

MAKING SPACE FOR CULTURE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

HATCH | RobertsDay

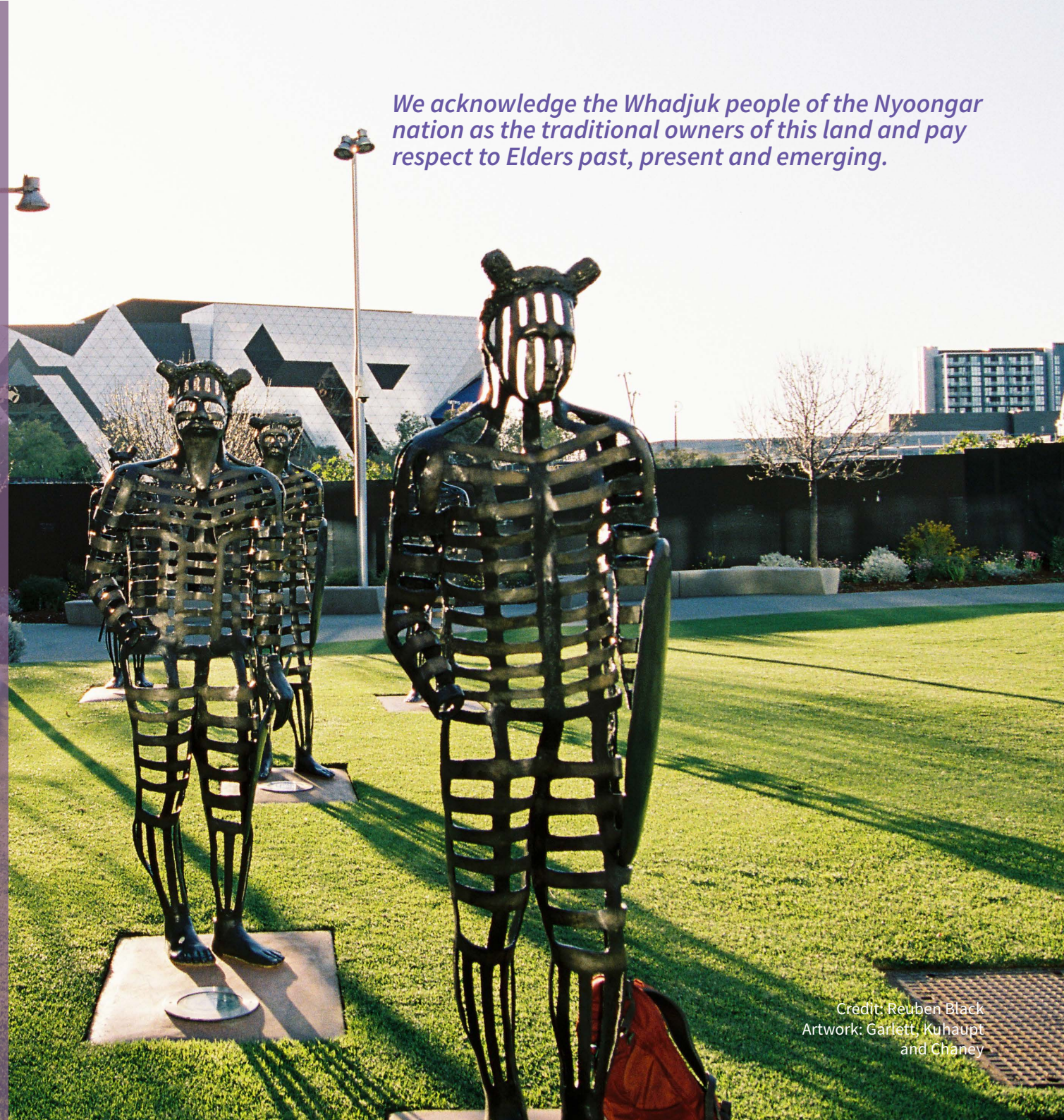


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Hatch RobertsDay Pty Ltd, 2021

We acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar nation as the traditional owners of this land and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



Credit: Reuben Black
Artwork: Garlett, Kuhaupt
and Chaney

Contents

Summary Document

1. Introduction & Context
2. Case study findings
3. Survey findings
4. Stakeholder feedback

The following document is a **Summary of Findings Report for the Making Space for Culture study, commissioned by the Inner City Local Government Areas (City of Perth, City of Vincent, City of South Perth and Town of Victoria Park).**

The findings of the study were used to inform more detailed reports and specific findings for each Local Government Area.

