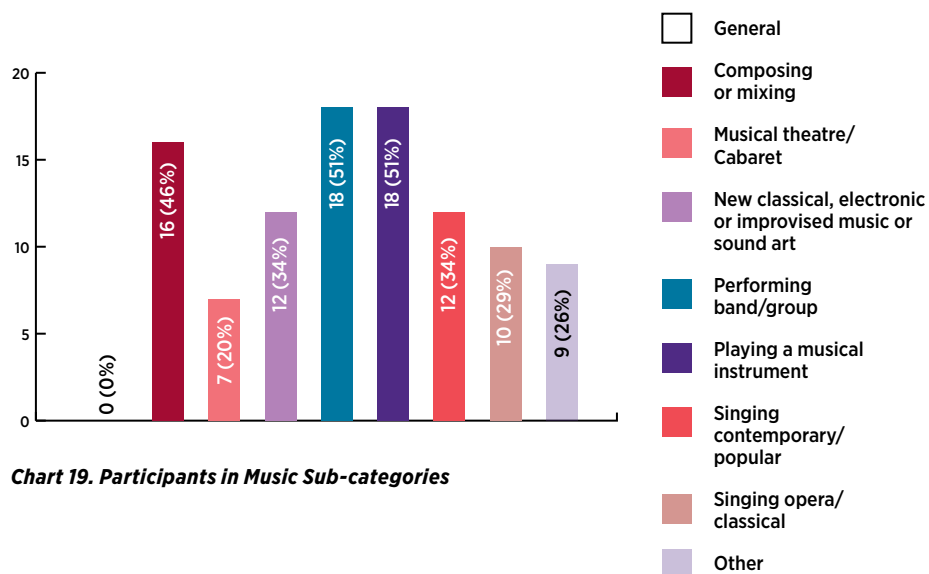


Chart 19. Participants in Music Sub-categories

#### C4.7 Theatre

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the Theatre sub-categories, with 24 respondents participating in Theatre, and on average, being involved in 2.9 sub-categories each.

##### Number and percentage of participants in Theatre sub-categories

(24 participants, 1.8 subcategories per participant)

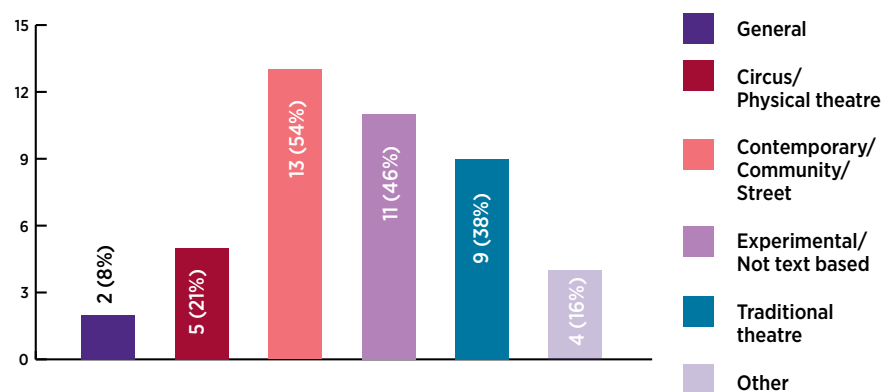
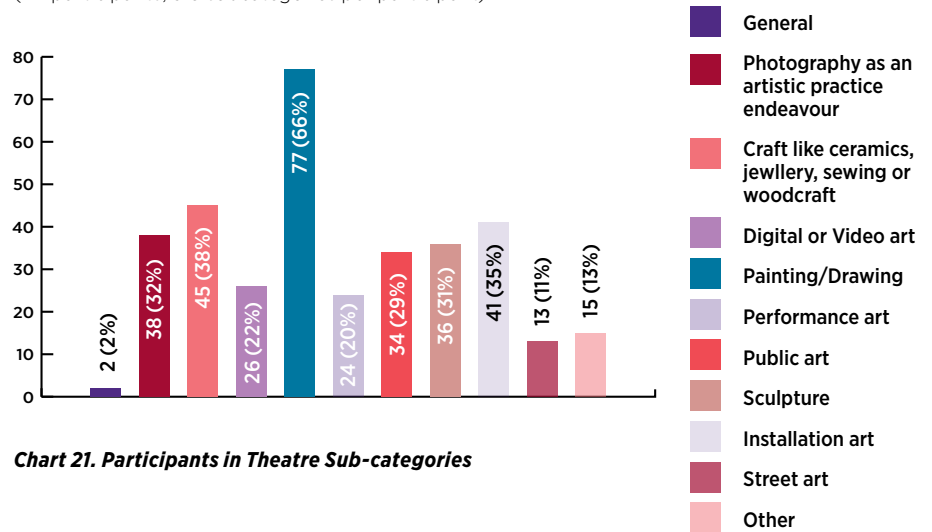


Chart 20. Participants in Theatre Sub-categories

#### C4.8 Visual Arts

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the Visual Arts sub-categories: 117 respondents participated in Visual Arts, and on average, were involved in 3.0 sub-categories each.

**Number and percentage of participants in Visual Arts sub-categories**  
(117 participants, 3.0 subcategories per participant)

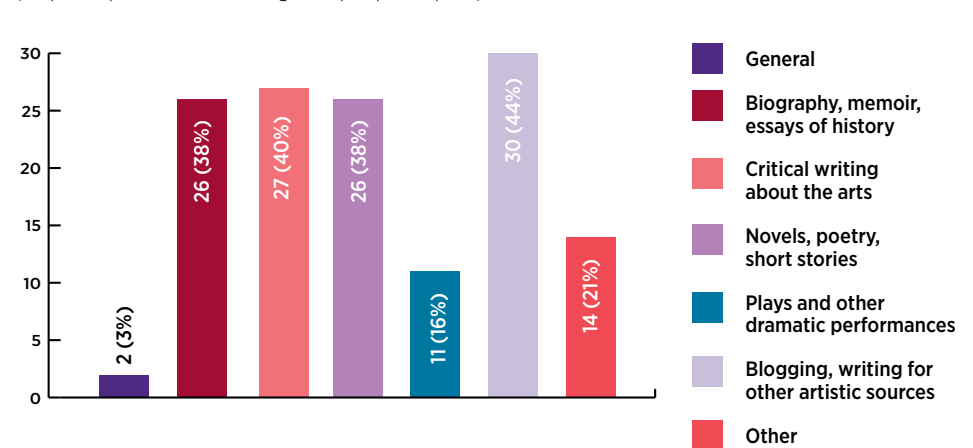


**Chart 21. Participants in Theatre Sub-categories**

#### C4.9 Writing

The following chart shows the number and percentage of participants in each of the writing sub-categories, with 68 respondents participating in Writing, and on average, being involved in 2.0 sub-categories each.

**Number and percentage of participants in Writing sub-categories**  
(68 participants, 2.0 subcategories per participant)



**Chart 22. Participants in Writing Sub-categories**

In general, the respondents indicated that they participated in more than one sub-category activity within their main artistic discipline, concerning which the following summary observations can be made:

**Dance:** Activities are well spread across several sub-categories.

**Design:** Activities are concentrated in the digital/design/graphics sub-categories, with little in fashion/industrial.

**Digital:** Activities are well spread across several sub-categories.

**Facilitation:** The primary activities are arts/culture facilitation or administration, and community arts or community development. There is less interest in programming exhibitions and screenings.

**Film/Video:** Activities are well spread across several sub-categories.

**Music:** Activities are well spread across several sub-categories.

**Theatre:** There is a strong interest in contemporary and experimental theatre.

**Visual Arts:** Activities are well spread across several sub-categories, except that painting/drawing has almost double the participation of the other sub-categories.

**Writing:** Activities are well spread across several sub-categories.

All artistic/creative disciplines had a strong participation of respondents in multiple sub-categories of the discipline. The following table shows how the average participation varies according to the primary discipline.

**Respondents in Discipline and Average Sub-categories**

Artistic/creative discipline	Number of respondents in discipline	Average number of sub-categories respondents participate in
Dance	22	2.0
Design	47	2.1
Digital	65	2.8
Facilitation	107	2.6
Film/Video	35	2.7
Music	35	2.9
Theatre	24	1.8
Visual Arts	117	3.0
Writing	68	2.0

**Table 3. Number of Respondents in Discipline and Average Sub-categories**

As the above Table shows, the Dance, Design and Theatre disciplines have lower participation in multiple sub-categories than the other disciplines, particularly Digital, Music and Visual Arts.



### C5. Location of Artistic Practice

Most respondents (72 percent) pursued their artistic/creative practice at home alone, with the next most popular practice (50 percent) being: “sharing with others in a studio/space outside of home”. Other options generally constituted less than 20 percent of the nominated sites (the total comes to more than 100 percent because some respondents pursued their artistic/creative practice in more than one space).

The location of artistic and cultural practice is often due to personal preferences regarding how people interact with others. The interviewees described their social needs as applicable to their creative lives:

*I get lonely actually in my office. I like the kind of cut and thrust of collaborations. It's interesting (James).*

*I call myself a social vampire because I love people, being around people, having people with me (Giuseppe).*

*... the good thing with artists is they can get together and they can talk about art ... it's just nice talking to people that have a similar interest (Matthew).*

### Where do you pursue your creative/artistic practice? (157 respondents)

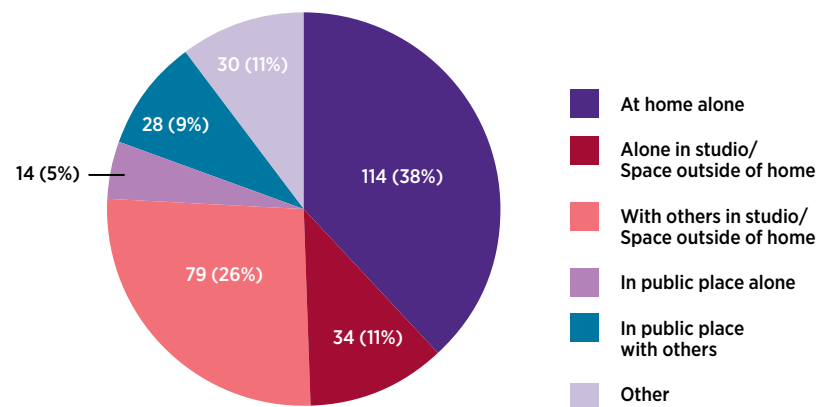


Chart 23. Location of Artistic Practice

### C6. How Respondents Undertake their Artistic Cultural Practice

Most respondents (70 percent) spent some of their time working by themselves, but many worked with others with similar, complementary or different skills. Use of digital technology was only moderately important for respondents in carrying out their artistic practice.

### How do you undertake your artistic practice? (160 respondents)

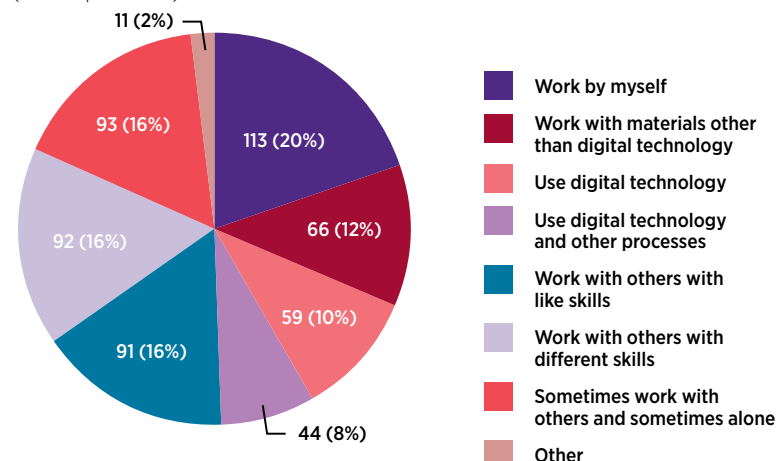


Chart 24. Location of Artistic Practice

Some interviewees indicated that they collaborate, but suggested that they did so under self-imposed conditions:

*I guess I collaborate in that way more under my own terms (Ursula).*

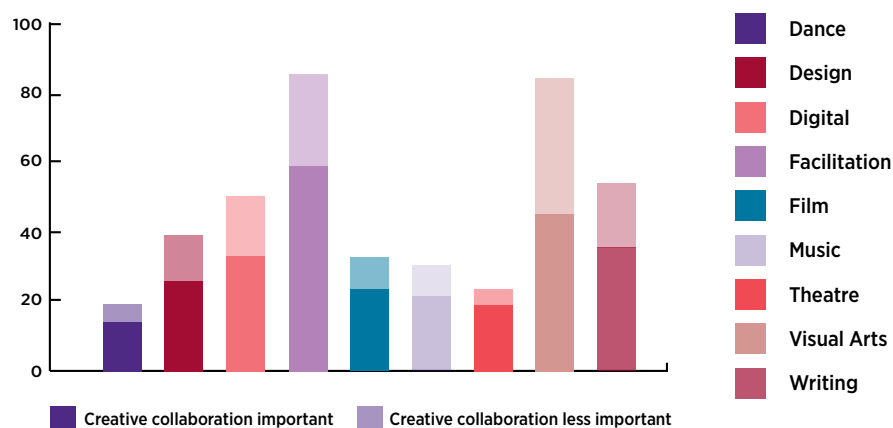
Contrastingly, there were those who had not collaborated in terms of making artistic work, but indicated that it was something that they would like to explore in the future:

*I haven't collaborated with others... It would be something I'm really interested in actually (Giulia).*

### C7. Importance of Creative Collaboration by Discipline

The following chart shows, for each discipline, how many respondents indicated that creative collaboration was important for them, and also, how many identified it as less important.

#### Respondents in each discipline indicating that creative collaboration is important vs number in discipline



**Chart 25. Importance of Creative Collaboration by Discipline**

Respondents in the disciplines where people work together as part of the creative process – such as in Dance, Theatre, Film and Music – identified creative collaboration as being important for them; this was less the case for those who work mainly as individuals, such as in Writing and Visual Arts.

Within each discipline the proportions regarding collaboration were different. In the Visual Arts, for example, around 50 percent of respondents felt that creative collaboration was important, whereas in Facilitation, around 90 percent felt it was important. This finding is unsurprising given the history and type of the practice involved, although it could be argued that more general networking among creative practitioners can also be viewed as an indirect mode of collaboration.

