

2023

# STATE OF THE ARTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY



CENTRE FOR  
WESTERN SYDNEY



WESTERN SYDNEY  
CREATIVE

BUSINESS  
WESTERN  
SYDNEY



Launch event - Western Sydney Creative -  
Arts and Culture Decadal Strategy, 2019

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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### CENTRE FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

Western Sydney University (WSU) is the only university in New South Wales (NSW) with a legislated commitment to conduct research that meets the needs of Western Sydney communities. Fulfilling this unique mandate for research, the University established the Centre for Western Sydney in 2014. The centre combines world-class research expertise with frank and fearless advocacy on issues of importance to Western Sydney. The centre's work is guided by its ambition for a thriving Western Sydney that is understood and respected for its strengths and contributions regionally, nationally and internationally. Delivered through a strong politics of listening, the centre aims to drive informed dialogue and action for and with its region.



### WESTERN SYDNEY CREATIVE

Launched in 2019, Western Sydney Creative is a comprehensive strategy that details Western Sydney University's long-term commitment to the arts and culture in our region and beyond. The strategy sets out the University's commitment and capacity as a leading learning, research and advocacy organisation for arts and culture in our region. Western Sydney Creative underpins Western's long-term commitment to the arts and cultural sector, including championing, celebrating and investing in the local to assist in the growth and maturation of the region's artistic and cultural landscape.



### BUSINESS WESTERN SYDNEY

The leading business advocacy organisation, advocating for economic, social and cultural investment to improve the quality of life for citizens of Western Sydney. In collaboration with key partners, Business Western Sydney is focused on bringing together business and industry with the government to create communities of shared interest for the benefit of Western Sydney.

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- Professor Andy Marks, Director of the Centre for Western Sydney
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- Various consultants, including Marc Snape, Lauren Gallagher, Charlie Rogers, Stonehaven Australia, Dr Abigail Taylor, Love Words Editing and Scott Newton-Lappan, Gauge Consulting

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### DOLLA MERRILLEES

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Dolla Merrillees is a writer, curator, cultural producer and public speaker. She brings a wealth of national and international experience to her work having had senior roles in large-scale festivals, museums, cultural spaces as well as the tertiary sector. Merrillees is currently the Director Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University and was previously the Director and CEO of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney and the Associate Director, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation. She is a board member of the Sydney Review of Books and FORM Dance Projects.



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# FOREWORD



The *Western Sydney Creative Strategy 2019 | 2029* positions Western Sydney University as an advocate, champion, and supporter of the arts in our region. Western Sydney's cultural sector is made up of a vibrant and dynamic network of individuals and organisations that, together, reflect and promote the rich diversity of our region. Despite the critical contribution of arts and culture to social cohesion and community well-being, the sector has faced unprecedented challenges in recent years that have tested its resilience and capacity to deliver programs and services.

Western Sydney Creative has initiated a program of research to explore how publicly funded cultural provisions relate to Western Sydney's creative ecosystem and economy. The Centre for Western Sydney's *State of the Arts Report*, commissioned by Western Sydney Creative and Business Western Sydney, builds on our current knowledge and understanding of the sector, seeks to assess the challenges and opportunities ahead and sets out a series of initiatives to support its growth and long-term sustainability.

Developed in consultation with the cultural sector, this report highlights the prevalent funding inequities in government support for the arts. The report finds that, at a Federal level, Western Sydney attracted only 3.4% of funds for the arts between 2015-2023 and 1.7% of the \$200 million of RISE funding allocated to economic recovery following the pandemic. At a State level, Western Sydney received only 36.6% of cultural infrastructure funding from 2015-2022. Similarly, in 2021-2022, Western Sydney institutions received just over 12% of

Sydney based grants awarded by Create NSW, with the remaining 88% provided to institutions in Eastern Sydney. Despite Western Sydney facing some of NSW's harshest COVID-19 lockdowns, creative businesses in the region received just under 12% of State COVID relief funding. While these inequities have restricted the potential for the arts and cultural sector to truly flourish in Western Sydney, this report is published at a critical time. At the forefront of the Australian Government's new national cultural policy, Revive, the delivery of the Powerhouse Parramatta and the significant investment of over \$562 million into arts and cultural infrastructure through the WestInvest program, this report provides a roadmap to ensure the optimisation of these investments.

This report demonstrates the significance of Western Sydney as an exemplary region for the enactment of the Revive policy, which prioritises Australian Indigenous knowledge and cultural expression, and culturally and linguistically diverse artists and cultural workers, a significant proportion of whom, call Western Sydney home. It also highlights that while investment in cultural infrastructure is essential to support the growth and development of the sector, to truly flourish, it will need a skilled creative workforce as well as increased investment into its operations and programs. As the leading tertiary institution for the region, Western Sydney University will seek to drive solutions, to provide a pipeline of talent, and to optimise the significant infrastructure investments being made by the NSW Government to revitalise Western Sydney's arts and cultural facilities, ensuring that everyone will have the opportunity to participate in arts and cultural activities and education.

I thank our partners in the sector, including Business Western Sydney and the Western Sydney Arts Alliance as we work towards building a thriving and resilient cultural sector.

**PROFESSOR BARNEY GLOVER AO**  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
Western Sydney University

## DAVID BORGER

Executive Director, Business Western Sydney



Western Sydney's population has continued to grow dramatically, but cultural arts funding has not kept up. There are now an additional 600,000 people living in Western Sydney and an extra 80,000 businesses. It's time the 2.6 million residents and 230,000 businesses of Western Sydney were given the opportunity to develop their talents and experience cultural assets closer to home.

The report shows investing in Western Sydney's cultural arts economy is a good long-term business and social investment to ensure Western Sydney is a place where people can live, work and socialise. Cultural investment creates communities, attracts businesses, and contributes to tourism. Cities that can attract talented people to work and invest will perform well, and a rich cultural offering can help businesses attract and strengthen their workforce. The WestInvest Fund has started to address this historic deficit in cultural, arts and entertainment facilities in Western Sydney but this can only be the beginning of the investment we need – not the end.

This report breaks new ground; it shows what businesses and local communities working together can achieve. Business Western Sydney has been an advocate for additional funding to be prioritised to Western Sydney, and working together, we have hopefully come one step closer to providing the people of the West with access to cultural attractions. We hope this report will bring change and we are eager to get started on the job of making the recommendations a reality.

## ALICIA TALBOT

Manager Blacktown Arts, Blacktown City Council  
Western Sydney Arts Alliance member<sup>i</sup>



Throughout the great expanse and interconnecting songlines of Western Sydney, we pay respect and walk lightly in the footsteps of those have gone before.

Country and a love of place sit at the heart of all that we do. The creatives, organisations and communities that call Western Sydney home are some of the most exciting artists in Australia. Across Western Sydney there is a palpable creative energy and depth of cultural knowledge that resonates strongly with local and global audiences. Our cultural communities and creative businesses drive a vibrant and diverse economy that is intergenerational, multifaith and fluent across many languages.

This report outlines that investment into arts and culture is not equal across greater Sydney.

Fifty per cent (and counting) of Sydney residents call Western Sydney home and yet received less than 3.5% of state infrastructure funding awarded to Sydney.<sup>ii</sup> Western Sydney residents received less than 10% of state funding across various programs awarded by Create NSW from 2021 - 2022<sup>iii</sup>. In Blacktown, home to 400,000 people, support for arts and cultural activity drops to less than 1%.

Access to culture is based on your postcode, and the school you attend. Western Sydney families pay again and again for the privilege of participating in creativity. There is a never-ending pressure on local governments and small to medium organisations to meet demand. And an expectation that cultural workers and artists subsidise the broader economy through below average wages and free labour.

Culture and creativity are critical to the transformation of Western Sydney. It's the heartbeat that will drive the vibrancy of our cities and the success of our neighbourhoods. There is a skilled network of future-focussed individuals and creative businesses that are ready to scale up.

Imagine the possibilities if Western Sydney received equitable per capita investment in creative education, arts and culture, and established regionally significant organisations. This investment will amplify the NSW Government's commitment to new cultural infrastructure and signature events for the people of Western Sydney. We urge the NSW Government to increase the investment and establish a dedicated Western Sydney investment strategy. Per capita cultural investment will accelerate the extraordinary opportunities across the region - connecting and honouring Country and generations of storytellers and makers. This will be the catalyst required to secure the future of arts and culture in Western Sydney.

<sup>i</sup> Western Sydney Arts Alliance represents over 32 arts organisations across the region. It recognises the centrality of arts, culture and creativity in a healthy society and a mature nation and is a passionate advocate for the vitality and extraordinary distinctiveness of Western Sydney's artists and cultural practitioners.

<sup>ii</sup> Excluding Powerhouse Parramatta and WestInvest.

<sup>iii</sup> This also included COVID relief funding administered by Create NSW from 2020-2022.

# PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE IN WESTERN SYDNEY

- 1 Commit to minimum per-capita funding for arts and culture in Western Sydney based on population distribution across three tiers of government.
- 2 Boost operations and programs funding from Create NSW for Western Sydney's small-to-medium arts sector.
- 3 Fund and commission critical research into Indigenous arts and culture in Western Sydney.
- 4 Establish local, high-quality higher arts education, training, employment and business development pathways to deliver the artistic and creative skills required for the future of Western Sydney.
- 5 Implement a process that allows active participation of arts and culture stakeholders in cross-government decision-making and ensure that their voices are heard on issues that impact the arts sector in Western Sydney.
- 6 Support the development of the Western Sydney Arts Alliance (WSAA) as a key independent peak advocacy body that provides feedback on government policy, raises the profile of the sector and provides services and resources to Western Sydney's arts and cultural sector.
- 7 Drive impactful research in Western Sydney's arts and culture in partnership with Western Sydney University to support and develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach to high-quality research into all aspects of arts and culture in Western Sydney.
- 8 Provide funding and support to Create NSW to establish a *Leadership and Development Program* specifically for underrepresented artists, including but not limited to women, young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) and those with disabilities.
- 9 Establish an *AI and Digital Capability Program*<sup>1</sup> for artists and the small-to-medium arts sector in Western Sydney to:
  - help artists and arts organisations improve their technological and digital skills
  - connect small and medium enterprises with AI equipment and tools
  - establish a purpose-built digitally blended exhibition/maker space for digital artists .
- 10 Undertake a feasibility study for developing cultural precincts and creative industry clusters around key upcoming WestInvest arts and culture projects across the Central River and Western Parkland Cities, such as the Western Sydney Airport and Aerotropolis.
- 11 Investigate the role the region's universities can play in supporting the growth of the region's creative industries, enterprises and entrepreneurs, harnessing the potential of universities to drive economic development and support the success of the region's creative businesses.
- 12 Revitalise the NSW Health and Arts Framework (2016) to share resources, coordinate community engagement and develop partnerships that recognise the benefits of culture in supporting regional recovery.

<sup>1</sup>See SGS Economics & Planning (2018). Digitally blended spaces were proposed as a priority by Ang et al. (2020) and are defined as spaces where digital content like YouTube videos can be produced.



Behind the Scenes - *When Worlds Collide*, directed by Esky Escandor and Victor Tran (Cineverse), 2022  
Film commissioned by Western Sydney Creative and Executive produced by Made In the West Film Festival  
Photo by Kyisoe Han

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CONTEXT

This report highlights that the arts sector in Western Sydney is facing critical inequities in funding, infrastructure and resources that have restricted the growth and success of the arts economy, and resulted in challenges faced by workers in the region. As a result, key studies and strategic documents have advocated for greater resource allocation and policy planning at a state level to support the arts in the Western Sydney region.

Critically, in addition to these inequities, the arts sector in Western Sydney has contended with the devastating impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The industry has seen profound disruptions to many of its revenues, routines and relationships, with most arts and culture organisations reporting economic losses, declines in outputs and loss of jobs. The viability of some performing arts venues, visual arts spaces and centres of community life has been questioned. As NSW recovers following the pandemic, the arts and its diverse creative workforce will play an important role in our region's recovery and renewal, driving Western Sydney's liveability, attractiveness, inclusivity and social cohesion.

At this critical juncture, it is timely to review the recommendations as proposed by the 2015 Deloitte report – *Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy* as well as provide an up-to-date analysis of Western's Sydney arts and culture sector. Further, with the creative economy being one of the world's fastest growing sectors, an enhanced focus on the arts in Western Sydney will secure the position of the region as an important asset for future income generation, economic growth, job creation and value.

Published at a significant time following the introduction of the new National Cultural Policy - *Revive* and the investment of over \$562 million into arts and cultural infrastructure through the WestInvest Program, this report provides a first step in developing the strategic approach required to maximise the recent investments into the arts in Western Sydney.

To secure the sector's recovery, resilience and success, this report assesses the vulnerabilities and capacities of the sector, what is working and where the region's long-term planning and future investment priorities should lie. Further, it identifies critical areas of future research, which are required to inform the development of evidence-based strategies, plans and targeted investments for the arts in Western Sydney.

The priorities proposed in this report are grounded in economic trends within the arts and culture sector in Western Sydney, as well as the perspectives of those working in the sector captured through an engagement process with key stakeholders in the arts.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Economic Landscape – Federal Arts Funding

- 1 Western Sydney represents 10% of Australians today, yet only attracted 3.4% of federal funds between 2015 and 2023. This starkly contrasts with eastern Sydney, which received 23.5% of federal funds.
- 2 Despite Western Sydney being hit hardest by COVID-19 lockdowns, Western Sydney businesses only received \$3.4 million (1.7%) of the \$200 million federal Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Funding allocated to economic recovery following the pandemic. In contrast, organisations in eastern Sydney received \$49.7 million (24.8%).

### Economic Landscape – State Funding

- 1 Between 2015 and 2023, Western Sydney received 36.6% of the state's cultural infrastructure funding allocated to Sydney in the State budget. Most of this funding (33.1%) was allocated to the upcoming Powerhouse Parramatta. In contrast, 63.4% of state cultural infrastructure funding was allocated to the rest of Sydney.
- 2 Recently, Western Sydney was awarded an additional \$562 million in funding for arts and culture facilities through the WestInvest Program. Less than half (\$262.5 m) was allocated to purpose-built arts and cultural infrastructure, with the remaining funds allocated to multipurpose (\$229.85 m) and non-purpose-built facilities (\$69.7 m). This amounts to 31.7% of all WestInvest Community Projects allocated across local government area (LGA) and competitive rounds.
- 3 A spatial disparity is similarly reflected in the distribution of state funding for arts and culture activities administered by Create NSW, with Western Sydney receiving just over \$31.6 million (12%) of the funds allocated to Sydney between 2020-2022, while eastern Sydney received the remaining \$227.9 million in Create NSW funds allocated to the city. Across programs, these spatial disparities are evident:

- a. As part of the \$60 million NSW Government Creative Capital fund launched in 2021 provided Western Sydney with an additional \$2.9 million (5%) in cultural infrastructure funding available via grant applications to Create NSW. On the other hand, eastern Sydney received \$12 million (20.5%) of the \$60 million in Creative Capital fund grants allocated.

- b. Western Sydney received \$22.3 million (11.8%) in Create NSW COVID relief funding. In contrast, eastern Sydney received over \$161 million (84.9%) of the funds administered by Create NSW for COVID-19 economic recovery.
- c. Eastern Sydney received most Create NSW Arts and Cultural Funding Program (ACFP) funds, with \$48 million (74% of the total amount). In contrast, Western Sydney received 7% of the funding, totalling just over \$4.5 million, while the remaining \$12.6 million (19%) was awarded to the rest of NSW.
- d. As a proportion of the \$750,000 allocated to the Create NSW Film Festival Fund in 2021-2022, Western Sydney received 37.4%, while eastern Sydney received 57%.
- e. The Culture Up Late program delivered by the office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Create NSW provided Western Sydney with \$1 million (20%), providing the remaining 80% of funds (\$3.9 million) to eastern Sydney funding.

- 4** Western Sydney also received a smaller portion of Destination NSW funding for international sports, cultural, creative and arts events. Between 2015-2022, 354 events were supported in eastern Sydney, compared with 137 in Western Sydney.

### Cultural Activity

- 1** In 2018, approximately 78.4% of Western Sydney's population attended at least one venue or event each year, compared with 86.5% in eastern Sydney. In the same year, approximately 28% of Western Sydney's population participated in cultural activities compared with 37% of eastern Sydney's population who had participated in cultural activities. These rates have been attributed to a range of factors in previous research, including transport connectivity, skills shortages and limited local tertiary education offerings in creative and performing arts.
- 2** Disparities in attendance and participation rates are shaped by the limited transport connectivity between Western Sydney residents and cultural institutions concentrated in eastern Sydney. When travelling to cultural institutions in a private vehicle, the combined cost of tolls, fuel and parking can reach up to \$105 a day for residents travelling from Oran Park to the Sydney Theatre Company in Dawes Point. Should a resident in Oran Park opt for the more affordable public transport option, this will cost \$16.80 on weekdays or \$8.40 on weekends, and take a staggering 4 hrs to travel to and from the Sydney Theatre Company.
- 3** Lower cultural participation rates can also be attributed to a skills shortage in the creative and performing arts among residents in Western Sydney. 2.4% of qualifications obtained by Western Sydney residents are in the creative arts field. In comparison, 7.3% of qualifications held in eastern Sydney are in the creative arts field.
- 4** The skills gap in arts and culture in Western Sydney is further intensified by limited tertiary education offerings for creative and performing arts in the region. Currently, three institutions in Western Sydney offer tertiary education in creative arts at a maximum of a bachelor level. Comparatively, eastern Sydney has approximately 17 different institutions offering formal tertiary education and qualifications in the creative and performing arts up to the postgraduate level. The emerging cultural institutions

in the region in both WestInvest developments and the Powerhouse Parramatta will drive significant employment opportunities in creative industries and rapid demand for creative skills. In preparation for the growth of the arts in the region, strategic investment in creative education, training and professional development will be required to meet the skills demand in the next four to six years upon delivery of WestInvest sites.

### Policy Landscape

- 1** The recent release of the new National Cultural Policy – *Revive* presents a key opportunity to further develop the arts in Western Sydney. The core commitment of the policy to Indigenous arts and culture is critical for Western Sydney, home to one of the largest Indigenous communities in the nation. The region provides a prime context for enacting the commitments of this federal policy for Indigenous arts.
- 2** State arts and cultural planning and policy for metropolitan Sydney remain focused on the Sydney central business district (CBD). When Western Sydney is discussed, the focus remains on the Central City (Parramatta), neglecting the remainder of the region.
- 3** There has been increased focus on supporting artists, especially young artists, Indigenous artists and artists with disabilities in both federal and state policies.
- 4** There has been increased recognition of the connections between the arts and other industries, such as the visitor and night-time economies and the future development of city centres in NSW.

### Stakeholder Consultations

The consultations with key stakeholders in Western Sydney revealed three main findings:

- 1** Western Sydney's arts sector has many strengths and distinctive features, including a dynamic and vibrant small-to-medium arts sector, a diverse range of authentic voices, skilled and entrepreneurial artists, and an inclusive culture that is deeply rooted in local communities. The sector promotes diverse practices and a collaborative artistic culture that values support over competition.
- 2** Challenges and obstacles are preventing the arts sector in Western Sydney from reaching its full potential, such as an outdated and incorrect regional reputation, insufficient representation in decision-making, inequitable funding processes, insufficient creative infrastructure and support, the digital divide (or unequal access to digital technologies) and limited education and business development pathways.
- 3** Arts and cultural workers envision a future where Western Sydney becomes the centre of the arts, occupied by self-determined artists, and remains inclusive in providing funding opportunities and access to spaces for all. They aim to be recognised and celebrated for their contributions while maintaining a collaborative ecosystem in Western Sydney that maximises their impact.

# INTRODUCTION

The arts and culture sector in Western Sydney holds great importance for the region's social, cultural and economic prosperity. It boasts a thriving network of individual artists and a diversity of small-to-medium arts organisations and enterprises.

Further, a diverse, young, highly educated and rapidly growing population in Western Sydney is driving demand for arts and cultural activities, programs and education. Despite this, previous studies highlight the critical funding, infrastructure and resource inequities facing the arts sector in Western Sydney. Over the last decade, key studies and strategic documents have advocated for greater resource allocation and policy planning at a state level to support creative activity in Western Sydney.<sup>2</sup>

The sector now faces more significant challenges following the unprecedented pressures of the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021. At this historical juncture following the COVID-19 pandemic, strategic cultural planning and investment in the evolving challenges, resilience and vision of the culture and arts sector are imperative for the future of the arts industry in Western Sydney.

Following the appointment of the Director, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University hosted the *Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor's Arts and Culture Roundtable* on 18 March 2022.<sup>3</sup> Working with industry policymakers and experts, the roundtable sought to identify the challenges and opportunities available in the sector following the COVID-19 lockdowns, and identify the University's role in sustaining and further developing Western Sydney's creative and cultural economy.

Among the key priority outcomes of the *Arts and Culture Roundtable* was the imperative of delivering an overview of the State of the Arts and Culture in Western Sydney. Such research was initiated by Business Western Sydney, which shared the vision to reassess the status of the arts following their previous study on *Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy: A Key to Sydney's Success* (2015).<sup>4</sup>

This report delivers this outcome, at a critical time, shortly following the introduction of the new National Cultural Policy - Revive, the delivery of the Powerhouse Parramatta as well as a significant investment of over \$562 million into arts and cultural infrastructure through the WestInvest Program, and the recent government pledge to secure the future of the Roxy theatre in Parramatta.<sup>5</sup>

The new federal policy aims to address disparities in access to the arts, improve arts education and further support Indigenous and multicultural artists and provides substantial opportunities to impact the diverse communities in Western Sydney. The policy's objective to promote fairness in access to the arts for communities that have suffered from marginalisation is of utmost significance, particularly in Western Sydney, where evidence of existing inequalities in funding, infrastructure and creative participation has been well established.

While the sector welcomes the allocation of the WestInvest funds and the relocation of the Powerhouse to Parramatta, it should be noted that without additional operation and programmatic support, these arts and culture facilities and small to medium arts and cultural facilities may fail to deliver on their function and purpose.

This report provides a bespoke analysis of the creative economy grounded in current and emerging challenges faced by those working in the arts in Western Sydney to capture where the arts sector is at present and what is required moving forward. Accordingly, it proposes sector-led recommendations based on the needs and aspirations of arts and cultural workers in the region.

Western Sydney University recognises that the diminishing options in tertiary and higher education systems have adversely impacted the growth and development of Western Sydney's arts and culture sector. It understands it has a significant role to play in sustaining and further developing the future of the arts in the region as a trusted collaborator with government and industry. Therefore, this research was undertaken in partnership with the Centre for Western Sydney, Western Sydney Creative, Business Western Sydney and with sector support from the Western Sydney Arts Alliance.

Together, the key partners seek to influence policy developments in arts and culture in response to key trends, needs and recommendations of those working in the sector in Western Sydney. Further, the report seeks to stimulate further research and policy interventions to realise a sustainable, viable and thriving future for arts and culture in Western Sydney.

<sup>2</sup>Refer to section 2 for further detail on research surrounding the key challenges facing the sector.

<sup>3</sup>Refer to Appendix G for the list of attendees and key discussion points at the WSU Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor's Arts and Culture Roundtable.

<sup>4</sup>Deloitte (2015).

<sup>5</sup><https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/nsw-government-pledges-to-save-parramatta-s-iconic-roxy-theatre-20230219-p5clpn.html>

## REPORT SCOPE

*State of the Arts in Western Sydney* aims to propose to the government, the University and the sector, a post-COVID-19 roadmap of key priorities and initiatives for the long-term sustainability of the arts. These priorities are based on an assessment of the funding, policy and research landscape of the arts and the needs of arts and cultural workers in the sector.

Within the broader context of historical funding inequity to the arts in Western Sydney and the added strain of COVID-19 on the sector, this report seeks to provide a snapshot of the arts in the region, including the opportunities, challenges and needs of those employed in the sector.

Drawing on an analysis of the funding, policy and lived experience of arts and cultural workers from 2015–22, this report proposes 12 key priorities required to optimise the lasting economic and social benefits intended by the upcoming investments into the communities of Western Sydney.

Within the above parameters, this report:

- i. provides a broad profile of arts and culture in Western Sydney, including the demographic, economic, funding, infrastructure and policy landscape
- ii. tracks funding, infrastructure and policy developments in arts and culture in Western Sydney following the release of key advocacy documents from 2015 onwards
- iii. documents the experiences, perspectives and needs of those working in Western Sydney following the COVID-19 lockdowns through stakeholder consultations
- iv. identifies key initiatives and interventions required to optimise new cultural infrastructure investments and ensure the future resilience of the arts and culture sector in Western Sydney
- v. seeks to provoke further conversation, research and advocacy for the arts in Western Sydney, identifying key areas of enquiry that need further investigation.

## LIMITATIONS

### Approach to the Arts

The report recognises that a myriad of art practices, art forms and art service organisations are engaged in creating, disseminating and promoting art in Sydney's west. However, for the purposes and scope of this report, art organisations engaged in this research have been limited to Western Sydney's small-to-medium arts sector. The ABS categorises arts and recreation services to include heritage, creative and performing arts, sports, and gambling activities. Within this report, the arts in Western Sydney refers to the following venues, events and activities:

- Literature
- Media arts
- Multi-art form and digital arts
- Music and sound
- Performing arts
- Visual arts

## Datapoints

This report explores various trends in the arts in Western Sydney, utilising publicly accessible data, as well as data provided by Create NSW under a Freedom of Information request on 10 February, 2023. The report draws on data provided by Create NSW at the broad level at which it was supplied.<sup>6</sup>

## Consultations

The stakeholder consultations for this project were limited in scope due to the complexities of the sector and the availability of participants within the time parameters of this project. A series of one-on-one interviews were held by an invitation only process. Two workshops were facilitated with the Western Sydney Arts Alliance and included members of the Alliance as well as external arts and culture stakeholders. Furthermore, while the study sample of participants from the small to medium arts sector was broad, this project did not specifically target underrepresented groups for participation.

This limitation will be addressed in a series of future research reports with a dedicated focus on Indigenous arts and culture in Western Sydney, CALD artists, the situation of women artists and cultural workers and an exploration of the cultural industries in Western Sydney.

## REPORT OUTLINE

This report is presented in four key sections:

- 1 Following the introduction, the report presents key data points on the funding landscape of the arts and the arts and cultural economy, including employment, cultural activity and the underlying factors shaping this economy, such as transport, skills and tertiary education.
- 2 The second section presents the research landscape, including key studies published over the last decade on the arts in Western Sydney. This section closes with an overview of the policy landscape, evaluating key strategies and documents shaping the sector.
- 3 Finally, the report closes with the findings of stakeholder consultations with 42 arts and cultural workers in Western Sydney. These findings highlight the sector's perceived strengths, challenges and visions for the future of the arts in the region.
- 4 Throughout, case studies of key arts events, activities, collectives and spaces in Western Sydney are profiled, showcasing the diversity, vibrancy and valuable contributions of the arts to the region.

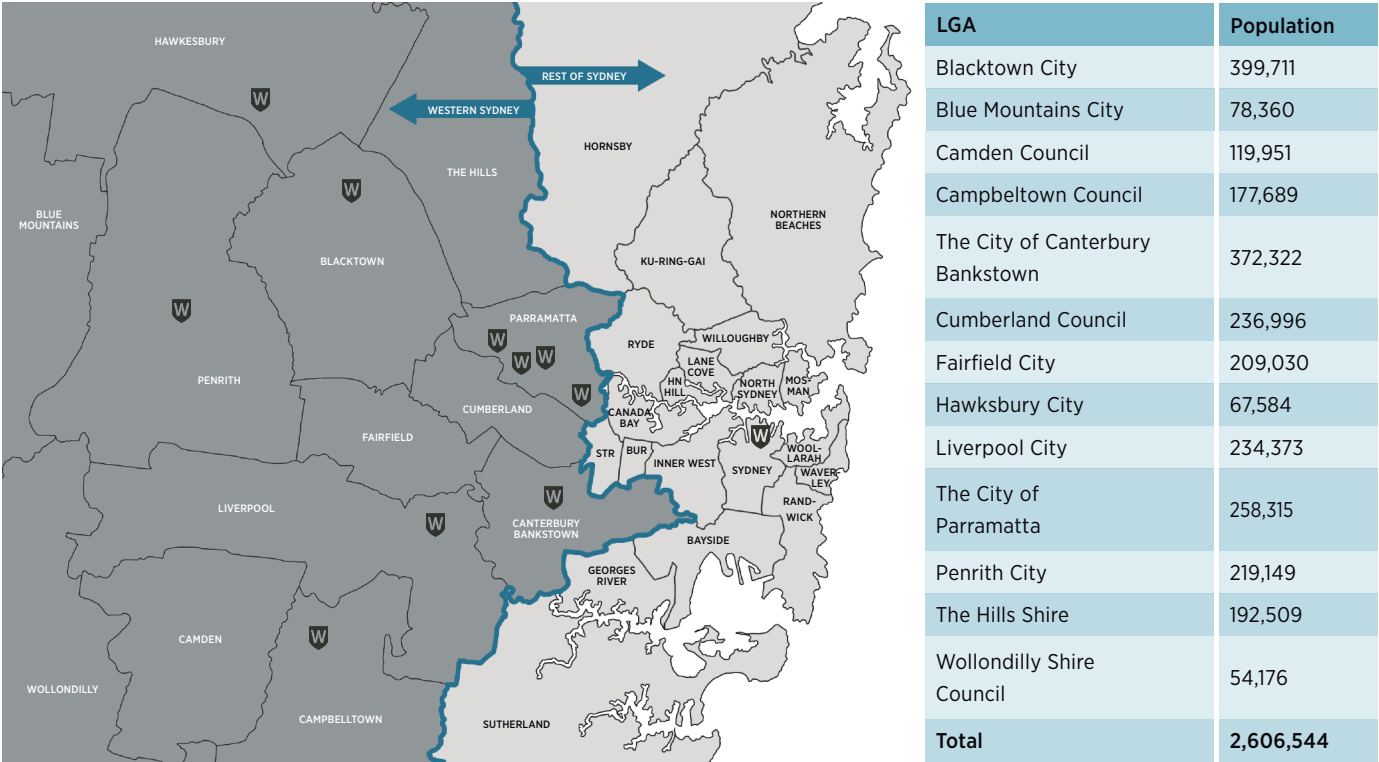
<sup>6</sup>Data requested of Create NSW for this report included: 1. NSW Cultural Arts Funding awarded, 2. grant applications, 3. grant recipients/awarded (including COVID-19 relief) and 4. Creative Kids providers and use of Creative Kids vouchers by LGA (2015 to 2021–22). The first three data points were supplied at a broad, top-level of detail, whereas the creative kids voucher data was excluded from the data pack provided to the team as this was not geographically classified for the spatial analysis required.

# PROFILING THE WESTERN SYDNEY REGION

The Western Sydney region sprawls almost 9,000 square kilometres, with boundaries meeting south at Wollondilly, west to the Blue Mountains and north to Hawkesbury. The area comprises 13 LGAs, with varying population sizes. The largest populations reside in the Blacktown, Canterbury Bankstown and Parramatta LGAs.

Aligning with previous projections, Western Sydney’s population surpassed eastern Sydney in 2021, with 2.62 million residents compared to 2.22 million in eastern Sydney. By 2041, Western Sydney’s population is projected to reach 3.4 million and account for 61% of Sydney’s population growth.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 1: Profiling the Western Sydney region



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Census of Population and Housing (2021).  
Map produced by Thomas Nance, Western Sydney University

## WESTERN SYDNEY

- Blacktown
- Blue Mountains
- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury Bankstown
- Cumberland
- Fairfield
- Hawkesbury
- Liverpool
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- The Hills Shire
- Wollondilly

## THE REST OF SYDNEY

- Bayside
- Burwood
- Canada Bay
- Georges River
- Hornsby
- Hunters Hill
- Inner West
- Ku-ring-gai
- Lane Cove
- Mosman
- North Sydney
- Northern Beaches
- Randwick
- Ryde
- Strathfield
- Sutherland Shire
- Sydney
- Waverley
- Willoughby
- Woollahra

<sup>7</sup>NSW Department of Planning and Environment



Ilhan Abdi DJ-ing at Ghost Cities Writing Zone Event,  
Pari Gallery Parramatta, 2022

# POPULATION

BY 2041, WESTERN SYDNEY'S POPULATION IS PROJECTED TO REACH 3.4 MILLION (61% OF SYDNEY'S AND 10.8% OF AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION).