Introduction

Over the past 15 years, the inner Perth metropolitan area has witnessed an unprecedented development boom, introducing new entertainment, cultural and civic infrastructure like the State Theatre, Elizabeth Quay, Perth City Link, Burswood Precinct and the South Perth Foreshore redevelopment.

We have seen the strengthening of Perth's 'Festival Season' with a unique combination of the New Year, warmer weather, Perth Fringe Festival and Perth International Arts Festival adding life, activity and vibrancy to our city streets.

Our main streets, precincts and places have also been through a quiet revolution. New co-working spaces are now peppered through the city's creative inner north and we have renewed our retail strips with home-grown talent that activate our town centres.

Perth is a different, and vastly more liveable place, which was rightly recognized as the 6th most liveable city in this year's Economic Intelligence Unit's (EIU) most Liveable Cities list.

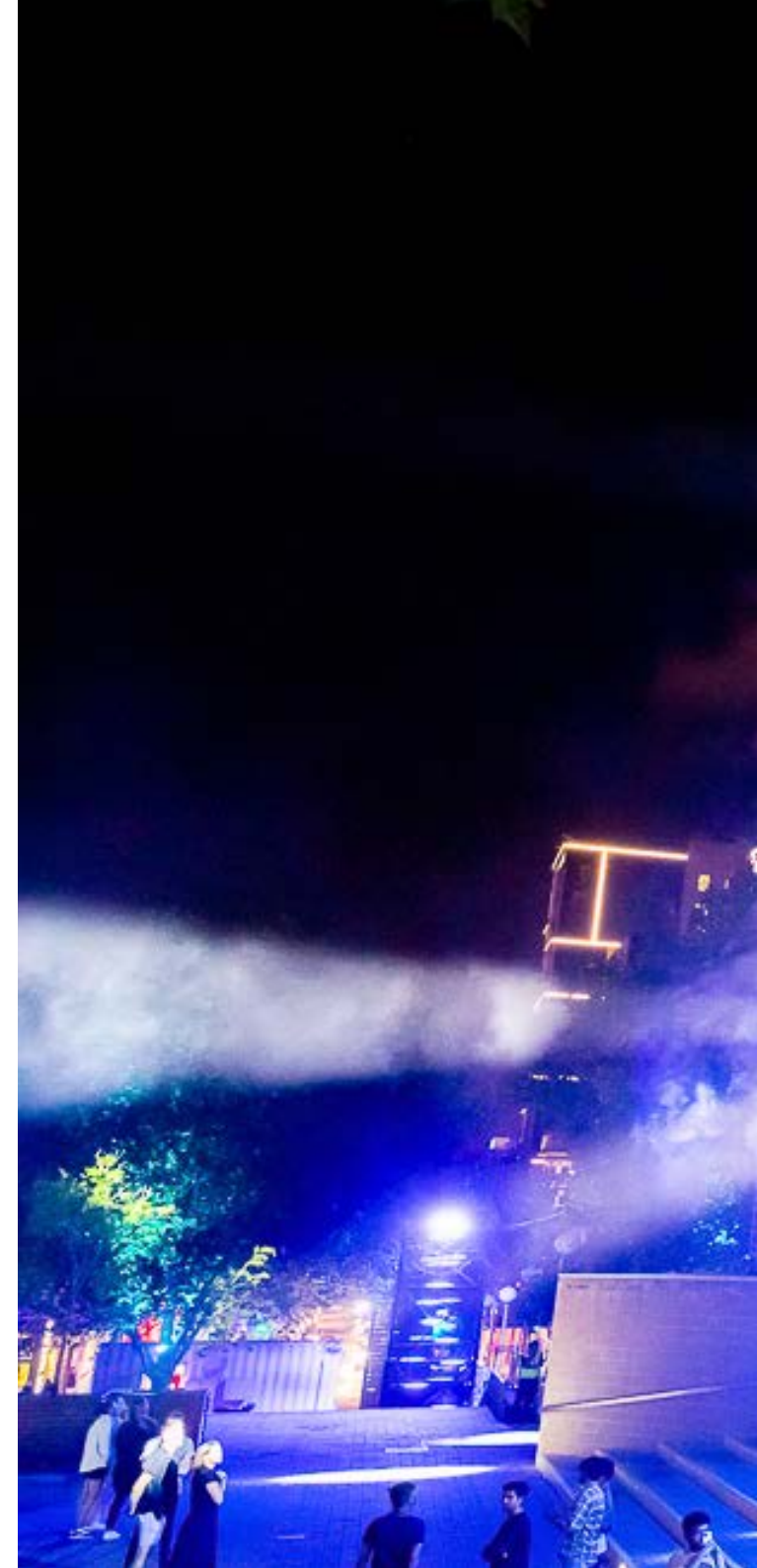
For all this momentum, there is still a sentiment within the creative sector that the city is yet to reach its full potential. The level of infrastructure required to support small to medium creative and cultural enterprises is still lacking, limiting our ability for innovation and experimentation