For some interviewees, collaboration can be seen as essential to the creative process in particular artforms:

*Film making is a collaborative process and I think working with others, it helps build towards that vision (Azra).*

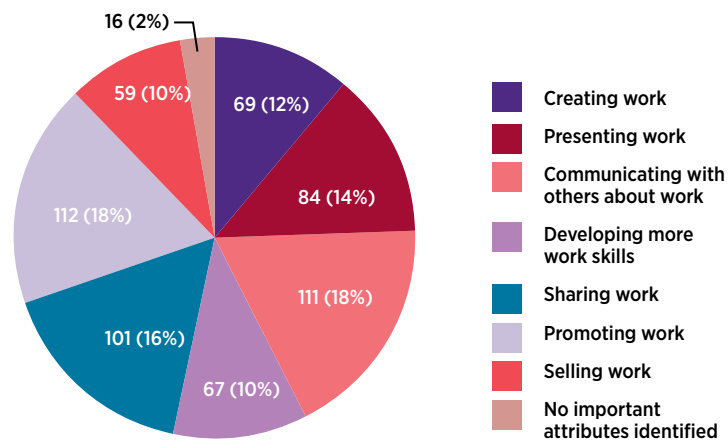
*... it takes a team to make a film. It takes people with different interests in different areas (Walid).*

### C8. Importance of Access to Digital Technology

The following chart shows the importance of access to digital technology to the creative work of survey respondents.

Most respondents (60-70 percent) indicated that digital technology was important for communicating with others, and for sharing or promoting their work, but less so for creating (43 percent) and selling (37 percent) their work.

### How important is access to digital technology for your work? (159 respondents)

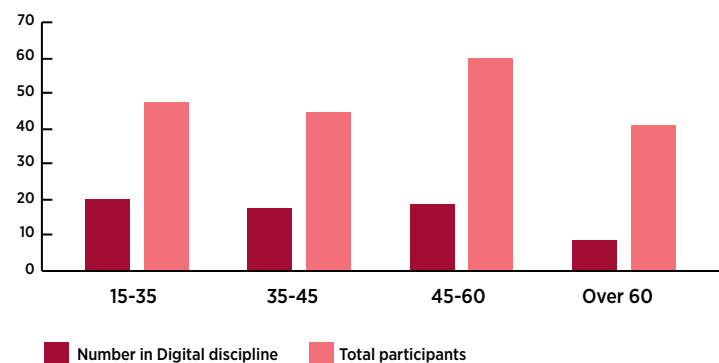


**Chart 26. Location of Artistic Practice**

### C9. Take up of Digital Creative Discipline by Age

The following chart shows the uptake of digital technology in the production of respondents' artistic work in relation to their age. The percentage of respondents participating in the digital artistic discipline was steady at about 40 percent until age 45, and then reduced further to about 20 percent for those over 60 years of age.

### How important is access to digital technology for your work? (159 respondents)



**Chart 27. Take up of Digital Creative Discipline by Age**

Several interviewees said they did not use digital technology to make their work. They mentioned a need to have a more tactile or intimate relationship with what they were doing, as well as a predisposition to use particular kinds of material in the process of making.

*In terms of making my work I'm currently not using digital media .... what I'm interested in, is more of a tactile nature (Giulia).*

*I don't find satisfaction in creating digital art ... I like the feeling of the material, the feeling of the oil or the watercolour and so on. That's the thing that really attracts me (Giuseppe).*

Others mentioned their preference for working with people rather than machines, sometimes in relation to specific artforms. For example, those who worked in Dance were less likely to use new media than, say, those working in Film. But this pattern also related to the kind of work that people are doing within their medium.

*My digital technology is basic. No, it's not a tool that I use ... I need to work with others (Penny).*

*I'm not great at that. I guess also because of what I do ... dance ... we do a lot of traditional dance and it's about the live elements of that (Ursula).*

*I almost don't (use digital technology). My pieces are very minimalist ... I'm more interested in this human contact (Fazal).*

There are also, though, interviewees who embrace digital media for making work and see it in a very positive way, both for reasons of aesthetics and efficiency:

*it's really digital media and technology that gave me access to art in terms of experimenting with film and music ... for me technology is the greatest thing that's happened to arts in the last ten years or so, because it just means that anyone can be an artist because the technical skills are kind of taken care of (Daichi).*

*I have to say, technology makes it a hell of a lot easier (Shereen).*

Many of the interviewees used social media (which are digital by nature) in their various forms to market their work, to communicate with others in their field, or to share information about their projects:

*we've got a pretty active social media ... We've got a Facebook page and an Instagram (Ursula).*

*I'll send out emails, I'll connect through social media (Jack).*

*Absolutely. And using the evils of Facebook too, because that's become like a huge marketing tool (Shereen).*

*... you can find an audience without having to rely on a third party to do that for you. And a global audience as well (Daichi).*

*I have a popular Facebook page. I have a webpage ... I produced the book on it (Fazal).*

There was also a generational issue reflecting a reluctance to engage or embrace 'new' media (some of which are no longer new):

*I mean I look at those things but I don't really use it in a way that some of the younger staff do. I'm just a product of my age really. I'm a product of my generation (James).*

*I feel [a] sort of weakness in my role here is that the primary communication is driven through camera (Helen).*

The proliferation of digital media and social media networking platforms, then, has had a differential impact on arts and cultural practitioners, with some using the former actively as a technology of creative production (Hope and Ryan, 2014), but most deploying the latter for the purposes of open and networked communication (Dewdney and Ride, 2014).



## D. PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS

### D1. Important Factors in the Creative Process

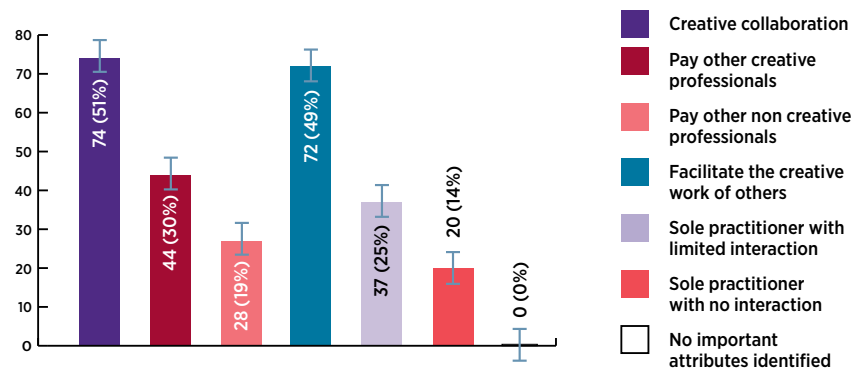
This section of the report investigates factors that are important to artists/cultural workers' creative process, professional development, financial status and social interaction. The most important factors relating to creative practice, both at a level of about 50 percent, are creative collaboration and facilitating the creative work of others.

Collaboration was seen by several interviewees as being essential to the creative process in particular artforms:

*Film making is a collaborative process and I think working with others, it helps build towards that vision (Azra).*

*Collaboration ... I mean I'm a theatre maker, so that's what theatre making is (Helen).*

**Which of the following factors are important to your creative process?**  
(146 respondents)



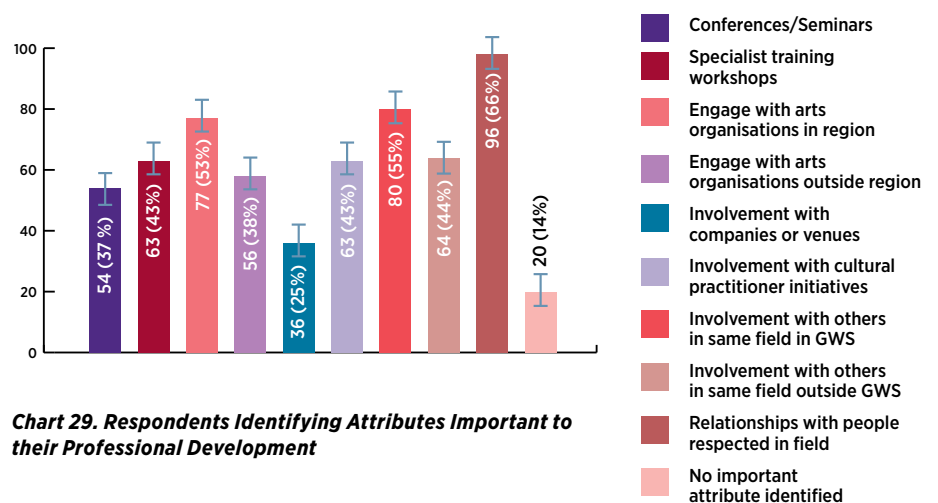
**Chart 28. Respondents Identifying Factors as Important in their Creative Process**

### D2. Attributes Important for Professional Development

Chart 29 shows which attributes are important to the respondents' professional development.

The most important aspects of professional development were relationships with others who are respected in their field; with others in same field – especially those co-located in Greater Western Sydney; and with arts organisations in the region. (These were each noted in 50-65 percent of responses). Survey participants viewed involvement with companies or venues as least important for professional development.

**How important is access to digital technology for your work?**  
(146 respondents)



**Chart 29. Respondents Identifying Attributes Important to their Professional Development**

### D3. Financial Factors that Enable a Successful Creative/Artistic Practice

Chart 30 shows which financial factors are important for the respondents' practice.

Most of the financial factors in this question were regarded as important by the respondents, including financial sacrifices and taking risks. By way of contrast, a full-time job was generally not a high priority, but a part-time job with flexible hours was frequently seen as important. Clearly, part-time employment (either in an art-related or other area of work) enables creative practice. This arrangement demands financial sacrifice, although, as noted above, many of the survey respondents were in a position of not needing to be engaged in full-time work in order to survive.

### Which of the following aspects of your own behaviour are important to your Professional Development? (146 respondents)

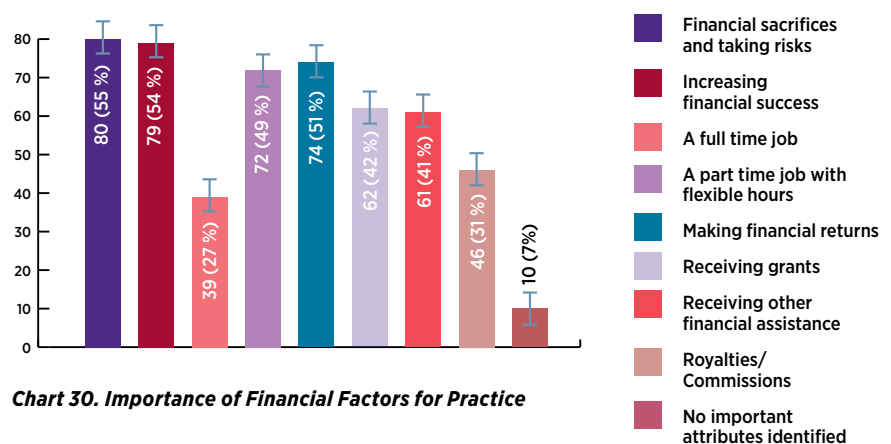


Chart 30. Importance of Financial Factors for Practice

### D4. Importance of Social Factors to Enable Successful Creative Practice

The following chart shows the social-relational factors that were important to the survey respondents.

The respondents generally (50-65 percent) rated recognition by family, peers, mentors and the community as particularly important for the successful conduct of their practice.

### How important are the following Social Factors? (146 respondents)

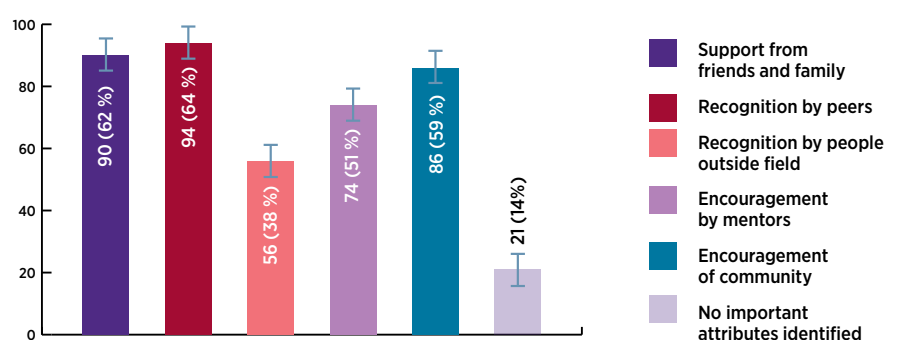


Chart 31. Respondents Identifying Types of Social Factors for Successful Practice

## E. INCOME AND HOURS WORKED

### E1. Average Annual Income from Artistic/Creative Practice in \$AUD

The following chart shows the income that respondents receive from their creative/artistic practice. It should be noted that a sizeable proportion of survey respondents did not answer questions about income and finances, perhaps because they were felt to be intrusive. For this reason, the data relating to finances should be treated with caution although, as is noted below, it is, in various respects, consistent with those of other large studies in Australia.

Which of these best describes your average annual income from your artistic/creative practice in \$AUD? (102 respondents)

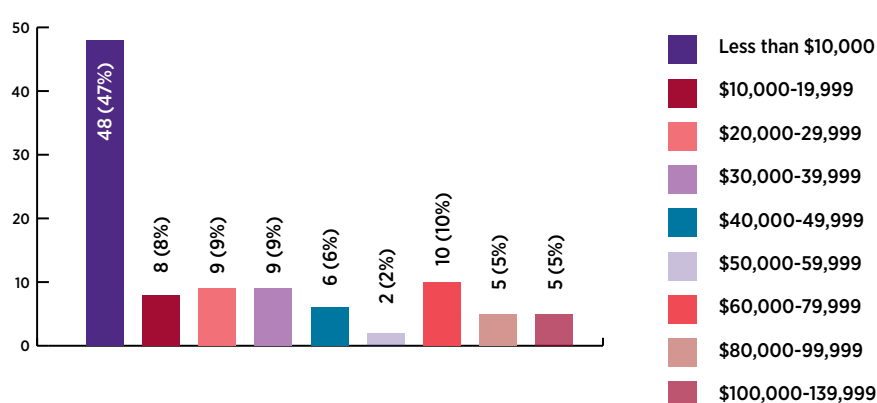


Chart 32. Average Annual Income from Artistic/Creative Practice in \$AUD

### E2. Creative Income in Relation to Place of Birth

The following chart shows income from the respondents' artistic and cultural practices in relation to their place of birth. Both median and average incomes are shown.