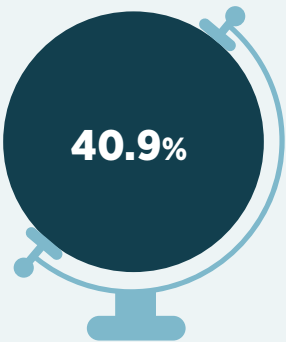
2.62M<sup>8</sup>  
WESTERN SYDNEY



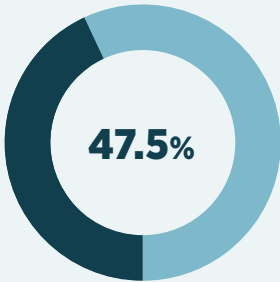
2.22M  
EASTERN SYDNEY



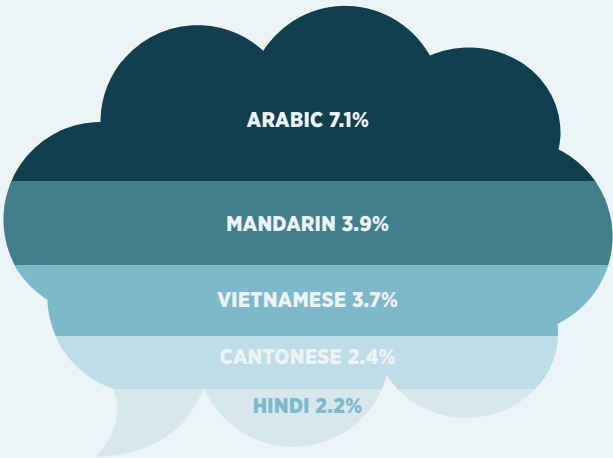
# CULTURAL DIVERSITY



WESTERN SYDNEY RESIDENTS  
BORN OVERSEAS



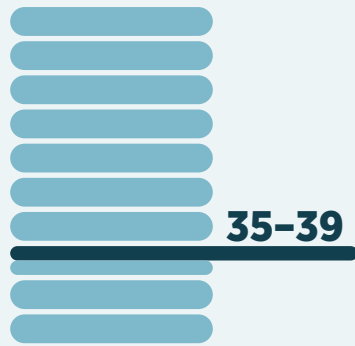
SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE  
AT HOME



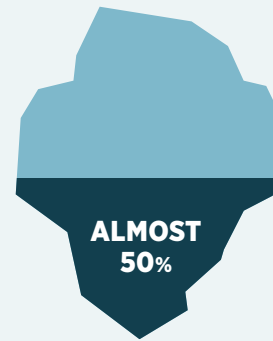
TOP 5 LANGUAGES SPOKEN  
AT HOME

<sup>8</sup>Refers to Estimated Residential Population, ABS (2021).

## AVERAGE AGE



MEDIAN AGE  
(YEARS)



POPULATION UNDER  
THE AGE OF 34

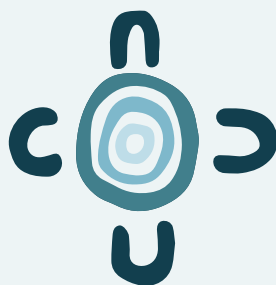
## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

10% INCREASE SINCE 2011

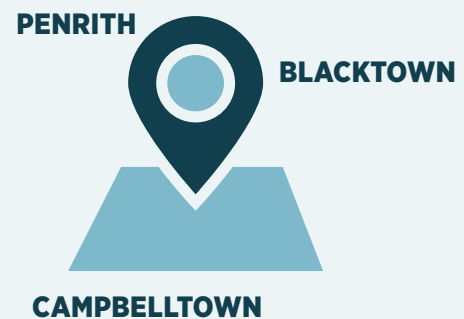


RESIDENTS HOLDING A BACHELOR  
OR HIGHER DEGREE

## INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS



INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS RESIDE  
IN WESTERN SYDNEY



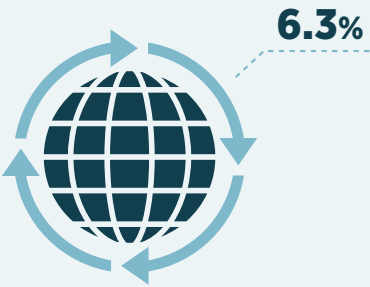
LARGEST INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES  
IN WESTERN SYDNEY

# THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN AUSTRALIA



ECONOMIC OUTPUT



GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) IN 2018

# EMPLOYMENT IN THE CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY (2021)



EMPLOYED IN 2021



REGISTERED BUSINESSES

# CULTURAL PARTICIPATION (2018)

ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN MAKING ART OR UNDERTAKING AN ARTS ACTIVITY



## CULTURAL ATTENDANCE (2018)

ACTIVITIES OF AUDIENCES AND PARTICIPANTS IN CONSUMING CULTURAL PRODUCTS AND TAKING PART IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES

**78%**

WESTERN SYDNEY

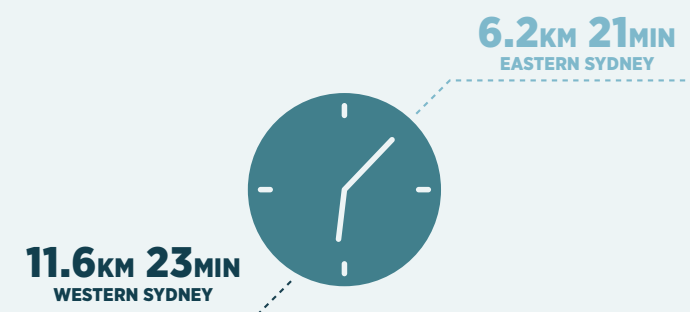


**86%**

EASTERN SYDNEY



## TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

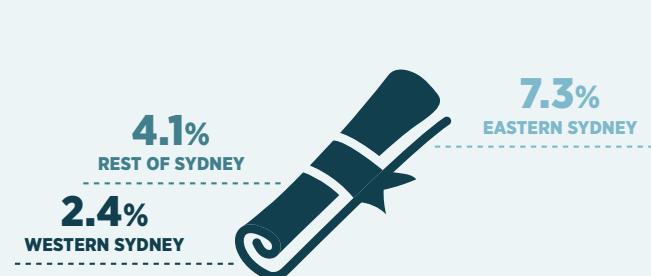


AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME TO  
LEISURE ACTIVITIES

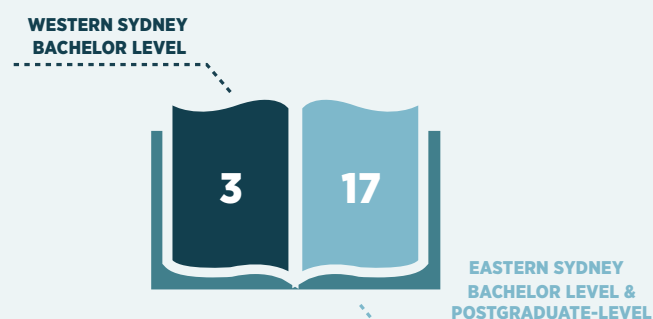


TRIP TO SYDNEY THEATRE  
COMPANY

## CREATIVE SKILLS



QUALIFICATIONS IN CREATIVE  
ARTS (2021)



TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN THE CREATIVE  
AND PERFORMING ARTS

# FEDERAL ARTS FUNDING

FEDERAL FUNDS ADMINISTERED BY THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS (2015 AND 2022)



## SUBSIDY PER CAPITA, FEDERAL FUNDING

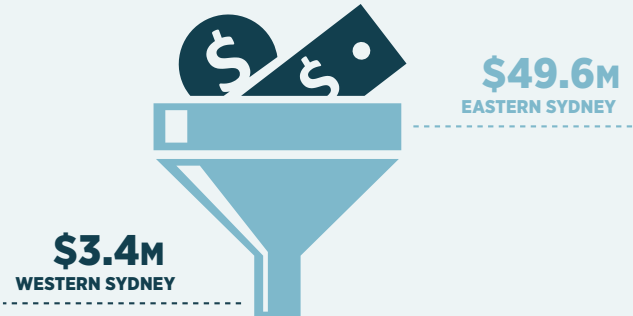
\$7.59  
WESTERN SYDNEY



\$54.95  
EASTERN SYDNEY

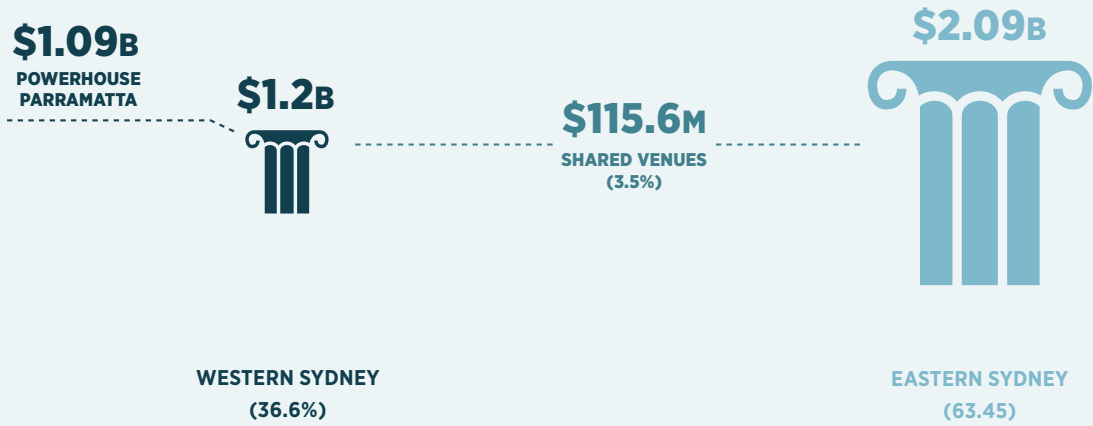


## RESTART INVESTMENT TO SUSTAIN AND EXPAND (RISE) FUND (\$200M)

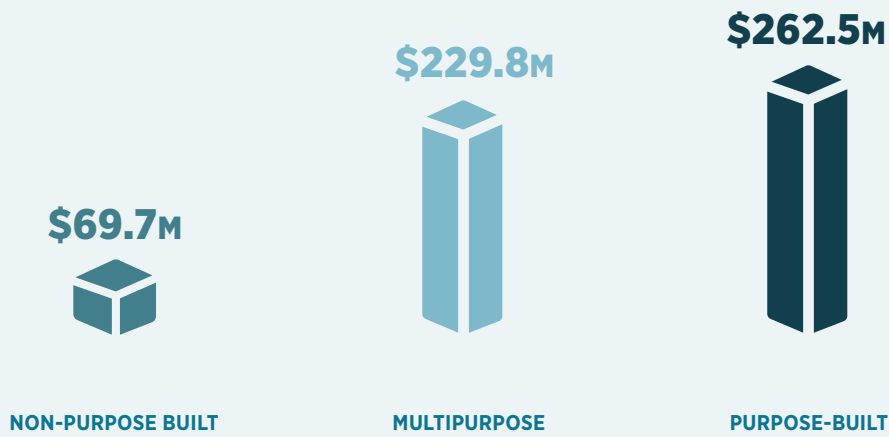


# STATE ARTS FUNDING

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURE FOR SYDNEY (2015–2023, EXCLUDING WESTINVEST)



WESTINVEST PROGRAM: ALLOCATION TO ARTS AND CULTURE FACILITIES<sup>9</sup>



CREATE NSW FUNDING, 2021- 2022, INCLUDING COVID-RELIEF FUNDING (2020-2022) ALLOCATED TO SYDNEY



<sup>9</sup>as of 9th February 2023.

CREATE NSW PROGRAM ALLOCATIONS ACROSS NSW



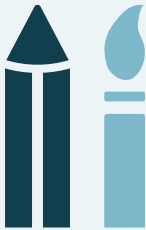
COVID-RELIEF

WESTERN SYDNEY \$22.3M (11.8%)  
EASTERN SYDNEY \$161M (85%)



FILM FESTIVAL FUND

WESTERN SYDNEY \$272,000 (37.4%)  
EASTERN SYDNEY \$416,000 (57.2%)



ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING PROGRAM

WESTERN SYDNEY \$4.5M (7%)  
EASTERN SYDNEY \$48M (74%)



CULTURE UP LATE FUND

WESTERN SYDNEY \$1M (20.1%)  
EASTERN SYDNEY \$3.9M (79.9%)



CREATIVE CAPITAL FUND

WESTERN SYDNEY \$2.9M (5.1%)  
EASTERN SYDNEY \$12M (20.5%)

DESTINATION NSW FUNDED CULTURAL, CREATIVE AND ARTS EVENTS



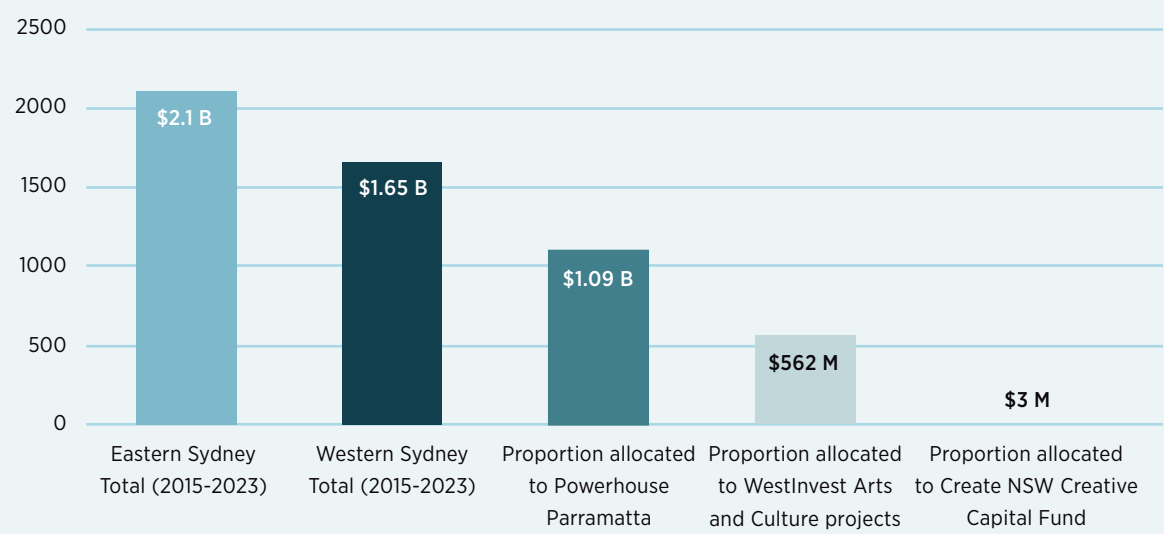
137

WESTERN SYDNEY EVENTS

354

EASTERN SYDNEY EVENTS

STATE CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING



# THE ARTS ECONOMY IN WESTERN SYDNEY

## FUNDING LANDSCAPE

Federal, state and local governments, businesses and not-for-profit organisations provide the funding for Western Sydney’s arts sector. The Australia Council for the Arts (soon to be known as Creative Australia) is the main federal funding body, distributing funds through key institutions and targeted programs across states and territories. Over 2015–2022, NSW received \$168.5 million in grants from federal funding for the arts, representing 30% of the total funding.<sup>10</sup>

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

#### AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

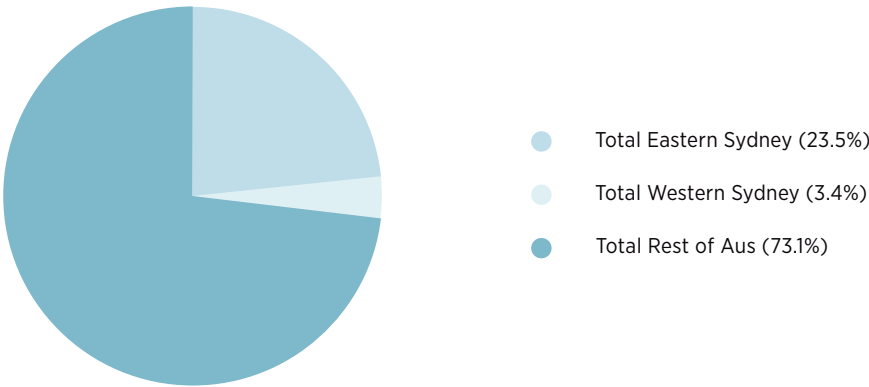
The Deloitte study on *Building Western Sydney’s Cultural Arts Economy* uncovered that the allocation of funds from the Australia Council for the Arts in 2008–14 across Sydney was unevenly distributed, with eastern Sydney receiving significantly more funds than Western Sydney. From 2008–2014, Western Sydney represented 9.5% of the population yet only received 1% of commonwealth arts program funding. Comparatively, eastern Sydney was home to 10.7% of Sydney’s population and received 36% of these funds.<sup>11</sup> Despite Western Sydney now representing 10% of the national population, funding inequities persisted in 2015–2022, with Western Sydney receiving 3.4% of funding, compared with 23.5% allocated to eastern Sydney, where 8.5% of the national population lives.

**Table 2.1:** Federal Funding Via Australia Council for the Arts, Awarded Grants 2015-2022

	Total Awarded (\$)	Total Funding (%)
Australia	\$565,232,394	100.0
Eastern Sydney	\$132,725,977	23.5
Western Sydney	\$19,395,647	3.4
Total rest of Australia	\$413,110,770	73.1

Source: Australia Council for the Arts, Awarded Grants 2015–2022

**Figure 2.1:** Federal Funding via Australia Council for the Arts (2015–2022)



Source: Australia Council for the Arts, Awarded Grants 2015–2022

<sup>10</sup>Refer to Appendix D for the distribution of federal funding administered by the Australia Council for the Arts across states and territories in Australia.

<sup>11</sup>Deloitte (2015).



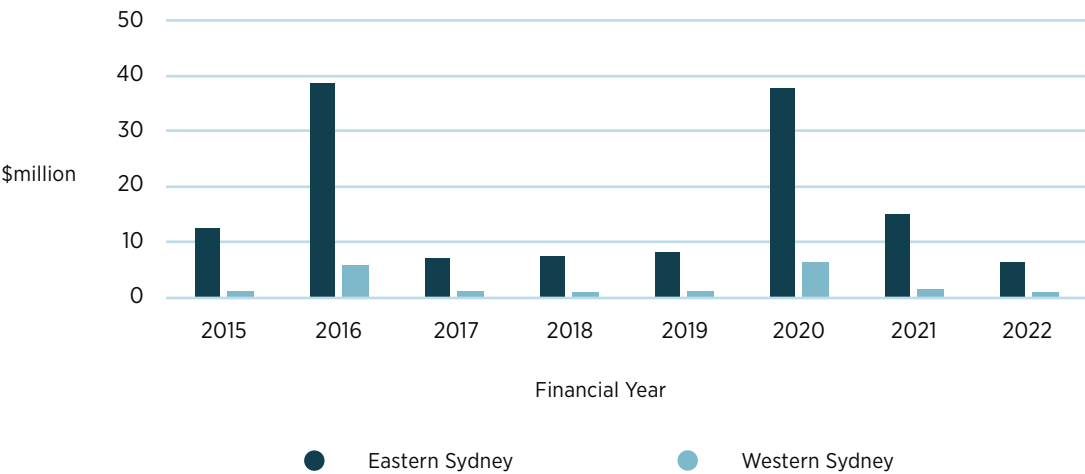
Behind the Scenes - *A Bird's Eye View: The Art of Rhonda Sampson*, directed by Bina Bhattacharya, 2022  
Film commissioned by Western Sydney Creative and Executive produced by Made In the West Film Festival

Table 2.2: Federal Government Funding via Australia Council, Awarded Grants by Year (2015–2022)

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		Total
	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	
Eastern Sydney	12.5	26.7	38.5	24.2	7.1	22.3	7.5	23.8	8.3	21.8	37.8	21.3	15.1	34.1	6.5	18.2	132.73
Western Sydney	1.1	2.4	5.9	3.7	1.2	3.9	0.9	2.8	1.2	3.2	6.4	3.6	1.6	3.7	1.0	2.9	19.4

Source: Australia Council for the Arts, Awarded Grants 2015–2022.

Figure 2.2: Federal Government Funding via Australia Council, Awarded Grants by Year (2015–2022)



Based on ABS population data in 2019, this spatially uneven distribution of funding results in a significant disparity in commonwealth subsidies for the arts in Western Sydney. Residents of Eastern Sydney received \$54.95 of commonwealth subsidies per person, whereas Western Sydney received only \$7.59.

**Table 2.3:** Subsidy per capita of Funding Via Australia Council, Awarded Grants 2015–2022<sup>12</sup>

	Population (2019)	Subsidy Per Capita
Eastern Sydney	2,415,243	\$54.95
Western Sydney	2,553,291	\$7.59

Source: Australia Council for the Arts, (Awarded Grants) 2015–2022.

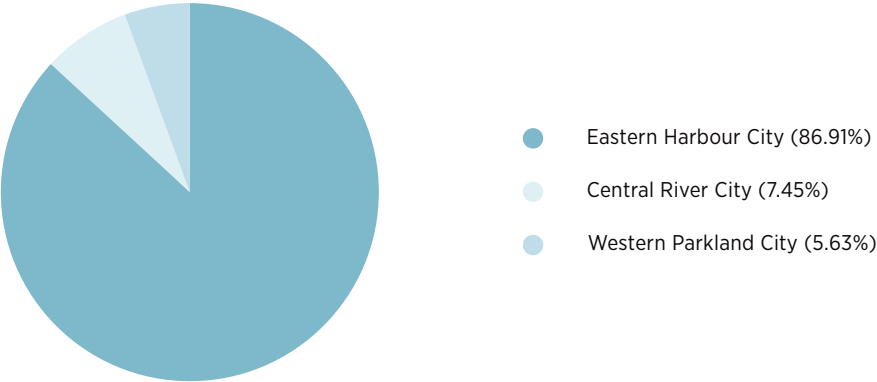
These spatial disparities in funding are further apparent when comparing the allocation between the three metropolitan cities of Sydney.<sup>13</sup> The Eastern Harbour district received the highest funding (23.4%), followed by Central River City (2%) and Western Parkland City (1.5%). It is apparent from Table 2.4 that the Eastern Harbour City of Sydney received a disproportionate amount of funding, with 86% of the total funding awarded to Sydney going to this area. In contrast, Western Sydney received only 12.7% of commonwealth support for the arts in Sydney. The smallest portion of funding was allocated to the Western Parkland City, which received 5.6%.

**Table 2.4:** Federal Government Funding Via Australia Council, Awarded Grants 2015–2022, Metropolis of Three Cities<sup>14</sup>

Sydney's three cities	Total awarded (\$)	Total commonwealth funding (%)	Total commonwealth funding allocated to Sydney (%)
Eastern Harbour City	132,210,210	23.4	86.91
Central River City	11,340,256	2.0	7.45
Western Parkland City	8,571,158	1.5	5.63

Source: Australia Council, Investment and Development (Awarded Grants) Data 2015–2022.

**Figure 2.3:** Federal Government Funding Via Australia Council, Awarded Grants 2015–2022, Metropolis of Three Cities



Source: Australia Council for the Arts, (Awarded Grants) 2015–2022.

It is important to note that the funding context in Australia has been unstable, especially for small-to-medium-sized organisations and independent artists. This has resulted from severe funding cuts, including \$52 million removed from the arts portfolio in 2015 and \$104 million divested from the Australia Council.<sup>15</sup> Although funds were significantly restored to the Australia Council in 2017, research has shown that the lasting effects of this disruption remain ongoing and left the sector particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Note: Subsidy per capita calculated using ABS 2019 population data and Australia Council awarded from 2015–2022.  
<sup>13</sup>A key strategy proposed by the Greater Sydney Region Plan (2018) by the Greater Sydney Commission (now the Greater Cities Commission) is to divide Sydney into three main cities: the Eastern Harbour City, the Central River City and the Western Parklands City. Refer to Appendix F for further detail on the strategy.  
<sup>14</sup>These figures collate the total funding allocated to specific grants and federal electorate specified by the Australia Council. The figures are an approximation only due to overlap in some federal electorates of eastern Sydney, Western Sydney and regional NSW. These figures also do not reflect the \$199 million in additional funding to be awarded to the Australia Council from 2023–24 following the release of the new Federal Cultural Policy – Revive.  
<sup>15</sup>Commonwealth of Australia (2023).  
<sup>16</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017); Commonwealth of Australia (2023).

## COVID RELIEF: RESTART INVESTMENT TO SUSTAIN AND EXPAND FUND

The COVID-19 Creative Economy Support Package provided \$200 million in commonwealth grants through the RISE Fund. Between 2021 and 2022, the fund supported 541 arts and cultural projects in Australia. 34% of the grant funding was awarded to organisations in NSW, of which 156 grants were received.

Eastern Sydney received the most grants (104 grants, \$49.7 m, 24.8% of total RISE funding), while Western Sydney only received 13 (\$3.4 m, 1.7% of total RISE funding).<sup>17</sup> The remaining 39 grants awarded to NSW were distributed across the rest of the state.

**Table 2.5:** RISE Fund Grant Amount Awarded by Organisation Location (2021–2022)

	Eastern Sydney	Western Sydney	Rest of NSW	Rest of Australia
Total funding (\$)	\$49,660,060	\$3,427,454	\$14,120,259	\$132,651,635
Total funding (%)	24.8%	1.7%	7.6	66.4%
Grants allocated (#)	104	13	39	385

Source: Australian Government, Office for the Arts (RISE Grant Funding Recipients, Batch 1–7, 2021–2022).

Further, an analysis of the area serviced by the RISE grants shows that funding primarily supported projects that serviced the eastern Sydney region. Eastern Sydney was exclusively serviced by 44 (28%) of RISE grants awarded to NSW, whereas Western Sydney was serviced by 11 (7%). The remaining 101 grants (65%) serviced other areas across NSW, outside of NSW, or were allocated to national and state-wide services.. These findings demonstrate that while some projects administered by businesses in eastern Sydney also serviced the Western Sydney region, such as the SoundWest festival, they mostly serviced eastern Sydney.

**Table 2.6:** Number of RISE Fund Grants Awarded to Projects by Area Serviced (2021–2022)

Area serviced	Grants allocated (#)	RISE grants awarded to projects NSW (%)
Eastern Sydney only	44	28.2
Western Sydney only	11	7.1
National or state-wide service <sup>18</sup>	39	25
Both Eastern Sydney and Western Sydney	1	0.6
Western Sydney and regional	2	1.2
Rest of NSW	51	41.46
Outside of NSW	8	5.1
<b>Total NSW</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Australian Government, Office for the Arts (RISE Grant Funding Recipients, Batch 1–7, 2021–2022).

A similar spatial imbalance can be observed in the distribution of RISE Fund grants through national initiatives or tours. The data in Table 2.7 show that 23 (92%) of the national initiatives or tours supported by the RISE Fund took place in eastern Sydney, while only one initiative was in Western Sydney, and another was split across both regions.

**Table 2.7:** Number of RISE Fund Grants Awarded by Areas Serviced through National Initiatives or Tours in Sydney (2021–2022)

Area serviced	Grants allocated (#)	Grants allocated for national initiatives or tours in Sydney (%)
Eastern Sydney	23	92
Western Sydney	1	4
Both Eastern and Western Sydney	1	4
<b>National initiatives or tours in Sydney (Total)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Australian Government, Office for the Arts (RISE Grant Funding Recipients, Batch 1–7, 2021–2022).

<sup>17</sup>Please note that the success rate is not recorded, as applicant information to the RISE Fund is not publicly available.

<sup>18</sup>National or state-service initiative refers to the areas of Sydney serviced when grant funding was awarded towards a national tour or initiative.

The lower allocation of RISE Funds to Western Sydney may be attributed to the region’s fewer registered businesses in arts and recreation services and other funding barriers highlighted by stakeholders in this study.<sup>19</sup> However, publicly available data does not demonstrate the success rate of applicants in Sydney based on their geographic location. While it is challenging to identify the root cause of a lower allocation of RISE funding to Western Sydney, consultations with the sector pointed to barriers faced by small-to-medium arts organisations in the region with current funding processes. Namely, participants felt that current funding processes were based on narrow economic measures, focused on traditional cultural art forms, and bound to inhibitive funding applications that made their applications less competitive.

STATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING

This section of the report reviews funding administered by the NSW Government towards cultural infrastructure and funds administered by Create NSW and Destination NSW for arts and culture. The data are based on publicly available sources and data sourced through a formal request to Create NSW.<sup>20</sup> Future analyses of the funding landscape of the arts in NSW should seek to complement the datapoints analysed in this section with information from the Office of Regional Youth and Aboriginal Affairs to build a comprehensive picture of funding allocations.

NSW CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Previous research has uncovered that between 2011-14, Western Sydney only received 6% of investments into the state’s cultural arts infrastructure, the majority of which was allocated to the Castle Hill facility of the Powerhouse Museum. Comparably, between 2015 and 2022-23, Western Sydney continued to receive a small proportion of this funding. From 2015-2023, the NSW Government allocated 36.6% of its total expenditure on cultural infrastructure in Sydney to the Western Sydney region and 66.4% to Eastern Sydney. Most state funding allocated to Western Sydney in the NSW budget was for the Powerhouse Parramatta project.<sup>21</sup>

Table 2.8: State Cultural Infrastructure expenditure, Sydney 2015-2023

	Total awarded (\$) m	Total cultural infrastructure expenditure in Sydney (%)
Sydney	\$3,301	100.0
Eastern Sydney	\$2,092	63.4
Western Sydney	\$1,208	36.6

Source: NSW Budget Papers (Infrastructure Statement, 2015-2023)

The vast majority of the state’s cultural infrastructure funding continued to support existing state-owned cultural institutions such as the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney Opera House, Australian Museum, the State Library of NSW and Museums of History NSW.<sup>22</sup> Western Sydney’s share of NSW cultural infrastructure funding is mainly received through the Powerhouse Parramatta and Museums of History Funding and a small portion through the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Fund<sup>23</sup> and grants from the State Library of NSW to libraries in the Western Sydney region. Western Sydney is also home to two of the 12 Museums of History in NSW that receive funding through the NSW Government’s Historic House Trust.

Table 2.9: NSW Cultural Infrastructure Funding 2014-15 to 2022-23

Cultural infrastructure	(\$) m	Total expenditure (%)	Location
Powerhouse Parramatta	1,092.8	33.1	Western Sydney
Art Gallery of NSW	687.8	20.8	Eastern Sydney
Sydney Opera House	484.7	14.7	Eastern Sydney
Walsh Bay Arts Precinct	578	17.5	Eastern Sydney
Australian Museum	172.6	5.2	Eastern Sydney
State Library of NSW	169.7	5.1	Eastern Sydney
Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences	64.6	2.0	Eastern/Western Sydney
Museums of History NSW	51	1.5	Eastern/Western Sydney
Total	3,301	100.0	N/A

Source: NSW Budget Papers (Infrastructure Statement 2015-2023).

<sup>19</sup>Refer to section 4 to review the stakeholder consultation findings on funding barriers in the sector.  
<sup>20</sup>Data requested by Create NSW that were not provided to the team included the allocation of Creative Kids vouchers.  
<sup>21</sup>As uncovered through consultations, it is important to note that despite the upcoming development of Powerhouse Parramatta, the sector in this LGA faces developer stress for affordable spaces to make and exhibit arts, as well as providing affordable housing for artists.  
<sup>22</sup>NSW Budget Reports (2015-2023). Excludes \$145m allocated to the Arts Maintenance and Upgrades Program between 2020 and 2023. This figure was excluded from this analysis due to uncertainty of funding allocations. The known listed projects include upgrades to the State Library of NSW, National Art School and the Gunnyer.  
<sup>23</sup>The figures provided for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences includes Sydney Observatory, Powerhouse Ultimo/Castle Hill and part of initial planning and funding to relocate the Powerhouse to Parramatta. Note that these figures do not include the \$480-500 million announced for the Powerhouse Ultimo Creative Industries precinct, which was not included in the budget papers analysed in this table. This allocation can be observed in the analysis of multiyear funding.

As evident in the time series presented in Table 2.10, an increase in funding allocated to cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney is observed regarding the upcoming development of the Powerhouse Parramatta in the NSW Budget 2018–2023, totalling \$1,092.8 million as of 2023. In addition, the time series demonstrates the impact of budget reductions across the arts and cultural sectors in NSW.