A range of recent changes to city context is resulting in a renewed need and opportunity to invest in the creative sector, including:

- The disruption caused by Covid-19 on the global economy, and the impact of lockdowns on our artists and creative industries
- The ongoing return of expats to Australian and Perth's shores; and
- A looming property boom led by record low vacancy rates, property demand and continuing delivery of city shaping projects.

In addition, there is strong community level demand for participation in the arts and provision of spaces for casual creative pursuits. Community based arts groups can lead to skills development and result in significant social participation outcomes.

We believe this represents an exciting opportunity for Perth to both respond to community demand for new cultural infrastructure, whilst concurrently repositioning itself as one of the World's most liveable cities through strategic investment in the arts and culture industry.





Credit: Cam Campell

Current State of Culture in the Inner City

Utilising baseline data from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) as well as local information provided by each of the inner-city LGAs, analysis has been undertaken on the current spatial supply of cultural infrastructure within the inner city. Part B provides a detailed list of this infrastructure and a localised assessment for each LGA.

This analysis identified the following key findings:

01 EXISTING + EMERGING CREATIVE CLUSTERS IN CURRENT “UNDERUTILISED / UNDERVALUED” LAND

Whilst having been through significant regeneration over the past two decades, the inner-city area still contains a series of underutilized or undervalued areas that organically attract creative uses. The most successful of these areas is West Perth or ‘The Pickle District’, which together with Leederville, forms one of the densest ‘free market’ conglomerations of creative uses within the inner city. Emerging and/or opportunity clusters with similar characteristics include City West and Burswood and the ‘private-led’ establishment at the Perth Girls School.

How do we remove barriers for entry and protect or leverage these areas in future redevelopment opportunities?

02 PREVALENCE OF CITY / STATE SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE

The supply of significant cultural assets within the Inner City area (particularly City of Perth and Town of Victoria Park) has greatly improved over the past 15 years, including infrastructure such as Perth Stadium, Crown Theatre, the State Theatre, Perth Arena and WA Museum Boola Bardip. Added to existing infrastructure like Perth Concert Hall, His Majesty’s Theatre and Mindeerup/South Perth Foreshore as well as the future delivery of the Perth Power Station and Aboriginal Cultural Centre, this infrastructure represents a significant attraction.

How do we support this ‘state/ city infrastructure’ with localized rehearsal and production space?

03 CURRENT RELIANCE ON STATE/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT OWNED LAND

Clusters that provide the opportunity for more localized creative pursuits including studio space within the Inner City area are far less prevalent and in short supply. These spaces are also still largely reliant on government ownership, including the Cultural Precinct, Vic Park Arts Centre and Robertson Park Artist Studios.

With limited government resources available, how do we find new spaces for these activities in alternative government assets, and /or incentivize / subsidize the creation of these facilities in the future?

04 SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE IN EXISTING SEMI-PRIVATE EDUCATION USES

A significant amount of cultural infrastructure is potentially available but not currently accessible to the broader public. These spaces include infrastructure within university and TAFE precincts as well as theatre spaces within schools.

How can we build strategic partnerships with the stakeholders to unlock the potential of the spaces as key community assets?

05 PRIVATE MARKET CAPACITY TO DELIVER MORE MAINSTREAM INFRASTRUCTURE - LARGELY FOR CONSUMPTION

The private market does deliver a substantial amount of space for culture within the Inner City area, particularly for consumption of music performance as well as supply of dance schools and photography / recording studios (largely located within underutilized areas of the city).

How do we protect these uses as residential development continues and maintain affordable spaces to broaden the spectrum of production infrastructure?