It is shown here that respondents born in Australia earned significantly more from their artistic and creative income than those born overseas. This finding is consistent with that of Throsby and Zednick (2010) regarding income from art work. Although not all those who were born in the country were Anglo-Australians, they were over-represented among respondents with 88 percent speaking English at home. They also had the additional advantage of being longer established in Australia. The Australia Council for the Arts (2015a; 2015b) found in its 2009 survey that less than 10 percent of professional artists are from a non-English speaking background. This "diversity problem", as Phillip Mar and Ien Ang (2015) describe it, needs to be addressed and overcome. Our survey and interviews found that, while there was considerable interaction and collaboration between arts and cultural practitioners with diverse backgrounds, those from non-English speaking backgrounds were generally less well established and, it follows, in a more economically precarious financial position than the Anglo-Australian majority.

Artistic/creative income vs place born

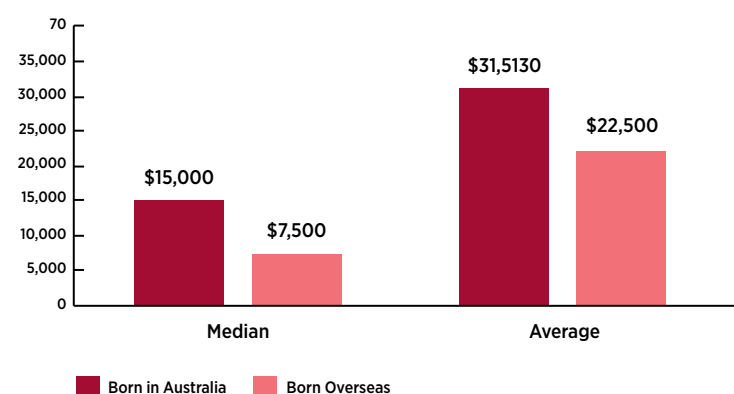


Chart 33. Creative Income in Relation to Place of Birth

### E3. Hours per week Spent on Supplementary or Other Employment as an Artist or Cultural Practitioner.

Chart 34 shows time spent per week on supplementary employment by the survey respondents (approximately half) who answered this question.

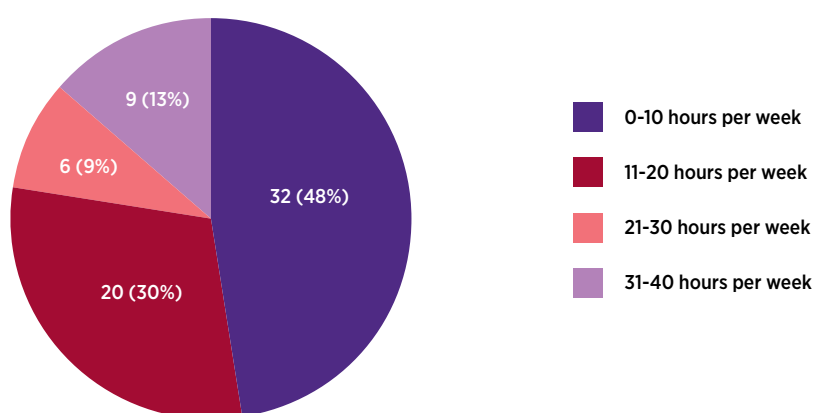
Of those respondents who had a supplementary income, most spent less than 20 hours per week on this activity, with the average hours worked being 14 hours per week. They were likely to have several sources of income and to juggle them in order to support their creative practice.

*Definitely other sources of income. That's why I wear so many different hats (Vince).*

*I film weddings most of the weekend. That's like a job to get money so I can spend [it] on my projects (Fahim).*

*the majority of my income comes from teaching (Giuseppe).*

**If you have supplementary or other employment to your practice, approximately how many hours per week do you spend on this?**  
(67 respondents)

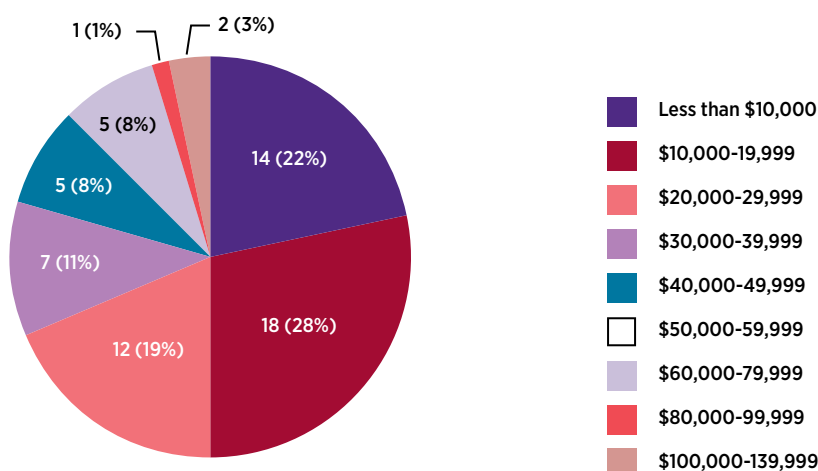


**Chart 34. Hours per Week Spent on Supplementary or Other Employment**

### E4. Average Annual Income from Other Employment in \$AUD

Chart 35 shows the supplementary income of respondents. It can be seen that supplementary income is generally higher than artistic income, averaging \$22,000 per annum and with a median income of \$20,000 per annum.

**Which of these best describes your average annual income from your other employment in \$AUD?** (64 respondents)



**Chart 35. Hours per Week spent on Supplementary or Other Employment**



### E5. Source of Most Supplementary Income

Chart 36 shows the broad sources of respondents' supplementary income, most of which comes from the professional, teaching and research sector (about 50 percent), although family sources are also important (about 30 percent).

In response to questions about whether they can live on their earnings from art, interviewees commonly indicated that this was not the case:

*I would say that per annum ... about a quarter of my taxable income comes from dance and dance-related work (Jack).*

*My personal arts practice? No. Not at all. Basically the financial support I get is from my part-time job and my husband also working casual jobs and that's about it (Giulia).*

*...No. No definitely not. I'm glad I've got a partner who works full-time as an engineer ... it does not support me financially at all (Azra).*

### Which of these best describes your average annual income from your artistic/creative practice in \$AUD? (70 respondents)

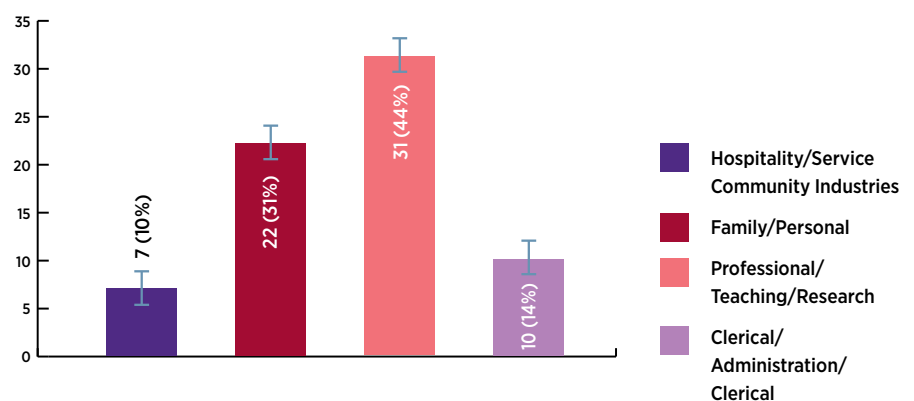


Chart 36. Source of Most Supplementary Income

### E6. Total Income

Chart 37 shows income from artistic and cultural practice with supplementary income superimposed. The two sources are added to indicate total income. Sixty-one respondents provided both incomes, and are plotted from the lowest artistic income to the highest.

Almost half the respondents had an artistic income of less than \$10,000 *per annum* and, therefore, relied heavily on supplementary income (which was usually higher than their artistic income). Nevertheless, the total income of these practitioners was still low – about \$30,000 *per annum*. As respondents came to earn more from their practice, they progressively relied less on supplementary income. Five respondents out of 61 earned more than \$50,000 from their artistic practice and did not have any supplementary earned income. Given that, in November 2016 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017), full-time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings were \$1,533.10 (that is, \$79,721.20 *per annum*), it can be seen that the arts and cultural practitioners in the survey were generally lowly remunerated both in relation to their creative and to other work. Viewing both formal paid labour and unpaid creative labour as 'work', it is apparent that most respondents were engaged in 'precarious labour' (Oakley, 2009; Taylor and Littleton, 2016).

### Income from all sources

(Sample size of 61 respondents who identify both an artistic income and a supplementary income)

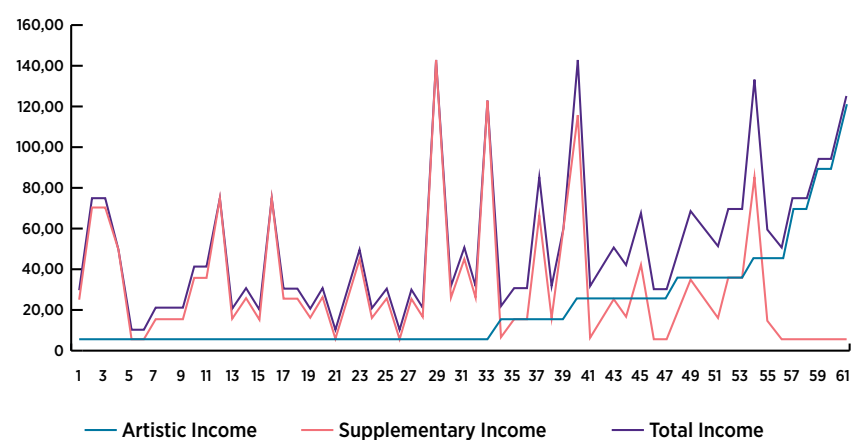


Chart 37. Income from All Sources

### E7. Artistic and Cultural Practice Income Sources

This survey question sought to identify sources of creative income, and the amount of income from those sources. Chart 38 shows how many respondents identified at least part of their income as coming from a particular source, and Table 4 displays how much of the respondents' income comes from each source.

Please indicate your Artistic/Creative Income earned from the following sources.  
(95 respondents)

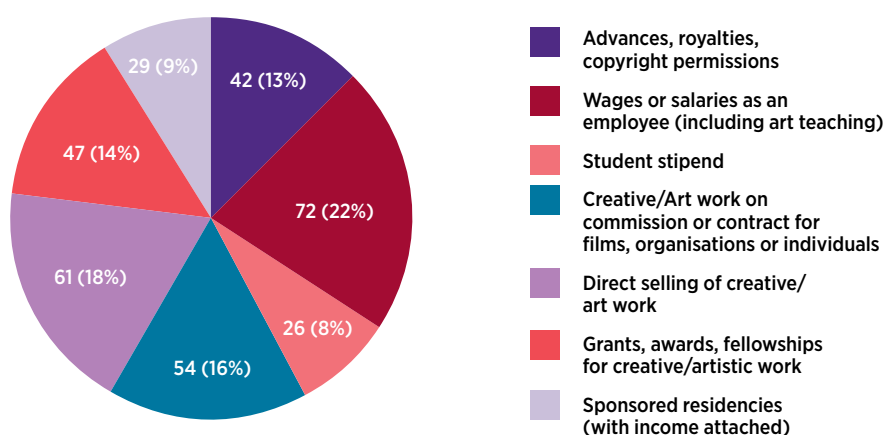


Chart 38. Sources of Creative Income

### Proportion of Income Derived from Various Sources.

Proportion of artistic/creative income earned from the following sources:	Advances, royalties, copyright permissions	Wages or salaries as an employee (including art and teaching)	Student Stipend	Creative/ Art work on commission or contract for firms, organisations or individuals	Direct selling of creative/art work	Grants, awards, fellowships for creative/artistic work	Sponsored Residencies (with income attached)
10% or less	39	24	22	26	32	30	26
11-20%	2	1	0	9	5	4	1
21-30%	1	3	0	7	1	4	0
31-40%	0	3	1	0	2	3	0
41-50%	0	2	1	1	5	4	2
51-60%	0	3	0	1	2	0	0
61-70%	0	2	0	3	0	1	0
71-80%	0	2	0	3	2	0	0
81-90%	0	10	0	2	5	0	0
91-100%	0	22	2	2	7	1	0
# Respondents	42	72	26	54	61	47	29

Table 4. Proportion of Income Derived from Various Sources

The chart and table reveal that 75 percent of respondents earned some income from wages or salaries, with 60 percent earning income from commission and direct selling and 45 percent from grants, advances and royalties. For most respondents, artistic income was spread across multiple sources. The only area where most income came from a single source was wages or salaries. There were interviewees moving into the middle and later stages of their lives, and who were starting to worry about how they would manage financially in the longer term:

*... in terms of employment and income, I know it will continue to be precarious and when I am down and not happy, it really concerns me (Penny).*

Others take the view that their artistic work will never support them entirely, so, while they may make some money from it, they do not expect to live on that income:

*... no, I don't rely on the income. And that's good in a sense (Christine, performing artist).*

*I don't subscribe to the starving artist philosophy because it's hard to be creative when you're trying to pay bills (Matthew).*

There were also artists and cultural workers who were concerned that they could become preoccupied by funding issues to their own detriment:

*I'm not an artist who has had a great deal of funding ... I think that we can get really caught up in just thinking that we can't make art and we can't practise if we don't have money (Ursula).*

Several of the interviewees were in full-time jobs and lived off their one main income. These jobs were usually in arts or cultural organisations, working as facilitators, administrators, curators, amateurs or even as council employees employed in a cultural role. Some of these individuals had spent many years as practising artists who lived a precarious existence, sometimes in a freelance role. They then made a conscious choice to seek full-time or at least more regular employment. While still engaged in creative activities, these practitioners were trying to live a more 'conventional' or stable existence.