**Table 2.10: Cultural Infrastructure Funding, Time Series 2015–2023<sup>24</sup>**

Cultural infrastructure	2015–2016 (\$ m)	2016–2017 (\$ m)	2017–2018 (\$ m)	2018–2019 (\$ m)	2019–2020 (\$ m)	2020–2021 (\$ m)	2021–2022 (\$ m)	2022–2023 (\$ m)	Total (2015–2023) (\$ m)
Powerhouse Parramatta	5.0	7.6	0.5	240	167	269.9	156.68	246.1	1092.8
Art Gallery of NSW	18.2	8.7	25.2	61.9	147.9	205.1	158.4	62.4	687.8
Sydney Opera House	22.9	23.3	100.0	44.9	80.0	136.9	60.2	16.5	484.7
Walsh Bay Arts Precinct	5.1	21.3	109.0	110.4	113.5	129.1	80.6	9.0	578.0
Australian Museum	6.0	14.1	7.9	9.1	52.8	36.1	20.5	26.1	172.6
State Library of NSW	23.4	21.9	20.4	17.3	17.6	20.7	23.1	25.3	169.7
Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences <sup>25</sup>	30.2	15.9	2.5	2.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	64.6
Museums of History NSW	4.9	8.7	7.2	7.1	5.1	8.2	4.8	5.0	51
<b>Totals</b>	<b>115.7</b>	<b>121.5</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>492.7</b>	<b>585.9</b>	<b>810.0</b>	<b>508.23</b>	<b>394.4</b>	<b>3,301.2</b>

Source: NSW Budget Papers (Infrastructure Statement 2015–2023).

The recent figures show that the funding for cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney has increased from 6% to 33.1% of the total allocation for NSW. However, most of this increase is due to the planned development of the Powerhouse Parramatta, leaving the Western Parkland City with a lower representation in the cultural infrastructure funding awarded in NSW.

In addition, of the \$1.9 billion of multiyear funding allocated to state cultural infrastructure in 2022–23, \$1.13 billion (56%) was awarded to seven sites in eastern Sydney. Conversely, \$840 million of multiyear funding for infrastructure in Western Sydney was exclusively provided for the Powerhouse Parramatta. In the Western Sydney region, only one site received multiyear funding, limiting the distribution of the social and economic benefits across the region and cultural institutions.<sup>26</sup> This demonstrates the persisting inequity in state funding benefits remaining concentrated in Eastern Sydney.

**Table 2.11: Top Funded State Cultural Infrastructure (NSW), Multiyear Funding Projects, Continuing and Works in Progress (2022–2023)**

Cultural infrastructure	(\$ m)	Region	Timeline
Powerhouse Parramatta	840.0	Western Sydney	2019–2025
Walsh Bay Arts Precinct	379.3	Eastern Sydney	2019–2026
Art Gallery of NSW	341.0	Eastern Sydney	2017–2022
Powerhouse Museum Ultimo	179.9 (over next 4 years)	Eastern Sydney	2021–2028
Arts Maintenance and Upgrades Program	103.8	Various	2020–2023
Australian Museum	58.1	Eastern Sydney	2018–2024
Cultural institutions Asset Maintenance Fund (Art Gallery of NSW & Sydney Opera House)	37.9	Eastern Sydney	2022–2024
National Art School Precinct Renewal	21.7	Eastern Sydney	2022–2026
State Library Capital Upgrades	12.1	Eastern Sydney	2020–2023

Source: NSW Budget Papers (Infrastructure Statement 2022–23).

<sup>24</sup>Figures are based on the total allocated and expenditure for the budget year for each infrastructure, and include total investment for planning and existing infrastructure maintenance.

<sup>25</sup>The figures provided for Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences include Sydney Observatory, Powerhouse Ultimo/Castle Hill and part of initial planning and funding to relocate the Powerhouse to Parramatta.

<sup>26</sup>It is important to note that despite this new cultural infrastructure, Parramatta is also under the same developer stresses as other major cities for affordable spaces to make and exhibit and affordable housing for artists.



Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, *Place of the Eels*,  
Parramatta Square, 2022

## WESTINVEST PROGRAM

In 2021, the NSW Government announced the \$5 billion WestInvest Program, intended to support economic recovery in the Western Sydney region following the COVID-19 lockdowns. The funding seeks to deliver transformational infrastructure projects that improve liveability in Western Sydney suburbs. The funding was available to 15 LGAs in Western Sydney, including the 13 LGAs referenced throughout this report, with the addition of Burwood and Strathfield. Three funding avenues were available to Western Sydney LGAs: the Community Projects (competitive round), Community Projects (local government allocation) and NSW Government Projects.

Key funding priority areas identified by the WestInvest grant program with arts and cultural facilities:

**expanding the range of venues that encourage regular participation, including specific arts and cultural hubs or precincts, with performing arts and event spaces or updating heritage facilities.**

Other categories included:

- quality green and open spaces – healthier natural environments, gardens and outdoor sports and recreation
- community infrastructure – improved access to sports and recreation and community spaces such as community centres and libraries
- school modernisation – modernised education facilities adaptive to evolving and digital learning standards
- high street activation – improved public spaces and amenities, access to goods and services and increase the vibrancy
- local traffic programs – safe, inclusive and accessible walkways and cycleways.

Approximately \$3 billion has been allocated to NSW Government agencies to deliver projects to Western Sydney communities. So far, the NSW Budget has committed about \$478.2 million of this fund to upgrade nine public school facilities. The remaining funding for the \$3 billion WestInvest NSW Government allocation is set to be announced in late 2023.<sup>27</sup>

### WESTINVEST COMMUNITY PROJECTS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALLOCATION

Approximately \$400 million in funding has been allocated to community projects led by local governments across the 15 LGAs. Between \$20 and \$35 million was allocated to each of the 15 local councils and was distributed depending on population size. Most of the funding was awarded to community infrastructure projects, followed by quality greens and open spaces, local traffic programs and high street activation.

**Table 2.12:** WestInvest allocation to Local Government Community Projects – 13 LGAs

Funding allocation	\$ m	Total WestInvest program %	Grant count #
Total	357.5	7.2	68
13 Western Sydney LGAs <sup>28</sup>	336.7	6.7	60

Source: NSW Government, WestInvest (2023)

A total of 68 Grants were allocated to the 15 local governments eligible for the WestInvest grants. Specific to the 13 Western Sydney LGAs covered in this report, only four grants were awarded to purpose-built arts and cultural facilities. These project grants include one heritage building restoration (Campbelltown), two dedicated arts and cultural precincts/hubs (Canterbury Bankstown and Wollondilly Shire) and one library (Canterbury Bankstown). Additional grants include \$47 million of funding awarded to multipurpose facilities with partial use for arts and cultural activity as events, like the Revitalisation of Mt Druitt Hubb, including art studios, cafes and computers and the St Mary's City Heart and Entertainment Canopy, which will include a state-of-the-art performance centre. A further \$17.7 million was awarded to non-purpose built facilities with potential use for arts and/or cultural purposes, such as community centres with bookable rooms and public spaces with public art and event spaces.

<sup>27</sup><https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/westininvest/nsw-government-projects>

<sup>28</sup>Excludes Burwood LGA, which was awarded \$20.8 million in the local government allocation of community grants. Information for the Strathfield LGA is yet to be released and is therefore excluded from this analysis.

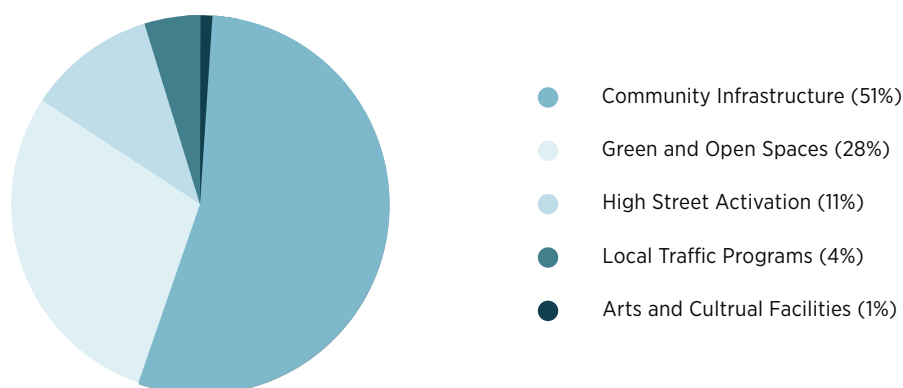
**Table 2.13:** Allocation to Arts and Culture Infrastructure – WestInvest Local Government Community Projects

Funding allocation	(\$) m	Total funding <sup>29</sup> (%)	Grant count (#)
Purpose-built arts and culture infrastructure	20.7	5.8	4
Multipurpose arts and culture infrastructure	47.8	13.3	2
Non-purpose built arts and culture infrastructure	17.7	5.0	4
Total awarded to arts and culture Infrastructure	86.2	24.1	10
Total awarded to other WestInvest projects	250.5	70.1	50

Source: NSW Government, WestInvest (2023).

The Local Government Community Projects round allocated \$86.2 million to arts and culture facilities. In comparison, the remaining \$259.9 million was divided among other priority areas of WestInvest, including community infrastructure, green and open spaces, high street activation and local traffic programs.<sup>29</sup> Arts and cultural facilities were awarded the least funding among the WestInvest Community Projects Local Government. This allocation of funds is beneficial as earlier research has emphasised the significance of local government in developing purpose-built arts and cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney, and delivering services based on local needs. However, it also poses significant risks due to the limited operational capabilities of local governments, which could result in these facilities failing to deliver on their function and purpose without additional support, funding and skilled staff.

**Without operational support that ensures the viability and sustainability of arts and cultural facilities supported by the WestInvest fund, these sites will fail to deliver lasting economic and social benefits.**

**Figure 2.4:** Allocation of WestInvest Local Government Community Projects by Focus Area

Source: NSW Government, WestInvest.

<sup>29</sup>Percentage of total funding was calculated using the total grant funding figure for all 15 LGAs.



Blak Douglas, Research Creations Showcase,  
Casula Powerhouse, 2022

WESTINVEST COMMUNITY PROJECTS – COMPETITIVE ROUND

The Community Projects’ competitive round of funding comprised approximately \$1.6 billion for community projects of a transformational scale within the six identified focus areas. Applications were open to local councils, community groups, non-government, charitable and other organisations within the 15 eligible Western Sydney LGAs.

A total of 104 Community Project grants (competitive round) were allocated to Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Hawkesbury, The Hills, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith and Wollondilly.<sup>30</sup>

As depicted in Table 2.14, nine of these grants, totalling \$241.8 million, were awarded to develop purpose-built arts and cultural facilities in the region. Additional grants provided \$182.05 million to support the development of multipurpose facilities, including partial arts and culture use. Finally, \$52 million was awarded to non-purpose built infrastructure with potential use for arts and/or cultural purposes.<sup>31</sup> Cumulatively, \$475.85 million from WestInvest was allocated to arts and culture infrastructure across the 13 Western Sydney LGAs investigated in this report.

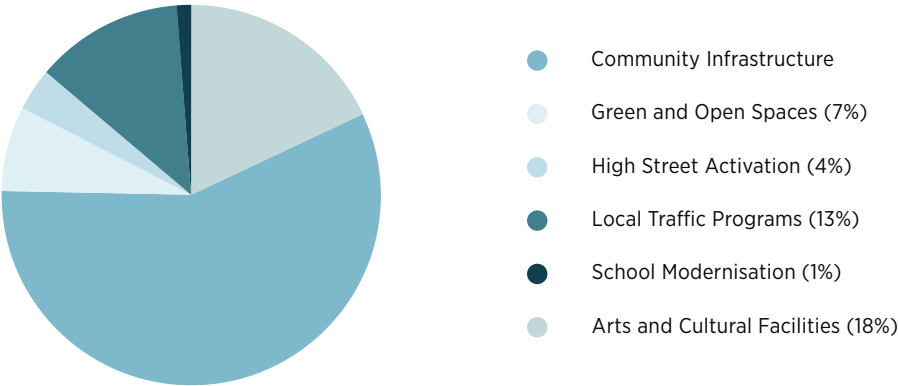
Table 2.14: WestInvest Community Projects, Competitive Round, Allocations

Funding according to type of arts and culture infrastructure	(\$) m	Total funding (%)	Grant count (#)
Purpose-built arts and culture infrastructure	241.80	17.1	9
Multipurpose arts and culture infrastructure	182.05	12.90	9
Non-purpose built arts and culture infrastructure	52.00	3.70	4
Total awarded to arts and culture infrastructure	475.85	33.60	22
Funding allocated to other WestInvest priority areas	869.94	61.50	79
Funding allocated to Eastern Sydney LGA’s (Burwood) <sup>32</sup>	69.40	4.90	3
Funding allocated to 13 Western Sydney LGAs	1,345.79	95.0	101
Funding allocated total	1,415.19	100.0	104

Source: NSW Government, WestInvest (2023).

Among the community projects, funding allocated to arts and culture facilities of varied use for creative activities totalled \$475.85 million, with the remaining \$869.94 million allocated to other WestInvest priority areas.

Figure 2.5: Community Projects Competitive Round Funding Allocation by Focus Area



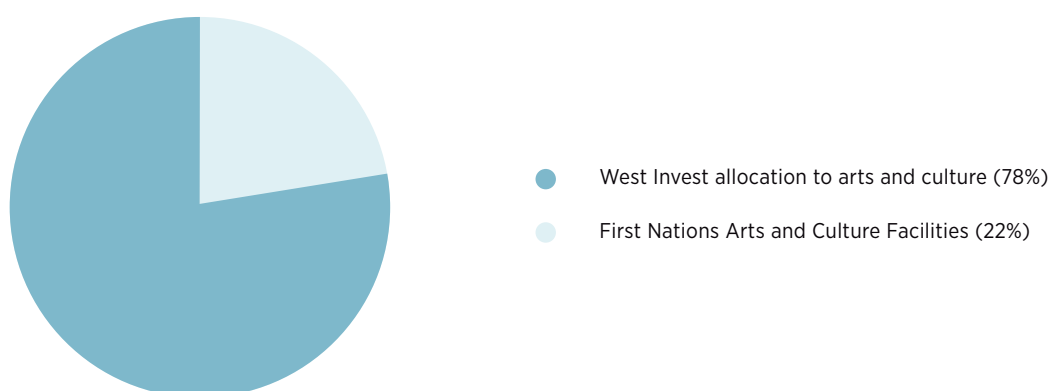
Source: WestInvest, NSW Government (2023)

<sup>30</sup>Figure based on announcements as of 9 February 2023.  
<sup>31</sup>A list of all WestInvest arts and cultural facilities are listed in Appendix E.  
<sup>32</sup>Funding awarded to Burwood excluded from the analysis presented in this report.

## WESTINVEST PROJECTS – INDIGENOUS CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

WestInvest allocated \$163 million to Indigenous arts sites in Western Sydney across the Blacktown, Cumberland, Liverpool and Parramatta LGAs. This allocation represented 22% of WestInvest funds awarded to arts and culture projects in the region.

**Figure 2.6:** WestInvest Arts and Culture Projects: Allocation to Indigenous Projects



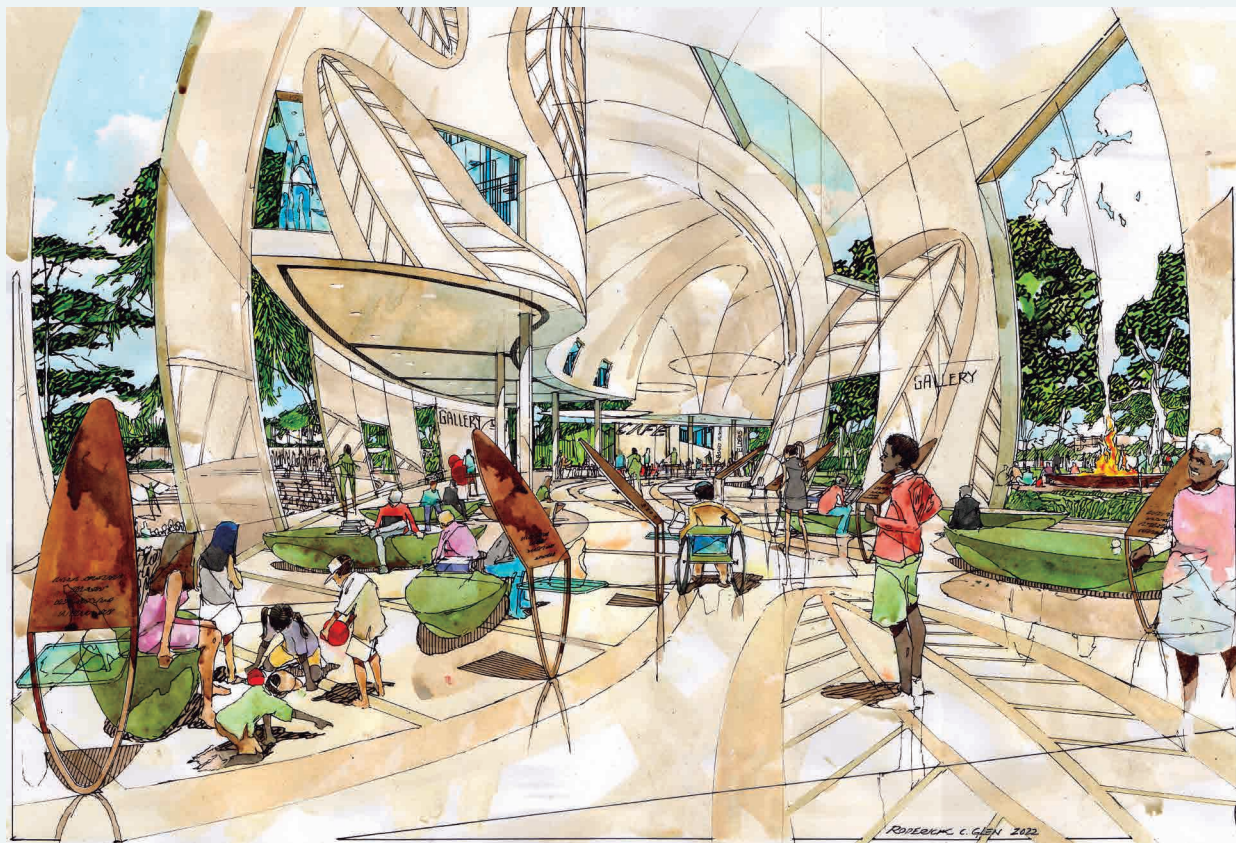
Source: WestInvest, NSW Government (2023).

As depicted in Table 2.15, five Indigenous projects were awarded WestInvest funding in Blacktown, Cumberland, Liverpool and Parramatta. Blacktown City Arts and Cultural Centre will comprise galleries, performance spaces and workspaces that aim to support Indigenous and multicultural community members, young people, senior citizens, schools and art groups. In addition, the First Nations Community Centre in Blacktown will offer an inviting atmosphere where local community members can come together, participate in cultural activities, launch local initiatives and cultivate a sense of belonging for future generations. The Gandangara Support Centre, Veteran Rehabilitation Centre and Youth Diversion Programs in Cumberland will establish a First Peoples' centre and include 10 hectares of green and open space for community use. In Liverpool, The Gandangara Cultural Connection Hub will be a fully accessible, three-level cultural and arts facility designed to allow the community to connect, belong and thrive.

**Table 2.15:** List of Indigenous arts and culture projects, WestInvest funding awarded

Indigenous projects			
Project Title/Description	Organisation	LGA	Amount Awarded (\$) m
<b>Blacktown City Arts and Cultural Centre</b> will consist of galleries, performance and workspaces promoting Indigenous and multicultural community members, young people, senior citizens, schools and art groups.	Blacktown City Council	Blacktown	39.9
<b>First Nations Community Centre</b> will provide an inviting space for the local community to gather, partake in cultural activities, develop local initiatives and foster a sense of belonging for future generations.	Blacktown City Council	Blacktown	19.5
<b>Gandangara Support Centre Veteran Rehabilitation Centre and Youth Diversion Programs</b> will establish a First Peoples' centre accompanied by 10 hectares of green and open space for the community	The Gandagara Local Aboriginal Land Council	Cumberland	16.9
<b>Gandangara Cultural Connection Hub</b> will establish a three-level, fully accessible cultural and arts facility for the community to Connect. Belong. Thrive.	The Gandagara Local Aboriginal Land Council	Liverpool	7.4
<b>Indigenous Centre of Excellence</b> project in Rydalmere will generate enduring benefits for Indigenous communities across the region.	Western Sydney University	Parramatta	78.5

## INDIGENOUS CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE, WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



Artists Impression, Indigenous Centre for Excellence, Western Sydney University, Allen Jack+Cottier Architects

The NSW Government has allocated \$78.5 million from the WestInvest Program to develop an Indigenous Centre of Excellence at WSU. Based at the Parramatta South campus in Rydalmere, this centre will be a focal point for the University and the surrounding community to honour their long-standing relationship with Indigenous people. The centre will be a pioneering entity in the fields of Indigenous education and research, as well as a tribute to Indigenous history and knowledge.

The Centre incorporates purpose-built facilities and spaces to support the sharing and preservation of Indigenous Australian culture while informal learning spaces will provide opportunities for engagement and collaboration. The state-of-the-art facility will be accessible to the region's schools, residents and businesses. People of all ages, abilities and interests can learn more about the region's rich Indigenous culture and heritage, explore its arts and cultural collections and attend performances, talks and screenings.

It will be developed with the University's Elders Advisory Committee and Indigenous stakeholders and designed to be environmentally sustainable while reflecting the Indigenous connection to the land. The centre will be open to schools, residents and businesses and have specialised areas for preserving and sharing Indigenous culture.

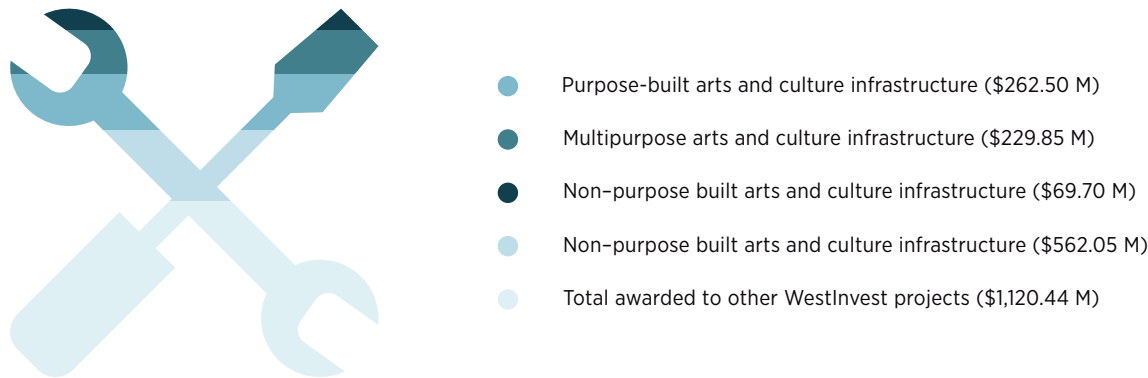
The establishment of this new centre aligns with the University's Indigenous strategy and its aim of becoming a leading institution in Indigenous higher education.



WESTINVEST ALLOCATIONS TO THE ARTS

Overall, the WestInvest fund is set to transform the region’s arts and cultural infrastructure landscape, contributing \$562 million in total to arts and culture facilities as of 9 February 2023. Of this funding, \$262.5 million has been allocated to purpose-built arts and cultural infrastructure. The remainder has been allocated to multipurpose facilities (\$229.85 m) and non-purpose built facilities (\$69.7 m) for various arts and culture activities and events. This amounts to 31.8.% of the \$2 billion allocated to WestInvest Community Projects across the local government and competitive rounds.

Figure 2.7: Allocation to arts and culture – WestInvest Community Projects (Competitive and LGA Rounds)



Source: NSW Government, WestInvest (2023).

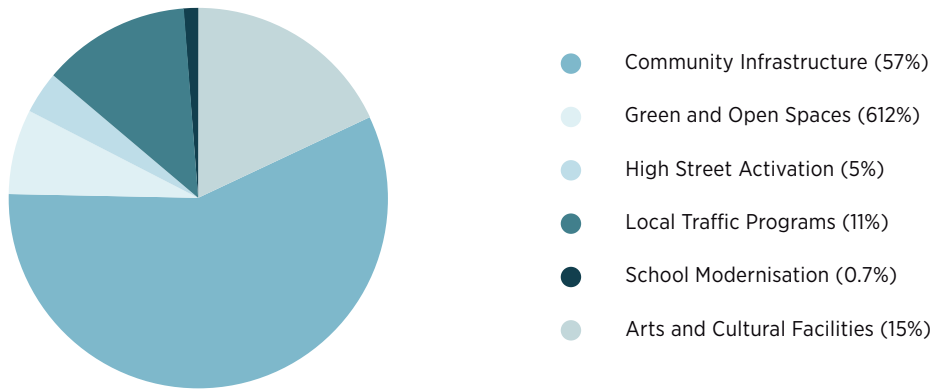
Of the three cities of Sydney, the Central River City received the largest portion of WestInvest funding, with \$252 million provided through 12 grants. The Western Parkland City received a total of \$252 million distributed among 20 grants. Finally, the Eastern Harbour City, including Burwood, which was eligible for WestInvest, received \$31.7 million for four projects.<sup>33</sup>

Table 2.16: Allocation to Arts and Culture – WestInvest Community Projects (Competitive and LGA Rounds), Three Cities of Sydney

Three Cities		
City	Amount (\$) m	Count (#)
Eastern Harbour City*	31.7	4
Central River	310.1	12
Western Parkland	252.0	20
Total	593.8	36

Note. \*Refers to Strathfield and Burwood LGAs awarded under the WestInvest fund.  
Source: NSW Government, WestInvest (2023).

Figure 2.8: WestInvest allocation of funding across priority areas – competitive community and local government projects



Source: WestInvest, NSW Government (2023)

<sup>33</sup>Refer to Appendix E for a breakdown of WestInvest allocations to arts and cultural projects by LGA.

CREATE NSW

Create NSW is responsible for distributing funding from the NSW Government to support a wide range of artistic and cultural activities and initiatives. This section presents key trends in funding distribution by Create NSW to the Western Sydney region compared with the rest of Sydney and NSW. Available via request from Create NSW, this section analyses the proportionate funding allocated to Western Sydney within the following programs:

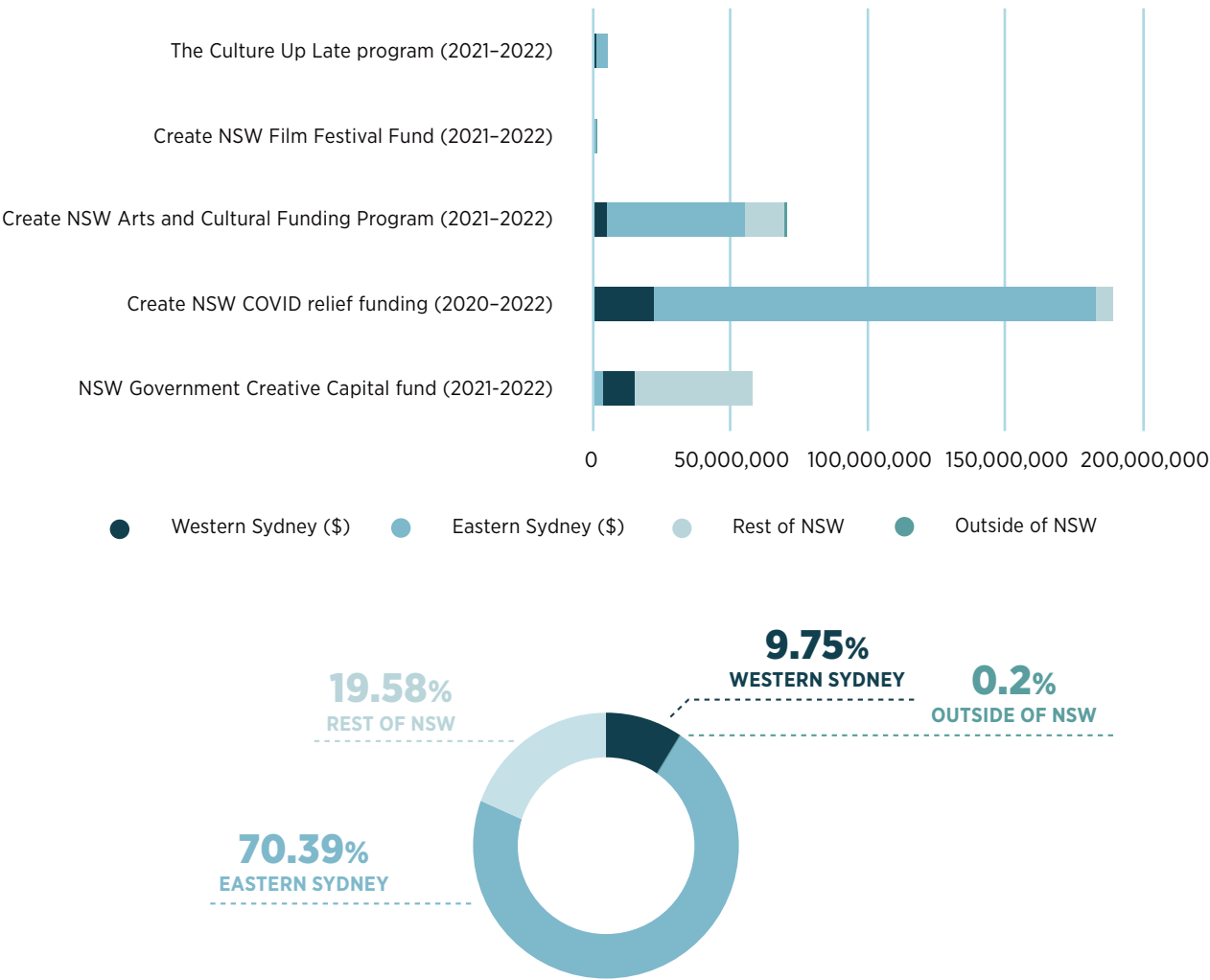
- Art and Cultural Funding Program
- COVID-19 support funding
- film festival fund
- culture up late fund
- creative capital fund.

As evident in Figure 2.9, Western Sydney received 9.75% (\$31.5 million) of the funding administered by Create NSW between 2020-2022, while eastern Sydney received 70.39% (\$227.8 million) across all programs analysed in the following sections of the report.

In addition to funding from Create NSW, the NSW Government invests in arts and culture through several different departments and agencies such as Destination NSW, the Office of Regional Youth and Aboriginal Affairs.<sup>34</sup>

The figures show that between 2020-2022, Create NSW allocated \$322.2 million in funding across various programs. Of this funding, Western Sydney received only 9.8% (\$31.5 million), while eastern Sydney received a significantly larger portion of 70.4% (\$227.8 million) across all programs analysed in the report. This funding disparity between eastern and Western Sydney highlights the need for greater attention to funding equity to ensure that all regions of the state have equal opportunities for cultural and arts development.

Figure 2.9: Funding Awarded by Create NSW



<sup>34</sup>The data provided by Create NSW presented below do not incorporate these other sources of funding, as it was beyond the scope of this research. However, it is encouraged that future research integrates these various data sources to build a comprehensive picture of the sector's funding landscape.

## ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING PROGRAM

The ACFP administered by Create NSW provides financial support to arts and cultural organisations, professional artists and individuals working in the arts and cultural sector. This program provides a range of grants, including yearly program funding, long-term funding, regional arts touring grants and project funding for organisations and individuals.

According to the Create NSW Year in Review for the 2021–2022 fiscal year, the ACFP distributed \$66.5 million to organisations and individual artists in NSW.<sup>35</sup> Eastern Sydney received most of the ACFP funds, with 74% of the total amount, or over \$48 million. Western Sydney received 7% of the funding, totalling just over \$4.5 million, while the remaining \$12.6 million (19%) was awarded to the rest of NSW. These figures vary slightly to the supplied data from Create NSW, which indicates a distribution of \$70.51 million to the ACFP, including \$5 million (7.2%) to Western Sydney and \$50.5 million to eastern Sydney (71.6%) of the total ACFP funding awarded across the state.

**Table 2.17:** Create NSW ACFP, Funding Awarded in Western Sydney and Eastern Sydney (2021–2022)

	Amount (\$)	Count (#)	% of Total funding	Success rate (%)	Average grant amount awarded (\$)
Western Sydney	\$5,062,168	90	7.2%	34.5%	\$56,246
Eastern Sydney	\$50,523,328	315	71.6%	31.7%	\$160,392
Rest of NSW	\$14,038,139	270	19.9%	34.7%	\$51,993
Outside of NSW	\$893,123	5	1.3%	45.5%	\$178,624
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$70,516,759</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>\$103,701</b>

Source: Create NSW, supplied data (2022)

## COVID-19 SUPPORT FUNDING

To address the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the arts and cultural sector, various initiatives were launched by Create NSW to provide targeted financial assistance to venues, spaces, and performances across NSW. A total of \$190 m<sup>36</sup> was allocated for this purpose, resulting in support for 353 venues and spaces and 17,386 performances state-wide. Notably, eastern Sydney received a significant portion of this funding, with \$161 m (84.9%) being directed towards 117 venues and spaces, and 14,586 performances. In contrast, Western Sydney only received \$22 m (11.8%) for 214 venues and spaces and 2,232 performances, while the remainder of NSW received \$6.3 m (3.3%) for 22 venues and spaces and 568 performances.