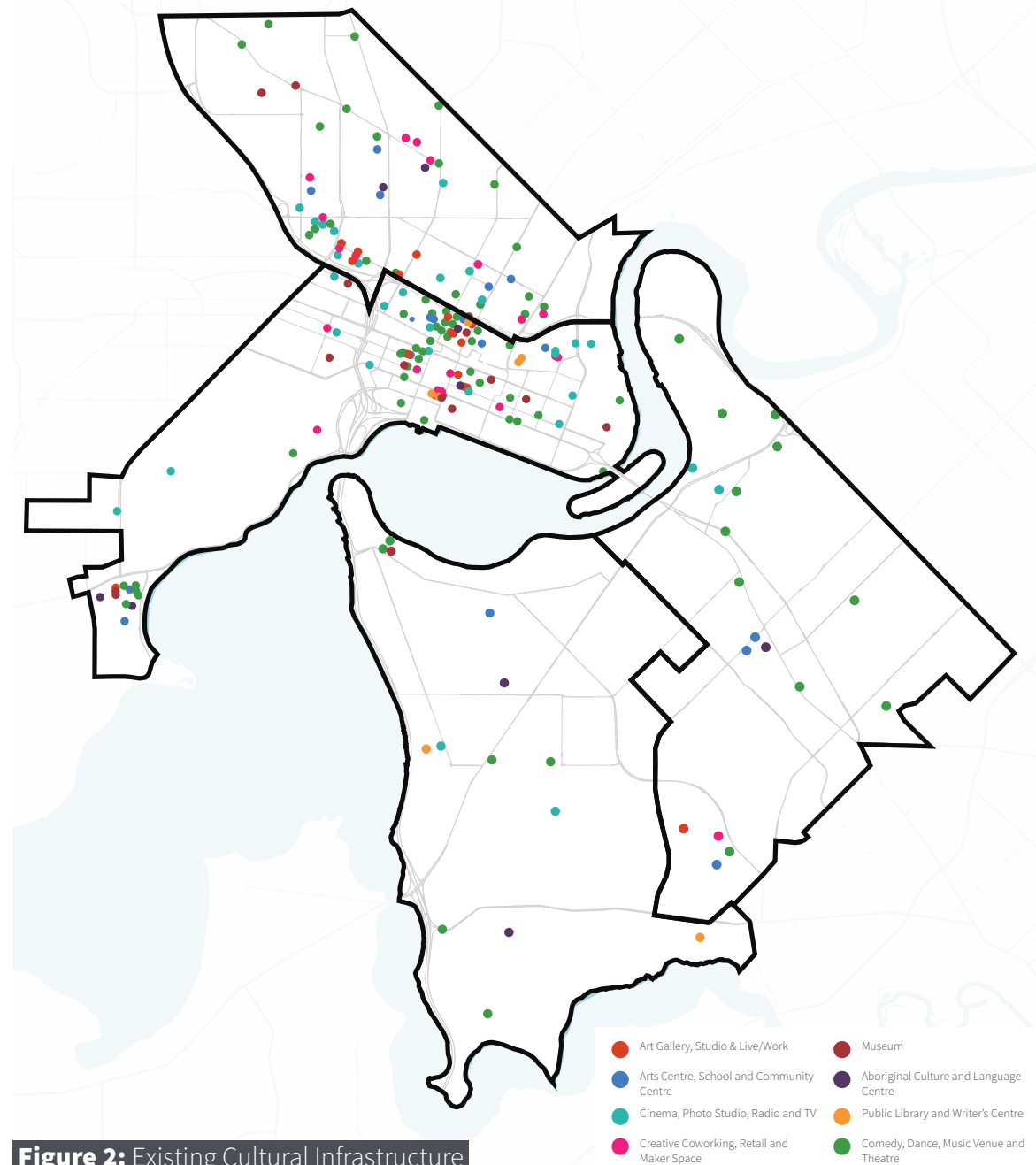
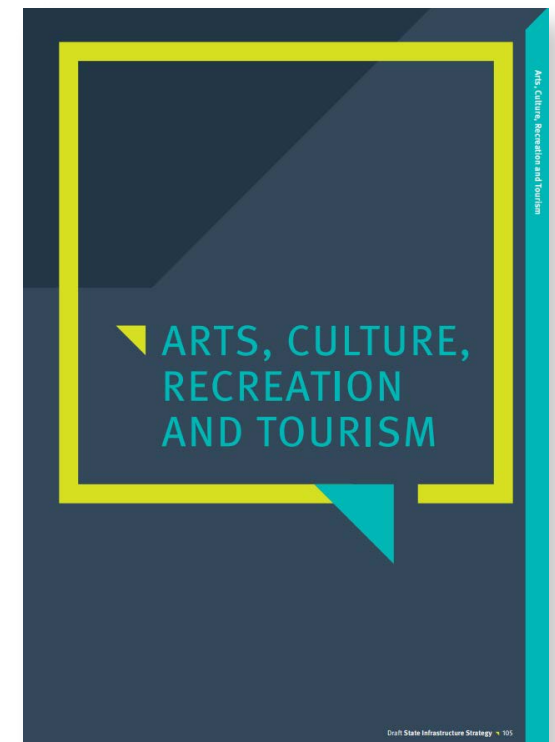