*I think I'm at a different point in my life now. I'm forty ... I do value a full-time job. It's the first time I've had a full-time job (Raymondo).*

## E8. Labour Market Segments

Artists and cultural practitioners participate in and move across a range of labour market segments, including the not-for-profit, community and commercial sectors. The classifications provided in the survey questions are as follows:

**Not-for-profit:** Refers to organisations that re-invest any profit in their creative activities. Not-for-profit organisations include arts organisations, theatre companies, galleries, arts centres and the like. They generate a lot of their own income, for example, from ticket sales and sales of works of art. However, they also receive considerable support from grants and subsidies, and also, in-kind support (for example, access to facilities and venues, sponsorship, promotion, equipment loan among others). Some of this support is provided by local government.

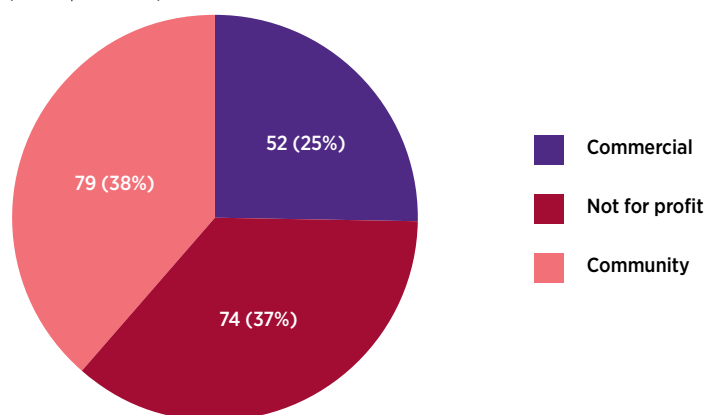
**Community:** Refers to creative or cultural services that meet a broad range of physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual needs; for example, community festivals, street theatre, public art and culturally specific activity. Work in this sector may or may not be reimbursed. The community sector focuses on a broad range of physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual needs, some of which relate to arts and creative practices. It is also supported by local government in much the same way as not-for-profit organisations, for example, through sponsorship, access to venues and spaces, organisational support and so on, and through support of arts organisations devoted to cultural development.

**Commercial:** Refers to the intention to make a profit from the enterprise, such as commercial art galleries representing artists and charging a commission for work that is sold to dealers, institutions and private collectors. Or, for example, in the performing arts where commercial activities generate a profit from ticket sales and merchandising, and which range in size from state-based flagship arts centres to smaller local and regionally-based venues and companies. Support can be provided through local, state and federal governments to some of these enterprises.

The following chart and table show the time that respondents devote to particular segments of the labour market.

### E8. Labour Market Segments.

Please indicate if any of your artistic/creative time is spent the following sectors.  
(95 respondents)



**Chart 39. Respondents who Devote Time to Particular Segments of the Labour Market**

### E9. What Proportion (if any) of Your Creative/Arts Activity Time was Devoted over the Past Three Years to these Sectors

Respondents indicated that they spent time in more than one sector. Approximately 80 percent spent some of their time in the not-for-profit and community sectors. Just over half (55 percent) worked for some time in the commercial sector, but only 10 percent of respondents spent more than 50 percent of their time in the commercial sector.

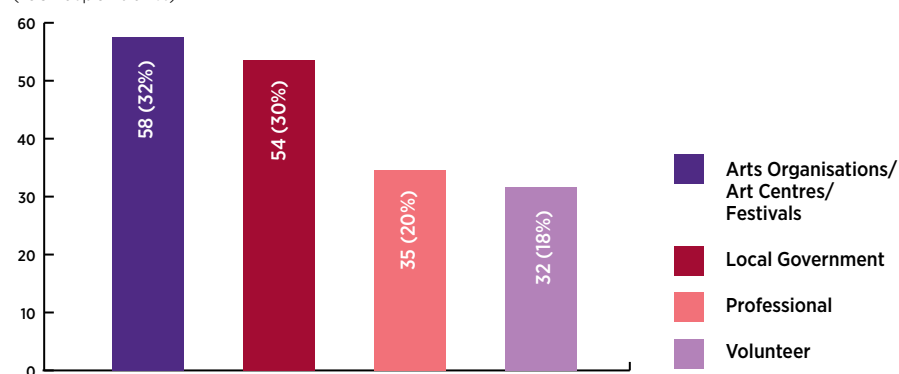
#### Time Devoted over the Past Three Years by Sector to creative/Arts Activity

Amount	Commercial Sector	Not-for-profit sector	Community Sector
10% or less	30	16	22
11-20%	6	5	8
21-30%	3	5	8
31-40%	2	6	8
41-50%	1	8	7
51-60%	0	7	4
61-70%	2	3	1
71-80%	3	1	2
81-90%	2	6	3
91-100%	3	17	16
Total respondents	52	74	79

**Table 5. Proportion of creative/Arts Activity Time Devoted over the Past Three Years by Sector**

The following chart shows where people were employed or volunteered, and whether the work was professional (that is, paid) or voluntary.

**Employment/Volunteering in Greater Western Sydney region in past three years**  
(135 respondents)



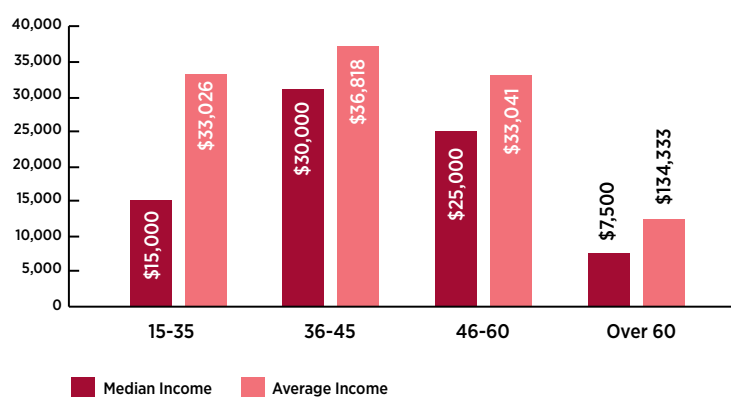
**Chart 40. Type of Employment/Volunteering in Greater Western Sydney, 2012-15**

#### E10. Creative Income in Relation to Age Group

The following chart shows income from the respondents' artistic practices based on the age of respondents (both median and average incomes are shown).

In general, the data indicate that respondents earned most from their artistic/creative practices in their middle years, earning significantly less when over 60 years of age. Average hours worked for artistic/creative income are about the same for all age groups and, therefore, earning rates per hour for the older respondents are significantly less than applies to other age categories. Additional research is needed to explain this difference, which may relate to relationships between age, main artistic discipline and financial return.

**Artistic/creative income vs age**



**Chart 41. Income Based on Artistic Practices and the Age of Respondents**

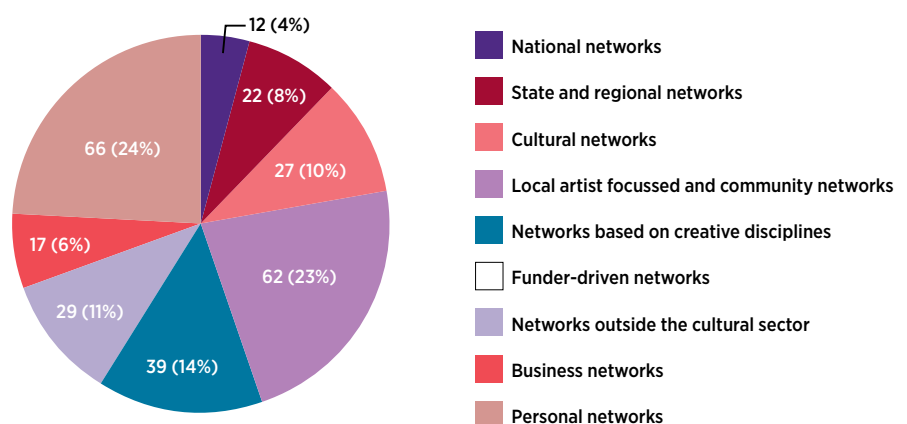


## F. NETWORKING

### F1. Use of Networks to Produce Work

Chart 42 shows which networks are reported by respondents as being important or very important to them for conducting their creative work. Cultural networks are identified as being the most often used, with those focused on local artists and community also highly favoured.

**Networks considered important for conducting creative work**  
(110 respondents)



**Chart 42. Types of Networks**

Networking, it should be recognised, means different things to different people. Moreover, although it emerged from the survey as important to respondents, it was frequently disparaged by interviewees when it was interpreted in instrumental terms as being expected to meet operational expectations of the arts/culture environment:

*I do networking but I hate it (Shereen).*

*When I go to them, I have to, but I don't really enjoy them ... those things aren't particularly about the work. It's usually about something entirely different (James).*

*I think I was really excited about networking.... then I think after I realised – actually they're not interested in my story at all ... They're interested in... ticking their boxes. And it's the truth (Azra).*

*It's getting out and about ... I've lost a drive to do that (Helen).*

*It is just kind of, a bit, emotionally draining. The whole notion of networking (Vince).*

However, networking was represented in a more positive light by those interviewees who viewed it as part of their knowledge building and commitment to their artform:

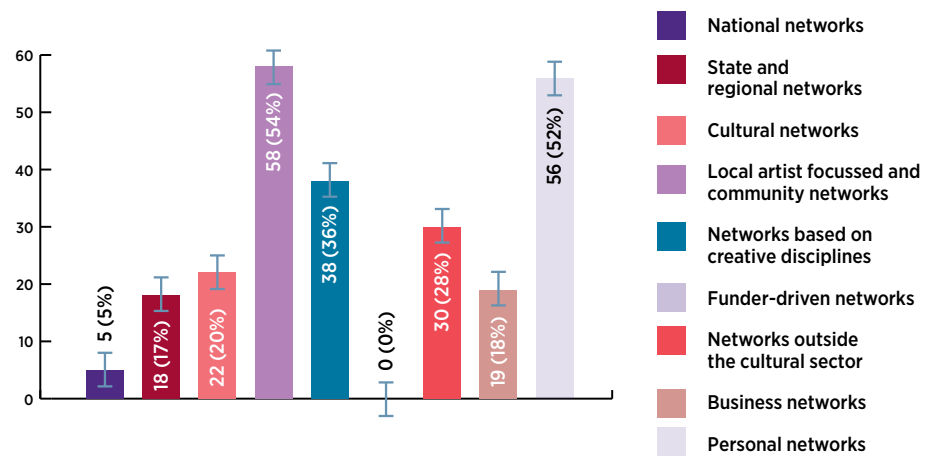
*... yeah I'm really engaged ... I do find myself at openings and things as a performer. But I absolutely do go and see stuff ... I'm always going to see work (Ursula).*

Thus, networking can be seen simultaneously as a chore – having to be seen and to 'meet and greet' significant others in order to gain a professional/organisational advantage – or as a positive process of mutual engagement and support with fellow cultural practitioners, sympathetic people and organisations. These competing responses to the idea and practice of networking obviously influence the nature of the expressed attitudes to the practice that are shaped by prior assumptions of what constitutes 'networking'.

## F2. Networks for Distribution and Marketing and Ranking

Chart 43 shows which networks are identified by the respondents as important or very important to them for distributing and marketing their creative work.

**Identify one or more networks which are important for distributing and marketing.**  
(107 respondents)



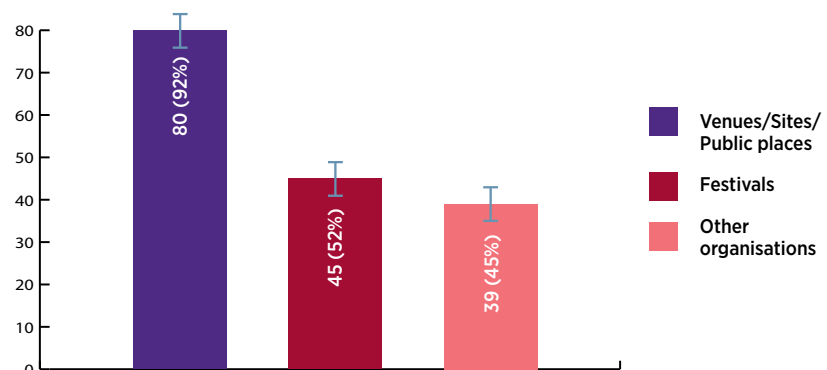
**Chart 43. Important Networks for Distributing and Marketing**

## G. ARTS ORGANISATIONS

### G1. Importance of Sites, Organisations, Venues or Festivals for Presentation

Chart 44 identifies the different sectors that are important for the presentation of the respondents' work. The most important places for presentation of work (92 percent of responses) are venues, sites and public places, with festivals (52 percent) and other organisations (approximately 45 percent).

**What are the sites, organisations, venues or festivals which are particularly important for the presentation of your creative work? Include, if appropriate, your home, your studio or public places. Be specific and provide names and rank in order of importance.**  
(87 respondents)



**Chart 44. Sites for Presentation of Work**

## H. RESOURCES

The resource needs identified by the survey respondents and interviewees were those of financial support; help in selling work; help in publicising work; discounted supplies or services; opportunities to network with peers; and opportunities to meet with others or to show to audiences. Those respondents of Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) identified the same needs as the majority of respondents with English-speaking backgrounds, but particularly noted the importance of opportunities to meet with other artists and opportunities to network (in the non-instrumental sense) outside their group (see Chart 46). Specialised services relating to language were not highly rated by NESB respondents.

The commitment and engagement of fellow cultural practitioners were regarded as the most valuable resource in Western Sydney, but were felt to be frequently overlooked. The data demonstrated that artists and cultural practitioners in Western Sydney were highly engaged with their work. They were animated by both, a close attachment to one or more artforms, as well as a commitment to social, cultural and political issues. There was a generally strong belief that arts and culture played a transformational and powerful role in their own lives and those of others.

Many respondents described Western Sydney as an environment that provided more artistic freedom than other parts of the metropolitan region (and, by extension, most other parts of the state and nation) because it supported both aesthetic risk and cultural difference. Their common view was that, in Western Sydney, there was a self-perception of difference, and therefore, there was a tendency to eschew associations with the cultural 'mainstream'. Paradoxically, alongside the greater artistic freedom, it was also felt that the emphasis on the divide between the West and elsewhere in Sydney, enabled correspondingly strong views that arts and cultural practice and product in Western Sydney were both undervalued and under-resourced.