**Table 2.18:** COVID-19 Support Funding Administered by Create NSW (2020–2022).

	Venues/spaces	Performances	Funding (\$)	Total funding (%)
Total eastern Sydney	117	14,586	\$161,083,013	84.9%
Total Western Sydney	214	2,232	\$22,310,386	11.8%
Total rest of NSW	22	568	\$6,309,561	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>17,386</b>	<b>\$189,702,960</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Create NSW, supplied data (2022)

<sup>35</sup>Refer to Appendix D for time-series analysis of ACFP funding from 2014–2022.

<sup>36</sup>Includes the Performing Arts Rescue Package and the three Performing Arts Recovery Packages. Other programs are not captured as information on geographical location was unavailable.

## FILM FESTIVAL FUND

The Film Festival Funding Program by Create NSW is aimed at rejuvenating Sydney's film festival culture and supporting the economic and social recovery of Sydney's CBD as part of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan of the NSW Government. The program includes public screenings, festivals and tours, with the objective of offering high-quality screen content to audiences throughout Sydney. In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the program awarded over \$700,000 to 23 festivals across NSW. Notably, eastern Sydney received the majority of this funding, with \$416,000 (57%) allocated to 14 festivals followed by Western Sydney with \$272,000 (37.4%) awarded to 7 festivals. The remainder of NSW received only \$39,000 (5.4%) for 2 film festivals. This funding distribution indicates a significant disparity between eastern and Western Sydney in terms of support for film festivals and the need for increased attention to funding equity.

**Table 2.19:** Film Festival Fund, 2021-2022

	Festivals	Funding (\$)	% of total funding
Total eastern Sydney	14	\$416,248	57.2%
Total Western Sydney	7	\$272,027	37.4%
Total rest of NSW	2	\$39,000	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>\$727,275</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Create NSW, supplied data.

## CULTURE UP LATE PROGRAM

The Culture Up Late program, a joint effort by the office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Create NSW under the CBD's Revitalisation program, provides support to museums and galleries to remain open until 9 pm, allowing access to various events and activities.<sup>37</sup> In the 2021/2022 fiscal year, a total of \$5 million was designated to Sydney venues and programs, with \$4 million (79.9%) going to eastern Sydney organisations and the remaining \$1 million awarded to Western Sydney. Funding was provided to 16 organisations, but despite half of the organisations being based in Western Sydney, only 20% of the funds were directed towards the region.

**Table 2.20:** Culture Up Late Program, 2021-2022

	Festivals	Funding (\$)	% of total funding
Total eastern Sydney	8	3,997,010	79.9%
Total Western Sydney	8	1,003,000	20.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5,000,010</b>	<b>100%</b>

## CREATIVE CAPITAL REGIONS FUND

The NSW Government launched the Creative Capital fund, which involved a \$60 million commitment over two years towards new and existing cultural infrastructure across the state. The fund aimed to promote cultural equity and provide accessible and high-quality cultural experiences for all. Grants were available to create purpose-built spaces and upgrade existing cultural facilities, such as high-performance museums, galleries, theatres, and performance spaces, as well as Aboriginal Cultural Centres, Keeping places, and language centres.<sup>38</sup> In 2021 and 2022, a total of 83 grants were allocated across NSW, with 11 grants (20.5%) and approximately \$12 m awarded to eastern Sydney, 8 grants (5.1%) and approximately \$3 m going to Western Sydney, and the remainder of NSW receiving 64 grants and \$43 m (74%). This funding distribution highlights a significant disparity between eastern and Western Sydney, indicating the need for further attention to ensure funding equity and equal opportunities for cultural infrastructure development across the state.

**Table 2.21:** Create NSW Creative Capital Grants Awarded (2021-2022)

	Grants	Funding (\$)	% of total funding
Total eastern Sydney	11	\$11,835,972	20.5%
Total Western Sydney	8	\$2,925,401	5.1%
Total rest of NSW	64	\$43,006,234	74.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>\$57,767,607</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Create NSW, supplied data

<sup>37</sup>NSW Government, n.d.

<sup>38</sup>Create NSW (n.d.) <https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/create-infrastructure/creativecapital/>



Screening of *No Film Sets in Bankstown* at Catalyst West, Parramatta, 2022.  
This film was Film directed by Alex Dona, commissioned by Western Sydney Creative and Executive produced by Made In the West Film Festival.

DESTINATION NSW FUNDING

Destination NSW is responsible for providing funding for international sports, cultural, creative, and arts events with the strategic goal of developing a sustainable events calendar for NSW. From 2015 to 2022, Destination NSW supported the largest portion of sports, cultural, creative, and arts events in eastern Sydney, with 354 events funded. In contrast, 137 events in Western Sydney were supported, while 319 events in regional NSW were supported. This highlights a significant funding disparity between eastern and Western Sydney in terms of support for arts events in the context of tourism, indicating a need for greater attention to address this inequity and ensure equal opportunities for cultural and recreational experiences across the state.

Table 2.22: Funding for International Sports, Cultural, Creative and Arts Events, number of events, Destination NSW (2015–2022)

Location	2021–2022	2020–2021	2019–2020	2018–2019	2017–2018	2016–2017	2015–2016	Total number of events (2015–2022)
Eastern Sydney	42	42	32	56	66	68	48	354
Western Sydney	11	11	23	21	21	25	25	137
Regional NSW	46	46	37	55	30	58	47	319

Source: Destination NSW Annual Reports (2015–2022).

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE

Local councils in NSW, Australia, source their arts and culture expenditure from a variety of sources, including:

1. NSW Government grants: the Arts and Cultural Development Program (ACDP) provides funding to local councils for arts and cultural initiatives and projects.
2. Council budgets: local councils allocate a portion of their annual budgets to arts and cultural programs and initiatives. The exact amount of funding will depend on the priorities of the council and the level of available funding.
3. Corporate sponsorships and partnerships: some local councils may partner with corporate organisations to provide funding for arts and cultural initiatives and projects.
4. Community fundraising: some arts and cultural initiatives may be funded through community fundraising activities, such as events and campaigns.
5. Private donations: local councils may also receive private donations from individuals and organisations for arts and cultural initiatives and projects.

The sources of arts and culture expenditure for local councils in NSW vary according to the specific council and the needs and priorities of the local community. However, the NSW Government's ACDP is typically a major source of funding for arts and cultural initiatives and projects in LGAs in NSW.

As demonstrated in Table 2.23, there is a spatial variation in the amount spent on arts and culture by local government in Western Sydney. These activities include venues, museums, galleries and arts/culture development.

The LGAs that spent the most on the arts included Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith—home to the most significant populations. Conversely, Campbelltown, Hawkesbury and Fairfield LGAs spent the least on the arts and have smaller populations.

**Table 2.23:** Local Government Expenditure on the Arts in Western Sydney LGAs

LGA	Total arts expenditure (\$)	Population
Blacktown	2,389,306	399,711
Blue Mountains	3,986,000	78,360
Camden	2,000,000	119,951
Campbelltown	845,000	177,689
Canterbury-Bankstown	4,877,000	372,322
Cumberland	2,700,423	236,996
Fairfield	1,352,288	209,030
Hawkesbury	902,000	67,584
Liverpool	7,829,140	234,373
Parramatta	6,376,000	258,315
Penrith	5,226,185	219,149
The Hills	1,865,000	192,509
Wollondilly <sup>39</sup>	N/A	54,176
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,348,342</b>	<b>2,606,544</b>

Source: Council Operational Reports (2021–22 & 2022–23).

<sup>39</sup>The operational costs for Wollondilly Council were not located in the desktop review.

## PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDING AND PHILANTHROPY

A 2020 study by Creative Partnership's Australia found that the total value of private-sector support for the arts and cultural sector decreased by 11% in the 2019–20 fiscal year compared to the previous year, despite generating \$540 million through sources like donations, sponsorships, bequests, fundraising and volunteering.<sup>40</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions likely played a role in the decline. Still, data from the survey and annual reports for the first 4 to 6 months of the pandemic in Australia suggest an increase in government support. Arts and cultural organisations anticipate a rebound in private-sector support in the next five years, which would reduce their dependence on government funding. However, these reduced levels of private-sector funding may significantly impact the arts in Western Sydney, which has been found to receive fewer sources of private-sector funding and philanthropy than the major cultural institutions in previous research. There is a need to further understand private-sector funding and philanthropy across key geographies and regions, including Western Sydney.

**Table 2.24:** Creative Partnership Australia, Giving Attitude, Research Report

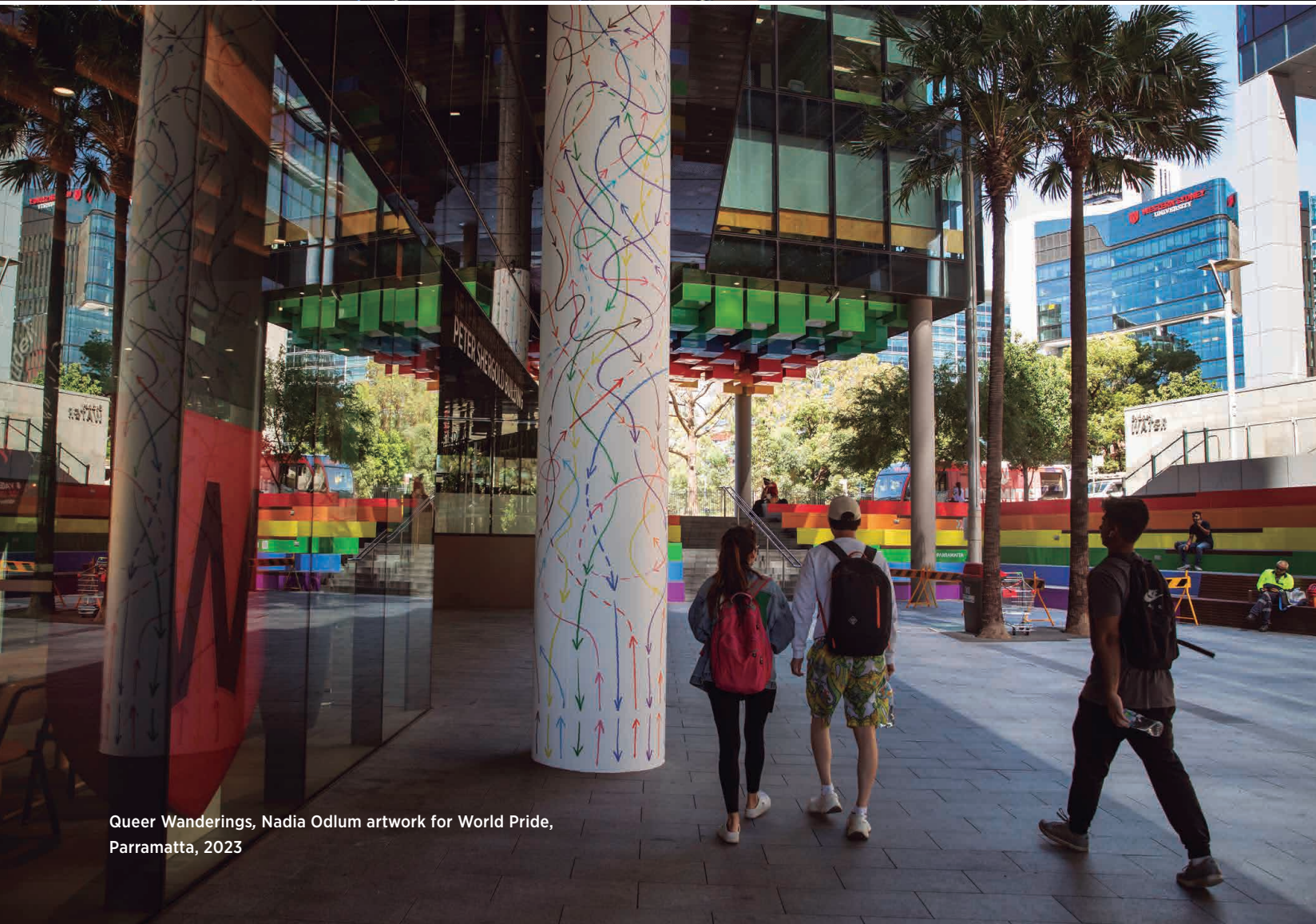
2020	Total sponsorship and giving ()\$ m	Per Capita (\$)	Change since 2019 (%)
ACT	17.5	38.38	-2
NSW	185.2	22.78	-10
NT	27.2	108.63	6
QLD	81.9	15.45	-11
SA	38.7	21.32	6
TAS	6.8	11.90	-34
VIC	134.1	20.34	-16
WA	48.6	17.52	-11
<b>Total</b>	<b>540.3</b>	<b>28.05</b>	<b>-11</b>

Source: Creative Partnerships Australia (2020).

<sup>40</sup>Note that sources of private funding are not disclosed in this report.



The Arts Philanthropy Forum, Beau Neilson, Andrew Cameron AM, Sue Cato in-conversation with David Borger, Executive Director, Business Western Sydney, 2022



Queer Wanderings, Nadia Odium artwork for World Pride, Parramatta, 2023

## ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

### ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ARTS

According to the latest available data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the cultural sector contributed 3.1% to the GDP in 2020.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, creative goods and services represented 3% of total merchandise exports and 21% of total service exports globally. The cultural and creative industries also provided employment to 6.2% of the global workforce, creating almost 50 million jobs world-wide, with a higher concentration of young people aged 15-29 than any other industry sector. In the past decade, exports of creative goods and services have increased globally, with creative goods exports growing from US \$419 million in 2010 to US \$524 million in 2020, and creative services exports increasing from US \$487 billion to almost US \$1.1 trillion during the same period.

In Australia, the creative economy has also experienced growth. A recent report by the Australia Council for the Arts revealed that cultural and creative activities in Australia generated \$115.8 billion in economic output, representing 6.3% of the nation's GDP in 2018 (pre-pandemic).<sup>42</sup> This figure exceeds that of agriculture, forestry, and fishing by 93% and is more than double that of accommodation and food services.

Accordingly, arts and recreation services ranked as the fourth highest industry to record quarterly growth in Australia at 3.5%.

**Table 2.25:** Gross Value Added by Top 5 Industries, Chain Volume Measures, Seasonally Adjusted (2022)

Industry	Quarterly growth %
Accommodation and food services	10.7
Transport, postal and warehousing	7.5
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	4.1
<b>Arts and recreation services</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Administrative and support services	2.8

Source: ABS, Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product June 2022.

The GVA added by an industry demonstrates the productivity of each industry sector in increasing the value of its inputs. This is a more refined productivity measure of an industry sector than output (total gross revenue). Some industries have high output levels but require large input expenditures to achieve that. The GVA by the creative and performing arts in Western Sydney and the eastern districts of Sydney<sup>43</sup> recorded a steady increase in their contribution between 2015–19. However, both the value added and the rate of growth of creative and performing arts activities were considerably higher in the eastern districts of Sydney than in Western Sydney.

**Table 2.26:** Value Added by Creative and Performing Arts Activities, Western Sydney and Eastern District, 2015–2019 (Pre-COVID-19 Lockdown Period)

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Change
\$ m	\$ m	\$ m	\$ m	\$ m
<b>Western Sydney</b>				
31.50	34.50	42.70	53.70	+22.20
<b>Eastern District</b>				
206.10	225.40	254.26	290.49	+84.39

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic considerably impacted the GVA of creative and performing arts activities following the 2020 and 2021 lockdowns. The contribution of creative and performing arts in Western Sydney declined by \$6.9 million and \$31.6 million in the Eastern Sydney district. Comparatively, pre-pandemic figures demonstrated a steady increase in the GVA contribution of heritage and creative and performing arts activities.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup>UNCTAD (2022)

<sup>42</sup>Australia Council for the Arts (2022b). In 2008–09, experimental research measuring cultural and creative activity by the ABS also found cultural and creative activity added about \$65.0 billion to Australia's gross value, accounting for 5.6% of Australia's gross value added (GVA).

<sup>43</sup>As compiled by economy.id, the Eastern District comprises of Bayside, Burwood, City of Canada Bay, City of Sydney, Inner West, Randwick, Strathfield, Waverley, Woollahra LGAs.

<sup>44</sup>NIEIR© (2021).

**Table 2.27:** Value Added by Industry Sector, Creative and Performing Arts Activities, Western Sydney and Eastern District, 2019–2021 (COVID-19 Period)

2020–21		2019–20		Change (2019–21)	
\$m	% of Sydney	\$m	% of Sydney	\$m	% of Sydney
<b>Western Sydney</b>					
41.3	12.5	48.2	12.7	-6.9	-1.5%
<b>Eastern District</b>					
203.3	62.6	235.27	63.2	-31.96	-0.6%

Source: NIEIR© (2021).

## EMPLOYMENT

The number of registered Western Sydney businesses within the arts and recreation industry increased by 243 between 2019 and 2021, demonstrating the sector's growth and increase in creative activities.

However, an analysis of employment capacity in the sector in 2020–21 indicates a creative worker surplus in Western Sydney. Employment capacity refers to the number of local jobs in an industry divided by the number of residents employed (anywhere) in that industry. A figure over 1.0 demonstrates more jobs are available than residents employed in that industry. In contrast, a score under 1.0 demonstrates more residents are employed than jobs available in the respective sector.

As demonstrated in Table 2.29, there were insufficient local jobs available for residents in Western Sydney employed in creative and performing arts, with 0.92 creative jobs available for each resident. In contrast, there is a creative worker shortage in eastern Sydney, with a 1.36 ratio of jobs to residents in the Eastern District. This creative worker surplus in Western Sydney is consistent with previous research that found employment in all creative industries in Western Sydney is lower than in eastern Sydney.<sup>45</sup>

Lower employment rates in Western Sydney reveal one outcome of the spatially uneven distribution of cultural institutions in Sydney, which remain concentrated in eastern Sydney. However, the cultural infrastructure landscape of Western Sydney is due to transform following significant investments into cultural infrastructure through the WestInvest fund and the upcoming development of Powerhouse Parramatta. This will result in increased local employment opportunities in the creative and performing arts and a subsequent need to upskill local talent in preparation for the upcoming developments.

**Table 2.28:** Western Sydney (LGAs) – Arts & Recreation Industry Sector Registered Businesses, 2019, 2020, 2021

	2021		2020		2019		Change from 2019–2021
Arts & Recreation	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)
Registered Businesses	2350	1.0	2219	1	2107	1.0	+243

Source: ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, 2019 to 2021.

**Table 2.29:** Employment Capacity within Arts and Recreation, Western Sydney LGAs and Eastern District, 2020–2021

	Western Sydney (#)	Eastern District (#)
Local jobs	2,136	2,068
Employed residents	2,311	5,533
Ratio of jobs to residents	0.92	1.36

Source: NIEIR© (2021).

<sup>45</sup>SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

As evident in Table 2.30, employment in the arts and recreation<sup>46</sup> industry sector in Western Sydney has also decreased since 2016. These trends diverge from the previously recorded increase in arts and recreation workers between 2011 and 2016. This recent employment decline in the arts and recreation sector between 2016 and 2021 may be attributed to the effects of COVID-19 on the Western Sydney region and those working in the sector. This is demonstrated in the overall decline in employment and among resident workers, with a 0.2% decrease in residents of Western Sydney employed in arts and recreation.

**Table 2.30:** Employment in Arts & Recreation in Western Sydney, 2011, 2016, 2021<sup>47</sup>

	2021		2016		2011		Change
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Employment (Census)	9,127	1	9,842	1.2	N/A		-715
Employment Total	19,249	1.8	12,179	1.3	10,750	1.3	+8,499
FTE employment	13,258	1.5	8,908	1.1	7,539	1.1	+5,719
Resident workers	11,841	1.1	13,038	1.3	N/A		-1,197

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2016 & 2021; NIEIR© (2021).

In 2020–21, the Western Sydney region contributed 28.7% of Sydney's employment in heritage activities and 25.4% of its value added to Sydney's economy. In the creative and performing arts activities sector, the Western Sydney region contributed 15.9% of Sydney's employment and 12.5% of its value added to the city's economy.<sup>48</sup> In addition, compared to findings from the broader arts and recreation category, a more focused analysis of employment figures demonstrates a minor increase in total employment in 2021 across creative and performing arts activities (+487) since 2015.

**Table 2.31:** Economic Contribution: Creative and Performing Arts Activities in Western Sydney and Eastern Sydney

Economic measure	2020-21		2015-16		Change from 2015-2021
Western Sydney					
	(#)	% of Sydney	(#)	% of Sydney	Change (#)
Western Sydney					
Employment (total)	2,068	15.9	1,581	13.9	+487
Employment (FTE)	1,478	14.8	1,096	11.7	+383
Value add (\$ m)	41.34	12.5	31.54	10.3	+9.80
Eastern District					
Employment (total)	7,532	59.5	7,068	64.5	+464
Employment (FTE)	6,075	62.3	6,355	69.6	-280
Value add (\$ m)	203.3	62.6	206.1	68.7	-2.82

Source: NIEIR© (2021).

<sup>46</sup>Note that the ABS now includes sports and gambling in the arts and recreation industry sector, which is a limitation to using the census data for insights on the arts and culture sector.

<sup>47</sup>Employment total refers to the number of people employed in the Greater Western Sydney region. The statistics are modelled by NIEIR to correct for the known undercount of jobs recorded in the Census. NIEIR estimate the total number of persons employed in an industry sector (full time and part time) in the Greater Western Sydney region regardless of where they live. Full-time equivalent (FTE) employment is modelled by NIEIR and considers differences in hours worked between industry sectors. It is a measure that allows direct comparison of employment between industries in the Greater Western Sydney region. In regard to resident workers, industry sector data identifies industries in which the residents of an area work either within the residing area or elsewhere. Comparing the industry sectors in which the Greater Western Sydney region residents are employed in the industry sectors located in the Greater Western Sydney region, indicates whether an economy draws on the skills offered by its own residents, or on a different set of skills imported from elsewhere in the region.

<sup>48</sup>See more detailed industry and sector analysis of both arts and recreation activities in Appendix D.

Despite relatively slow employment growth in the arts, cultural activity in Western Sydney has grown since 2015. As captured by the CreativeWest mapping database,<sup>49</sup> a range of creative activities occur in Western Sydney, including historical and temporal sites, networks and organisations. As demonstrated in Table 2.32, creative industries and cultural production are represented in all 13 LGAs in Western Sydney, including 659 creative industries practitioners and businesses, 460 sites of cultural production, 34 events, festivals and pop-ups, as well as 15 Indigenous and eight historic sites, recorded in 2022–23 in Western Sydney.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 2.32:** Creative Activities Across Western Sydney LGAs, CreativeWest (2022–2023)

LGA	Creative industries (#)	Cultural production (#)	Events, festival and pop-ups (#)	Indigenous activities (#)	Historic (#)
Blacktown	56	27	7	0	2
Blue Mountains	245	251	9	9	1
Camden	23	6	0	0	0
Campbelltown	15	11	1	2	0
Canterbury Bankstown	10	13	0	0	0
Cumberland	19	6	2	0	0
Fairfield	14	12	2	0	0
Hawkesbury	5	5	0	0	0
The Hills	69	7	0	0	0
Liverpool	12	12	2	0	0
Parramatta	92	71	8	1	0
Penrith	49	25	2	1	3
Wollondilly	3	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>

These sites are clearly concentrated in specific LGAs, including the Blue Mountains, followed by Parramatta and Blacktown. The top three creative industries mapped in the region were graphic design, web and apps and music, while the top three in creative production were visual arts, places to learn and galleries and museums.

<sup>49</sup>The interactive mapping of the CreativeWest database, for all forms of creative activity across Western Sydney, can be accessed at <http://creativewest.com.au/>.

<sup>50</sup>Refer to Appendix D for a detailed table of the CreativeWest database by LGA and categories.



Maldhan Ngurr Ngurra, - Lithgow Transformation Hub,  
Painted River Project event at Lake Wallace, 2022

# INFRASTRUCTURE LANDSCAPE

## CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN WESTERN SYDNEY

As established in previous research and documents, inadequate cultural infrastructure and facilities are available to meet the arts sector needs in Western Sydney. While some public cultural facilities exist, most are small community art galleries or local history museums. Apart from the upcoming development of the Powerhouse Parramatta and Museums Discovery Centre in Castle Hill, none of the major state-funded cultural institutions are currently located in Western Sydney. As demonstrated in Table 2.33, most public cultural facilities are small community art galleries or local history museums. There are 14 regionally significant venues in Western Sydney, which refer to facilities that serve as hubs for cultural activity and gathering places for the local community, including museums, theatres, galleries, concert halls, cultural centres and historical sites.

Table 2.33: Existing Cultural Infrastructure in Western Sydney

Type	Count (#)
Regionally significant venue <sup>51</sup>	14
Local venue	14
Community infrastructure	1
Non-specific	3
Outdoor cultural infrastructure	1
Total	33

Recent additions to the regionally significant infrastructure available in Western Sydney include the upcoming Parramatta development and the Sydney Coliseum Theatre at West HQ in Rooty Hill. West HQ is a privately owned and operated multipurpose facility and a member of Clubs NSW. It is important to note that transforming Rooty Hill RSL into West HQ was privately funded through the RSL club, which gains a large portion of revenue from gambling and gaming activities.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup>'Regionally significant venues' refers to facilities that promote and preserve a specific region's cultural heritage and identity. These venues serve as hubs for cultural activity and gathering places for the local community, and include museums, theatres, galleries, concert halls, cultural centres and historical sites.

<sup>52</sup>A report published by Nance (2023) uncovered the disproportionate effects of gambling harm on the Western Sydney region. The potential impact of gambling rates must be considered when reviewing ABS figures related to arts and recreation.

**Table 2.34:** Existing Cultural Infrastructure in Western Sydney<sup>53</sup>

Existing Infrastructure	LGA	Type	Venue Capacity (#)
West HQ (Sydney Coliseum Theatre)	Blacktown	Regionally significant venue	2,000
Blacktown Arts Centre	Blacktown	Regionally significant venue	75 (performance studio)
Lot 7 Dance Makers Collective	Blacktown	Local venue	38
Museums of History NSW	Various	Regionally significant venue	12 sites with various capacity
Wentworth Falls School of Arts	Blue Mountains	Community centre	300
Norman Lindsay Gallery and Museum	Blue Mountains	Local venue	100
Varuna Writers Centre	Blue Mountains	Local venue	N/A
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre	Blue Mountains	Regionally significant venue	250 (gallery space)
Springwood Theatre and Community Hub	Blue Mountains	Regionally significant venue	438 (theatre)
Camden Civic Centre	Camden	Local venue	600 (theatre)
Narellan Digital Studios	Camden	Outdoor cultural infrastructure	N/A
South West Sydney Multicultural and Community Centre	Campbeltown	Non-specific	N/A
Campbeltown Arts Centre	Campbeltown	Regionally significant venue	350 (standing)
Bankstown Arts Centre	Canterbury Bankstown	Regionally significant venue	130 (theatre)
Granville Multipurpose Community Centre	Cumberland	Local Venue	320 (large hall)
Peacock Art Gallery	Cumberland	Local Venue	N/A
Granville Town Hall	Cumberland	Non-specific	320
Fairfield City Gallery and Museum	Fairfield	Local venue	N/A
Powerhouse Youth Theatre	Fairfield	Local venue	120
Hawkesbury Museum	Hawkesbury	Local venue	N/A
Hawkesbury Regional Gallery	Hawkesbury	Local venue	N/A
Liverpool Regional Museum	Liverpool	Local venue	N/A
Casula Powerhouse	Liverpool	Regionally significant venue	322 (theatre)
Epping Creative Centre	Parramatta	Local venue	100 (large room)
Sydney Olympic Park Facilities	Parramatta	Non-specific	21,000 (Qudos Arena)
Arts and Cultural Exchange	Parramatta	Regionally significant venue	120
Pari	Parramatta	Local Venue - Artist-run initiative	N/A
Parramatta Artist Studios	Parramatta	Regionally significant venue	N/A
Parramatta Park	Parramatta	Regionally significant venue	18,000
Riverside Theatres	Parramatta	Regionally significant venue	761
Arms of Australia Inn Museum	Penrith	Local venue	N/A
Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre	Penrith	Regionally significant venue	550 (concert hall)
Penrith Museum of Printing	Penrith	Local venue	N/A
Penrith Regional Gallery and Lewers Bequest	Penrith	Regionally significant venue	80 (theatre style)
Castle Hill Community Centre	The Hills	Local venue	N/A
Pavilion Theatre	The Hills	Local venue	N/A
Museums Discovery Centre, Castle Hill	The Hills	Regionally significant venue	N/A

<sup>53</sup>Venue list is collated based on information provided by SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

## CULTURAL ACTIVITY

### CULTURAL ATTENDANCE

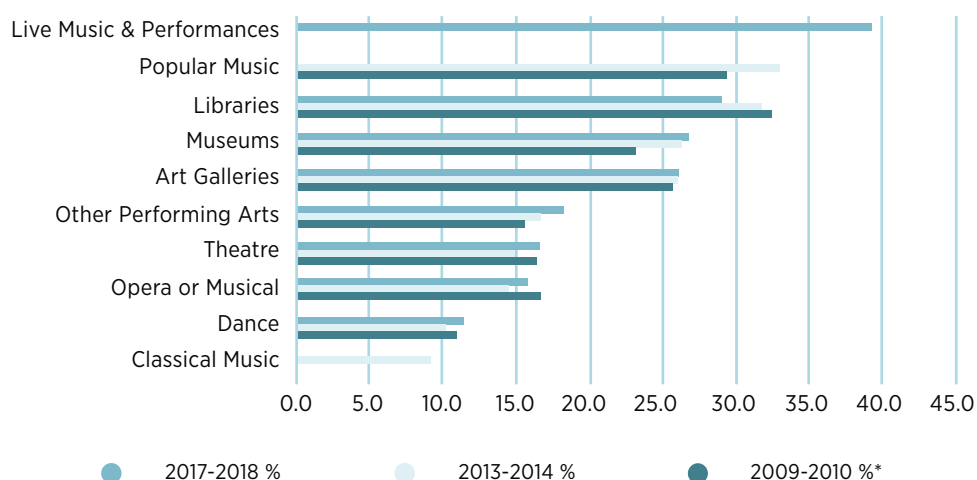
The national average attendance rate to cultural venues or events decreased from 85.8% in 2009 to 82.4% in 2018. Every state experienced a drop in attendance during this period. Despite receiving one of the lowest funding rates per capita, the attendance rate in NSW stands at 81.1%, which is in the middle range compared to other states. In the same time frame, attendance by NSW residents at popular music, theatre, art galleries, museums, dance and other performing arts improved, but attendance at libraries, classical music, opera and musicals declined.

**Table 2.35:** NSW Attendance at Cultural Venues and Events 2009–2018

	2009–2010	2013–2014	2017–2018
Venue or event	(%)	(%)	(%)
Live music & performances	N/A	N/A	39.3
Classical music	9.4	9.2	N/A
Popular music	29.3	32.9	N/A
Theatre	16.4	15.0	16.6
Dance	10.9	10.1	11.4
Opera or musical	16.7	14.5	15.8
Other performing arts	15.6	16.7	18.2
Art galleries	25.7	26.0	26.1
Museums	23.2	26.3	26.8
Libraries	32.4	31.7	29.0

Source: ABS cat. 4114 and ABS Cultural attendance and participation 2017–2018.<sup>54</sup>

**Figure 2.9:** Attendance at Cultural Events, NSW, 2009–2018



Source: ABS cat. 4114 and ABS Cultural attendance and participation 2017–2018.

<sup>54</sup>Attendance rate based on percentage of NSW population. Data for live music and performances, classical music and popular music is unavailable across particular time periods due to the recent classification of these categories under 'live music and performance' in 2017.

Analysis of data from the ABS Cultural Attendance Survey (2018) demonstrates a difference in attendance at selected cultural activities and events between eastern Sydney and Western Sydney residents.<sup>55</sup> The survey measures attendance at creative or performing arts events/exhibitions or cultural heritage venues such as museums and galleries. In 2018, approximately 78.4% of Western Sydney's population attended at least one venue or event yearly, compared with 86.5% in eastern Sydney.<sup>56</sup>

### Cultural Attendance Rates, Western Sydney and Eastern Sydney (2018)

**78.38%**

**WESTERN SYDNEY**



**86.45%**

**EASTERN SYDNEY**



Source: ABS, Cultural Attendance and Participation Survey (2018).