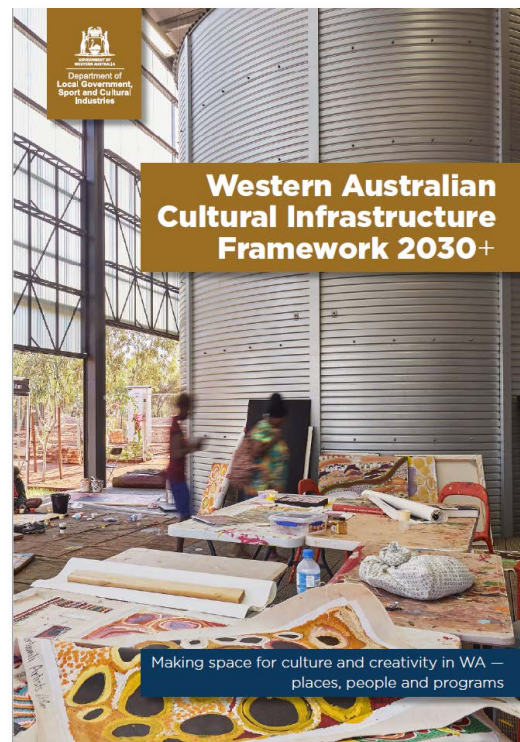
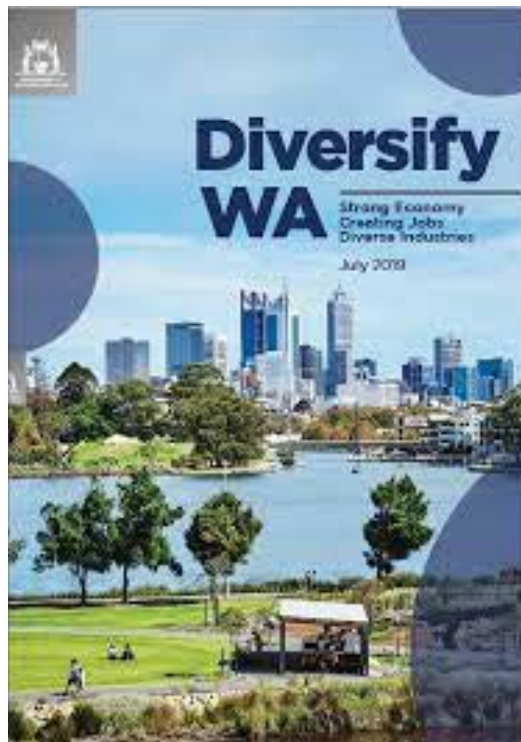