H1. Services and Resources that Assist in Artistic and Cultural Practice

Chart 45 shows respondents' identification of their resource needs.

The services and resources that, by their own account, would most assist respondents were: financial support; help in publicising work; and opportunities to meet with or show to audiences. In contrast, job placement services, computer services, office services, work-space and work resource referrals were not highly rated.

What kinds of service/resource would most assist you in your creative/artistic practice? (117 respondents)

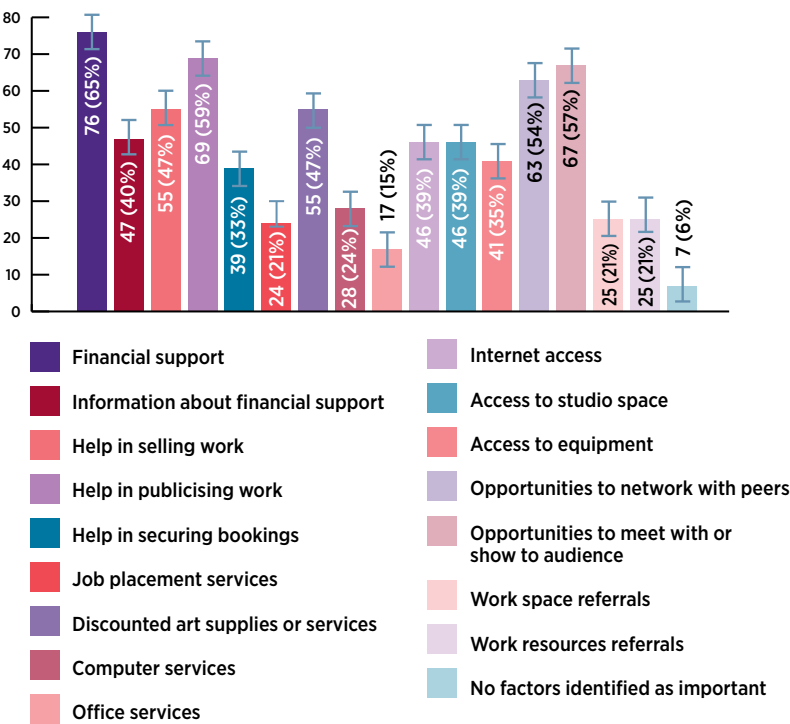


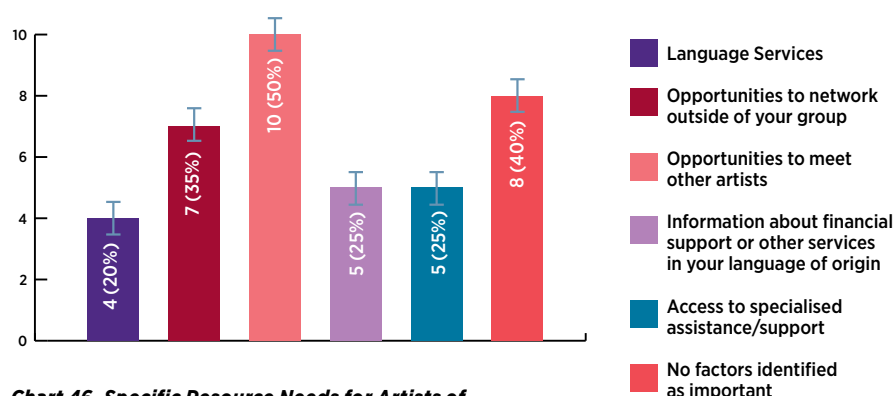
Chart 45. Detailed Resource Needs

## H2: Specific Services/Resources for those of Non-English Speaking Background and/or Recent Migrants

Chart 46 shows specific requirements for respondents of non-English speaking backgrounds.

While specialised services relating to language were not highly rated by NESB respondents, 50 percent identified opportunities to meet with other artists as a specific service and 35 percent wished to be able to network outside their group. This suggests that the respondents perceived a degree of distance from the arts milieu or 'scene'. At the same time, however, 40 percent are not concerned about this matter, which points to an acceptable level of involvement for them in the arts and cultural milieu. This paradox has been identified and analysed as a common experience (see, for example, Ang et. al., 2006).

**If you have a non-English speaking background and/or are a recent migrant, are there specific services/resources that would assist you in your creative/artistic practice?**  
(20 respondents)



**Chart 46. Specific Resource Needs for Artists of Non-English Speaking Background Backgrounds**

## FUTURE NEEDS OF THE ARTIST/CULTURAL PRACTITIONER

When asked about their views concerning the future needs of Western Sydney, participants often articulated a requirement for flexible and accessible cultural facilities, as well as for direct advocacy concerning their needs as arts and cultural practitioners. Interviewees frequently expressed feelings of being hampered and frustrated in their work by the lack of cultural facilities in the Greater Western Sydney region. In particular, they noted the benefits of permanent spaces where they could work and/or expand the range of their work. Such spaces include those devoted to artists' studios, workshops, storage, exhibition, teaching and performance. Many expressed a sense of frustration over the slow progress of investment in cultural facilities in Greater Western Sydney. However, it was consistently made clear that usable spaces were required, rather than expensive 'white elephants' that cannot be accessed or afforded.

Several interviewees acknowledged that some local governments in the region

support a range of cultural and arts practices. However, they also observed that getting practical outcomes at local government level involves much lobbying, persuasion and communication, and expressed a desire to see more long-term investment and better planning. Interviewees emphasised their frustration about the lack of practical, beneficial outcomes for arts and cultural practice despite the political attention that the region has received via such strategies as the NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework 2015 (Arts NSW, 2015), and other initiatives at the state (NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2016) and federal levels (Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, 2016).

### Support for Artists and Cultural Practitioners

The interviewees generally shared strong views about the importance of arts and culture to the wider society, seeing the arts as playing a significant role in every aspect of life, as well as being a vehicle for empowerment, communication, expression and fulfilment. They mostly felt that the arts are not sufficiently respected or valued in Australian society, nor are they supported

equally, with the greatest share of government funding going to elite arts such as classical ballet and major cultural facilities, usually located in the city centre. Concern was articulated about the future of arts and culture more generally, especially arts practice that is not aligned with prevailing business models. A major divide was discerned between the kinds of art practised in the Western Sydney region and those which receive the major share of government funding. Changes in arts funding policies reinforced this sense of a 'cultural-material' divide, and several of the interviewees expressed a high degree of anxiety about their future:

*.... if we're talking about federal arts funding, what has happened since the last federal Budget in 2015 is a huge dismantling. A really very significant dismantling of a respect for peers and assessments... if we didn't know what arms-length funding meant before, we know what it means now by having it taken away (Penny).*

*I have a feeling, and that's based on the last year or so of talk about funding and funding cuts, that it's going to be harder and harder for individual artists to be able to fund their practice through grants (Giulia).*



## Audiences and the Artist

Notwithstanding a general impression that the arts are not highly valued in Australia, there is a prevailing view among the interviewees that appreciation of arts and culture has increased over the past few years, with a greater proportion of the population having a better understanding of what constitutes good art:

*... the view of art in Australia was, some years ago, that they were all Philistines, but it's not there anymore. People are interested in art. So they go to see good art and they get to know it (Giuseppe).*

Nevertheless, this perception is largely accompanied by the belief that the arts do not get enough respect or support, and that there are major gaps that exist as a result:

*... the arts are nowhere near as supported in Australia as they are in other countries ... there's a really fine distinction between high art and those circles, and the rest of what the arts are in this country (Jack).*

There is a view here of a form of 'class divide' in relation to the arts, where the high European arts (such as opera and classical ballet) receive more than is perceived by several interviewees to be their fair share of the funding dollar:

*I'm not saying I'm against the arts or anything but I notice a lot of the big funding has always gone to like stuff like ballet... (Azra).*

It is generally felt that a lack of respect or appreciation of the arts, broadly conceived, has a major impact on the culture of the country:

*... in general what I worry about is just the culture in Australia in terms of - not arts and culture - but the culture of our society and our appreciation for the arts (Fazal).*

This lack of respect was also aligned by some interviewees as flowing to the cultural role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

*Indigenous people need to be at the forefront of the arts. Indigenous leaders need to be driving the arts ... We're still not accepting the first people of Australia at the forefront of the arts in everything we do (Walid).*

## REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The need to improve support for Western Sydney's arts and cultural facilities is acknowledged both in earlier research (for example, Lally, 2004; 2006), and in the most recent consultancies, reports and policy documents focussing on arts development in Western Sydney (Arts NSW, 2015; Deloitte, 2015). From the *Recalibrating Culture* research reported here, it is clear that participants would like this recognition to be demonstrated by immediate actual practical outcomes.

The concept of a 'cultural space' similar to sport spaces, as was suggested by one interviewee, provided within and for every community, has strong potential and could create a template for practices and policies across the state and country. The spaces envisioned by this interviewee are similar, perhaps, to the Scandinavian model of an 'arts house' where different art forms are able to be practised and the community has access to both usable spaces as well as skill development.

Encouraging this concept in a contemporary mode as part of the development of multi-use spaces is an initiative that has considerable merit, and its implantation could be configured in conjunction with existing and proposed buildings.

Overall, there is a major need for more, better and accessible cultural facilities across the Greater Western Sydney region, and additional support for practising artists and existing arts and cultural organisations. It is beyond the scope of this report to recommend specific creative production methods, but it is worth highlighting the valuable research undertaken in a survey of national arts case studies, *Promoting Diversity of Cultural Expression in Arts in Australia* (Mar and Ang, 2015). This work highlights a range of conditions that encourage contemporary dynamic arts production that is pertinent to the *Recalibrating Culture* research.

Importantly, urban arts and cultural policy is dominated by a focus on economic development and city reimagining rather than by the priorities and experiences of local artists and cultural workers (Stevenson, 2014).

Thus, approaches embedded in a creative industries/creative cities framework tend to imagine creative workers as young, inner-city, 'slashes' in the 'gig economy' forging mobile, flexible careers in the creative industries (Gill and Pratt, 2008; Olding, 2011). *Recalibrating Culture*, by contrast, painted a rather less 'fashionable' image of arts and cultural workers. Some stayed close, or were drawn back, to their socio-spatial origins in Western Sydney, far from the inner suburbs conventionally regarded as metropolitan Sydney's creative hubs. Ethnicity, community and social class were significant factors in determining where such arts and cultural practitioners live and work. But we also found another important group which did not resemble the 'typical' cultural worker foregrounded in creative industries-informed urban cultural policy. They are older, predominantly female, highly educated, and not particularly mobile, but play a key role in local creative communities and networks (Stevenson, 2017). The *Recalibrating Culture* project had demonstrated a clear need to take such socio-cultural complexities into account in any consideration of arts and cultural policy development.

This research has covered a range of issues of direct concern to cultural policy and planning, both in the metropolitan Sydney context and in the wider national and international spheres. While there has been considerable interest in employment in the cultural sector in inner Sydney (Rowe and Lynch, 2012), comparatively little is known about the working lives of arts and cultural practitioners in its more populous West. This problem has been compounded by a tendency in Australia to deploy a creative industries model developed in the British context (Stevenson, Rowe, and McKay, 2010; Stevenson, McKay, and Rowe, 2010) that has been of limited utility and privileged economic over public value (O'Connor, 2016). As we have demonstrated here, the outcome has been an under-appreciation of the high levels of creative activity in 'unfashionable' places like Greater Western Sydney, much of which is carried out by 'unfashionable' people embedded in local networks receiving little recognition as integral elements of a broadly conceived cultural economy.

This is not an attempt to romanticise the suburban or peri-urban struggling artist. The participants in our research were well aware that they had chosen a relatively precarious lifestyle in order to pursue their creative interests. Their aspirations for remuneration, resourcing and recognition were generally modest, and their suggestions for improving the conditions of arts and cultural practice in Western Sydney could by no means be described as extravagant. Instead, they demonstrated how a combination of strategic cultural institution building and fine-grained resourcing of artists and cultural practitioners, located in a proliferating range of cultural spaces, could generate tangible public-cultural benefits across whole communities and urban settings. Ultimately, then, the imperative of cultural recalibration is to adjust arts and cultural policy settings in ways that nurture and value creative practice wherever it is located and irrespective of the social status of those engaged in it. A compelling case is made in this report for Western Sydney's arts and cultural sector to be given unprecedented attention, but its method, analysis and argument may also apply to other cities and regions that have experienced comparable under-recognition.

The following recommendations have been developed to enable their implementation and realisation within a short timeframe of 12 months, provided that there is support via reasonable levels of expenditure, whether from local councils, state or federal government:

1. **Establish permanent arts/culture working spaces** in the local government areas covered by this study by consulting artists and cultural workers, and arriving at a working model for the Greater Western Sydney region. A working space might be a large garage or similar covered space that is dry, can be secured, has adequate ventilation, and is accessible to public transport. Each group consulted in this study has clear ideas about what is needed, particularly in relation to artforms. If a model of an artists' run space is preferable, then it would be possible to develop a 'best practice' model in conjunction with likely participants through

planning, monitoring and assessment. The City of Sydney, for example, has begun such a program with an audit that identified available and suitable spaces, has funded minimal refurbishment, and made the spaces available through a call for expressions of interest (City of Sydney, 2016). This approach could be conducted at local council or wider state levels, whichever is deemed to be more time and cost effective.

2. **Undertake an audit of existing arts and culture presentation spaces.** A recently completed audit of formal and informal presentation venues across the City of Sydney, *Mapping Culture: Venues and Infrastructure in the City of Sydney* (Ang et. al., 2016) revealed the range and scope of facilities utilised by artists to show their work. Building on the findings of this report, new research will examine the nature and extent of future needs for cultural space in the city, especially spaces for cultural creation and production. Similar research in Greater Western Sydney could reveal opportunities to increase presentation spaces, with relatively modest refurbishment costs. Again, this outcome can be achieved in conjunction with artists and with arts/cultural centres who are actively working with artists and cultural practitioners.
3. **Establish paid or subsidised artist-in-residency programs** that enable artists to work in various communities for extended periods of time. These residencies can be based in government bodies such as schools, hospitals, local government offices and community centres, but also located in semi-government and private sector organisations. This initiative would create employment opportunities for many artists, and also allow them to contribute valuably to their cultural *milieu*. One significant benefit of such programs could be intercultural exchange, understanding and inclusion – for both artists and host organisations. The process for residency programs could be streamlined if artists identify and negotiate interest with an institution or company with whom they would like to undertake a residency. Arts NSW, for example, could offer a program that can be promoted specifically to

and for Western Sydney-based artists and cultural practitioners, or residencies could productively be undertaken as a partnership with local councils.