Interest and engagement with the arts can also be drawn from rates of household expenditure on recreation and cultural activities. A household expenditure survey undertaken in 2020–21 revealed that recreation and culture was the third-highest household expense across Sydney.<sup>57</sup> Western Sydney residents, on average, spent a higher percentage of their total household income on recreation and culture than the rest of Sydney, suggesting Western Sydney residents are willing to allocate a significant portion of household income to recreation and cultural activities. These findings oppose unfounded misconceptions that Western Sydney residents are not interested in the arts. Further, it supports research that has revealed the growing demand for arts and cultural activities in the region and the subsequent opportunities it presents to situate key cultural institutions in Western Sydney.<sup>58</sup>

It is important to note that a few key factors can also shape household expenses for arts and recreation. First, as this figure is relative to the total household income, the total average amount spent by Western Sydney remains slightly lower than the overall average across households in Sydney. In addition, the broad categorisation of recreation and culture in this survey accounts for additional activities such as sports and gambling, which limits the ability to determine specific household expenditure on arts and cultural activity. This is particularly important to note in the context of the reported increased problem gambling in the Western Sydney region.<sup>59</sup>

**Table 2.36:** Top 5 Household Expenses in Sydney 2020–21

2020–21	Western Sydney region as a % of Sydney		Sydney	
	(\$ per household)	expenditure (%)	(\$ per household)	expenditure (%)
Housing	25,089	22.0	30,309	23.2
Miscellaneous goods & services	15,835	13.9	17,868	13.7
Recreation & Culture <sup>60</sup>	12,091	10.6	13,675	10.5
Food	10,840	9.5	12,306	9.4
Transport	9,600	8.4	9,949	7.6

Source: NIEIR© (2021).

<sup>55</sup>The 2017–18 ABS Cultural Attendance Survey is the latest publicly available dataset that can be analysed at the LGA scale.

<sup>56</sup>Other measures that can track cultural attendance rates includes the Creative Kids Vouchers and the 'Discover' of Dine and Discover. Both data sources are not publicly available and subject to government approval for release.

<sup>57</sup>Household expenditure is modelled on a set of expenditure items collected every five years in the ABS Household Expenditure Survey.

<sup>58</sup>See Stevenson & Magee (2017).

<sup>59</sup>Nance (2023).

<sup>60</sup>Excludes hotels, cafes & restaurants.

## CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

The ABS Cultural Attendance Survey also measures cultural participation, which refers to participants' activities in making art or undertaking an arts activity.<sup>61</sup> In 2018, about 28% of Western Sydney's population participated in cultural activities compared with 37% of eastern Sydney's population who had participated in cultural activities.<sup>62</sup>

### Cultural Participation Rates (2018)

**28.15%**

**WESTERN SYDNEY**



**37.10%**

**EASTERN SYDNEY**



Source: ABS, Cultural Attendance and Participation Survey (2018).

<sup>61</sup>SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

<sup>62</sup>Other useful data sources for measuring cultural participation could include the Create NSW Creative Kids Vouchers and the "Discover" of Dine and Discover, which is not publicly available.



Opening night - Sally Tsoutas: *Slow Shutter*, Margaret Whitlam Galleries, Rydalmere, 2022



Installation Sally Tsoutas: *Slow Shutter*, Margaret Whitlam Galleries, Rydalmere, 2022

## FACTORS SHAPING CULTURAL ACTIVITY

Understanding the role of geography in the consumption and distribution of culture is important to examine the spatial variations in arts attendance and participation.<sup>63</sup> Research has found that residential location, particularly proximity to cultural institutions has a significant impact on participation and attendance in the arts. Specific to the disparities between eastern Sydney and Western Sydney residents in attendance and participation rates, previous research has identified a range of factors:

- **transport connectivity**
- **skills shortages**
- **limited tertiary education in creative and performing arts.**

Moreover, it has been found that CALD communities and Indigenous Australians have lower involvement as audiences and creators of art than the general Australian population.<sup>64</sup> This issue significantly impacts Western Sydney, one of Australia’s most culturally diverse urban regions. Nevertheless, previous studies have shown a complex interplay between factors such as class, age, ethnicity, gender, education, urban form and distribution and attendance at galleries and museums, which has led to greater attendance and participation in suburban areas such as Western Sydney.<sup>65</sup>

### TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

In addition to limited access to local cultural facilities in the region, studies have indicated that Western Sydney has less transport connectivity than eastern Sydney. Heavy reliance on private transport, particularly in areas with limited public transport access, may lead to not only attending cultural activities but also poorer access to local employment opportunities in creative industries, currently concentrated around the Sydney CBD. Limited access to public transport restricts access to arts and cultural facilities, particularly for households without access to private transport.

The *Mapping Arts and Culture in Western Sydney* study uncovered that most Western Sydney residents live within a 20-minute drive of a leading arts organisation.<sup>66</sup> However, travel time to multipurpose and major metropolitan cultural and literature facilities is significantly longer. The Transport NSW Household Travel Survey indicated that Western Sydney residents have a travel-time threshold for leisure activities of about 23 minutes. This places every major state and metropolitan cultural institution outside the reasonable threshold of time that most Western Sydney residents need to spend on travel to leisure activities.<sup>67</sup> Further, it limits Western Sydney residents’ connectivity to creative industry employment, particularly in areas with limited access to a train station.<sup>68</sup>

**Table 2.37:** Average Travel Time to Leisure Activities, 2019–2020

	Average distance (km)	Average time (min)
Eastern Sydney	6.23	21.18
Western Sydney	11.61	23.01

Source: Transport for NSW, Household Travel Survey 2019–2020.

In addition to the average travel time to leisure activities being higher, Western Sydney residents face the financial cost of travelling further distances to access arts and cultural facilities. Factoring in fuel, toll roads and parking costs near major cultural venues in Sydney’s East, some Western Sydney residents are paying three separate costs to access the facilities their taxes are funding.

When travelling to cultural institutions in a private vehicle, the combined cost of tolls, fuel and parking can reach up to \$105 a day for residents travelling from Oran Park to the Sydney Theatre Company in Dawes Point. Should a resident opt for the more affordable public transport option, this will cost \$16.80 on weekdays or \$8.40 on weekends and take a staggering 2 hrs to arrive at the Sydney Theatre Company.

<sup>63</sup>Stevenson & Magee (2017, p. 839)  
<sup>64</sup>See SGS Economics & Planning (2018).  
<sup>65</sup>See SGS Economics & Planning (2018) and Stevenson & Magee (2017).  
<sup>66</sup>SGS Economics & Planning (2018) defines leading arts organisations as ‘primary spaces for arts and cultural participation and exhibition in Western Sydney, encompassing several mediums and drawing artists and audiences from Western Sydney and beyond. Leading arts organisations may be publicly or privately operated. Examples include arts centres, Parramatta Artists’ Studios and the Information and Cultural Exchange (p. 3).  
<sup>67</sup><https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/data-and-research/data-and-insights/surveys/household-travel-survey-hts>  
<sup>68</sup>SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

The spatial disparities in transport connectivity reinforce social and spatial disadvantage, costing more time and money for residents in the Central and Western Parkland cities to participate in and attend arts and cultural activities. This broader connectivity inequity has been of considerable debate in the push for the 30-minute city, as outlined in the *Greater Sydney Regional Plan* that aims to place jobs, infrastructure, housing and services within 30-minute reach of more residents of Sydney. The inequitable time and financial costs of limited connectivity to local cultural infrastructures findings reinforce the need to situate cultural arts facilities within closer reach of Western Sydney residents.<sup>69</sup>

Transport Costs, Western Sydney vs Eastern Sydney to Sydney Theatre Company, Dawes Point, Sydney<sup>70</sup>



PRIVATE VEHICLE			
Western Sydney			Eastern Sydney
Glenmore park to Sydney Theatre Company	Oran park to Sydney Theatre Company	Austral to Sydney Theatre Company	Randwick to Sydney Theatre Company
58km	70km	52km	10km
53 minutes	60 minutes	49 minutes	24 minutes
Est total round trip - <b>\$63.00</b>	Est total round trip - <b>\$105.00</b>	Est total round trip - <b>\$102.00</b>	Est total round trip - <b>\$24.00</b>



PUBLIC TRANSPORT			
Western Sydney			Eastern Sydney
Glenmore park to Sydney Theatre Company	Oran park to Sydney Theatre Company	Austral to Sydney Theatre Company	Randwick to Sydney Theatre Company
58km	70km	52km	10km
2 hours 13 minutes	2 hours 2 minutes	2 hours 16 minutes	44 minutes
Est total round trip Weekday - <b>\$16.80</b> Saturday - <b>\$8.40</b>	Est total round trip Weekday - <b>\$16.80</b> Saturday - <b>\$8.40</b>	Est total round trip Weekday - <b>\$16.80</b> Saturday - <b>\$8.40</b>	Est total round trip <sup>71</sup> Weekday - <b>\$7.86</b> Saturday - <b>\$5.50</b>

Source: Desktop Search, Google Maps (2023).

These findings reflect earlier research that found Western Sydney has significantly less connectivity than Eastern Sydney. According to this previous work, no area in Western Sydney is connected to more than 30% of jobs in metropolitan Sydney by car. Therefore, the eastern half of Sydney achieves better connectivity to creative industry employment and opportunities to attend cultural events than Western Sydney. The areas of Western Sydney with the greatest relative connectivity to creative industries employment are those with the best transport connections and creative industries employment in the travel catchment.

<sup>69</sup>Rachwani (2023).  
<sup>70</sup>Figures provided for transport costs are an estimate.  
<sup>71</sup>The fastest route for Randwick to Dawes Point is to travel via the Cross City Tunnel, costing \$6.50 one way and reducing the trip time by three minutes. For the purpose of a time comparison, these toll costs were excluded from the table.  
\*Est total round trip includes estimated toll costs, fuel and parking cost.

## SKILLS SHORTAGES

Lower cultural participation rates can also be attributed to a skills shortage in the creative and performing arts among residents in Western Sydney. According to the ABS Fields of Qualification data (2021), only 2.4% of qualifications obtained by Western Sydney residents are in the creative arts field. Comparatively, this figure is lower than the rest of Sydney's 4.1% average and significantly lower than residents in eastern Sydney, whereby 7.3% of qualifications are in the creative arts field.

**Table 2.38:** Resident Workers Field of Qualifications – Creative Arts 2021

Area	#	%	Change 2016–2021 #
Western Sydney Region	26,460	2.4	+5,586
Eastern Sydney	39,419	7.3	+4,808
Rest of Sydney	94,143	4.1	+13,422

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2016, 2021.

## TERTIARY EDUCATION IN THE ARTS

Lower rates of qualifications and skills in creative arts may be a result of limited visual and performing arts tertiary education courses and facilities available in Western Sydney. Three institutions currently offer tertiary education in creative arts in Western Sydney. Western Sydney University offers a Bachelor of Music at the Penrith campus, the only performing arts-related course available across the 13 campuses and in the region.<sup>72</sup> Sydney Art School's site in Castle Hill offers visual and creative arts education. TAFE NSW offers visual arts and ceramics education at the Campbelltown, Meadowbank, Nepean, Katoomba and Kingswood campuses.

**Table 2.39:** Tertiary Institutions Offering Performing and Visual Arts Qualifications Counts

	Government (#)	Private (#)	Bachelor/higher degree available (#)	Total institutions (#)
Eastern Sydney	9	8	15	17
Western Sydney	2	1	2	3

Comparatively, Eastern Sydney has approximately 17 different institutions available offering formal tertiary education and qualifications in the creative and performing arts. Further, the highest qualification on offer in Western Sydney for the creative and performing arts is a bachelor level qualification. In contrast, tertiary institutions in eastern Sydney offer a range of postgraduate-level creative and performing arts courses at nine of the 17 institutions, as detailed in Table 2.40.

Limited access to tertiary education in the creative and performing arts and lower skills in these industries will pose a significant challenge upon completion of upcoming WestInvest projects in arts and culture. These emerging cultural institutions in the region will drive significant employment opportunities in creative industries and rapid demand for creative skills. In addition, recent research has demonstrated that creative skills are an important part of enabling future job growth and that creative workers will be required for the future economy.<sup>73</sup> In preparation for the growth of the arts in the region, there must be strategic investment in providing the creative education, training and professional development required to meet the skills demand in the next four to six years upon delivery of WestInvest sites. Focusing on delivering requisite training and skills development in Western Sydney will provide a pipeline of talent for expanding industries, not only the arts but also other sectors requiring the innovation and original thought fundamental to creative skills. In doing so, an investment in delivering creative education and skill development in Western Sydney will position NSW competitively to benefit from new technologies and innovation that can be drawn from increased creative skills in the growing region of Western Sydney.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Western Sydney University's arts school closed over a decade ago.

<sup>73</sup>Commonwealth of Australia (2018).

<sup>74</sup>ibid.

**Table 2.40:** Visual and Performing Arts, Tertiary Education in Sydney

Institution	Category	Level	Funding	Location
Western Sydney University	Music, arts	Bachelor	Government	Western Sydney
Sydney Art School	Visual and creative arts	Diploma, certificate	Private	Western Sydney
TAFE NSW	Visual arts and ceramics	Bachelor, diploma, certificate	Government	Western Sydney
Australian Catholic University	Creative arts	Honours, bachelor, diploma	Government	Eastern Sydney
National Institute of Dramatic Arts	Dramatic arts	Masters, bachelor, diploma	Government	Eastern Sydney
TAFE NSW	Fine arts	Diploma	Government	Eastern Sydney
Australian Film Television and Radio School	Screen arts	Masters, bachelor, diploma	Government	Eastern Sydney
Australian Institute of Music	Music	Masters, bachelor, diploma	Private	Eastern Sydney
University of Technology Sydney	Music and sound design, writing	Bachelor	Government	Eastern Sydney
SAE Creative Media Institute	Music production	Masters, bachelor, diploma	Private	Eastern Sydney
Macquarie University	Music, arts	Bachelor	Government	Eastern Sydney
Sydney Conservatorium of Music	Music	Master, grad. diploma, bachelor	Government	Eastern Sydney
University of Sydney (Sydney College of the Arts)	Arts, creative arts	Masters, bachelor	Government	Eastern Sydney
JMC Academy	Music, creative arts	Bachelor, diploma	Private	Eastern Sydney
University of NSW (School of Art & Design)	Music, fine arts	Master, honours, bachelor	Government	Eastern Sydney
Academy of Music and Performing Arts	Music, performing arts	Master, bachelor	Private	Eastern Sydney
Academy of Film, Theatre and Television	Performing arts	Bachelor, diploma	Private	Eastern Sydney
Acting and Communication Academy	Performing arts	Diploma, certificate	Private	Eastern Sydney
Actors Centre Australia	Performing arts	Bachelor	Private	Eastern Sydney
National Art School	Visual arts	PHD, master, bachelor	Private	Eastern Sydney

Source: Desktop Search, Google Maps (2023).

## BRAVE NEW WORD, YOUTH POETRY FESTIVAL



Brave New Word Youth Festival, 2022  
Photography supplied by Bankstown Poetry Slam

**Category:** Festival

**Organisation type:** Not-for-profit

**Year:** 29 November – 13 December 2022<sup>c1</sup>

### Overview

Brave New World (2022) festival is Australia's first ever national youth poetry slam festival hosted through 15 events over two weeks across nine Western Sydney suburbs. The festival gathered 50 local and interstate artists and three international artists. The festival is presented by Bankstown Poetry Slam (BPS) – a not-for-profit charity hosting monthly poetry slam events, performances and workshops for organisations and schools. BPS has gained national recognition as both the first regular poetry slam in Western Sydney and the largest in Australia.<sup>c2</sup>

The festival engages young people and showcases Western Sydney's creative talent and production capabilities to local, interstate and international audiences, attracting audiences and participants from all over Australia. The BNW festival, featured by SBS World News saw 20 finalists from six different states and territories across Australia compete for the inaugural crown.

### Learn more

- <https://www.bravenewword.au>
- <http://www.bankstownpoetryslam.com/home>

## ACE TRUTH-TELLING



ACE Truth Telling Session  
L-R: Lesley Woodhouse, Ruby Langton-Batty,  
Marilyn Isaacs, Fabri Blacklock  
Photography: Cassandra Hannagan

**Category:** Event<sup>c3</sup>

**Organisation type:** Community-based organisation and registered charity

**Year:** 2022

### Overview

The ACE truth-telling session was hosted during the 23rd Biennale of Sydney, Rīvus in Parramatta. The discussion between the National Committee of Friends of Myall Creek and Dharug Knowledge Holders in Western Sydney explored and commemorated the Myall Creek Massacre of 1838. In addition, the discussion explored Frontier Wars in the Parramatta region and preserving these histories through local efforts. In line with the theme, Rīvus, meaning stream, the truth-telling panel shed light on Australia's history of colonial conflict around creeks and waterways.<sup>c4</sup> The session also provided a platform for Indigenous voices on these histories and evoked change through ongoing work and activism.<sup>c5</sup> The event engaged indigenous communities, CALD groups, and sought to shed light on Aboriginal perspectives on the histories of conflict and colonialism around the creeks and waterways in the Parramatta area.

### Learn more

- <https://aceinc.org.au>
- <https://www.culper.com.au>
- <https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/exhibitions/23rd-biennale-of-sydney-rivus/>
- <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/biennale-of-sydney-rivus-2022>
- <https://www.biennaleofsydney.art/participants/national-committee-of-the-friends-of-myall-creek/>
- <https://www.biennaleofsydney.art>
- <https://myallcreek.org/about-us/>

<sup>c1</sup>BNW festival is hosted by Bankstown Poetry Slam, established in 2013.

<sup>c2</sup>Sponsored by Bankstown Poetry Slam, Create NSW, USA Embassy in Australia, Blacktown Arts, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, PHIVE, Campbelltown Arts Centre, FCMG, River Side, Outloud, Cumberland City Council, PP&VA, Enough Said Books, The Street University.

<sup>c3</sup>Hosted by Arts and Cultural Exchange (ACE), formerly known as the Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE), during the 23rd Biennale of Sydney, Rīvus. ACE was established in 1984 and has since worked with communities in Western Sydney to provide resource, training and information access. The Biennale of Sydney is a leading international contemporary art event held every two years, presenting global art in venues in across Sydney.

<sup>c4</sup><https://wsup.news/event/truth-telling-panel-discussion/>

<sup>c5</sup>The event was sponsored by Cultural Perspectives Group, a research, communications and consulting agency leading projects around sensitive social issues focusing on reaching CALD and Indigenous audiences.

## UTP RADICAL ACCESSIBILITY AND SYDNEY REVIEW OF BOOKS



Live panel event on radical accessibility.  
Photography by Iman, supplied by utp

**Category:** Initiative, program and partnership

**Organisation type:** A partnership between Utp and Sydney Review of Books. Utp is a theatre company (producing and commissioning). Sydney Review of Books is an initiative of the Writing and Research Society at Western Sydney University.

**Year:** 2022.

### Overview

Radical Accessibility is a hybrid programming initiative based at Utp, which services Bankstown Arts Centre in Bankstown and audiences from neighbouring LGAs in Western Sydney. As a part of WSU, Sydney Review of Books services the Western Sydney region. The initiative seeks to provide accessibility through digital platforms for people with disability and rural communities with limited mobility. Accessibility to arts became an important provocation of Utp's 2022 program curation, built upon the research of disability scholars focusing on the societal changes required for equity and intersectional accessibility. Utp Radical Accessibility, in partnership with Sydney Review of Books, will commission a series of essays over three years. Some of Australia's most progressive thinkers have been asked to address '*some of the big questions that keep us up at night in order to take responsibility for the future we are co-creating*'.<sup>c6</sup> The Radical Accessibility Essay Series features Western Sydney writers such as Sheila Ngoc Pham's Essay 'Western Sydney is dead, long live Western Sydney' and Riana Head-Toussaint's Essay 'The R Word'.

### Learn more

- <https://utp.org.au/event/2022-utp-programs>
- <https://utp.org.au/event/radical-accessibility-essay-series>

## BANKSTOWN BIENNALE

**Category:** Program

**Organisation type:** Grassroots exhibition, supported by Canterbury Bankstown Council<sup>c7</sup>

**Date of establishment:** 2020/2022

### Overview

The Bankstown Biennale is a bi-annual exhibition that proudly showcases the creativity of culturally diverse and Indigenous Australian production in the region for decades. Following the devastation of the 2020 bushfires and the cascading effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bankstown Biennale was produced as an artist-led response, offering hope to the region.<sup>c8</sup>

The Inaugural Bankstown Biennale of 2020, Symbiosis, asked '*artists to examine recent crises impacting us locally and globally, as an opportunity for transformative change*'. In 2022, the second Bankstown Biennale, *SubTerrains* was an Indigenous artists' led response to local narratives of land, water and historical truths buried within Bankstown's landscape.<sup>c9</sup>

Encouraging a connection to the environment and social contexts of Western Sydney, both exhibitions provided local artists with a platform to showcase creative works produced within the region, including those based on local narratives. The exhibition also encouraged residents and other Western Sydney community members to engage in a local cultural activity.

### Learn more

- <https://www.cbccity.nsw.gov.au/arts-centre/whats-on/bankstown-biennale>
- <https://www.artshub.com.au/news/features/artshub-speaks-with-the-inaugural-bankstown-biennale-curators-261252-2368767/>

<sup>c6</sup>Urban Theatre Projects (2022b): <https://utp.org.au/event/radical-accessibility-essay-series>

<sup>c7</sup>Sponsored by Arts, Screen and Culture, Create NSW, Indigenous Languages and Arts, Australian Government and Bankstown Arts Centre, Canterbury-Bankstown City Council.

<sup>c8</sup><https://www.artshub.com.au/news/features/artshub-speaks-with-the-inaugural-bankstown-biennale-curators-261252-2368767/>

<sup>c9</sup><https://www.cbccity.nsw.gov.au/arts-centre/archive/past-exhibitions/bankstown-biennale-2020>

## CAMPBELLTOWN ARTS CENTRE CREATIVE CAREERS EXPO



2022 Creative Careers Expo.  
Photography by Rolling Media

**Category:** Event

**Organisation type:** Council-led initiative: Campbelltown Arts Centre

**Year:** 2022

### Overview

Campbelltown Art Centre's annual Creative Careers Expo for high school students and emerging creatives offers an annual program of talks with artists and creative professionals alongside stalls, live music, breakout workshops and presentations from leading tertiary institutions in the creative industries.

The event seeks to support arts learning and post-school pathways, providing inspiration and understanding of diverse career paths in the creative industries in Campbelltown and surrounding LGAs in Western Sydney. This is a free Auslan interpreted event for school-age young people and job seekers.<sup>c10</sup>

### Learn more

- <https://c-a-c.com.au/creative-careers-expo/>

## YIRRAN MIIGAYDHU: WEAVING OUR WAYS TO COUNTRY



Weaving our Ways to Country Exhibition  
Photography: Document Photography

**Category:** Exhibition

**Organisation type:** Weaving group, based at Campbelltown Arts Centre - a cultural facility of Campbelltown City Council.<sup>c11</sup>

### Overview

Weaving our ways to Country, or Yirran Miigaydhu Biyangalaygu Ngunrayu in Dharawal language, is the second presentation since 2019 of newly created works by Yirran Miigaydhu – Aboriginal Women's Weaving Group at Campbelltown Arts Centre. Yirran Miigaydhu began in early 2015 as a weaving group for Aboriginal women living in south-west Sydney to connect and embrace knowledge through weaving. These monthly meetings provide space for connection through conversation, sharing stories and interweaving women's business and wellbeing with creativity. The meetings are led by established weaver and artist, Aunty Phyllis Stewart, who guides weaving with traditional and contemporary methods using natural fibres and grasses such as Lomandra and vines harvested from the surrounding area.

For this exhibition, the Yirran Miigaydhu weavers created ambitious vessels using basket-making techniques with dyed raffia and cane. 'Bringing the old ways to new times, strengthening journeys and reviving connections, this exhibition epitomises the gathering of many women from across Country and the celebrated tradition of creating meeting space on Dharawal land. Their work as a group and individually spans baskets, fish nets, eel traps, random weave, sculpture and wall-based installations incorporating natural fibres found on Dharawal and Yuin Country'.<sup>c12</sup> The group's works are exhibited in Western Sydney and other areas, such as Cement Fondu (Sydney) and Sturt Gallery (Southern Highlands), showcasing Indigenous creative works produced in the Western Sydney region.

### Learn more

- <https://c-a-c.com.au/weaving-our-ways-to-country/#>

<sup>c10</sup>Campbelltown Arts Centre. (2023a): <https://c-a-c.com.au/creative-careers-expo>

<sup>c11</sup>Yirran Miigaydhu exhibition is also sponsored by Create NSW funding, the Australia Council, Crown Resorts Foundation, the Packer Family Foundation and the Neilson Foundation.

<sup>c12</sup>Campbelltown Arts Centre (2023b): <https://c-a-c.com.au/weaving-our-ways-to-country/>

## PYT DORR-E-DARI: A Poetic Crash Course in The Language of Love



**Category:** Theatre

**Organisation type:** Theatre Company<sup>C13</sup>

**Year:** 2021

### Overview

Inspired by the tradition of private recitals and 'curtain shows' performed throughout the Persian-speaking world, Dorr-e Dari is a theatre work providing intimate storytelling and ballads from the streets of Kabul, Tehran and Quetta via Western Sydney. Based in Fairfield, Dorr-e Dari seeks to represent and showcase the cultural diversity of Western Sydney in its performances that spanned outside of the region. The show has performed across Australia at the Sydney Opera House, the Arts Centre, Melbourne, PYT Fairfield and Sydney Festival at Carriageworks.<sup>C14</sup>

### Learn more

- <http://pyt.com.au/dorr-e-dari-a-poetic-crash-course-in-the-language-of-love/>

## DANCE MAKERS COLLECTIVE – LOT 7



**Category:** Rehearsal & performance space

**Organisation type:** Community arts space managed by Dance Makers Collective<sup>C15</sup>

### Overview

LOT7 is a space located in Darug Country in Seven Hills for performing artists to gather, practice, do class, develop work, share ideas and connect with a wider community of practice. LOT7 is home to Dance Makers Collective (DMC) and other resident groups. It provides a rich opportunity for creative people to collaborate and engage in activities for professional artists, budding professionals, hobbyists and creative enthusiasts.

DMC is Australia's only collective-led dance organisation with its own self-managed property. In 2021, DMC employed 75+ dance makers and spent more than \$260,000 in paying artists, representing more than 80% of their expenses.<sup>C16</sup>

LOT7 seeks to provide an inclusive environment where professional and community dance practices intersect, welcoming a breadth of dance activity where a cross-section of communities of performance-making can exchange, build networks, get feedback and support one another.

### Learn more

- <https://www.dancemakerscollective.com.au>
- <https://lot7studios.com.au>

<sup>C13</sup>Dorr-e Dari project was developed in partnership with the University of Sydney and supported by the Australia Council for the Arts, Create NSW, Vitalstatistix, Crack Festival, The Lansdowne Foundation and the Seaborn, Broughton & Walford Foundation.

<sup>C14</sup><http://pyt.com.au/dorr-e-dari-a-poetic-crash-course-in-the-language-of-love/>

<sup>C15</sup>The space is available for hire at community rates for unfunded activity or commercial use.

<sup>C16</sup><https://lot7studios.com.au/studio-hire/>

# RESEARCH LANDSCAPE: THE ARTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY

**Cultural and creative industries play a vital role in education, supporting the development of skills and driving innovation and technology. They can help us make sense of change, connect us – both locally and globally – and inspire us to transform our ways of living and working.<sup>75</sup>**

Arts and creative industries in Australia are substantial both in size and in their contribution to society and our economy.<sup>76</sup> On an economic level, ‘the creative economy and its industries are strategic sectors that if nurtured can boost competitiveness, productivity, sustainable growth, employment and exports potential’,<sup>77</sup> and is further strengthened by a rising demand for content and the surge in digitisation and services. The impact of the arts, cultural and creative industries on the economy are on par with education and training.

On a social level, the arts play a significant role in every aspect of life, operating as a vehicle for empowerment, communication, expression and fulfilment.<sup>78</sup> The arts are critical to early education, cultivate social cohesion, forge social networks across otherwise divergent demographic groups and bridge social barriers.<sup>79</sup> This occurs through ‘creative enterprise and community-based arts and culture, such as festivals or installations of public art, and has been found to connect disparate members of a community’.<sup>80</sup> The vast benefits of arts and culture cut across the community, business and place development, contributing not only to jobs and economic growth, but also significantly impacting the liveability and vibrancy of an area.<sup>81</sup>

Reports from the last decade highlight strengths and opportunities driving the growth of the arts and culture sector in Western Sydney, as well as challenges that hinder its current and future success.

## STRENGTHS



- collaborative
- interdisciplinary
- culturally diverse
- inclusive
- connected to communities

## CHALLENGES



- social inequities
- stereotypes of Western Sydney
- cultural participation and attendance rates
- funding inequities and inadequate infrastructure
- impacts of COVID-19

<sup>75</sup>Australian Council for the Arts (2022, p. 2).

<sup>76</sup>It is important to note that the ABS measures the economic contribution of cultural and creative industries connected with arts, media, heritage, design, fashion and information technology activities. This report does not focus on all these industries, as outlined in the Introduction.

<sup>77</sup>UNCTAD (2019).

<sup>78</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017).

<sup>79</sup>Cmielewski et al. (2020).

<sup>80</sup>A New Approach (2019), p. 20

<sup>81</sup>Clements (2018) argues for a more holistic approach to acknowledging intersection of community resources and business opportunity in the creative economy.

<sup>82</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017); Cmielewski et al. (2021).

<sup>83</sup>ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021).

<sup>84</sup>Refer to CreativeWest dataset (see section 1 of this report).

<sup>85</sup>Recalibrating Culture revealed that artists and cultural practitioners in Greater Western Sydney are not only diverse in demographic terms and in their aesthetic practices but also transcend the stereotyped image of the young, ‘hip’, urban, mobile creative worker (Stevenson et al., 2017).

<sup>86</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017, p. 63).

<sup>87</sup>Ho (2014); Bau, Georgeou & Kreemers (2021); Sandbach (2021).

## STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN WESTERN SYDNEY

### COLLABORATIVE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY

The unique collaborative, flexible creative practices that produce regional production synergies are a key sector strength. Artists in Western Sydney often encompass a range of artistic identities, work across cultural forms, often in interdisciplinary ways and tend not to be associated formally with cultural institutions. Digital artists are among the most collaborative of these creative practitioners, with a growth in employing digital platforms to expand audience engagement with creative productions in the region.<sup>82</sup>

### DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE

Uniquely, the arts and culture sector in Western Sydney is renowned for its presence and expression of cultural diversity. Over half of the world's nations are represented among Western Sydney's population, with more than 40% of residents born overseas.<sup>83</sup> Western Sydney is an exemplar of everyday multiculturalism in Australia, home to the highest levels of cultural diversity in NSW and a key arrival point for refugees and new migrants.

Moreover, Western Sydney has a significant Indigenous population, accounting for 2% of the total population in the region. Although a comprehensive study on Indigenous artists and creative activities in Western Sydney has not been carried out yet, the presence of 15 Indigenous led creative organisations in the region highlights the connection between arts and the cultural heritage of Aboriginal people.<sup>84</sup>

A key strength of the region, therefore, includes these high levels of diversity across culture, as well as age and practice.<sup>85</sup> As a result, the West is perceived as a more tolerant and accepting environment of difference. It espouses a strong sense of belonging among arts and cultural workers in the region. This inclusive local culture has been known to 'provide an environment of risk and difference in a manner, which contrasts with the more recognised, better-supported arts and culture of the inner city'.<sup>86</sup> Building on this strength, community artists in Western Sydney have focused on the everyday diversity of the region as its biggest asset, branding the region as a cosmopolitan hub with creativity and stories of multicultural Australia.<sup>87</sup> Local communities in the region value such rich cultural diversity and connection to Aboriginal culture and heritage.<sup>88</sup>

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Artists in Western Sydney aim to engage with their local community and often display their works in unconventional spaces such as parks, main streets and showgrounds.<sup>89</sup> This dynamic and cooperative culture has led to a rise in creative businesses in Western Sydney, including those relocating from city centres. Research shows that this trend is

driven by the appealing lifestyle, convenient proximity and thriving local economy in Western Sydney. As a result, being creative in the area is closely tied to being local, allowing for a better work-life balance and community engagement. These trends challenge the notion that inner-city areas are the centre of the creative industries and instead highlight the growing creative hubs and activity in Western Sydney.<sup>90</sup>

## CHALLENGES FACED BY ARTS AND CULTURE IN WESTERN SYDNEY

Despite the documented strengths, the full potential of the arts and culture sector in Western Sydney has yet to be realised. Significant challenges still exist for those working in cultural and creative industries in Western Sydney, including limited creative education, training and employment opportunities,<sup>91</sup> inadequate local infrastructure for creativity and transport,<sup>92</sup> lower creative and audience participation compared with Sydney and NSW<sup>93</sup> and negative perceptions of the Western Sydney region.<sup>94</sup>

### SOCIAL EQUITY

Financial instability and low-income levels in the arts industry make it difficult for Western Sydney artists to establish a career in the creative field. Artists in Western Sydney earn below the national average income for their arts practice,<sup>95</sup> leading many young creatives to engage in their work on a part-time or irregular basis.<sup>96</sup> This is especially true for creatives from low socio-economic backgrounds and minority groups, including CALD artists, as reported by Diversity Arts Australia.<sup>97</sup> Arts and cultural workers face increasing difficulties covering basic expenses such as rent, mortgage and bills.