Figure 2: Existing Cultural Infrastructure

WA Cultural Infrastructure Plan

Recognising the central role that arts and culture play in the future development of the State and wellbeing of the community, the State Government has prepared three guiding strategies to inform future priorities, namely:

1. Diversify WA
2. Cultural Infrastructure Plan and
3. Draft State Infrastructure Strategy.



Diversify WA July 2019-July 2021

Diversify WA is the state Economic Development Framework and provides a blueprint for collaboration between government, industry and the community to diversify and strengthen the State's economic base.

The strategic document recognizes the creative industries as a 'priority economic sector' linked closely with attraction of tourists and events.

Draft State Infrastructure Strategy July 2021

The draft State Infrastructure Strategy outlines Western Australia's significant infrastructure needs and priorities over the next 20 years, including arts and cultural facilities. One of the key recommendations in the Strategy is to develop and publish a ten-year state arts and culture strategy to guide priorities, including infrastructure and investment needs. More information about the Strategy is available at www.infrastructure.wa.gov.au

Western Australian Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+

In support of this direction, DLGSC has prepared a Cultural Infrastructure Plan, which recognizes the role 'spaces' play in ensuring a strong cultural and creative community and guides the delivery of new infrastructure within WA.

The framework identifies a series of 'focus areas' and opportunities that should be explored, with the successful implementation of the plan reliant on collaboration across all levels of government, the creative sector, investors, developers, planners and local communities.

Importantly the plan:

- Acknowledges the ongoing renewal and redevelopment of our cities puts pressure on affordable working spaces for artists and creatives;
- Identifies creative hubs and maker spaces as an identified need raised through community consultation;
- Recognises the need for better coordination and partnership between state and local government; and
- Has a core focus area in incentivising private investment into cultural infrastructure.

The framework does not include a detailed plan for delivery, but rather forms part of a toolkit proposed to become a resource that can assist decision making.



Credit: Reuben Black
Artwork: Lance Chadd

A Global Challenge

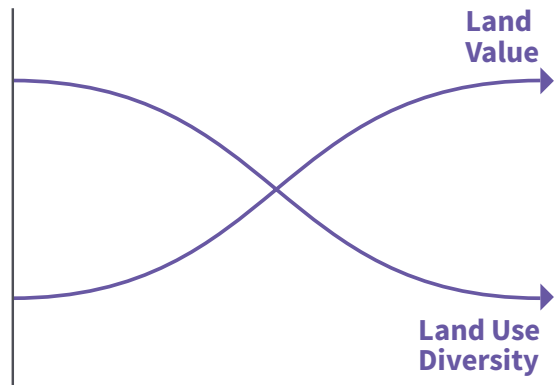
The challenges of delivering and maintaining affordable working and living spaces for artists and creatives are not unique to Inner City Perth.

Closely linked to the issue of land values and affordability, there is a very clear relationship between land-use diversity and land values. This is demonstrated time and again through the SOHO effect or gentrification process, whereby creatives move into an area due to its affordability, make the neighbourhood more desirable and attract investment and capital, but are ultimately priced out of the area they helped to create.

This process is particularly relevant to the inner-city LGAs, as older retail strips are continually renewed, land prices increase, and the significant growth that is likely to be experienced in the future.

Given the economic fundamentals associated with the gentrification process and its applicability to many major cities, the challenge of Making Space for Culture is one being experienced across the globe, and is being magnified due to rapid rising population and competing priorities on both budgets and policy directions.

The similarity of issues means there is much to learn from other cities, and in particular the policy responses being created to maintain spaces for cultural production within cities. For this reason, the following chapter focusses on ‘global benchmarks’, informing key lessons and a delivery toolkit that may be applied within Perth and beyond.



How do we maintain + develop a dynamic mix of spaces and facilities within the harsh realities of the real estate market?



Figure 3: World Culture Cities Forum



Credit: Peter Bennetts

Case Study Key Lessons



It is essential to understand where your city, precinct and neighbourhood is at in its economic cycle as this will indicate the appropriate strategy to employ to deliver cultural infrastructure.

In many of the case studies, undervalued land attracted cultural uses to the area, with a rezoning or redevelopment forcing their relocation. Rather than the organisations finding new locations, they were able to broker a space in the form of live/work housing or working space in the redevelopment.

This demonstrates the value of both encouraging and facilitating creative uses in undervalued land (even on a temporary basis and in secondary locations) and facilitating planning controls to ensure these uses are maintained in ultimate redevelopment through either bonuses or requirements.



Enlightened developers understand the value of the creative sector, and will find innovative ways to create cultural space within their redevelopment proposals, or embed uses while sites are awaiting redevelopment.

This is especially true when planning controls incentivise the creation of space through floor space bonuses, which is a key opportunity within our existing WA planning system.

To create these opportunities, it is essential that a strong creative organization is championing the vision, being able to communicate the value they will bring to the development and their space requirements. In addition, there is a strong role for government or intermediaries to bring these parties together, recognizing opportunities and linking creatives with property owners.



Through partnering with both government agencies to negotiate more affordable space and the private sector for long-term space, strong cultural organisations are central to achieving outcomes.

From government's perspective, these organisations allow for outcomes to be achieved in a cost-efficient manner, without the need for additional staff members or resources. Strong organisations can use their own networks to achieve these outcomes, ensuring they are aligning with both their not-for-profit purpose and the Key Performance Indicators of the government allowing ongoing access to grants and funding.

From a developer's perspective, organisations with a track record minimize the risk associated in partnerships. They provide confidence regarding clearing of development conditions and the outcomes that can be achieved on site by way of activation.