4. **Develop a small grants program for arts and cultural activities.** Small grant programs could be administered through local government bodies or via the NSW State Government, and directed solely to the Greater Western Sydney region, with a focus on the local government areas which were partners in this study. This program should be broad enough to allow both individuals and groups to apply, have flexible deadlines, involve a streamlined one-page application, a one-page reporting back, and should be capped at a maximum amount per application (e.g. \$10,000-\$50,000). Successful applicants in one year would be ineligible the following year, so that access to such a program is spread as broadly as possible.
5. **Celebrate 'success' stories in the Greater Western Sydney region through a targeted campaign.** There are many inspiring stories about what people are doing in the field of art and culture in Greater Western Sydney. But many of those interviewed for this project felt that their work is not recognised and/or that they are portrayed negatively because of where they live and work. Greater acknowledgment and wider recognition can help alleviate this sense of invisibility and marginality. Such celebration certainly can occur in local media and council newsletters, and also at state level. A program of arts and culture writers could be established that will work in conjunction with a range of media outlets and be mentored by established writers and critics within New South Wales. This program would need to include arts and cultural media as well as general media, and could begin as a series of internships.
6. **Enhance arts and culture profile through advocacy and partnerships.** Highlight the work (discussions and achievements) of the Western Sydney Arts Advisory Group through a dedicated website which is regularly updated. This group would be seen by artists and cultural practitioners as a platform for engagement and

dissemination of information, and thus could help reduce the sense of isolation experienced by many consulted in the *Recalibrating Culture* study. The Casula Powerhouse-based national arts advocacy organisation, Diversity Arts Australia (formerly Kultour), could be viewed as an advocacy springboard site. The Western Sydney Arts and Culture Lobby, an advocacy network that contributes usefully to cultural policy debates, is a resource that could be strengthened through modest strategic investment and support.

**7. Establish a continuous research program.** Develop longitudinal knowledge and analysis through research studies such as *Recalibrating Culture* in order to maintain momentum. An online survey, such as the one developed for *Recalibrating Culture*, could be distributed every two years to generate new, comparative data, along with an online interviewee update option and new interviews every four years. Comparisons of, and shifts in, attitudes and success (or otherwise) of implemented strategies could, therefore, be tracked over time. Western Sydney-specific research might, therefore, be aligned with the longitudinal Macquarie University artists' income survey, which constitutes a national report on the state of artists' lives (Throsby and Hollister, 2003; Throsby and Zednik, 2010). The current survey, as yet unpublished, could interlink with recommendations from the 2016 research commissioned by Screen Australia, *Seeing Ourselves: Reflections on Diversity in Australian TV Drama* (Screen Australia, 2016). This work in the screen sector could articulate productively with studies such as the Australian Film Television and Radio School's *Diversity: Building a Platform for Change* (Australian Film Television and Radio School, n.d.), which addresses issues of lack of production space, profile and distribution that have also been identified in *Recalibrating Culture*.

**8. Tackle the issue of training.** Establish a mentoring program for different levels and types of arts and cultural practitioner careers. Entry advice and pathway development needs to be made more widely available in light of the lack of

formal arts and cultural practice training in Western Sydney (its local university, in particular, could be encouraged to re-establish its lead role in this area). An audit of available short-term courses and workshops could be more effectively publicised, and presentations on career pathways held on a regular basis as part of artists' networking opportunities. This type of service can be provided as a community and outreach program by a range of institutions or companies.

#### 9. Create innovative cultural infrastructure.

Ensure that all cultural infrastructure projects have a flexible and accessible working area for artist residencies. The level of interest in, and support for, location to Western Sydney by major and independent cultural institutions needs to be leveraged in ways that are not 'business as usual'. Cultural infrastructure projects need to consider how flexible and accessible creative working areas can be incorporated into their development. This level of interaction with the region's diverse population of artists and cultural practitioners would increase the profile of cultural infrastructure across the whole Sydney metropolitan region. In turn, it would generate dynamic creative centres with which Western Sydney could be identified. Professional artist residency spaces can be built into any new complex,

which can also include sites for semi-formal training. Enhanced interaction with artists and cultural practitioners would increase the profile of institutions and, in turn, generate dynamic creative precincts. Crucially, artists and cultural practitioners (singularly and in teams), need to be recognised as the key existing constituents of creative infrastructure, and be sustainably supported as the creative leaders in the region.

#### 10. Counter creative and cultural worker stereotypes.

The survey and interview research for *Recalibrating Culture* revealed starkly the inadequacy of prevailing conceptions of cultural creative workers and labour. It demonstrated not only that artists and cultural practitioners in Greater Western Sydney are diverse in demographic terms and in their aesthetic practices, but also that they often did not match the rather stereotyped image of the young, 'hip', urban, mobile creative worker around whom much creative industries discourse revolves. It is necessary, therefore, to develop more inclusive explanatory frameworks of cultural activity and approaches to local cultural policy that focus first on artists and cultural practitioners rather than subordinate their concerns to abstract creative economy models.



David Williams in *Smurf In Wanderland*. (2017). National Theatre of Parramatta. Photograph: Eric Berry.

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# APPENDIX 1

## INTERVIEWEE CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

**Table 6: Interviewee Characteristics**

Age	Male	Female	English not first language	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Perf. Arts	Vis. Arts	Film/Media	Name (Pseudonym)
+50		✓			✓			Penny
+30	✓		✓			✓		Vince
+30		✓			✓			Shereen
+50		✓		✓		✓		Carol
+30	✓			✓	✓			Jack
+60	✓					✓		James
+30		✓	✓			✓		Giulia
+30	✓				✓			Raymondo
+30	✓						✓	Daichi
+30		✓				✓		Monique
+60		✓			✓			Christine
+80	✓		✓			✓		Giuseppe
+60	✓					✓		Matthew
+20		✓	✓				✓	Azra
-20	✓		✓				✓	Fahim
+20	✓		✓				✓	Walid
+30		✓			✓			Helen
+50	✓					✓		Sol
+20	✓					✓		Pablo
+30		✓		✓	✓			Ursula
+30	✓		✓		✓			Fazal
Totals	12	9	7	3	8	9	4	21

## WHAT DID THEY SAY?

In the following section the views of the interviewees are summarised and discussed. These responses are framed within several topics that were pursued during the interviews. The words in italics are the voices of the interviewees, followed by a brief description of the interviewee and researcher comments.

### 6.1 What do the arts mean to you?

*... it's hard for me to explain what the arts is because... it's part of my heart* (Jack).

For several interviewees, the arts are at the core of who they are and how they live. They talk about arts and culture giving meaning to their lives.

*It's just part of who I am* (Giulia).

This personal identification suggests that the interviewee sees the arts as a primal function and as something that defines their very being.

*It just means everything, like – my life. I fight for it every day* (Fahim).

This way of seeing the arts is not simply or directly related to gender, age or culture, but to practising as artists. In addition, it is suggested that humanity is defined by its involvement in the arts:

*Art is a vital necessity. We cannot survive without art* (Giuseppe).

*It's a beautiful expression that we humans have* (Giulia).

In this context, arts and culture are seen as giving meaning to others' lives, as well as to their own.

*... the meaning is for people around me, the communities that surround us* (Walid).

Further, the practice of art is not seen as an activity that happens separately from the world in which we live, but is a part of everything that we do.

*We live the arts. The arts is (sic) with us everywhere* (Jack).

While there is frequent reference to the arts being everywhere, there is also a view that this very omnipresence means that it is insufficiently recognised or valued.

*Any field involves arts in one way or another. But somehow people think of art as irrelevant* (Giuseppe).

Art is also seen as a healing mechanism because it provides an outlet for expressing pain and loss.

*... If it wasn't for the artists I met along the way I wouldn't be the person I am today. I'd be full of hate...* (Walid)

The arts are thus typically seen by the interviewees as something powerful in most people's lives and, in fact, as having a 'transformative' power that can change people's lives, in some cases being a replacement for spiritual beliefs and practices.

*I don't believe there's a god. But I do believe in the kind of transcendence of artistic practice* (James).

*... without religion the arts is (sic) an expression of divinity and it's an expression of your spirit* (Helen).

*For me it is creating meaning and meaning not only for myself .... The people we see every day* (Walid).

The impact of arts and cultural practice on improving society and the world in general is also a recurrent theme.

*... if more people were artists ... then I think the world would end up being a better place* (Fazal).

*...I think it should inform more policy, not just arts and cultural policy* (Pablo).

*... there's all these people out there, like in Western Sydney ... who are battling ... And if they could just have this one amazing experience it might open them up to this whole world* (Fazal).

Arts and culture are seen by some of the interviewees as giving meaning to their existence. Being engaged in the arts provides for them some personal as well as social power that they believe frequently not acknowledged or recognised by the broader society.

### 6.2 What do you think about the position of the arts and artists in Australia?

There were different views about how arts and culture are framed in Australia. For example, one interviewee thinks that Australia does better than most countries in this domain, although a degree of adaptation is needed to work successfully in the arts in this country.

*I do think Australia does extremely well for a small country... You just need to be a lot more flexible with the way you do stuff* (Raymondo).

Another interviewee notes that Australians take for granted free entry to arts and cultural facilities (such as galleries and museums), an access arrangement that is not common throughout the world.

*... I think in terms of international scope I think we do quite well.... I recently travelled throughout Europe and there was only one country that provided free entry to arts centres and cultural facilities, and that was Ireland* (Pablo).

There is also a common view that appreciation of arts and culture has increased in Australia over the past few years, with a greater proportion of the population understanding what constitutes "good art" and appreciating it.

*... the view of art in Australia was, some years ago, that they were all Philistines but it's not there anymore. People are interested in art. So they go to see good art and they get to know* (Giuseppe).

However, in general there were views that the arts do not get enough respect or support, and that there are major gaps that exist as a result. This position applies to the whole of Australia, not just Western Sydney, although it resonates with the criticism cited above that the region's art and culture are substantially disadvantaged when compared to the highly subsidised artforms that predominate in the inner city.

*... the arts are nowhere near as supported in Australia as they are in other countries ... there's a really fine distinction between high art and those circles, and the rest of what the arts are in this country* (Jack).

There is acknowledgment here of a class divide in relation to the arts so that, as discussed earlier, the high European arts are seen to receive more than their fair allocation:

*I'm not saying I'm against the arts or anything but I notice a lot of the big funding has always gone to like stuff like ballet... (Azra).*

It is believed that a lack of respect or appreciation of the arts has a major impact on the culture of the country.

*... in general what I worry about is just the culture in Australia in terms of – not arts and culture – but the culture of our society and our appreciation for the arts (Fazal).*

This lack of respect is seen as notable with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural practice.

*Indigenous people need to be at the forefront of the arts. Indigenous leaders need to be driving the arts. ... We're still not accepting the first people of Australia at the forefront of the arts in everything we do (Walid).*

Arising from of this view that the arts are not valued, there are 'flow-on' perceptions that working in the arts or as an artist are also not valued. Such attitudes are then seen as impacting on the amount of capital expenditure that the cultural sector receives.

*... as a society however... we still relegate art as a hobby or something we do that's not really real. It's not a real job.... If you're going to create a culture where an artist can actually live by his art, you have to have venues where they can sell it (Matthew).*

As noted above, for several interviewees negative framing of the arts has been compounded by recent changes in arts funding at the federal level and their consequent impact on the cultural sector. Mostly, there were quite bleak predictions about the future as a result.

*... if we're talking about federal arts funding, what has happened since the last federal Budget in 2015 is a huge dismantling. A really very significant dismantling of a respect for peers and assessments. ...if we didn't know what arms-length funding meant before, we know what it means now by having it taken away (Penny).*

*I have a feeling, and that's based on the last year or so of talk about funding and funding cuts, that it's going to be harder and harder for individual artists to be able to fund their practice through grants (Giulia).*

This concern was crystallised in terms of those benefiting and losing as a result of the funding changes, and the subsequent impacts on how the cultural ecosystem functions in the future. For example, there were views that, while some parts of the arts sector may thrive, other fields are likely to disappear through neglect.

*My feeling is that the big institutions – the powerful institutions – will get richer and richer (James).*

A changing, commercially-oriented paradigm was also observed, particularly in an alignment between business and the arts.

*... there's a bigger move towards aligning business and art together, and that could be problematic I think (Giulia).*

*I'm just wondering whether the commercial, you know, the business drivers aren't undermining it. If we are forcing all artists to be commercially viable... (Christine).*

Alternatively, there are also views that artists and arts workers can become preoccupied by funding issues to their own detriment.

*I'm not an artist who has had a great deal of funding... I think that we can get really caught up in just thinking that we can't make art and we can't practice if we don't have money (Ursula).*

There are several comments by interviewees that artists need to be brought into any policy conversations about arts and culture funding and, in fact, should be playing a leadership role in them.

*... who else would be better to set policies regarding art and culture than the artists themselves? (Carol).*

*.... ideally the arts minister would be an artist or have had some experience in the arts world (Fazal).*

*I think if you're going to write a cultural policy then you need to have the voice of artists (Ursula).*

### 6.3 What is Western Sydney?

Seeking to describe Western Sydney necessarily requires proposing what is distinctive about it. But given that it is a huge area, Western Sydney cannot be categorised as one place, but as many places.

*There's so many Western Sydneys now as well. And so many South-western Sydneys... They're worlds within themselves (Penny).*

*... in terms of community, there's actually more communities out in Western Sydney (Azra).*

While there is frequent recognition that Western Sydney is many communities, not one, there are also aspects of Western Sydney that are seen as particular or different to other parts of Sydney.

For example, a strong overarching sense of 'community' comes through strikingly in the interviews.

*... I appreciate this sense of community and belonging I have in Western Sydney (Daichi).*

*... I'll always come back to community. This is like part of me (Fahim).*

This is a community that is not necessarily bound by spatial, cultural or class connections. It is seen as a community in the abstract that is able to work across different generations, as well as across different cultures. It is framed as a more tolerant and accepting environment of difference.