### THE 'WESTIE' LABEL

Previous research has pointed to the impacts of negative stereotyping on the regional identity of both the creative sector and the perceived interest of local communities in arts and culture activities in Western Sydney (Stevenson & Magee, 2017). As covered by Sandbach (2013), following the suburban development of Western Sydney in the 1960s and '70s, 'Western Sydney became synonymous with economic disadvantage, and the image of dangerous sites of delinquency and dysfunctionality became etched in the local psyche and strongly influenced perceptions of life in Sydney's'.<sup>98</sup> In the last few decades, the 'Westie' label became a widely accepted characterisation of Western Sydney, which was reflected in debates surrounding the decision to locate the Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta.

However, creative industries and local initiatives have been actively working to dispel these stereotypes by shifting their focus away from a 'welfare approach' and highlighting the strengths of Western Sydney and the wealth of artistic talent in the region.<sup>99</sup> In particular, they reinforce that the 'Westie' label does not accurately represent contemporary Western Sydney, characterised by a rising level of education, ethnic and class diversity, that challenges these negative stereotypes.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>82</sup>Necoutz (2021).

<sup>83</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017); SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

<sup>84</sup>See Sandbach (2021). This is also supported by Stevenson and Magee (2017), who uncover that density, rather than proximity, appears to be a stronger spatial feature of cultural consumption patterns. This implies the singular clustering of cultural institutions is less important than their embeddedness within comparatively dense hubs across the city, arguably such as Western Sydney.

<sup>85</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017).

<sup>86</sup>Cmielewski et al. (2020); Deloitte (2015); Stevenson & Magee (2017).

<sup>87</sup>SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

<sup>88</sup>Sandbach (2015, 2021); Stevenson et al. (2017).

<sup>89</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017).

<sup>90</sup>Morgan, Wood & Nelligan (2013).

<sup>91</sup>Diversity Arts Australia (2022).

<sup>92</sup>Sandbach (2013, pp. 724–725), drawing on Gwyther (2008).

## PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE RATES

Previous research has found lower creative and audience participation rates in Western Sydney compared to the rest of Sydney and NSW.<sup>101</sup> This disparity is particularly pronounced for culturally and linguistically diverse people and Indigenous Australians.<sup>102</sup> The reasons for this can be attributed to several factors, including distance from the Sydney CBD, ethnicity and age.

Western Sydney is located 20 km outside the Sydney CBD and has low population and dwelling densities outside Parramatta, Liverpool and Bankstown, limiting cultural participation. The *Mapping Arts and Culture in Western Sydney* study highlights that urban form and transport connectivity are significant barriers to the arts community and audiences in Western Sydney.<sup>103</sup>

Inadequate public transportation systems and the dependence on personal transportation in the area restrict the connectivity of Western Sydney communities to art and cultural venues and spaces.

Significant recent investment in public transport infrastructure in the region, including the upcoming Sydney Metro West and the development of fast rail, links our regional centres and public transport to the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) and Kingsford Smith airports.<sup>104</sup>

However, location and proximity to arts and cultural institutions need not hinder Western Sydney residents from participating in and attending the arts. A recent study has shown the demand for the arts in Western Sydney's regional city centres, such as Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith. Stevenson and Magee found that the connection between education and art consumption is growing stronger. This is significant in Western Sydney, where tertiary education rates have risen 10% over the past decade. Further, the study found that population density, rather than proximity, is a more significant factor in cultural consumption patterns.

Previous research has highlighted the opportunity for embedding cultural institutions into densely populated areas across the city, such as Western Sydney, to improve arts participation and consumption. This can address the challenges of connecting communities in Western Sydney with the arts due to the current concentration of cultural institutions in the Sydney CBD.<sup>105</sup> With the upcoming development of Powerhouse Parramatta and key arts and cultural facilities, there is an opportunity to enhance local participation and attendance in the arts, which can be supported by improved transport connectivity to key strategic centres of Western Sydney from all parts of the region.

## FUNDING INEQUITIES

Inequity in state and federal cultural resource expenditure in Western Sydney is one of the major challenges facing the sector, as highlighted in Deloitte's report *Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy – A Key to Sydney's Success*:

*On a per capita basis the Western Sydney Cultural Arts sector has been grossly underfunded 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.*<sup>106</sup>

Building on these findings, the Recalibrating Culture study undertaken by the Institute for Culture and Society at WSU further highlighted the lack of creative resources available to their research participants working as cultural practitioners in Western Sydney:

*Young 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 income and associated low level of income in the arts.*<sup>107</sup>

## LIMITED CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Creative activity and cultural facilities are widely recognised as markers and facilitators of successful cities and societies, contributing to local economic growth, fostering a positive city image and enhancing the quality of life in cities. However, research has emphasised that the arts sector in Western Sydney faces major challenges due to limited hard and soft cultural infrastructures. Hard cultural infrastructure refers to spaces, buildings and venues that facilitate the development and delivery of cultural activities, whereas soft cultural infrastructure refers to the institutions, policies and human resources that facilitate the development and delivery of cultural activities.

A study by SGS Economics & Planning (2018) commissioned by Create NSW, *Mapping Arts and Culture in Western Sydney*, found that most Western Sydney LGAs lack purpose-built artistic and cultural infrastructures and have poor transport connectivity and limited access to creative industries employment. While some public cultural facilities exist, most are small community art galleries or local history museums and none of the major state-funded cultural institutions are in Western Sydney apart from the upcoming Powerhouse Parramatta and historic sites entrusted to the care of Museums of History NSW.

<sup>99</sup>Sandbach (2013, 2021).

<sup>101</sup>Collins & Poynting (2000); Stevenson & Magee (2017).

<sup>102</sup>Deloitte (2015); SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

<sup>103</sup>SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

<sup>104</sup>SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

<sup>105</sup>Greater Cities Commission (2022).

<sup>106</sup>Stevenson & Magee (2017).

<sup>107</sup>Deloitte (2015, p. 9).

The study also uncovered digital connectivity issues in some parts of Western Sydney, emphasising the need for dependable and affordable digital infrastructure. Further, a pressing need for soft infrastructure – additional resources, personnel and skill enhancement in the sector has been revealed. This is required to support the sustainability of arts organisations and event operators and to drive the growth and development of Western Sydney's arts and cultural scene.<sup>109</sup>

The lack of cultural infrastructure and services results in lower cultural attendance and participation rates, limited employment opportunities in the arts and a drain of professional artists to the eastern parts of Sydney. The arts sector has expressed a strong desire for permanent working spaces, including artists' studios, workshops and exhibitions and teaching and performance spaces. Ang et al.'s study on the need for enhanced infrastructure provision in Parramatta highlights the lack of appropriate cultural infrastructure and entertainment activities.<sup>110</sup>

The Penrith and Blue Mountains Creative Production Enablers and Support Survey<sup>111</sup> drew a similar conclusion. It found that participants identified a lack of key physical facilities to support their creative practice. The limited availability of suitable cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney is therefore hindering the ability of the arts sector to reach its full potential.<sup>112</sup>

Based on these deficiencies in cultural infrastructure, previous research has prioritised key solutions to meet the sector's needs. First, recent studies have emphasised the need for new long-term, accessible, flexible multipurpose and artform cultural spaces while supporting and building capacity within existing informal spaces.<sup>113</sup> In addition, other research has proposed making planning and zoning regulations more amenable to cultural activity and production, ensuring opportunities for tourism, arts and culture. For example, Cmielewski et al.'s study on Creative Production Synergies in Penrith and the Blue Mountains suggested that changing planning and zoning requirements could help develop the studio spaces required in parts of Western Sydney, such as the Penrith and Blue Mountains LGAs.<sup>114</sup>

A desire to embed cultural infrastructure into the region's strategic planning could be implemented by incorporating a *cultural space*, which 'similar to sports spaces, provided within and for every community, has strong potential and could create a template for practices and policies across the state and country'.<sup>115</sup> Critically, research has emphasised that establishing these arts and culture working spaces must be time- and cost-effective and developed in consultation with arts and cultural workers.<sup>116</sup>

## IMPACTS OF COVID-19

The arts sector in Australia has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with widespread closures of live performance venues, museums and galleries leading to decreased income and market opportunities for artists and cultural workers.<sup>117</sup> The negative impacts on income, proficiency and wellbeing have been particularly pronounced for artists from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous Australians and CALD individuals, who have reported higher levels of financial, mental and physical stress, as well as increased experiences of racism during the COVID-19 context.<sup>118</sup>

A study of the Camden LGA in Western Sydney found that the industries most affected by reductions in employee numbers were accommodation and food services and arts and recreation services, with 70% of businesses in these industries reporting a decrease in employees.<sup>119</sup> Despite this, the arts sector has shown resilience and adaptability. For example, some organisations responded to the lockdowns by digitising arts and cultural activity online. However, smaller organisations reportedly experienced digital exclusion, lacking the resourcing to create and share digital cultural content.<sup>120</sup>

Targeted investments and broader economic support measures such as the JobKeeper Payment and the RISE Fund sought to mitigate these pressures.<sup>121</sup> However, barriers to accessing COVID-19 relief funding, including eligibility requirements and lengthy application processes, have been reported. Additionally, the unique work conditions of artists and creative workers, such as reliance on multiple sources of income and self-employment, have produced barriers for some in accessing general income support.

Although attendance at arts and cultural events is increasing following the pandemic, the sector remains vulnerable to future disruptions, with many organisations and artists facing ongoing financial consequences.<sup>122</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic may significantly impact the future of arts in Western Sydney, but the full extent and what is required for recovery is yet to be fully understood through research.

<sup>109</sup>Cmielewski et al. (2020).

<sup>110</sup>Ang et al. (2020).

<sup>111</sup>Penrith City Council (2020).

<sup>112</sup>Stevenson & Magee (2017).

<sup>113</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017); SGS Economics & Planning (2018); Cmielewski et al. (2020); Catanzaro (2014).

<sup>114</sup>Cmielewski et al. (2020).

<sup>115</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017, p. 55).

<sup>116</sup>Stevenson et al. (2017, p. 55).

<sup>117</sup>Australia Council for the Arts (2022b).

<sup>118</sup>Diversity Arts Australia (2022).

<sup>119</sup>Tannous (2020).

<sup>120</sup>Australia Council for the Arts (2022b).

<sup>121</sup>Refer to section 2 of the report for an overview of COVID-19 relief funding administered to Western Sydney. Also, refer to Australia Council for the Arts (2022) for a timeline of COVID-19 relief funding administered at a federal level to Arts and Culture.

<sup>122</sup>Australia Council for the Arts (2022b).

## FORM DANCE PROJECTS – SHARP SHORT DANCE



**Category:** Annual festival

**Organisation type:** Outreach program

### Overview

Sharp Short Dance is FORM Dance Project's annual youth dance festival featuring short works by choreographers and dancers under the age of 21.<sup>C17</sup> Hosted at Riverside Theatres in Parramatta Western Sydney, this event celebrates young talent in the region and nationwide. The event is open to applicants around Australia, showcasing Western Sydney talent while attracting visitors and nationwide participants to the region. Finalists are eligible for valuable industry secondment opportunities with leading dance companies, including those located in the region. The festival inspires young performers to strive for their artistic excellence and encourages active youth participation in all genres and traditions of dance and media. In 2022 the festival expanded with dance film content and digital media.<sup>C18</sup>

### Learn more

- <https://www.form.org.au/sharp-short-dance-2022/>

## RESONANTWAVE – BLUE MOUNTAINS



**Category:** Immersive performance event

**Organisation type:** Council-led event<sup>C19</sup>

**Year:** 2022

### Overview

resonantwave was an immersive audio/visual performance event held during Winter Magic Festival in the Blue Mountains City Art Gallery, the immersive experience activated cultural activity in the region following the COVID-19 lockdowns. Curated by the Blue Mountain City Council's Cultural Development Coordinator Katrina Noorbergen, the event partnered four visual artists, working across photography, digital collage, painting and moving image. Four music groups perform an array of electronic, acoustic, classical, post-rock and experimental sounds.<sup>C20</sup> Through this event, local visual artists were mentored by Illuminart to develop new skills in creating large-scale projection artwork.

### Learn more

- <https://illuminart.com.au/project/resonantwave/>
- <https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/DK7PC3QNM3TozgKK-Fg7muC?domain=youtube.com>

<sup>C17</sup> Founded in 2000 by Riverside Theatres and Ausdance NSW as an outreach program of the NSW Ministry for the Arts, Western Sydney Arts Strategy, Western Sydney Dance Action became an incorporated association in 2004 under the leadership and direction of Kathy Baykitch (2000–2008) and Olivia Ansell (2009–2010). In 2011, the new director, Annette McLernon (2011–2023), launched the organisation as FORM Dance Projects, maturing the organisation from a small service provider into an arts organisation uniquely placed in the Australian independent dance sector as both presenter and producer. FORM drives an artistic program engaging a community of local, national and international dance artists.

<sup>C18</sup> <https://www.form.org.au/sharp-short-dance-2022/>

<sup>C19</sup> Resonant Wave was supported by the RISE Fund, an Australian Government Initiative.

<sup>C20</sup> <https://illuminart.com.au/project/resonantwave/>; <https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/media-centre/a-night-of-art-light-music-to-immense-audiences-at-blue-mountains-cultural-centre>

## PARI AND ARAB THEATRE STUDIOS REPRESENTATION IN DOCUMENTA 15, GERMANY

**Category:** Event

**Organisation type:** Cross-organisation collaboration between Arab Theatre Studios and Pari

**Year:** 2022.

### Overview

Members from two Western Sydney collectives, Arab Theatre Studio and Pari, travelled to Kassel, Germany, in 2022 to participate in documenta fifteen through Gudskul's collective studies program 'Sekolah Temujalar'. Here, the two organisations undertook a nongkrong ('hanging out') curriculum – 'exploring how cooking, cleaning, living, studying and karaoke-ing together is instructive for our collective practices' (Lumbung, 2022). This participation allowed provided representation of the Western Sydney region in a global creative collective.

Arab Theatre Studios seeks to develop Arab centred critical conversations and creative spaces. Their activities include growing a creative hub in Western Sydney; connecting artists; facilitating critical conversations and participatory workshops; producing performances, live works and accessible multilingual theatre; sharing information online and through social media and becoming a hub for referrals.<sup>21</sup>

Pari is an artist-run space where people and communities gather to talk, think, learn and do. Pari's program draws out ideas particular to their location in Western Sydney.<sup>22</sup>

### Learn more

- <https://lumbung.space/tags/pari/>
- <https://www.arabtheatrestudio.com>
- <https://pariari.org/about>

## ELDERS IN RESIDENCE AT BLACKTOWN ARTS



**Category:** Weekly community event

**Organisation type:** Blacktown Arts is a unit of Blacktown City Council, Council-led by Blacktown City Council.

### Overview

Grab a cuppa and have a yarn with local Indigenous Elders Uncle Wes Marne, Uncle Greg Simms, Uncle Danny Eastwood and Uncle John Farrington on Friday mornings at Elders in Residence. Based on Darug land at The Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre, this initiative seeks to connect the Blacktown community with Indigenous knowledge, histories and perspectives. This weekly program provides a welcoming space for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds to engage with local Indigenous Elders and hear stories of culture and Country, thus connecting and building relationships between communities in Western Sydney.

### Learn more

- <https://blacktownarts.com.au/whats-on/summer-making/#elders>

<sup>21</sup><https://www.arabtheatrestudio.com/about>

<sup>22</sup><https://lumbung.space/social/documentafifteen/109323790630836328/>

## WESTWORDS PTY LTD

**Category:** Writing centre

**Organisation type:** Independent company

### Overview

WestWords Centre for Writing is dedicated to creating and sharing the stories of the people, places and cultures that comprise the heart of Western Sydney, and was the winner of 2020 and 2021 Excellence in Arts & Culture.<sup>C23</sup>

The centre is guided by the belief in the power of literature and literacy (written, oral and visual), self-expression and creativity to change lives and the experience of communities. WestWords strategic focus is to promote and encourage reading, writing and story-making by and for children and young people living in Western Sydney and beyond.

WestWords delivers a comprehensive program of workshops, residencies, fellowships and support for writers, and offer professional opportunities for the growth of distinctive voices. WestWords programs seek to facilitate, create and share the stories of Western Sydney in person, online and hybrid, attracting writers and audiences from across the region, nationally and internationally.

### Learn more

- <https://www.westwords.com.au/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pG593iyykDU>
- <https://www.ultimopress.com.au/australiana>

## WRITERS IN PARRAMATTA



Photography: Sally Tsoutas

**Category:** Public events

**Organisation type:** WSU, Western Sydney Creative

**Year:** 2022

### Overview

Established by Dr Kate Fagan, a member of the Writing and Society Research Centre and senior lecturer in Literary Studies at WSU, 'Writers in Parramatta' was a series of free public events presented by the Writing and Society Research Centre and the Sydney Review of Books under Western Sydney Creative.

Various local venues in Parramatta held the events with local partner organisations, including The Writing Zone, Utp, Parramatta Artists' Studios, WestWords and outLOUD, bringing together communities, writers and literary enthusiasts to celebrate and discuss creative works.<sup>C24</sup>

This event served Western Sydney residents, particularly those living in the Parramatta LGA, connecting communities with Western Sydney writers and literary enthusiasts. The events were held at local venues in the Parramatta area, including Pari Gallery, Female Orphan School and WSU Innovation Hub. Local artists showcased work at each of the events.

### Learn more

- [https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/writing\\_and\\_society/events/writers\\_in\\_parramatta](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/writing_and_society/events/writers_in_parramatta)
- [https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/staff\\_profiles/uws\\_profiles/-doctor\\_kate\\_fagan](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/staff_profiles/uws_profiles/-doctor_kate_fagan)

<sup>C23</sup>The Western Sydney Young People's Literature Development Project (WestWords) was established in 2007 to address the low level of literature development in Western Sydney. In 2015 WestWords Pty Ltd came into being and Michael Campbell was appointed its Executive Director.

<sup>C24</sup>[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/writing\\_and\\_society/events/writers\\_in\\_parramatta](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/writing_and_society/events/writers_in_parramatta)

## MADE IN THE WEST FILM FESTIVAL



Made in the West Red Carpet interview 2022  
Photography: Nataly Thomson

**Category:** Film festival

**Organisation type:** Sponsored event

### Overview

Made in the West Film Festival is a Western Sydney focused film festival that is a red-carpet event held at Liverpool Event Cinemas in Liverpool. The event is also featured online to provide better access for people with disability or audiences engaging beyond the region.

The biggest annual celebration of Western Sydney talent on the big screen, Made in the West features a selection of locally produced films that are showcased at the event, providing filmmakers with a chance to win one of three major awards judged by a panel of industry professionals.

The awards include Best in the West, Best Student Film, Best Music Video, and the Audience Choice Award is voted for by attendees on the night. Films entered into the festival can be any genre or type, under 15 minutes in length and must include at least one cast member, crew member or location from Western Sydney.

Hosted by Still Searchin' Productions, the festival connects independent and student film makers with established industry experts.<sup>C25</sup>

### Learn more

- <https://www.madeinthewest.com.au/>

## WOMEN OUT WEST



Image supplied by Women Out West

**Category:** Event

**Organisation type:** The Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre is part of Penrith Performing and Visual Arts, Ltd (PP&VA), Women with Altitude is a social enterprise

### Overview

Women out West is an ongoing panel discussion series presented three times per year by Penrith Performing and Visual Arts (which encompasses the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Q Theatre, Penrith Conservatorium and Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of the Lewers Bequest). The very first Women Out West event was held at Penrith Regional Gallery on 7 March 2021 and was presented and produced by PP&VA and author, writer and speaker Lisa Finn Powell, who is also the Relationships Manager at PP&VA.

This International Women's Day Forum in conjunction with Women with Altitude, featured an all-female string quartet from Penrith Symphony Orchestra and included two panel discussions, 'Rebuilding after Domestic Violence' and 'Women at Work'. The two discussions aimed to continue to advocate for safety, equality, diversity and growth, bringing women from the Western Sydney region together to listen, learn and inspire.

### Learn more

- <https://www.thejoan.com.au/events/women-out-west/>
- <https://www.womenwithaltitude.com.au/about-us>

<sup>C25</sup><https://www.madeinthewest.com.au/>



Dr Debra Keenahan, founder and producer  
of *Othering*, Casula Powerhouse, 2022

## OTHERING AT CASULA POWERHOUSE

**Category:** Theatre, event

**Organisation type:** Little Big Women Productions, Part of the Sydney Festival 2023, held at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

**Year:** 2023

### Overview

Othering is a powerful performance that encourages audiences to reflect on the blasé ill-treatment of people with dwarfism and, in turn, people who are viewed as 'outside the norm'.

'Inspired by performer Debra Keenahan's lived experience, this provocative new work addresses the physical, social and personal dimensions of personhood to examine the subject of 'being different' as an insider. By emphasising the reactions, attitudes and behaviours of the broader society in the construction of difference and disability,

Othering encourages audiences to experience the world 'as if' they are a person with dwarfism and reflect upon how we use words and actions to 'other' people who are seen to be different'.<sup>C26</sup>

Othering was directed by Katrina Douglas, and both produced and performed by Debra Keenahan who is a lecturer at Western Sydney University in Humanitarian and Development Studies.

Othering was developed with support of the Critical Stages Touring Regional Touring Residency and Cowra Civic Centre, Bundanon Phoenix Central Park and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and assisted through CreateNSW and Australia Council for the Arts.

### Learn more

- <https://debrakeenahan.com.au/othering/>
- <https://www.sydneyartsguide.com.au/othering-casula-powerhouse/>

<sup>C26</sup><https://debrakeenahan.com.au/othering/>

# POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT OF THE ARTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY

This section presents a review of 20 local, state and federal policies and strategies that have shaped the arts sector in Western Sydney in the last 10 years.<sup>123</sup> A shift occurred in consideration of the arts in the region following the funding and infrastructure inequities uncovered by Deloitte's (2015) study on the Arts and Culture Economy in Western Sydney. Recent studies have also pointed to the lack of an overarching governance structure and strategy for growing, developing and diversifying Western Sydney's arts sector. Further, they have highlighted that while more recent policy documents consider Western Sydney, the focus is exclusively on Parramatta, representing only one part of the region and Western Sydney's arts and cultural practice and infrastructure.<sup>124</sup> This section begins with a summary of policy developments since the 2015 Deloitte study, then analyses the current policy landscape for the arts in Western Sydney and closes with an evaluation of key strategic achievements in the arts sector following the publication of the Deloitte (2015) study.

## Tracking investment and progress in Western Sydney's arts and cultural sector

Recommendation proposed by <i>Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy Study</i>	
1 commitment of \$300 million for cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney from 2015–2020, excluding the Powerhouse relocation <sup>125</sup>	X
2 double arts and cultural development program funding: Arts NSW double 2015 program funding to Western Sydney through its Arts and Cultural Development Program: from \$3.2 million in 2014 to \$6.4 million for 2015 through 2020 financial years; with funding levels tripled (to \$9.6 m) from 2021 onwards	X
3 relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Western Sydney (including sale proceeds, formal links with WSU, local cultural arts industry and existing cultural venues) <sup>126</sup>	Partially accomplished
4 work with Western Sydney's councils and cultural arts leaders to establish a Western Sydney Cultural Arts Advisory Group <sup>127</sup>	Partially accomplished
5 NSW government to develop a long-term Western Sydney Cultural Arts Infrastructure and Industry Development Strategy <sup>128</sup>	X
6 co-fund (with relevant councils) the planning and development of the redevelopments of new large-scale cultural art venues in the three regional city centres: Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith <sup>129</sup>	X
7 co-fund (with relevant councils) the planning and development of community cultural arts infrastructure in Western Sydney's major centres	X

<sup>123</sup>This section reviews high-level strategies and plans versus implementation-level programs, based on a policy matrix provided by Stonehaven Australia. The analysis is based on publicly available, open-source materials. As such, the ability to assess the effectiveness of the policies is constrained by what the policymakers, involved organisations and third-party sources have publicly disclosed.

<sup>124</sup>See SGS Economics & Planning (2018); Cmielewski et al. (2020).

<sup>125</sup>Recent cultural infrastructure funding has been allocated to the region through the WestInvest fund, tracking at \$562 m as of 9 February 2023. However, this funding was awarded in 2022, past the 2020 target end date for this recommendation.

<sup>126</sup>Sale proceeds remain connected to the Ultimo site.

<sup>127</sup>The Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Roundtable was set up and conducted from 2015–2017.

<sup>128</sup>Create NSW commissioned SGS Economics & Planning to undertake the Mapping Arts in Western Sydney study in 2018. However, no formal arts and culture strategy in Western Sydney was developed.

<sup>129</sup>Plans to develop Riverside Theatre were approved in July 2021. This will be funded through the \$100 million sale of the Parramatta Riverbank carpark site (to the NSW Government for the Museum of Applied Arts & Science). In addition, \$40 million was awarded through the WestInvest grants.

8	fund investigations into establishing a permanent external performing arts venue (i.e., music bowl in Western Sydney) <sup>130</sup>	X
9	provide funding for the Western Sydney Conservatorium of music (Penrith)	X
10	expand cultural arts training: relocate Australian Film, Television and Radio School and the National Arts School. WSU to develop new programs to deliver vital tertiary cultural arts training	X
11	establish a cultural arts endowment fund, and that the government invest \$1 million a year for the first 10 years of the fund, matching contributions made to the endowment fund from the private sector and philanthropic organisations <sup>131</sup>	X
12	representation by Western Sydney on the boards of the state's major cultural institutions be required, and that each institution provides an annual report card on their activities, engagement and reach in Western Sydney	X

<sup>130</sup>Although not a permanent music bowl, the Crescent in Parramatta, managed by then-Parramatta Parklands (Western Sydney Parklands Trust) developed a music program between 2015–2018, including moving the Tropfest short film festival and Sydney Symphony Under the Stars program to Parramatta.

<sup>131</sup>Note that Create NSW Western Sydney Arts Fellowship provided \$60,000 of financial support to enable an artist or arts/cultural worker from Western Sydney to undertake a self-directed program of professional development (2015–2017).

**Figure 4.1:** Policies, Plans and Strategies on the Arts in Western Sydney

## FEDERAL

- **Revive: Australia's Cultural Policy for the next five years (2023)**
- **Corporate Plan (triennial) (2022)**
- **National Performing Arts Partnership Framework (2019)**
- **Creative Economy Support Package (2020)**
- **National Indigenous Visual Arts Action Plan (2021)**

## STATE

### Create NSW

- NSW Arts & Cultural Policy Framework (2015)
- NSW 24 Hour Economy (2020)
- Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ (2019)
- Local Government Authorities Arts and Culture Program (yearly)

### Destination NSW

- Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan (2017)
- Western Sydney Visitor Economy Strategy (2017)

### Screen NSW

- Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018 (2015)

### Department of Premier and Cabinet

- WestInvest Fund (2022)

### Greater Cities Commission

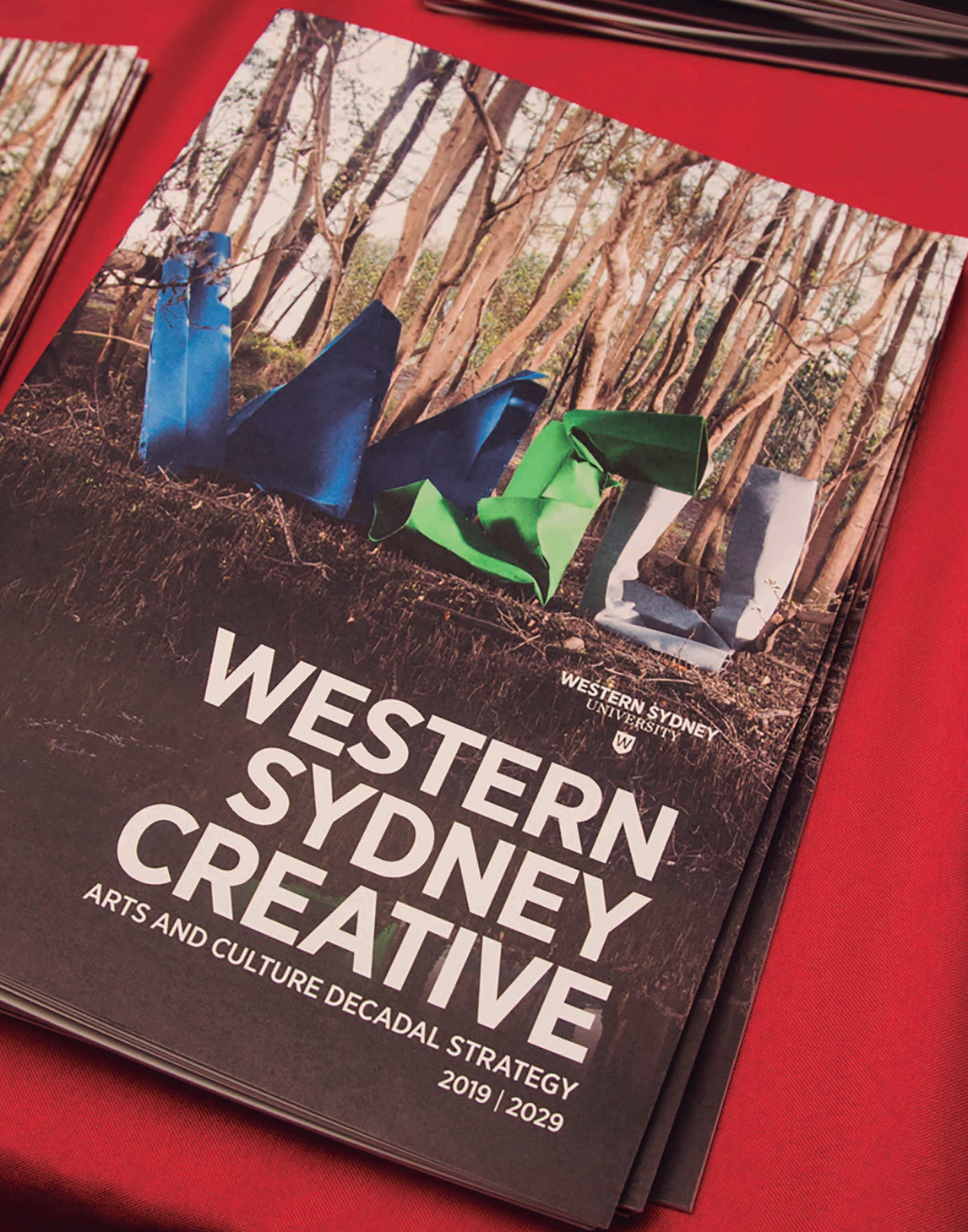
- Greater Sydney Region Plan: a Metropolis of Three Cities (2018)
- Western City and Central City District Plans (2018)
- The Six Cities Discussion Paper (2022)

## LOCAL

- **Parramatta City Council:** Parramatta CBD Cultural Plan (2017)
- **Blacktown City Council:** Blacktown City Cultural Plan (2013)
- **Liverpool City Council:** Liverpool City Council Cultural Policy (2017)
- **City of Canterbury Bankstown Council:** Creative City Strategic Plan (2019)
- **Campbelltown City Council:** Campbelltown Community Plan (2020)

**WESTERN  
SYDNEY  
CREATIVE**  
ARTS AND CULTURE DECADAL STRATEGY  
2019 | 2029

**WESTERN  
SYDNEY  
CREATIVE**  
ARTS AND CULTURE DECADAL STRATEGY  
2019 | 2029



## SUMMARY OF KEY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

**Figure 4.2:** Key Findings: Policy and Strategic Landscape of the Arts in Western Sydney<sup>132</sup>

### KEY FINDINGS OF POLICY ANALYSIS

1. The focus of state arts and cultural planning and policy for metropolitan Sydney remains focused on the Sydney CBD. When Western Sydney is discussed, the focus is solely on the Central City (Parramatta).
2. There has been increased focus on supporting artists, especially young artists, Indigenous artists and artists with disabilities.
3. Local policies seek to develop the reputation and prestige of artistic and cultural institutions in Western Sydney – turning it into a destination for visitors and creators.
4. Some state policies embed the arts sector within broader strategic planning for the future development of key regions of NSW, including Western Sydney.<sup>133</sup>
5. Increased recognition of the connections between the arts and other industries, such as the visitor and night-time economies, as well as the future development of city centres in NSW.
6. Local government policies and plans, while varying in quality, generally had more targeted and grassroots interventions for the Western Sydney region.