Whilst you can encourage new creative uses in underutilized spaces, or negotiate favourable leasing terms for a specified period, public ownership of space is the only way to secure ultimate stability for the future. Like any organization, knowing they have security of space allows cultural organisations to focus on their purpose, grow and achieve more outcomes.

This is especially true in Perth, where government ownership has ensured long term success for spaces such as Tresillian Arts Centre, Camelot, Fremantle Art Centre and Mundaring Art Centre.

However, with competition for space and increasing property prices, innovative ways must be found to secure this tenureship in the future, which should be the ultimate long-term goal of each LGA.



With increasing property prices and lease costs, governments must find innovative ways to positively influence the private market to deliver spaces that would not otherwise be delivered within the open market or find new ways to fund the purchase of property to safeguard space in the future.

Case studies have demonstrated that this can be achieved through financial levers such as property tax reductions, or rates exemptions, that allow the subsidization of space for creative uses to make sense from a business and financial perspective.

Additionally, using trusts to purchase property that ultimately allows other properties to be purchased through leveraging assets is a viable approach in many major cities.

These incentives are critical to influence the market, and creative practitioners and those involved in the process of creating space must be ready to deploy these mechanisms when appropriate.



The case studies have highlighted the intrinsic value in cultural and creative hubs, which points to opportunities for other revenue streams to be accessed to help subsidize affordable spaces.

Ultimately, this presents itself as a sliding scale of leasing costs, with studios and maker spaces on lower spectrum of rents, reducing barriers of entry for artists, all the way through to full fee-paying uses. These full fee-paying uses may be organisations within the creative industries (i.e. architects and brand agencies), food and beverage, retail, corporate partners or even innovative partnerships for marketing purposes.

Thinking of ways to embed arts hubs into broader precincts, and actively planning for a range of revenue streams at the inception of the project allows for cross-subsidisation of leases. These are essential ingredients that allow for financially self-sufficient organisations and hubs that are more sustainable in the longer term.

Survey Results

The study involved a survey of creatives to gauge practice, profiles and space needs.

The survey results from all responses (i.e. unfiltered results) are displayed on the following pages, aligned to the key themes of:

- **Who | The creatives** that responded to the survey;
- **What | The spaces** that were identified as being in need and their unique characteristics; and
- **Where | The preferred locations** and neighbourhood characteristics of these areas.

A full suite of survey responses is provided at Appendix C of this report.

Key trends and highlights that were identified in the findings included:

- A significant amount of interest in taking up space within inner city (84%)
- A high proportion of visual artists (53%), performance artists (15%) and musicians (13%) looking for space
- Identified demand for work-space in particular, including public facing studio space, collaborative workshop space and performance space; and
- A very similar set of special requirements and neighbourhood amenities across all artist types (i.e. access to natural light, bigger is better and close to audiences, cafes and other creatives).

These findings provide a baseline assessment of demand within the inner city, with more localised findings expanded upon in each local government report.

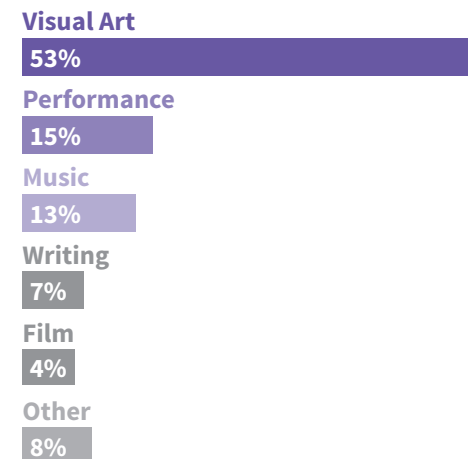
1080 RESPONSES FROM PRACTICING CREATIVES

What is your level of interest to have a space in 'Inner Perth'?



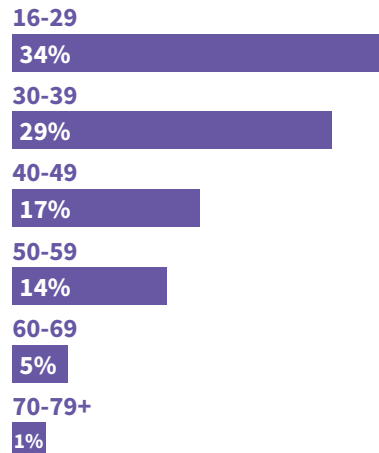
84% INTERESTED IN AN INNER CITY CREATIVE SPACE

What best describes your main creative practice?