*... the intergenerational thing that I find happens more regularly in Western Sydney (Vince).*

*... it's quite a common thing that we can all work together. We're all different ethnicities but we can still understand that same, similar stories. ...There's a sense out in Western Sydney that you can be your own identity and ethnicity, and celebrate it (Azra).*

#### 6.4 Why do you live and/or work here?

Many of the interviewees have made a conscious choice to live and practise in Western Sydney because of a sense of difference and freedom that they believe it offers.

*... I made a choice to live in the region. I also made a particular choice to work in the region. So that's been a very specific choice (James).*

*... I love it out here. It's a mix of people (Jack).*

*... there's this sense you can move freely without having to be faced with mainstream Australia (Azra).*

However, the original 'choice' to live in the region was also, in many cases, a matter of economic circumstances.

*... It's because I knew I could own my house a lot quicker (Matthew).*

*... we weren't able to afford living in the Inner West... I live at Liverpool (Giulia).*

Additionally, sometimes the choice to remain was made partly because first-generation migrant parents had stayed in the region and partly because of identification with a particular cultural or ethnic community. This ethnic and cultural heritage encouraged intergenerational congregation in Western Sydney.

*... We stayed with my uncle in Western Sydney for a month until we found a house to rent ... there's a lot of Iraqis here (Fahim).*

*... it's always been Western Sydney because a lot of the Vietnamese population is out there (Azra).*

Being born or growing up in the West also meant that a sense of belonging to the region was often evident.

*... I sort of grew up in Western Sydney – came, left and came back to it. But I always found that Western Sydney was my home and so I reside here now (Pablo).*

*... It's not like a conscious choice – I'm going to live in Western Sydney. This is home territory (Penny).*

There is also a common view that working in the West has particular rewards not evident elsewhere.

*... in Western Sydney, they're so hungry. They're hungry to contribute, to collaborate, to participate, to show what they're good at. (Azra).*

*I think also the community cultural development sector is more thriving in the region and a lot of artists just seem to find themselves... more of an engaged way of working and more placed in the real world as well, in some way (Vince).*

The needs of Western Sydney are what lead many interviewees to stay in the region and help in whatever way they can. They believe that the region is disenfranchised on many levels and that they must try to remedy this situation.

*I see that working in the cultural sector really is about, in the work I try and do, is about access and equity, and in a sense cultural democracy ... that comes from growing up in Western Sydney, with very poor cultural services, with very poor cultural programs, with very poor educational programs (James).*

Furthermore, there is evidence of a different motivation visible in the stories of many people who work in arts and culture in Western Sydney. Several interviewees talk about wanting to do something for their community rather than necessarily something for themselves.

*... I think artists are motivated, in Western Sydney, less by commercial means (Vince).*

*... this sort of language that I was really interested in when I first started, I would argue was developed in Western Sydney. Particularly in terms of outreach and community engagement... (Pablo).*

There is also acknowledgement here that, by practising in Western Sydney, there are fewer constraints applying to those working in the arts.

*... I think that there's a stronger sense of freedom in the work. There's less regimentation in the work. It's less hide-bound by tradition (James).*

*... being based out at Western Sydney is an asset because I feel like people are more free, in the sense that they have the time to sit and discuss ideas (Azra).*

*... Developing creative opportunities. Being able to take risks (Pablo).*

Being geographically distant from the arts and culture 'scene' in Eastern Sydney can be construed as an advantage; it affords artists and cultural practitioners the space to 'do their own thing'. This view suggests that there is less pressure to conform, and that an environment in the West supports both risk and difference in a manner which contrasts with the more recognised, better supported arts and culture of the inner city.

*I do feel like there's a divide, at least for me – I don't know how the other arts workers and artists feel – between stuff that happens in the city and the stuff that happens out west... (Daichi).*

*... the equity between how much funding the galleries and the institutions in Sydney get as opposed to Western Sydney – there's quite a huge gap. A huge divide... I don't think the issue is accessibility. It's more like investment from government. Because I mean art is accessible in Australia but it depends on where you are or where it's located (Sol).*

This notion of an East-West divide is compounded by a feeling of invisibility, with a view that much of what does happen in the West is not recognised or sufficiently valued. It is, therefore, asserted by some interviewees that there needs to be some formal mechanism to highlight arts and cultural work that is already happening in Greater Western Sydney.

*I would just love to see what's already existing being celebrated (Vince).*

### 6.5 What do you do? Why do you do it? How do you describe your role?

There are many different ways of framing the work that the interviewees do. For example, in some cases there is an emphasis on building connections and relationships, particularly in different parts of the community.

*I'm building conversations, building relationships and developing skills with community organisations, individuals and groups. (Penny).*

*I describe myself as a translator. And by that I mean I'm strangely effective at understanding what the community wants... (Monique).*

*... my practice is, in this role, to assist people to realise a seed of an idea and to just slowly develop it and see where it takes them (Walid).*

Others are proactive within their work and in their community, developing new work and helping others to make new work.

*... I'm kind of the person that makes stuff happen (Ursula).*

*... I'm a film maker but I'm also a cultural practitioner, a workshop facilitator (Azra).*

*... first of all I organise exhibitions, I curate exhibitions... I teach (Matthew).*

*... sometimes my job is a coordinator, some of it's a curator, sometimes it's a director (Raymondo).*

*... I have a very, very deep personal commitment to capacity-building within the sector (Shereen).*

There are also those who talk about why they love the arts or their practice in greater detail.

*I'm a lot into painting. I love to paint... (Carol).*

*I'm a collector ... I have an extensive art collection (Sol).*

*I've always loved films... I want to make movies... (Walid).*

*... I always danced (Ursula).*

*I could not stop drawing ... I explore all the possibilities in art. I cannot go to bed without drawing every night (Giuseppe).*

*I just loved stitching and working with fabric (Monique).*

There is a sense here that passion for their art has influenced many of the interviewees' life choices. Hence, they have tried to integrate their arts and cultural work with activities from which they can make a living, or in some cases have left professional occupations behind. These decisions have translated into feelings that they 'belong', when they previously felt like outsiders.

*I was embraced in that contemporary arts world ... My weaknesses in that other world were my strengths in that world (Fazal).*

*I discovered after three years that I am not a scientist ... I was always a creative inside (Monique).*

*... it was really just something that I got in my heart. I had done everything I really wanted to do in corporate life (Matthew).*

However, artform preferences are not necessarily stable, and it is not uncommon to develop an interest in another artform, or to embrace a more multi-disciplinary approach. Several interviewees have moved between being practising artists themselves, to teaching, directing or nurturing others in their craft or artform. They realised that, while they wanted to work in arts and culture, they did not necessarily want to continue being an artist. This decision is also motivated by a need to make a better living and have a more 'normal' existence (see 6: 10 below).

*I don't really consider myself an artist anymore. I'm more of a curator and arts worker (Daichi).*

*I just felt dance wasn't enough for the ideas I was interested in to work with (Raymondo).*

*... originally I trained to be in theatre. To be a performer ... I've really worked since, as a career, in curatorial practice (James).*

### 6.6 What is particular about the way you work?

There are many who feel strongly that arts and cultural practice needs to be inclusive and to reflect the experiences of every group. Their focus, therefore, is on working with communities to allow other perspectives and voices to be seen and heard.

*We need real stories. There are a lot of stories that are untold, they are inside people and you don't know it... (Fahim).*

*... it's just more about having a voice really... I realised how important it is to have your voice heard because it represents all these other people that are the underdogs (Azra).*

*I can give young people a positive taste and experience with what it means to be Aboriginal... (Jack).*

*I do see arts as part of people's cultural wellbeing... (Penny).*

This orientation is conducive to making art that communicates with audiences that are not already privileged, and by so doing, enabling different voices to be heard.

*...I don't want to create art for people with rich pockets. I want to create art for those who don't have a voice... (Walid).*

*I guess my practice is really driven ... I am politically motivated, I am contextually motivated. Questions that arise to me as justice questions. Equity questions (Helen).*

Several interviewees describe their skills in working with different communities or cultures, talking about their capacity to understand particular aspects of the work of others when communicating with them. To work across cultures, they describe particular strategies of communication that are important.

*I have a really slow approach ... what are you doing and why are you doing it and how are you doing it? (Penny).*

*...translating between the two so that they understand each other (Monique).*



*...essentially I think I'm working in multicultural performance ... to do the brokering you have to have an understanding of the art forms of the communities and all that kind of stuff. A bit of history (Raymondo).*

Other interviewees have a commitment to a particular culture or aspect of their culture and to working with others to share that knowledge. This sharing may involve working in communities that are not part of the conventional mainstream 'demographic'.

*... the focus is working with young people out this way. Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people... Arts and culture-based programs to... nurture Indigenous culture... (Jack).*

*... my interest in migration and storytelling marry all that together (Daichi).*

*I engage with local Aboriginal girls ... and they do lots of performances, mostly at community level (Ursula).*

*I almost exclusively work with non-classically trained performers or unorthodox performers... (Fazal).*

## 6.7 Do you collaborate when you work?

Collaboration seems to be a common feature of how many artists and cultural workers operate in Western Sydney, stemming from the high level of community engagement in work processes common to many of the interviewees.

*...the more and more I've discovered that it is important to be part of a community and that the making experience isn't done in isolation (Vince).*

*...it's important to me to be able to understand the diversity of experiences and... that contribute to our community. And I can only do that really by working in partnership (Monique).*

*I think the most effective way forward is that actually companies bring expertise together around a community desire and actually work together (Helen).*

Others talk about collaboration as a means of deriving better work outcomes.

*I work personally better in a collaborative way ... I like the idea of bouncing ideas (Jack).*

*I actually am very collaborative in nature because I will ask people for suggestions (Shereen).*

*Yeah, I love working as a team. Yeah... when you work as a team it's so much easier to do something (Fahim).*

Collaboration can be seen as essential to the creative process in particular artforms.

*Film making is a collaborative process and I think working with others, it helps build towards that vision (Azra).*

*Collaboration... I mean I'm a theatre maker, so that's what theatre making is... (Helen).*

*... it takes a team to make a film. It takes people with different interests in different areas... (Walid).*

Or it can be a personal preference of how people interact with others.

*I get lonely actually. In my office. I like the kind of cut and thrust of collaborations. It's interesting (James).*

*I call myself a social vampire because I love people, being around people, having people with me (Giuseppe).*

*... the good thing with artists is they can get together and they can talk about art ... it's just nice talking to people that have a similar interest (Matthew).*

There are also those who collaborate but suggest that they do it under their own rules.

*I guess I collaborate in that way more under my own terms, I guess (Ursula).*

Others have not collaborated in terms of making artistic work, but indicate that it is something that they would like to explore in the future.

*I haven't collaborated with others ... It would be something I'm really interested in actually (Giulia).*

## 6.8 Do you network?

As discussed above, networking means different things to different people. Several interviews disliked its instrumental, career-oriented dimensions.

*I do networking but I hate it (Shereen).*

*When I go to them, I have to, but I don't really enjoy them ... those things aren't particularly about the work. It's usually about something entirely different (James).*

*I think I was really excited about networking ... then I think after I realised - actually they're not interested in my story at all. ... They're interested in ... ticking their boxes. And it's the truth (Azra).*

*It's getting out and about. ...I've lost a drive to do that (Helen).*

*... it just kind of ... a bit emotionally draining. The whole notion of networking (Vince).*

However, networking is seen more positively by interviewees when it is part of their knowledge building and commitment to their artform.

*... yeah I'm really engaged... I do find myself at openings and things as a performer. But I absolutely do go and see stuff ... I'm always going to see work (Ursula).*

*... involves a lot of talking to people. Constantly, lot of the evenings, I go and see stuff (Raymondo).*

## 6.9 What about technology? How does it influence your work?

Several interviewees said that they don't use digital technologies in actually making their work. They mention the need to have a more tactile or intimate relationship with what they are doing, as well as a preference for using particular kinds of material in the process of making art and culture.

*In terms of making my work I'm currently not using digital media ... what I'm interested in, is more of a tactile nature (Giulia).*

*I don't find satisfaction in creating digital art ... I like the feeling of the material, the feeling of the oil or the watercolour and so on. That's the thing that really attracts me (Giuseppe).*

Others mention their preference for working with people rather than 'machines', although uses of technology may relate to artforms. Therefore, those who work in say, dance, are less likely to use new media than, say, those who are working in film. But it is a choice that is also related to the kinds of work that people are doing within their medium.

*My digital technology is basic. No, it's not a tool that I use ... I need to work with others...* (Penny).

*I'm not great at that. I guess also because of what I do ... dance ... we do a lot of traditional dance and it's about the live elements of that...* (Ursula).

*I almost don't (use digital technology). My pieces are very minimalist ... I'm more interested in this human contact...* (Fazal).

But there are also interviewees who embrace digital media for making work and see it in a very positive way.

*... it's really digital media and technology that gave me access to art in terms of experimenting with film and music ... for me technology is the greatest thing that's happened to arts in the last ten years or so, because it just means that anyone can be an artist because the technical skills are kind of taken care of (Daichi).*

*I have to say, technology makes it a hell of a lot easier (Shereen).*

Many of the interviewees, however, use social media in their various forms to market their work, to communicate with others in the field, or to share information about their projects.

*... we've got a pretty active social media ... We've got a Facebook page and an Instagram (Ursula).*

*I'll send out emails, I'll connect through social media (Jack).*

*Absolutely. And using the evils of Facebook too, because that's become like a huge marketing tool (Shereen).*

*... you can find an audience without having to rely on a third party to do that for you. And a global audience as well (Daichi).*

*I have a popular Facebook page. I have a webpage ... I produced the book on it (Ursula).*

There is also a generational factor, reflecting a certain reluctance to engage or embrace new media in several of those in older age groups.

*I mean I look at those things but I don't really use it in a way that some of the younger staff do. I'm just a product of my age really. I'm a product of my generation (James).*

*I feel sort of weakness in my role here is that the primary communication is driven through camera (Helen).*

## 6.10 Does your income from your arts practice financially support you?

Generally, most interviewees, especially if they are practising artists and cultural workers, admit that they subsidise their cultural practice with other sources of income when asked whether they can support themselves through creative work.