### POLICY STRENGTHS

1. Evidence-based and informed by research, data and ongoing community consultation on existing achievements and challenges. Moreover, policies are reviewed and amended regularly based on emerging evidence.
2. Clear objectives and policy time frames, broken down into concrete, measurable programs and actions for the future of the arts in Western Sydney.
3. Cultural infrastructure support for both hard and soft infrastructure.
4. Clarity and transparency for funding programs, including accessible funding mechanisms, particularly for smaller community organisations or individuals.
5. Long-term and repeatable funding that enables organisations to commit to long-term plans and infrastructure projects.
6. Transparent reporting of progress and embedded regular reviews to track policy implementation.
7. Include case studies and best practices for the arts from communities around the world.

### POLICY GAPS

1. The absence of a clear timeline and commitment to review, as well as little analysis or public commentary to determine the success and effectiveness of key policies.
2. Vague and abstract language used in goals and objectives (e.g., promote inclusivity and diversity, increase cultural participation) that do not detail specific deliverables to achieve such goals.
3. Lack of investment in individual performers and freelance artists rather than just organisations and industry bodies.
4. Lack of representation of underrepresented groups within the organisations designing policies that seek to support a particular demographic, e.g., Indigenous Australians or CALD communities. The bodies responsible for designing these policies must represent the groups they are trying to work with.
5. Minimal engagement with stakeholders, requiring greater inclusion of insights from consultation or research with community groups, audiences and artists, particularly from the Western Sydney region.

<sup>132</sup>Refer to Appendix C for a written overview of key policies analysed in this report.

<sup>133</sup>See, also, Cmielewski et al. (2020).

## FEDERAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Australian Government supports the arts and culture through four core funding streams:<sup>134</sup>

- targeted programs
- key national institutions
- artist support programs
- broadcasting and tax incentives.

The core federal avenue supporting Western Sydney is the Australia Council for the Arts. The Australia Council is the Australian Government's principal arts investment, development and advisory body.

### FEDERAL PRIORITIES

#### Key themes in federal policies and strategies on the arts

- support a professional, viable and ethical Indigenous arts industry based on strong participation and economic opportunities for Indigenous Australians, ensuring the community cherishes Indigenous storytelling
- address disparities in access to the arts, improve arts education and promote fairness in access to the arts for communities that have suffered from marginalisation
- support the longevity and operational sustainability of arts organisations
- ensure that Australian audiences can access and engage with the arts and can benefit from or be transformed by arts and cultural projects
- ensure the arts reflect and represent the diversity of Australian society and tell everyone's story
- provide COVID-19 recovery and support for the cultural and creative sector.

## STATE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The NSW Government plays a significant role in funding cultural arts programs, major institutions, performing artists, venues and events. To carry out this responsibility, the NSW Government has created Create NSW, an integrated entity that oversees arts, screen and cultural functions. This organisation is a part of the Arts, Sport and Tourism Group within the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade. It works towards the government's goal of making NSW recognised for its dynamic and inclusive arts and culture that connects with the community and showcases the state's diverse heritage.

Broader initiatives in the areas of tourism and regional planning, also impact the policies and strategies surrounding arts and culture. As a result, this report analysed state policies and strategies related to arts and culture, encompassing Create NSW, Destination NSW, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Screen NSW and the Greater Cities Commission.

### STATE PRIORITIES

#### Key themes in state policies and strategies on the arts in Western Sydney

- improve the inclusivity and accessibility of the arts
- support the building and revitalisation of cultural infrastructure across NSW, including in Western Sydney and Regional NSW
- embed the arts into urban and regional planning strategies
- create jobs and support employment in the arts sector
- support Aboriginal arts and culture
- support cultural innovation and leadership
- encourage younger generations involved as audiences and artists
- support sector development and business sustainability, including small businesses and individual artists across regions and programs
- facilitate partnerships
- support the recovery and growth of the night-time economy.

<sup>134</sup>See Deloitte (2015).

## LOCAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

This review examined five strategies/plans from local governments in Western Sydney to understand their priorities for arts and culture.<sup>135</sup> This analysis revealed several key themes that indicate how local governments plan for arts and culture across key strategic centres of Western Sydney.

#### Key themes in local policies and strategies on the arts in Western Sydney

- seek to deliver unique arts and cultural activities programs that build the identity of local areas and distinguish its local cultural life from other parts of Sydney
- improve the inclusivity and accessibility of arts and culture by developing and providing infrastructure and special funding and programs
- acknowledge the importance of preserving and promoting Indigenous arts and culture
- seek to invest and fund arts and cultural activities as a new and effective way to facilitate the local economy and generate revenue
- support cultural innovation and leadership in the arts and cultural sector in building a unique cultural identity for the LGA
- funding and investment to major local arts and cultural organisations that aim to maintain and prosper local cultural participation
- acknowledge and integrate environmental impact and local ecological profiles as part of cultural planning.

<sup>135</sup>Plans and festivals reviewed included: Parramatta City Council: Parramatta CBD Cultural Plan (2017); Penrith City Council: ad hoc policies (The Real Festival Strategy and 10-Year Plan (2021–2031)); Blacktown City Council: Blacktown City Cultural Plan (2013); Liverpool City Council: Liverpool City Council Cultural Policy (2017); City of Canterbury Bankstown Council: Creative City Strategic Plan (2019) and Campbelltown City Council: Campbelltown Community Plan (2020). LGAs were selected for this analysis based on their relevance to the location of Western Sydney University campuses, as well as their importance as key strategic centres in the region.



Dr Holly Harrison, Giraffe Quartet, Research Creation Showcase, Casual Powerhouse, 2022



Backstage - Fiji's Pacific Fusion fashion runway by Hupfeld Evers Hoerder, Research Creations Showcase, Casula Powerhouse, 2022

# STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

As the policy analysis demonstrates, urban arts and cultural policies often prioritise economic development and placemaking to the detriment of local artists and cultural workers' needs and experiences.<sup>136</sup> Recent research has called for more qualitative research and evaluations at the grassroots level to inform government-led initiatives and strategies for the creative economy in NSW. This advocacy stems from frustration with the lack of tangible benefits for the arts and cultural sector in Western Sydney despite the political attention it received from 2015 onwards. Specifically, there has been a push for cultural policies informed by meaningful community consultation and engagement – that is, ongoing consultation, implementation and evaluation based on the needs and experiences of those in the sector.<sup>137</sup>

To develop more inclusive approaches to local cultural policy that focus on artists and cultural practitioners, the Centre for Western Sydney collaborated to design and facilitate a series of engagement activities to gather input from industry stakeholders, reflected in the proposed priorities and actions detailed within this report.

Engagement activities included:<sup>138</sup>

- 10x 45 min virtual interviews with industry leaders identified by Western Sydney Creative
- 1x 1.5 hr in person/hybrid workshop with 13 members of the WSAA
- 1x 1 hr virtual workshop with 14 other interested artists and art workers (by invitation from the Centre for Western Sydney and WSAA).

Across the various engagement activities, all participants were asked the following questions:

1. What do you believe are the strengths of the Western Sydney Arts & Culture Sector, especially those that set it apart from the rest of Sydney?
2. Building on these strengths, what is your ideal vision for the sector's future?
3. What are the most critical, specific barriers to achieving that vision?
4. What specific interventions by industry or different levels of government would have the greatest impact on these barriers?

The workshops used paired and plenary conversations, as well as a mix of physical materials and the virtual tool GroupMap to maximise participants' opportunity to share their views.

<sup>136</sup>See Stevenson (2014).


<sup>137</sup>See Stevenson (2018).

<sup>138</sup>Refer to Appendix G for a list of participants and a copy of the questions used across the three engagement activities. Stakeholder consultations were facilitated by Scott Newton-Lappan of Gauge Consulting.

Key themes that emerged from these engagements are discussed below, focusing on the perceived strengths and challenges of the arts sector in Western Sydney according to the stakeholders engaged in the consultation.<sup>139</sup>

**Figure 5.1:** Perceived Strengths and Barriers faced by the Arts Sector

**PERCEIVED STRENGTHS OF THE ARTS SECTOR**



1. home to diverse, authentic voices of contemporary Australia
2. entrepreneurial and highly skilled artists
3. inclusive approaches grounded in community
4. collaborative, not competitive

**BARRIERS FACED BY THE ARTS SECTOR**



1. outdated and inaccurate regional profile of Western Sydney
2. inadequate representation of Western Sydney in decision-making processes
3. limited creative infrastructure, operational support and unfair funding processes
4. limited education and business development pathways

The consultations with key stakeholders in Western Sydney revealed three main findings:

- 1 Western Sydney’s arts sector has many strengths and distinctive features, including a diverse range of authentic voices, many skilled and entrepreneurial artists, an inclusive culture deeply rooted in local communities and promotes diverse practices and a collaborative artistic culture that values support over competition.
- 2 Challenges and obstacles are preventing the arts sector in Western Sydney from reaching its full potential, such as an outdated and incorrect regional reputation, insufficient representation in decision-making, unfair funding processes, insufficient creative infrastructure and support and limited education and business development pathways.
- 3 Arts and cultural workers envision a future where Western Sydney becomes the centre of the arts, occupied by self- determined artists and remains inclusive in providing funding opportunities and access to spaces for all. They aim to be recognised and celebrated for their contributions while maintaining a collaborative ecosystem in Western Sydney that maximises their impact.

<sup>139</sup>Facilitator notes from Scott Lappan-Newton on opportunities for continued sector engagement to further progress a strengths-based conversation on the sector are also included in Appendix G.

## STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: STRENGTHS OF THE ARTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY

### DIVERSE, AUTHENTIC VOICES OF CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA

One of the major perceived advantages of the sector is the abundance of cultural diversity among both artists and the Western Sydney region itself. Participants believed that Western Sydney contains a wide variety of artists and art professionals who make up a vibrant tapestry across the region, with strong ties to local and global communities.<sup>140</sup> Their perspectives are genuine, and their artistic techniques and skills are influenced by and contribute to distinct customs from around the globe. Additionally, Western Sydney is home to a large population of Indigenous peoples and community audiences with a strong interest in their narratives and histories. Individuals working in the sector emphasised the significant opportunities such diversity and strong connection to Indigenous histories and community artists offer towards the unique value and contribution of the arts in Western Sydney. This is particularly significant following the recent release of the new National Cultural Policy - *Revive* and its core commitment to Indigenous arts and culture. Western Sydney, home to one of the largest Indigenous communities in the nation, provides a prime context for enacting the commitments of this federal policy towards Indigenous communities.

### ENTREPRENEURIAL AND HIGHLY SKILLED

Consultations uncovered that creatives in Western Sydney's arts sector possess a strong entrepreneurial spirit, often emerging through non-traditional channels and developing resilience and resourcefulness in an underfunded sector. According to participants, creatives in Western Sydney employ bold and innovative approaches that resonate with global audiences, who are increasingly valuing authenticity and ingenuity in the stories and practices of creators over prestige. Additionally, those working in the sector believed that Western Sydney is at the forefront of a shift in Australia towards delivering more holistic 'experiences' to communities, including a significant pivot towards online arts and culture experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>141</sup>

### INCLUSIVE APPROACHES GROUNDED IN COMMUNITY

Stakeholders believed Western Sydney's approach to the arts is unpretentious and bound by 'no rules', allowing for authentic productions by, with and for communities. Small-to-medium organisations were also perceived as a key asset, providing flexibility and an open environment for creative practice. Throughout the consultations, many participants pointed to the sector-led pathways provided for grassroots artists to build successful careers in the sector through training, shadowing opportunities, internships and other opportunities.

In addition to providing informal education and training, participants described creative spaces as public spaces, whereby creative communities continue to provide opportunities for young people and other amateurs to use such spaces to deliver arts and cultural experiences for their communities. These perspectives reinforce how creative practice is embedded in the local community across informal spaces<sup>142</sup> while shedding light on the region's informal education and training opportunities.

### COLLABORATIVE, NOT COMPETITIVE

Conversations with those employed in the sector reinforced the strong partnerships and collaborative relationships between the WSAA, other arts and culture organisations, local governments and WSU that work effectively together to maximise outcomes for all. According to participants, such collaborative approaches have enabled the sector to share the benefits of funding programs such as WestInvest and the JobKeeper Payment. As reflected in previous research, a key strength of the sector is the uniquely collaborative and flexible creative practices that produce regional production synergies and enhanced capacity.<sup>143</sup>

## STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: BARRIERS TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ARTS SECTOR IN WESTERN SYDNEY

### OUTDATED AND INACCURATE REGIONAL PROFILE OF WESTERN SYDNEY

Arts and cultural workers indicated that despite the extensive strengths of the region, negative perceptions and representations of Western Sydney were inaccurate and outdated. There was a desire for collaboration as a sector to redefine and enhance the image of the arts in Western Sydney, both nationally and internationally. As specified by those working in the sector, a rebrand of the arts sector in Western Sydney necessitates a strengths-based approach that moves beyond the perception of Western Sydney as a 'struggling' area with 'niche' perspectives to one portrayed instead as a microcosm of modern Australia and the world.

As previously documented in research by Katrina Sandbach, creatives have already been key influencers in transforming the place branding of Western Sydney, sharing their narratives and lived experiences of the region across various creative mediums using a strengths-based approach.<sup>144</sup> This has also taken place at the local government level, where participatory placemaking approaches like Penrith Council's Magnetic Places provided financial support to organisations to devise community-based creative projects.<sup>145</sup> The desire to rebrand Western Sydney, combined with the past achievements of creatives in achieving this, presents a significant opportunity for the arts sector in Western Sydney.

<sup>140</sup>See also Ho (2014); Bau, Georgeou & Kreemers (2021) and Sandbach (2021).

<sup>141</sup>See also Stevenson et al. (2017) on the flexibility within the arts and culture sector in Western Sydney, as well as the employment of digital technologies and platforms.

<sup>142</sup>See Sandbach (2021) on the connection between arts and culture and local communities in Western Sydney. See Stevenson et al. (2017) and Cmielewski et al. (2021) on the collaborative work of artists in Western Sydney.

<sup>143</sup>As noted in studies by Stevenson et al. (2017) and Cmielewski et al. (2021).

<sup>144</sup>See Sandbach (2013, 2015).

<sup>145</sup>See Sandbach (2015).

## INADEQUATE WESTERN SYDNEY REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Consultations with the sector uncovered that decision-making processes in the arts in the region and NSW must be strengthened, including by:

- affording greater influence to Indigenous Australians and CALD communities in Western Sydney better balancing the responsibility of building relationships between Western and eastern Sydney
- gathering and using better sector-specific data to inform decisions
- assigning Western Sydney representation to all decision-making positions across boards and committees relating to NSW's arts and culture sector.<sup>146</sup>

Conversely, participants also highlighted that potential contributions of the arts to other sectors should be utilised more effectively. As those working in the sector emphasised, the arts provide valuable and genuine insights into the community and a unique perspective for interdisciplinary team decision-making and problem-solving processes. Participants emphasised that the arts sector should be given more consideration in strategic planning processes and a more prominent role in major regional development projects. These findings provide novel insights into the desire for the Western Sydney arts sector to be involved and represented in key sector decision-making positions and key regional planning projects.

## UNFAIR ARTS FUNDING PROCESSES

Arts and cultural workers explained that funding for the sector is insufficient and typically short-term. In addition, they believed that funding allocations are not always transparent and often favour eastern Sydney's State Cultural organisations.<sup>147</sup> Current funding processes were described as focused on narrow economic measures of success, such as 'bums on seats', rather than rewarding artist excellence, creative risk-taking and more nuanced, broader community benefit. In addition, participants emphasised that is very little dedicated funding for Western Sydney to counteract this imbalance, which results in the sector relying on local government funding, which is relatively small and can shift drastically between elections.

Critically, participants expressed that funding application processes are not artist-friendly, requiring creatives to articulate the value of their work in government-centric, financially focused terms via overly bureaucratic written-word mediums. Moreover, participants believed that these applications are often reviewed by judging panels lacking diversity, reducing the success rate of applicants from the Western Sydney region, particularly those from diverse backgrounds.

## INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR MARGINALISED GROUPS

According to the stakeholders consulted, funding alone is insufficient to address the holistic barriers to participation in the arts, such as socioeconomic and sociocultural barriers, which disproportionately impact communities in Western Sydney. This is particularly true for marginalised groups such as Indigenous Australians, CALD communities, women and young people.<sup>148</sup> If these barriers are not addressed, the sector will miss out on the unique talents and stories of the diverse communities residing in the region while limiting these communities' access to attend and enjoy the arts. Specifically, discussions highlighted the need for targeted support to unlock the rich stories and contributions of our Indigenous communities, which can benefit not only the Western Sydney region but also Australia and the world. These findings demonstrate the need to examine the needs and mitigate the challenges of key disadvantaged groups within the arts sector in Western Sydney.

## INADEQUATE CREATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

Arts and cultural workers emphasised that there is a lack of infrastructure in place to realise their vision for the arts sector in Western Sydney. Participants indicated a need for hard and soft creative infrastructure, including large cultural spaces, decentralised rehearsal and studio spaces and improved public transport.<sup>149</sup> In addition, there is a need for greater support for artists and art workers to operate these facilities long-term once hard infrastructures are provided, such as operational support, digital capacity and ongoing training. Given the expansiveness of the region and the tendency for communities to remain in their local areas, participants emphasised that providing infrastructure in one location (such as Parramatta) will not meet the needs of greater Western Sydney.

## LIMITED EDUCATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

Discussions focused on the lack of local art and culture education in Western Sydney as a critical issue that needs to be addressed.<sup>150</sup> Key stakeholders warned that if the current skills gap remains, communities in Western Sydney will likely stop practising their art or seek opportunities elsewhere. The impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated a skills shortage of technical staff, marketers, partnerships managers, arts workers and executive managers and administrators in the arts sector. Many in these roles have moved to other sectors with better-paying, permanent positions. Additionally, COVID-19 and the worsening economic climate have led to a normalisation of staying indoors, making it more important than ever for the sector to possess the marketing skills necessary to improve the visibility of art and cultural experiences, especially those developed by diverse artists.

<sup>146</sup>Also proposed by Deloitte (2015).

<sup>147</sup>See Deloitte (2015) on funding disparities between organisations in Eastern Sydney compared with Western Sydney.

<sup>148</sup>Diversity Arts Australia (2022) emphasises the exacerbated difficulties faced by Indigenous Australians and CALD artists during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

<sup>149</sup>Infrastructure shortages and needs detailed by SGS Economics & Planning (2018).

<sup>150</sup>Also covered by Cmielewski et al. (2020), Deloitte (2015) and Stevenson & Magee (2017).



Ben Quilty, alumnus of Western Sydney University  
in his studio, 2022

## ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS SECTOR IN WESTERN SYDNEY

Building on the key strengths and barriers discussed throughout the engagements, stakeholders detailed their ideal vision for the sector's future.

Arts and cultural workers envision a future for the sector where the West becomes the centre of the arts, occupied by self-determined artists and remains inclusive in providing opportunities for all to participate in sector funding and access spaces. Those working in the sector seek to be recognised and celebrated for their contributions while maintaining a collaborative ecosystem in Western Sydney that maximises the impact of their work.

**Figure 5.2:** The vision of the sector for the future of arts in Western Sydney



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**Figure 5.1:** Perceived Strengths and Barriers faced by the Arts Sector

**Figure 5.2:** The vision of the sector for the future of arts in Western Sydney

## APPENDIX B: KEY TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

**ABS:** Australian Bureau of Statistics

**Arts and culture:** In the context of this report, the arts and culture sector/industry is discussed in terms of the economic and social activity that places creative and artistic production at its core, and from which culture in all of its expression and diverse mediums results.

**Arts and cultural events:** An organised event celebrating and exhibiting the richness and diversity of artistic and cultural production and endeavours.

**Audience:** Attendees at arts and cultural events.

**CALD:** Includes people who do not speak English as their first language and have a culturally diverse linguistic background.

**Community infrastructure:** Spaces that are run by the government or non-profit organisations and primarily serve a different purpose but may also be used for arts and cultural activities, such as community centres, halls, libraries, or exhibition grounds.

**Creative economy:** The creative economy is the sum of all the parts of the creative industries, including trade, labour and production.

**Creative industries:** The use of cultural and creative practices to produce social, cultural and commercial outcomes. Creative Industries include but are not limited to advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, film, video, photography, music, performing arts, publishing, research & development, software, computer games, electronic publishing and TV/radio.

**Cultural attendance:** the activities of audiences and participants in consuming cultural products and taking part in cultural activities and experiences.

**Cultural festival:** A festival featuring arts and events specific to a particular culture.

**Cultural participation:** Activities of participants in making or producing art and undertaking an arts activity.

**Cultural precincts:** an area that brings together cultural institutions, organisations and businesses to support and celebrate arts and culture. Arts and cultural precincts play an important role in supporting the state's creative industries, enriching the cultural life of communities and promoting cultural tourism.

**Disability:** A person with a disability includes those who report having a limitation, restriction, or impairment, which has lasted or is likely to last for a least six months and restricts everyday activities (ABS).

**Eastern Sydney:** For the purpose of this report, Eastern Sydney is referred to as the geographical area encompassing all Sydney LGAs outside of the Western Sydney region. This includes Burwood, Bayside, Canada Bay, Georges River, Hornsby Shire, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches Council, Randwick, Ryde, Sutherland Shire, City of Sydney, Waverley, Willoughby, Strathfield and Woollahra.

**Indigenous Australians:** In alignment with key strategic documents and

at Western Sydney University, this report adopts the term Indigenous Australians to refer to First Nations, Indigenous, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Funded arts organisations:** Arts organisations that receive funding from federal, state or local governments through grants or other financial support to undertake a range of activities that deliver benefits to the arts sector and wider public

**Hard cultural infrastructure:** Spaces, buildings and venues that facilitate the development, production and delivery of cultural activities

**LGA:** The geographic area in which a local council is responsible.

**Multipurpose spaces:** Arts and cultural spaces that are suitable for multiple artistic purposes. For example, co-located galleries and studios that used for production, performances and exhibitions.

**Museums:** A publicly or privately owned/operated institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage.

**Non-purpose built facilities:** Facilities such as community halls, showgrounds, parks and streetscapes that may be used for arts and cultural activity and events, however, is not the primary purpose.

**Professional arts organisations:** Organisations that support the development, production and/or presentation of professional arts, cultural and creative programs, events and experiences.

**Purpose-built facilities:** Facilities constructed specifically for arts and cultural activities, including the creation and display of cultural expressions and artistic works. These facilities can be owned and operated by the public sector, private non-profit organisations, or community entities.

**Regionally significant venues:** cultural venues are facilities that promote and preserve the cultural heritage and identity of a specific region. These venues serve as hubs for cultural activity and gathering places for the local community, and include museums, theatres, galleries, concert halls, cultural centres and historical sites.

**Sector development:** The development of policies and programs that support and encourage training, education, business creation and skills and the development and growth of artists and arts organisations.

**Soft cultural infrastructure:** Institutions, policies and personnel necessary to facilitate and service the creation and provision of cultural infrastructure and facilities.

**State cultural institutions:** Institutions owned by the NSW Government that provide programs and services to the public and manage significant cultural heritage collections. State Cultural institutions include the Sydney Opera House, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Australian Museum, State Library of NSW, Art Gallery of NSW and Museums of History NSW.

**Western Sydney:** refers to the LGAs of Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, The Hills, Wollondilly.

**Young people:** Persons aged between 15 and 24 years.

## APPENDIX C: CHANCELLOR AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ARTS AND CULTURE ROUNDTABLE

10am, Friday 18 March 2022

Boardroom 1, Level 2, Building EB, Parramatta South Campus.

### Attendees External representatives

The Hon Ben Franklin MLC,  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth  
Mr Steven Alderton, Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), National Art School  
The Hon Peter Collins AM President, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences  
Mr Michael Dagostino, Director, Campbelltown Arts Centre  
Ms Elizabeth Dibbs, Deputy Chancellor  
Mr David Gonski AC, Chancellor, UNSW  
Dr Jessica Olivieri, CEO and Artistic Director, UTP  
Dr Gene Sherman AM, Executive Director and Founder, Sherman Centre for Culture and Ideas  
Ms Kate McQuestin, Chief of Staff – Office of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Arts and Regional Youth  
Ms Gabrielle Trainor AO, member, Foundation Council

### Western Sydney University

Professor Peter Shergold AC (Chancellor)  
Professor Barney Glover AO (Vice-Chancellor and President) (Chair) (by Zoom)  
Professor Andy Marks (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Strategy, Governance and Alliances)  
Ms Dolla Merrillees, Director Western Sydney Creative  
Ms Sophie Buck, Director, Governance (meeting support)

### Apologies

Ms Kate Foy, Group Deputy Secretary, Tourism, Sport and Arts, NSW Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade

### Background

In 2019, WSU released its arts and culture decadal strategy, Western Sydney Creative 2019 – 2029 (Western Sydney Creative). The strategy sets out the University's commitment and capacity as a leading learning, research and advocacy organisation for arts and culture in our region. Its implementation, late last year comes at a critical juncture with arts and cultural practice across Western Sydney and beyond experiencing significant challenges over the past two years, and with work accelerating on major infrastructure projects.

### Roundtable Key Questions

The Arts and Culture in Western Sydney Roundtable seeks to address the University's role and focus in relation to two key themes.

#### 1. State of the Arts in Western Sydney:

Strategic cultural planning and investment in the evolving challenges, resilience and vision of the arts and culture sector is critical in securing the cultural arts economy potential in Western Sydney, which has been made more precarious and uncertain by the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Recognising the need to revisit the cultural arts economy in Western Sydney since the 2015 Deloitte study – Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy – A Key to Sydney's Success, the following questions need to be urgently addressed:

- a. How has cultural resource expenditure and activity across Western Sydney changed since 2015?
- b. What are the impacts of these changes on the cultural arts economy, particularly within the context of the pandemic?
- c. What is required to build on and sustain existing and emerging opportunities of the small-to-medium arts sector within the cultural arts economy in Western Sydney that will aid a wider COVID-19 recovery agenda and build resilience across the region?
- d. How can the University capitalise on strategic opportunities (e.g., WestInvest, Aerotropolis, Parramatta CBD revitalisation) to further develop, activate and consolidate the arts within Western Sydney?

## 2. Arts and Cultural Workforce of the Future:

Strategic cultural planning and investment in the evolving challenges, resilience and vision of the arts and culture sector is critical in securing the cultural arts economy potential in Western Sydney, which has been made more precarious and uncertain by the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Recognising the need to revisit the cultural arts economy in Western Sydney since the 2015 Deloitte study – Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy – A Key to Sydney's Success, the following questions need to be urgently addressed:

- a. What are the current issues and challenges as they relate to arts and culture in Western Sydney? What emerging trends impact on the University's role?
- b. How can the University help meet the challenges of a rapidly growing Western Sydney population? How can the University best assist over the next decade?
- c. How can the University assist with supporting and creating linkages and relationships that contribute to the growth of the creative and cultural economy? (e.g., creative supply chains, creative technology, skills policy, creative industry clusters)
- d. How can the University assist with building capacity in the arts and cultural sector, including education, training and ongoing professional, leadership and skills development?

## APPENDIX D: THE ARTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY – SUPPLEMENTARY

### Indigenous Communities in Western Sydney by LGA

Indigenous (ancestry) Western Sydney residents	(#)	LGA population (%)
Blacktown City	10,866	2.70
Blue Mountains City	2,051	2.6
Camden Council	3,716	3.1
Campbelltown Council	6,785	3.8
The City of Canterbury Bankstown	2,627	0.7
Cumberland Council	1,436	0.6
Fairfield City	1,476	0.7
Hawkesbury City	3,081	4.6
Liverpool City	3,605	1.5
The City of Parramatta	1,754	0.7
Penrith City	10,057	4.6
The Hills Shire	1,211	0.6
Wollondilly Shire Council	2,341	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,008</b>	<b>2</b>

## Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Western Sydney

Ancestry <sup>179</sup>	2021		2016		2011		Change from 2011–2021
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)
Australian	520,888	20.0	502,615	21.8	495,631	23.8	+25,256
English	476,834	18.3	473,362	20.5	441,365	21.2	+35,468
Chinese	231,571	8.9	195,194	8.5	150,217	7.2	+81,354
Indian	171,170	6.6	134,703	5.8	86,070	4.1	+85,100
Irish	130,348	5.0	141,591	6.1	125,228	6.0	+5,120
Lebanese	129,913	5.0	124,004	5.4	108,367	5.2	+21,545
Scottish	107,376	4.1	108,394	4.7	97,459	4.7	+9,917
Italian	96,841	3.7	90,443	3.9	83,686	4.0	+13,154
Vietnamese	94,371	3.6	86,195	3.7	66,357	3.2	+28,014
Filipino	89,445	3.4	70,738	3.1	59,843	2.9	+29,601
Birthplace							
Overseas born	1,067,345	40.9	890,764	38.6	754,589	36.3	+312,756
Australia	1,406,386	54.0	1,280,315	55.5	1,212,115	58.3	+194,270
Not stated	132,796	5.1	136,378	5.9	113,930	5.5	+18,866
Languages spoken at home							
Speaks English only	1,258,128	48.3	1,175,909	51.0	1,136,141	54.6	+121,987
Non-English total	1,191,895	45.7	1,005,356	43.6	841,232	40.4	+350,663
Not stated	156,521	6.0	125,923	5.5	103,373	5.0	+53,147
Language Spoken at home (excluding English)							
Arabic	185,377	7.1	161,688	7.0	146,020	7.0	+39,357
Mandarin	102,641	3.9	81,182	3.5	51,076	2.5	+51,564
Vietnamese	95,219	3.7	84,144	3.6	73,138	3.5	+22,080
Cantonese	63,159	2.4	60,862	2.6	58,926	2.8	+4,232
Hindi	57,644	2.2	47,924	2.1	38,655	1.9	+18,988
Filipino/Tagalog	52,072	2.0	44,562	1.9	39,817	1.9	+12,254
Punjabi	39,202	1.5	24,426	1.1	15,400	0.7	+23,802
Urdu	38,338	1.5	24,310	1.1	14,090	0.7	+24,248
Assyrian/Aramaic	36,463	1.4	28,104	1.2	19,769	1.0	+16,694
Nepali	32,973	1.3	14,040	0.6	5,682	0.3	+27,291

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2016 &amp; 2021.

<sup>179</sup>Ancestry defines the cultural association and ethnic background of an individual going back three generations.

## Qualification Levels in Western Sydney, persons aged 15+ (2001–2021)

Qualification level	2021	2016	2011	2006	2001	Change 2011–2021
Bachelor or higher degree	536,656	380,821	277,286	203,582	153,509	+383,146
Advanced diploma or diploma	191,181	162,986	132,495	105,012	81,528	+109,653
Vocational	331,679	306,597	272,549	245,967	231,108	+100,571
No qualification	829,885	806,098	769,793	747,558	791,812	+38,072
Not stated	177,263	167,670	181,168	201,666	173,102	+4,161
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,066,664</b>	<b>1,824,172</b>	<b>1,633,293</b>	<b>1,503,787</b>	<b>1,431,061</b>	<b>+635,603</b>

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 &amp; 2021.

## Industry Sector Analysis (Creative and Performing Arts Activities) in Western Sydney, 2015–16 and 2021–21

Economic measure	2020–21		2015–16		Change from 2015–2021
	Western Sydney region (#)	As a % of Sydney	Western Sydney region (#)	As a % of Greater Sydney	(#)
Employment (total)	2068	15.9	1,581	13.9	+487
Employment (FTE)	1478	14.8	1,096	11.7	+383
FTE to total employment ratio	0.72	0	0.69	0	+0.02
Output/total sales (\$ m)	93.7	12.5	64.82	10.2	+28.87
Value add (\$ m)	41.34	12.5	31.54	10.3	+9.80
Exports (\$ m)	11.47	3.2	11.67	3.4	–0.20
Exports (domestic) (\$ m)	10.53	2.9	9.10	2.8	+1.43
Exports (international) (\$ m)	0.94	14.1	2.58	10.4	–1.63
Imports (\$ m)	111.92	61.3	92.20	60.7	+19.72
Imports (domestic) (\$ m)	109.81	62.4	87.74	63.4	+22.07
Imports (international) (\$ m)	2.11	32.2	4.45	32.6	–2.35
Local Sales (\$ m)	82.23	21.4	53.15	18.5	+29.08
Worker productivity (\$ per worker)	19,994	0	19,950	0	+43

### Distribution of Grants Awarded by the Australia Council for the Arts, 2015–2022 By State/Territory

State	Total awarded (\$)	Total funding (%)	Population (2022)	Subsidy per capita (\$)
NSW	168,543,748	30	8,130,100	\$20.73
VIC	168,543,748	25.8	6,593,300	\$22.15
QLD	75,803,890	13.4	5,296,110	\$14.31
SA	51,036,213	9	1,815,500	\$28.11
WA	48,650,199	8.6	2,773,400	\$17.54
NT	39,463,135	7	250,400	\$157.60
TAS	20,273,681	3.6	571,200	\$35.49
ACT	7,975,817	1.4	455,900	\$17.49

Source: Australia Council, Investment and Development (Awarded Grants) Data 2015–2022, ABS (National, State and Territory Population), 2022.

### Top Funded State Cultural Infrastructure (NSW), Multiyear Funding Projects, Continuing and Works in Progress (2022–2023)

Cultural infrastructure	(\$ m)	Region	Timeline
Powerhouse Parramatta	840.0	Western Sydney	2019–2025
Walsh Bay Arts Precinct	379.3	Eastern Sydney	2019–2026
Art Gallery of NSW	341.0	Eastern Sydney	2017–2022
Powerhouse Museum Ultimo	179.9	Eastern Sydney	2021–2028
Arts Maintenance and Upgrades Program	103.8	Various	2020–2023
Australian Museum	58.1	Eastern Sydney	2018–2024
Cultural institutions Asset Maintenance Fund (Art Gallery of NSW & Sydney Opera House)	37.9	Eastern Sydney	2022–2024
National Art School Precinct Renewal	21.7	Eastern Sydney	2022–2026
State Library Capital Upgrades	12.1	Eastern Sydney	2020–2023

Source: NSW Budget Papers (Infrastructure Statement 2022

\*Over four years –2023).

### Subsidy Per Attendee at State-Funded Cultural Venue and Events 2021–2022<sup>180</sup>

State-funded cultural venue/events	NSW investment	Est. attendees	Subsidy per attendee (\$)*
Sydney Opera House	\$183,748,000	512,000	\$359.00
State Library of NSW <sup>181</sup>	\$98,698,000	N/A	N/A
Powerhouse Museum	\$39,300,000	472,178	\$83.27
Art Gallery of NSW	\$146,100,000	791,899	\$184.49
Australian Museum	\$57,200,000	462,000	\$123.81
Sydney Festival	\$8,835,000	160,806	\$54.94
Sydney Living Museum	\$22,770,000	132,065	\$172.42

Source: Venue Reports (note: subsidy per attendee data skewed due to impact of COVID-19 on annual attendance rates).

### Create NSW, ACFP funding, Time Series 2014–2022

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		TOTAL	
	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%	\$ m	%
ES	37.9	78	38.1	75	38.8	74	39.2	74	40.8	73	46.4	76	47.9	76	50.5	72	340	75
WS	3	6	4.3	9	4.8	9	5.4	10	6.4	11	5.2	8	4.3	7	5.1	7	38.4	8

Source: Create NSW supplied data (2023)

<sup>180</sup>Calculated by dividing total government funding by estimated attendees.

<sup>181</sup>Note that the State Library of NSW allocates some funding to other libraries.

## CreativeWest Data: Creative Activity by Category, Total Across Western Sydney.

Category & subcategory <sup>183</sup>	(#)
<b>Creative industries</b>	<b>659</b>
Advertising	62
Animation	8
Architecture	20
Fashion design	17
Filmmaking & videography	46
Game design	1
Graphic design	186
Illustration	19
Interior design	1
Jewellery design	3
Mural & street art	13
Music artists	82
Music management & promotion	2
Music production	6
Photography	68
Textile design	5
Web & app	94
Writing & publishing	26
<b>Cultural production</b>	<b>460</b>
Artisanal products	28
Creative programs	9
Creative spaces	22
Community organisations	10
Galleries & museums	74
Maker & co-working spaces	22
Networks, group & hubs	12
Performing arts	54
Places to learn	82
Podcasts & broadcasts	6
Visual arts	141
<b>Temporal</b>	<b>34</b>
Events	24
Festivals	9
Pop-ups	1
<b>Indigenous activities</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Historic</b>	<b>8</b>

<sup>183</sup>In the case that organisations intersected across various categories, they were counted within each respective category.

## APPENDIX E: WESTINVEST ARTS AND CULTURAL PROJECTS

### WestInvest Community Projects Local Government Funding Allocation by Focus Area\*

Focus area	(\$ m)	Total Funding %	Grant Count (#)
Arts and cultural facilities	3.5	1.0	1
Community infrastructure	182.2	51.0	32
Green and open spaces	98.3	27.5	16
High street activation	37.1	10.4	5
Local traffic programs	15.6	4.4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>336.7</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: NSW Government, WestInvest (2023).

\*Excludes figures for school modernisation

### WestInvest Community Projects Competitive Round Funding Allocation by Focus Area

Focus Area (WS LGAs included in this report)	(\$ m)	Total Funding %	Grant count (#)
Arts and cultural facilities	241.8	17.1	9
Community infrastructure	772.9	54.6	49
Green and open spaces	97.4	6.9	14
High street activation	48.6	3.4	9
Local traffic programs	172.7	12.2	17
School modernisation	12.39	0.9	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,345.7</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>101</b>

Source: WestInvest, NSW Government (2023).

### WestInvest Community Projects, Total Competitive Round & Local Government funding

Funding allocation (WS LGAs)	(\$ m)	Total Funding %	Grant count (#)
Purpose-built arts and culture infrastructure	262.5	14.8	13
Multipurpose arts and culture infrastructure	229.85	13	11
Non-purpose built arts and culture infrastructure	69.7	3.9	8
<b>Total awarded to arts and culture infrastructure</b>	<b>562.05</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>32</b>
Total awarded to other WestInvest projects	1,120.44	63.2	129
<b>Total</b>	<b>1772.69</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>193</b>

Source: NSW Government, WestInvest (2023).

<sup>184</sup>Percentage of total funding was calculated using the total grant funding figures for Community Projects across (i) LGA and (ii) competitive rounds across all 15 LGAs as of 09/02/2023.

Project Name	Organisation	LGA	Amount \$ m
<b>Purpose built</b>			
Blacktown City Arts and Cultural Centre	Blacktown City Council	Blacktown	39.9
Sydney Islamic Arts Museum	Islamic Sciences and Research Academy	Blacktown	26.3
The Eleanor Dark Foundation Cultural Hub	The Eleanor Fark Foundation	Blue Mountains	0.8
Wentworth Falls School of Arts Theatre and Hall	Blue Mountains City Council	Blue Mountains	0.7
Camden Civic Centre Renewal and Upgrade	Camden Council	Camden	7.7
Campbelltown Arts Centre	Campbelltown City Council	Campbelltown	79.0
Hurley Park – Early Stories of Campbelltown’s resilience	Campbelltown City Council	Campbelltown	2.2
Panania Library and Knowledge Centre	City of Canterbury Bankstown Council	Canterbury Bankstown	5.0
Revitalising Campsie Civic Precinct	City of Canterbury Bankstown Council	Canterbury Bankstown	10.0
Gandangara Cultural Connection Hub	The Gandagara Local Aboriginal Land Council	Liverpool	7.4
Theatres Redevelopment, Riverside	City of Parramatta Council	Parramatta	40.0
Greater West Sydney Oasis	The Salvation Army	Penrith	40.0
Wollondilly Community Cultural Precinct and Civic Precinct Performing Arts	The Wollondilly Shire Council	Wollondilly	\$3.5
<b>Multipurpose-built</b>			
First Nations Community Centre	Blacktown City Council	Blacktown	19.5
Seven Hills Portal – Community Resource Hub	Blacktown City Council	Blacktown	35.8
Revitalisation of Mt Druitt Hub	Blacktown City Council	Blacktown	26.8
Creative Design Innovation Centre and classroom upgrade	Blue Mountains Christian Education Association	Blue Mountains	0.4
Katoomba Town Centre - Place Activation	Blue Mountains City Council	Blue Mountains	7.5
Campbeltown City Centre Transformation	Campbelltown City Council	Campbeltown	7.5
North Richmond Community Precinct	Hawkesbury City Council	Hawkesbury	23.9
Don Moore Multipurpose Community Hub	City of Parramatta Council	Parramatta	20.6
Indigenous Centre of Excellence	WSU	Parramatta	78.5
St Marys City Heart and Entertainment Canopy	Penrith City Council	Penrith	21.0
<b>Non-purpose built</b>			
Community Infrastructure in Blacktown LGA	Blue Mountains City Council	Blacktown	2.2
Glenbrook Activation and Improvement Program	Blue Mountains City Council	Blue Mountains	4.0
Hazelbrook Village Centre – Place Activation	Blue Mountains City Council	Blue Mountains	2.1
SmartenUp Blackheath Community Centre	Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre	Blue Mountains	0.8
Camden Town Centre Enhancements – John Street Public Domain Upgrade and Activation	Camden Council	Camden	23.1
Narellan Town Centre Improvements	Camden Council	Camden	9.7
Glenfield Town Beautification	Campbelltown Council	Campbelltown	2.5
City Park and Urban Retreat	Penrith City Council	Penrith	8.2
Refurbish Rydalmere Bowling Club	Rydalmere Bowling Club	The City of Parramatta	5.5

## WestInvest Fund Allocation to Arts and culture, by LGA

Local Government Area		
LGA	Amount \$ m	Count #
Blacktown	150.5	6
Blue Mountains	16.3	7
Burwood	11.4	3
Camden	40.5	3
Campbelltown	91.2	4
Canterbury Bankstown	15.0	2
Cumberland	0.0	0
Fairfield	0.0	0
Hawkesbury	23.9	1
Liverpool	7.4	1
Parramatta	144.6	4
Penrith	69.2	3
Strathfield	20.3	1
The Hills	0.0	0
Wollondilly	3.5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>593.8</b>	<b>36</b>

## APPENDIX F: POLICY AND STRATEGY LANDSCAPE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN WESTERN SYDNEY

The policy analysis presented in this report was guided by the following key objectives:

1. Understand the existing policies that shape arts and culture in Western Sydney and determine their effectiveness at achieving their aims.
2. Assess evidence base for existing objectives and whether they are based on known or existing issues
3. Identify policies and programs initiated for COVID-19 recovery and resilience
4. Measure how integrated policies are across various levels of government, and what changes to be made if they are not integrated.
5. Determine the role of the policies in targeting the needs of (i) Western Sydney arts and culture and (ii) the needs of specialised groups such as women, Indigenous artists, CALD communities and young people.

### FEDERAL POLICIES

#### NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY – REVIVE (2023)

The new National Cultural Policy - Revive introduces Creative Australia, an initiative aimed at revitalising and modernising the Australia Council for the Arts. As part of this policy, four new entities will be established, including a Indigenous-led board, Music Australia (\$69 million), Writers Australia (\$19.3 million) and a Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces (\$8.1 million). These entities will address pressing issues in the arts industry such as fair pay, sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination. A total of \$286 million will be invested in the sector over the next four years, including \$241 million in new investment and an additional \$45 million redirected from a COVID-19 insurance scheme.

The policy is organised around five pillars: Indigenous Australians first, a place for every story, the centrality of the artist, strong institutions and reaching the audience. Ten key priorities have been identified, including the need for Indigenous Australian arts and culture to be led by Indigenous Australians, access to arts and culture for all Australians, sustainable career structures for artists and arts workers, arts education in schools, fair remuneration, representative leadership, cultural infrastructure, exposure for Australian stories, future-focused creative industries and the generation and preservation of new works and cultural memory.

The policy has several strengths, including comprehensive and specific actions in all priority areas. With regards to Western Sydney, the policy includes specific measures to support Indigenous Australians and multicultural artists, which will positively impact the diverse communities in the region. It also strives for greater equity in access to the arts for historically excluded communities.

However, there are also some shortcomings in the policy. One such shortcoming is the lack of attention to improving wages for artists, especially for individual artists and limited focus on environmental sustainability. Additionally, the policy does not provide a comprehensive and targeted skills package for arts workers. It also does not include provisions for pandemic and natural disaster relief for artists and galleries and has cancelled the previously planned national insurance scheme for live events due to COVID-19 cancellations.

#### COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS: NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK 2019

The National Performing Arts Partnership Framework supports and maintains the stable development of the arts and cultural industry through funding investment to significant Australian performing arts organisations. The strength of this approach is that it directs significant funding towards major performing arts organisations across Australia to maintain cultural industry stability and promote performing arts development.

However, a key gap in this approach could be a reformed funding mechanism with more transparency and inclusivity of smaller organisations in the opportunities provided. This is particularly important for the arts sector in Western Sydney where many small-to-medium sized arts organisations operate.

#### COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS: CREATIVE ECONOMY SUPPORT PACKAGE 2020

The Council for the Arts Creative Economy Support Package seeks to support the cultural and creative sector throughout the pandemic by providing targeted support for Indigenous Australians, as well as regional and performing artists affected by COVID-19 lockdowns. The strengths of this policy include providing significant funding to address the impact of COVID-19 and supporting its objectives, which can be adjusted to meet changing needs over time. However, this policy focused exclusively on supporting organisations and industry bodies and did not cater to supporting individual artists and employees in the arts.

## STATE POLICIES

### CREATE NSW: CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2025+ (2019)

The Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ policy supports the integration of cultural infrastructure planning into the local community and economic development and increases access equality to cultural infrastructure. It also facilitates new cultural infrastructure building and investment, and embeds cultural infrastructure with other sectors, establishing partnerships. The policy responds to industry needs for arts and cultural infrastructure, particularly in Western Sydney and Regional NSW, by promoting cultural economy through infrastructural development. For example, the plan details a strategic focus for the development of the new Western Sydney Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis that includes incorporating cultural infrastructure and positioning cultural facilities in areas where there is a concentration of creative industries, technology and innovation.<sup>185</sup>

Specialised groups such as Indigenous Australians and young people are considered in the policy. The policy includes targeted plans and initiatives to promote building cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney and Regional NSW. The strengths of this policy include acknowledging the importance of investment in cultural infrastructures to promote NSW cultural and economic development, addressing gaps in cultural infrastructure development in Western Sydney and Regional NSW, and setting out policy direction and guidelines for local government to form LGA cultural plans.

### CREATE NSW: NSW ARTS & CULTURAL POLICY FRAMEWORK (2015)

The NSW Arts and Cultural Policy framework focuses on supporting and expanding cultural innovation and leadership domestically and internationally, connecting Aboriginal arts and culture and revitalising cultural infrastructure across NSW. It advocates for the increased inclusivity and accessibility of the arts, seeks to enhance sector development and business sustainability, and facilitates innovation and partnerships. The policy also supports digital and visual arts and technological exploration and targets developments for regional NSW, Sydney and Western Sydney. It also supports small businesses and individual artists across regions and programs, specifically proposing specific funding for Western Sydney.

Specialised groups such as small businesses, Indigenous Australians and young people are considered in the policy. The strengths of this policy include a comprehensive framework and a list of key actions for Western Sydney, ranging from guidance on infrastructure, economy and business development, professional skill development and increased activity in screen production.<sup>186</sup> It also sets out policy direction and guidelines for local government to form respective LGA cultural plans. However, most plans for cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney are focused on the development of a cultural precinct in Parramatta, failing to address other strategic centres in the region.

## SYDNEY 24-HOUR ECONOMY (2020)

The Sydney 24-hour economy strategy proposes a plan for post-COVID economic recovery and night-time cultural participation in Sydney. It supports the creation of jobs and fosters arts and culture vibrancy in the city. The report details specific proposals and initiatives outlining programs and infrastructures to be delivered and proposes a new business model to promote cultural and recreational participation by reviving the night-time economy. The report's strengths include its COVID-19 response, detailed proposals and initiatives, annual reviews that track policy implementations and a new business model to promote cultural and recreational participation. However, the report primarily targets economies in areas within the Sydney CBD, leaving gaps for other regions, including Western Sydney.

### CREATE NSW: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAM (YEARLY)

The Local Government Authorities Arts and Culture Program assists LGAs to deliver hard and soft infrastructure that support arts and cultural activities across the state. The program provides funding for projects that deliver great arts and cultural outcomes for audiences, supports employment in the arts and culture sector and partners with others to create unique experiences, events and activities. Councils located in Western Sydney have received funding through this program, however, some of these funds were one-time, as opposed to other sources of funding that were distributed over several years. The consistent delivery of long-term funding may help LGAs in Western Sydney commit to more long-term plans and infrastructure projects.

### DESTINATION NSW: ABORIGINAL TOURISM ACTION PLAN (2017)

The Destination NSW: Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan responds to increasing domestic and international demand for cultural tourism. It acknowledges the challenges associated with accessibility and how Aboriginal cultural tourism operators face a unique set of cultural considerations in finding harmony between tourism, culture and the environment, and achieving the appropriate balance between cultural integrity and responsiveness to market demands. The plan seeks to build consumer awareness of Aboriginal culture in Sydney and Regional NSW, increase the inclusion of export-ready experiences in travel trade distribution networks and marketing programs and develop new sustainable market-ready and export-ready Aboriginal cultural tourism products and events.

This plan builds on the success of cross-cultural exchange between NSW Aboriginal cultural tourism, Government and Destination Networks. However, there are key gaps in this plan, including limited consideration of Western Sydney, despite high presence of Indigenous communities in the region. The plan has also faced public criticism, due to minimal representation of Indigenous employees at Destination NSW. Advocates have stressed that it is important that the framework is developed by those whom it seeks to assist.

<sup>185</sup>Cmielewski et al. (2020) provide a robust review of the Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ in the context of Arts and Culture in Penrith and the Blue Mountains.

<sup>186</sup>See SGS Economics & Planning (2019, p. 6) for key actions contained in the Western Sydney action plan.

## DESTINATION NSW: WESTERN SYDNEY VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY (2017)

The Western Sydney Visitor Economy Strategy identifies Western Sydney's vast cultural events as assets to the visitor economy. It highlights the need to develop a cohesive approach to destination management and marketing in Western Sydney through Government, industry and commercial partnerships. The strategy proposes that the sector leverage existing cultural products and experiences in terms of museums, galleries, local fashion designers, performing arts and Aboriginal culture (both traditional and contemporary) and continue to create innovation clusters that will be attractive to locals as well as visitors to Western Sydney. To achieve this, the strategy suggests developing and linking arts and culture tours, trails and festivals to further promote Western Sydney as a destination for the arts.

## SCREEN NSW: STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 – 2018 (2015)

The Screen NSW Strategic Plan proposes a set of programs and services that aim to ensure that emerging practitioners, industry and audience development are supported through partnerships. Specifically, the strategy seeks to support the outcomes of the Arts and Cultural Policy Framework by responding to the need for greater diversity and achieve meaningful inclusion of underrepresented groups in the screen industry in NSW. The plan advocates for prioritising underrepresented groups across all programs, including Indigenous Australians, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, women, those with disabilities and residents of Western Sydney. This is achieved through proposing additional targeted policies, plans and quotas for underrepresented groups.

One of the strengths of the report is that its strategic goals are accompanied by measures of success over the period of the plan, which provides important, tangible goal posts for the industry. However, it is worth noting that the report is not specifically Western Sydney-focused. Therefore, it may not address all the needs and challenges of the Western Sydney region in terms of diversity and inclusion in the screen industry.

## WESTINVEST FUND (2022)

In 2021, the NSW Government announced the \$5 billion WestInvest Program to support economic recovery after the COVID-19 lockdowns. The funding is aimed at delivering transformational infrastructure projects to improve liveability in Western Sydney suburbs and enhance community across 15 LGAs in Western Sydney (those referenced throughout this report as well as Burwood and Strathfield Council). Three avenues of funding were available to Western Sydney LGAs, including the Community Projects (competitive round), Community Projects (local government allocation) and NSW Government Projects.

One of the six key priority areas prioritised by the grant guidelines was arts and cultural facilities. Specifically, the grant sought to support projects that expand the range of venues that encourage regular participation, this included specific arts and cultural hubs or precincts, with performing arts and event spaces or updating heritage facilities. The outcomes of the WestInvest fund for the development of arts and cultural facilities are documented in section 1 of this report, and announcements for community projects are ongoing.

## GREATER SYDNEY REGION PLAN: A METROPOLIS OF THREE CITIES (2018)

The key strategy of the Greater Sydney Region Plan by the Greater Sydney Commission (now the Greater Cities Commission) is to divide Sydney into three main cities: the Eastern Harbour City, the Central River City and the Western Parklands City. The Western Sydney region falls primarily within the Western and Central Cities. The goal of the plan is to provide housing, services, employment and infrastructure throughout Greater Sydney, and to address the increasing population needs of Western Sydney.

The plan recognises the importance of the arts in the future development of Sydney and its tourism industry and acknowledges the need for more cultural infrastructure and facilities in the Central River and Western Parkland Cities compared to the Eastern Harbour City. However, the plan does not provide further detail on the specific creative infrastructure needs of Western Sydney, nor does it outline specific actions to address these disparities in creative infrastructure.

## GREATER SYDNEY 2056: WESTERN CITY AND CENTRAL CITY DISTRICT PLANS (2018)

Both the Western City and Central City District Plan plans recognise the significance of cultural facilities in Western Sydney and their ability to promote unique identities and a sense of community. The liveability framework put forth by the Greater Cities Commission highlights the role of the arts, creativity, cultural expression and innovation in shaping great places. This is reflected in Planning Priority 4, which aims to create healthy, creative, culturally diverse and socially interconnected communities.

This emphasis on arts and culture is reflected in actions such as bringing together schools, healthcare, ageing care, sports and cultural facilities to encourage collaboration and innovation. Another key action is to promote opportunities for creative and artistic expression and participation, with minimal regulations, wherever possible. This includes supporting arts enterprises and facilities, creative industries, temporary uses and the development of a strong night-time economy.

Building on this plan, the West Parkland City Authorities' West Parkland City Blueprint, which was released in October 2022, includes a focus on improving liveability through strategies to deliver national and internationally recognised arts and cultural, recreational and sporting facilities. This is listed as one of the Economic Development Roadmap Phase 1 priorities and directions. In addition, the Blueprint also includes a priority of supporting tourism by focusing on expanding visitor markets and enabling infrastructure, as well as developing a Destination Management Plan. This action is identified as 11. in the Economic Development Roadmap Phase 1 priorities and directions. This reflects the recognition of the importance of the arts and culture in the development and revitalisation of the Western Parkland City.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>187</sup>It is important to note that in reporting on key performance indicators, the 'Pulse of Greater Sydney' report reported that there were no outcomes related to Arts and Culture reported for the Western City District Plan. This suggests that there may be a lack of progress in implementing arts and culture initiatives in the Western City District Plan.

## THE SIX CITIES REGION: DISCUSSION PAPER (2022)

The discussion paper aims to start a conversation about how to plan for a six-city region including Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City, Central Coast City, Illawarra-Shoalhaven City, Western Parkland City, Central River City and Eastern Harbour City, which encompasses 43 LGAs. One of the goals is to create inclusive places linked to infrastructure, with a focus on vibrant local centres and neighbourhoods and equal access to services and amenities. The plan will also focus on infrastructure decisions needed to support each city, including cultural infrastructure. The upcoming 2023 Region Plan will have a greater emphasis on infrastructure delivery and social and environmental infrastructure and will identify how to create well-designed places that improve quality of life, are accessible and attractive and have local access to infrastructure including arts and culture.

Additionally, the plan prioritises infrastructure that enables dynamic centres that will offer a mix of tenancies, buildings, transport, arts, hospitality and entertainment choices for the local community. This discussion paper signals a greater prioritisation of arts and culture in strategic planning for the future urban development of cities in NSW. Specific targets and actions for the role of arts and culture in the future development and revitalisation of Western Parkland City, Central River City should be developed in consultation with the arts and culture sector.

## APPENDIX G: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

### List of Stakeholders Consulted in the State of the Arts in Western Sydney study

Interviews		
Interviewee	Organisation	Position/Role
Hania Radian	Penrith Performing and Visual Arts	Chief Executive Officer
Alicia Talbot	Blacktown Arts	Manager, Arts and Cultural Development
Craig McMaster	Riverside Theatres	Director
Carl Sciberras	DMC	Producer; Choreographer
Vanessa Hyde	Curious Works	Arts Manager/Creative Producer
Anne Loxley	Arts and Cultural Exchange (ACE)	Executive Director
Craig Donarski	Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre	Director
Jessica Olivieri	Urban Theatre Projects (UTP)	CEO; Artistic Director
Michael Dagostino	Campbelltown Arts Centre	Director
Catriona Menzies-Pike	Sydney Review of Books	Editor
WSAA Workshop (Hybrid)		
Lliane Clarke	Western Sydney Arts Alliance	Advocacy & Communications
Tiffany LeeShoy	Penrith City Council	Senior Cultural Strategy Officer
Toby Chapman	Penrith Performing and Visual Arts	Director
Hania Radvan	Penrith Performing and Visual Arts	CEO
Krissie Scudds	Penrith Performing and Visual Arts	Marketing Director
Augusta Supple	City of Parramatta	Cultural Services Coordinator
Chloe Kang	Powerhouse Parramatta	Communications and Engagement Manager
Josie Cavallaro	Fairfield City Council	Public Programs Coordinator
Carmel Aiello	Fairfield City Museum & Gallery	Coordinator
Alicia Talbot	Blacktown Arts	Manager Arts and Cultural Development
Zoe Kazic	Camden Council	Cultural Project Officer
Vanessa Hyde	Curious Works	Arts Manager; Creative Producer
Inara Molinari	River City Voices	General Manager
Virtual Workshop		
Cecelia Cmielewski	Institute for Culture and Society	Research Fellow
Christiane Keys-Statham	Institute for Culture and Society	UWS Postgraduate
Christopher Tooher	Sydney Festival	Executive Officer
Felicity Castagna	Community Arts Worker; Member of the Literature Board, Create NSW	Lecturer in Creative Writing; Writer
Karin Louise	WSU	Academic Program Adviser
Katrina Sandbach	WSU	Senior Lecturer
Michael Campbell	WestWords	Executive Director
Misty McPhail	Made in the West Film Festival	General Manager
Natalie Wadwell	Penrith City Council	Community Capacity Officer
Nick Tapper	Giramondo Publishing	Associate Publisher
Pedram Khosronejad	Powerhouse Parramatta	Curator
Sophia Kouyoumdjian	Parramatta Artists' Studios and Cultural Services	Director
Suzanne Buljan	City of Parramatta	Public Art & Cultural Projects
Veechi Stuart	Varuna the National Writers House	Executive Director
Alexia Derbas	Diversity Arts Australia	Research and Policy Manager

## Interview Questions

<b>OPENING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How would you describe where you fit into the WS sector? What is your organisation's role?</li> </ul>
<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the strengths of the WS sector, especially those that set it apart from the rest of Sydney?</li> <li>Compulsory prompt</li> <li>Could you give an example?</li> <li>Optional prompt</li> <li>How would you describe the WS sector's connection to the rest of the Sydney ecosystem?</li> </ul>
<b>VISION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building on these strengths, what is your vision / hope for the future of the WS sector?</li> <li>Compulsory prompt</li> <li>Could you give an example?</li> <li>Optional prompt</li> <li>What specific growth opportunities do you see (e.g. health, innovation precincts, airport)?</li> </ul>
<b>BARRIERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the most critical, specific barriers to achieving that vision?</li> <li>Where would targeted interventions do the most to unlock the WS sector's potential?</li> <li>Compulsory prompts</li> <li>Are there any specific, critical barriers relating to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COVID-19 and wider economic changes?</li> <li>First Nations people or women in the sector?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Could you give an example?</li> <li>Optional prompts</li> <li>Are there any specific, critical barriers relating to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquiring funding – lack of funding pools or difficulty applying for existing pools?</li> <li>Missing cultural infrastructure (e.g. production facilities, studios, rehearsal spaces)?</li> <li>Engagement with government?</li> <li>People's ability to work / participate in the sector?</li> <li>Particular workforce shortages (e.g. back of house, technical, First Nations staff)?</li> <li>Low digital capacity in institutions?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>VISION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What specific interventions by (i) industry and (ii) different levels of government would have the greatest impact on these barriers?</li> <li>Compulsory prompts</li> <li>Any specific interventions needed for First Nations people or women in the sector?</li> <li>Could you give an example?</li> <li>Optional prompts</li> <li>How can we ensure existing funds are administered? Where would additional funds be best targeted?</li> <li>What specific, additional cultural infrastructure would have the greatest impact (e.g. production facilities, studios, rehearsal spaces)?</li> </ul>
<b>WRAP UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any other case studies, publications or people the team should consider in their research?</li> </ul>

## Workshop Questions

### WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- 1. understand views of Western Sydney Arts & Culture sectors:
  - i. strengths
  - ii. their vision for its future
  - iii. the barriers to achieving that vision
  - iv. interventions that might help overcome those barriers.
- 2. provide a meaningful, satisfying opportunity to influence the State of the Arts and Culture in Western Sydney Report.

### WORKSHOP FORMAT

#### Workshop 1

Undertaken during monthly WSAA meetings, in a hybrid format via Zoom and in person at the Joan Sutherland Theatre, Penrith. 3.00pm – 4.30 pm, Thursday 1 December

#### Workshop 2

Undertaken online via Zoom. 2.00 pm – 3.00 pm, Thursday 8 December, by invitation.

### QUESTIONS COVERED

- What are the strengths of the WS sector, especially those that set it apart from the rest of Sydney?
- Building on these strengths, what is your ideal vision for the future of the sector?
- What are the most critical, specific barriers to achieving that vision? Where are the greatest opportunities to unlock WS's potential?
- What specific interventions by industry or different levels of government would have the greatest impact on these barriers?
- Are there any other critical case studies or publications the team should consider in their research?
- Are there any other critical industry stakeholders the team should consult with?

## Facilitators Notes on Future Strengths-based Consultations with the Arts Sector in Western Sydney, Scott Newton-Lappan, Gauge Consulting

<b>Step 1. Sector narrative and value</b>	<p>The participants of this process had a compelling and closely-aligned story to tell about the region and the significant contribution the sector can make to the Western Sydney community and to Sydney's arts and cultural exports.</p> <p>In advocating for further funding and support, the sector is not asking for a handout; it is looking to maximise the contribution it can make.</p> <p>There is immense value in coming together for a follow-up sector workshop of arts and cultural leaders to agree on that narrative and on a public campaign that would articulate the value the sector could bring to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sydney's arts sector</li> <li>ii. community</li> <li>iii. local councils and government agencies</li> <li>iv. philanthropists and corporate stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2. Proposing contributions to stakeholder challenges</b>	<p>By understanding the wicked challenges and big opportunities these stakeholders are facing, the sector can better propose how it can contribute to these.</p> <p>This could be achieved through a desktop review into these challenges and opportunities (e.g., across planning, sociocultural, transport, health, education, tourism, innovation and more) and another sector workshop to propose in more detail the role arts and culture might play in these.</p>
<b>Step 3. Refining contributions</b>	<p>The sector could then complete a roadshow of these proposed contributions, meeting with key stakeholders to better understand their challenges and opportunities. This would enable the sector to further refine its proposal for how it can assist, through another sector workshop or some other means.</p>
<b>Step 4. Evidencing contributions</b>	<p>The sector's proposal could be further evidenced with supporting data to help quantify or illustrate these contributions. This might include but is not limited to return-on-investment data and other impact analyses, individual case studies and/or a sectors skills audit.</p>
<b>Step 5. Advocating for and workshopping interventions</b>	<p>Armed with the buy-in of these stakeholders into the benefits that the arts sector could deliver for their wicked challenges and opportunities, the sector would be well positioned to advocate for the priority interventions required to unlock its potential.</p> <p>This could include hosting multistakeholder workshops for sector, community, local councils, government agencies, philanthropists and corporate stakeholders to codesign implementable interventions.</p>



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