*I would say that per annum ... about a quarter of my taxable income comes from dance and dance-related work (Jack).*

*My personal arts practice? No. Not at all. Basically the financial support I get is from my part-time job and my husband also working casual jobs and that's about it (Giulia).*

*... No. No definitely not. I'm glad I've got a partner who works full-time as an engineer ... it does not support me financially at all (Azra).*

Several have multiple sources of income that they juggle to support their practice.

*Definitely other sources of income. That's why I wear so many different hats (Vince).*

*I film weddings most of the weekend. That's like a job to get money so I can spend on my projects (Fahim).*

*... the majority of my income comes from teaching because I devote most of my time to teaching (Giuseppe).*

There are also interviewees who are moving into the middle or later stages of their lives and are starting to worry about how they will manage financially in the longer term.

*... in terms of employment and income, I know it will continue to be precarious and when I am down and not happy, it really concerns me (Penny).*

Others take the view that their artistic work will never support them, so, while they may make some money from it, they do not expect to live on that income.

*... no, I don't rely on the income. And that's good in a sense (Christine).*

*I don't subscribe to the starving artist philosophy because it's hard to be creative when you're trying to pay bills (Matthew).*

Several of the interviewees are in full-time jobs and live off their one main income. These jobs are usually roles where they are in arts or cultural organisations as facilitators, administrators, curators, animateurs or even council employees working in a cultural role. Some of these individuals have spent many years as practising artists where they have lived a precarious existence, often as freelancers. They have then made a conscious choice to secure full-time or more regular employment. While they are still doing artistic, creative activities, they are trying to live a more 'conventional' existence.

*I think I'm at a different point in my life now. I'm forty ... I do value a full-time job. It's the first time I've had a full-time job... (Raymondo).*

## 6.11 How do you see your future?

In terms of their own future, the interviewees hold varied views about what they think will happen to them or what they hope will happen. There are those who are in organisational roles who are thinking in terms of what their contribution might mean.

*I think really what my job is here at the moment is I think really building towards who comes in next. It's about capacity for the future... (James).*

Then there are artists who are hoping for more time, money and space to focus on their artistic practice.

*I'm hoping to be able to focus a bit more on the art practice and to be able to have an ongoing process, where I'm continually producing things... (Giulia).*

The really hopeful individuals see a time when they may realise their ultimate aspiration of making art and culture with few impediments concerning time and money.

*I would actually love to be known as a renowned Aboriginal artist... (Carol).*

*I have some books I want to publish and the next one's half finished. And I've got at least two or three others planned. And that's fun ... There's some art in me that hasn't come out yet. But I can almost touch it (Matthew).*

*I really love writing. And creative writing for both performance and the page. And I would love to find more time for that (Helen).*

*I want to make films that represent Western Sydney. I want to make films that represent the cultures that don't exist in Australian media ... (I) want to give a voice to the voiceless... (Walid).*

Others accept that the path that they have chosen is likely to be difficult, but are accepting of that less-than-ideal trajectory.

*I just want to keep continuing with what I'm doing. I'd really like, as I mentioned, to keep going. Yeah, I just want to keep doing what I'm doing for probably the next five years (Ursula).*

*I've noticed that there are times when things work out and then bang, you're in a struggle. So moments are good, moments are bad. But I realised it's just a part of the process (Azra).*

## 6.12 What are your views about working with governments?

Some interviewees talk about a very positive relationship with government, particularly at the local government level. While there is a desire for more engagement, support and provision of facilities, there is a recognition that some councils are doing their best to try to meet their legitimate demands.

*I find the Western Sydney Councils they've got quite an open engagement with the community ... we have constant conversations on projects and things that are happening (Azra).*

*Fairfield is just an extraordinary wonderful council. They have been for a long time. they were real leaders ... there's these very strong powerful cultural communities. So they've really seen that as a strength and they've worked [with] that as a strength (Helen).*

*... we are in close contact with the Council of Penrith because they provided all the facilities - the studio and so on (Giuseppe).*

Nevertheless, there is recognition of the constraints imposed by bureaucracy.

*... the very structure of local government, dare I say, crushes innovation and it really is not a space for creativity (Monique).*

Thus, a lot of work in brokering, communicating and persuading is needed to get local government 'onside' to support cultural activities. Furthermore, it is observed that to get other tiers of government involved is even harder.

*... trying to get government to think about art ... not just institutions, but the support an artist needs ... there is a lot of need still in the area particularly with just capital (Vince).*

Those who are involved in lobbying and being proactive about arts and culture in Western Sydney reflect a sense of demoralisation at times.

*My main concern here in the west is we don't receive official support. Two years ago I was invited to a summit by Penrith Council about the arts but it never came to nothing so far. No support whatsoever (Giuseppe).*

*I mean if you compare with what they (the local councils) spend for sport you may not find it's quite that impressive. But that's the problem, yeah (Christine).*

*We need support. With funding or with stuff, because if you want to make something you need finance. And there's not much in Australia, especially [for the] arts [and] like cultural work in Western Sydney (Fahim).*

Mention is made also of the political attention paid to Western Sydney in the domain of arts and culture over recent years (especially the last two), but there is a common belief that that interest has not born fruit.

*It's been almost a year, or just over a year, since the Deloitte Report, and almost all the recommendations haven't been actioned. The only one that is actually happening is relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta... (Sol).*

*There's been a lot of interest in Western Sydney in terms of cultural investment ... if we want to support artists from Western Sydney or bring artists to Western Sydney to deliver projects and to lead the way in the arts, then yeah, there needs to be better investment and better planning, better policy (Pablo).*

There is also comment that 'others' are taking control of the agenda - people who are not from the West (although the abovementioned Deloitte Report (2015) was a Western Sydney initiative).

*I think the experience of Western Sydney's been really interesting because still, in terms of people speaking for the region, no one bothers to talk to the region. It's always somebody outside (James).*

*...there is always someone running ... that didn't grow up in Fairfield. Always. The community wants to see people from the community running these organisations... (Walid).*

### 6.13 What are your views about the future needs for Western Sydney?

Several interviewees have unequivocal views about what is needed in the future in the West. The absence of any formal tertiary training in the arts in the region is a major concern, for instance.

*...one of my key concerns is there isn't really any tertiary education for art in the region (Vince).*

Some argue that permanent arts centres structures and companies for arts practices are needed.

*I would love to see a contemporary arts centre in Western Sydney. ... I think Parramatta's really in need of an arts centre (Vince).*

*I can't see why major performing arts companies can't grow and live in Western Sydney (Sol).*

The most common concern is the lack of designated permanent spaces, whether for working in, showing, performing or gathering.

*... if I had a wish it would be that one day we get a permanent home (Matthew).*

*... our biggest problem, I mean is we haven't got a home... We need just a big shed on a big space where we can work... (Christine).*

*... the things that did come up were artist studios, a 300-seat theatre. So they're the things that we're going to be advocating for (Monique).*

*... there's also no artist-run initiatives in the region (Vince).*

*... I'm starting to think maybe an artist-run initiative is the only way to go, as opposed to trying to get local government support (Penny).*

However, there is also a view that artists and cultural practitioners can make spaces 'happen' if they take the reins with the help of local governments or other bodies.

*... I'm hoping that if there was an artist-run space it's because there's a group of artists that are keen and enthusiastic to do it themselves... (Monique).*

There are also requests for culturally specific spaces that would function successfully as both working and gathering places.

*... we need an (Indigenous) arts and culture centre... (Carol).*

*I have been, for a long time, interested in developing a space ... A small cultural space that has a broad focus on what the - the language of Middle Eastern - Middle Eastern cultural expression.... (Penny).*

Another view is that all communities need a cultural centre which everyone can access.

*I think this community needs beautiful collective spaces, public space, in which they can define how they want to use those spaces. Like parkland, like cultural centres. Basically places for gathering... (Helen).*

# APPENDIX 2

## OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Tell me about yourself and what you do? What made you choose your pathway?
2. Did you complete the questionnaire? Do you have any comments about it?
3. Can you talk about why you live and/or work in Western Sydney?
4. How do you describe your own practice, how you go about it and where do you do it?
5. Do you work with others? If so, how and why?
6. Do you network? If so, how and why?
7. Is digital technology important for your work? How do you use it?
8. Does your practice support you financially? If not, why do you continue to do it?

### THE ENVIRONMENT

9. How do you define 'the arts' or creative practices more generally?
10. What observations or trends have you noticed regarding artistic and/or creative practice and production?
11. Where do you believe 'the arts' or the creative sector in Australia are headed in the future?
12. Do you believe that artists/creative workers can have a role in determining the future directions of cultural policy at a local, regional or national level?
13. Can you talk about the impact of local/regional or national governments on your practice? Which sector (Not for profit, commercial, community/local government) do you work in primarily, and why?

### THE FUTURE

14. Please outline what you hope to be doing in your creative practice/work over the next few years.
15. How confident are you about your future creative production/work? Why/Why not?

# APPENDIX 3

## RESEARCHER BIOGRAPHIES

**Professor Deborah Stevenson** is a Professor of Sociology and Urban Cultural Research in the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. She has held academic positions at the University of Newcastle, the University of Technology Sydney, and Western Sydney University where her roles have included Foundation Dean of the Graduate Research School, Associate Pro Vice Chancellor Research, and Head of the School of Social Sciences.

An internationally acknowledged expert on arts and cultural policy and the uses of culture in city imaging and urban redevelopment, Deborah has published widely on these topics including in excess of forty refereed journal articles and book chapters, and ten authored or edited books. Her most recent books are, *Cities of Culture: A Global Perspective* (Routledge, 2014), *The City* (Polity, 2013), and *Tourist Cultures: Identity, Place and the Traveller* (co-authored, Sage, 2010). In addition, she is co-editor of the *Research Companion to Planning and Culture* (Ashgate, 2013), *Culture and the City: Creativity, Tourism, Leisure* (Routledge, 2013) and the forthcoming *Routledge Urban Media and Communication Companion*. Her work has been published in translation in China, Serbia, Poland and Greece, and under license in India and South Asia.

Deborah is a member of the editorial boards of leading international journals, including the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, and advisory boards such as for the Palgrave Macmillan series *New Directions in Cultural Policy Research*. She is also a member of the European Science Foundation College of Experts and an Honorary Professor at the University of Bath, UK. Her research program has been supported by external funding from a range of sources, and she has been a chief investigator on seven successful ARC grants with her two recent projects being focused on arts and cultural practice in Western Sydney and cultural taste and consumption in Australia. Deborah has worked as an advisor and consultant to all levels of government and was a member of the Ministerial Reference Group for the NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework.

**Professor David Rowe**, FAHA, FASSA is Professor of Cultural Research, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University, and was Director of its predecessor unit, the Centre for Cultural Research. Previously, he was Professor of Media and Cultural Studies and Director of the Cultural Institutions and Practices Research Centre, University of Newcastle. He has been a Visiting Research Fellow at several international universities, including Goldsmiths' College, University of London and the University of Westminster, and is currently Honorary Professor, University of Bath. In 2015 he received Western Sydney University's Excellence in Research (Researcher of the Year) Award.

His research and scholarship focus mainly on the relationships between popular cultural texts and practices, socio-cultural institutions, and systems of power, with a particular emphasis on sport, national culture, media representation and globalisation. His Australian Research Council-funded activities include projects on cultural planning; tabloidisation; the role of the Murdoch media in global sports television; international circuits of cultural policy; the urban night-time economy; sport, nation and cultural citizenship; cultural production and consumption in Greater Western Sydney; and Australian cultural fields and national cultural policy. He has been a research consultant to many public, commercial and community organisations.

David has published over 90 research articles in peer-reviewed journals, over 110 chapters in edited collections and major reference works, and many research reports. Professor Rowe's books include *Popular Cultures: Rock Music, Sport and the Politics of Pleasure* (Sage, 1995); *Sport, Culture and the Media: The Unruly Trinity* (Open University Press/McGraw-Hill, 1999, 2004); *Global Media Sport: Flows, Forms and Futures* (Bloomsbury, 2011); *Sport Beyond Television: The Internet, Digital Media and the Rise of Networked Media Sport* (with Brett Hutchins, Routledge, 2012); and *Sport, Public Broadcasting, and Cultural Citizenship: Signal Lost?* (edited with Jay Scherer, Routledge, 2014). His work has been translated into several languages, including Chinese, French, Turkish, Spanish, Italian and Arabic, and he is a frequent commentator on socio-cultural matters in international and Australian print, broadcast and online media.



**Cecelia Cmielewski** is undertaking her doctorate at the Institute of Culture and Society. Her research interests address inclusion in the creative sectors with a focus on the relationship between creative production and multicultural policies. Her thesis researches the relationship between the experiences and practices of artists of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) and key arts policies through a consideration of the roles of creative and organisational leadership. Cecelia was a principal investigator on the ARC-funded *Large Screens and Transnational Public Sphere*. She held senior roles at the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory agency, between 1998 and 2011. She is also a curator, most recently curating *meta\_narratives* for ISEA2015 in the United Arab Emirates.

**Associate Professor Josephine Caust** is Principal Fellow (Hon) in the School of Culture and Communication Studies at the University of Melbourne. From 1997 to 2011, Associate Professor Caust led the postgraduate program in Arts and Cultural Management at the University of South Australia. She founded and edited the *Asia Pacific Journal of Arts and Cultural Management* from 2003-2011. She has published three books; *Leadership and Creativity; Understandings of this Relationship in Arts Organisations* (Muller, 2009), *Arts Leadership-International Case Studies* (edited, Tilde University Press, 2013) and *Arts and Cultural Leadership in Asia* (edited, Routledge, 2015). She has also published more than 60 papers and articles worldwide. She continues to write for learned journals and for the media and is an arts columnist for *The Conversation*.

Dr Caust has worked extensively internationally, particularly in several Asian countries. She has held senior positions at the Australia Council and at the South Australian Department of Arts, as well as leading and managing several arts organisations. In 1995 Dr Caust began her own consultancy business, Jo Caust and Associates (now JoCaustArts), supporting government, arts organisations and arts projects, and developing curricula for arts training programs in Australia and Asia. She began her career as a freelance actor in mainstream theatre, film and TV in Australia and in the UK.

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