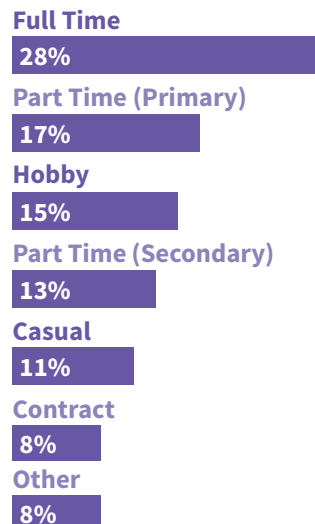


Who?

What is your age group?



What best describes your employment within your creative practice?



CREATIVE REQUIREMENTS

FASHION



21 Responses
(2% of total responses)

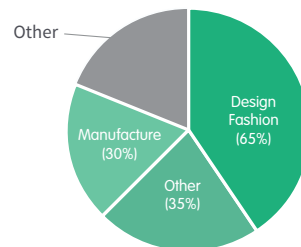
Special Requirements

- Natural light (70%)
- Natural ventilation (50%)
- High Ceilings (40%)

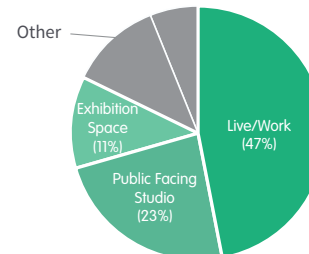
Amenities

- Public Transport (60%)
- Cafes and Restaurants (60%)
- Parks and Nature (50%)

Creative Practice*



Preferred Space



GAMING AND VIDEO



9 Responses
(1% of total responses)

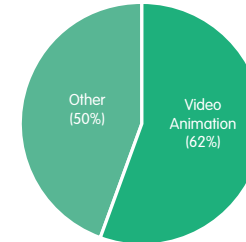
Special Requirements

- Natural light (75%)
- Storage spaces (75%)
- Secure Parking (75%)

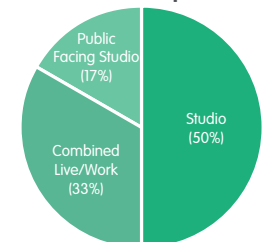
Amenities

- Public Transport (75%)
- Cafes/Restaurants (75%)
- Parking and Access (75%)

Creative Practice



Preferred Space



VISUAL ARTISTS



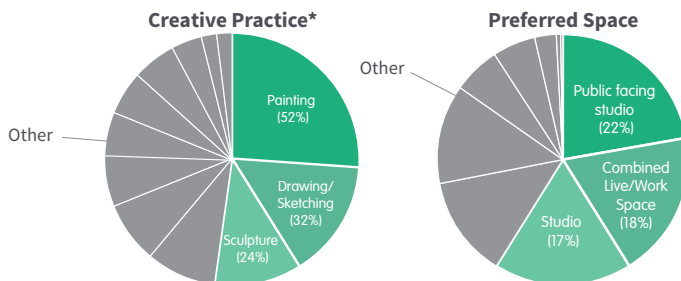
571 Responses
(50% of total responses)

Special Requirements

- Natural light (82%)
- Natural Ventilation (55%)
- Storage spaces (43%)

Amenities:

- Cafes and Restaurants (62%)
- Exposure to audience and clients (56%)
- Public transport (43%)



PERFORMANCE



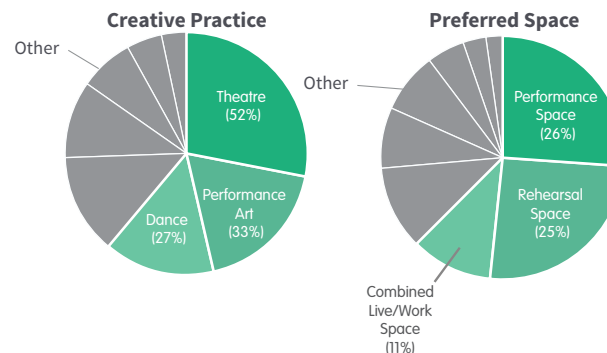
168 Responses
(15% of total responses)

Special Requirements

- Natural light (54%)
- High speed internet (54%)
- Storage spaces (53%)

Amenities:

- Public transport (85%)
- Cafes and restaurants (68%)
- Exposure to audience and clients (64%)



MUSIC



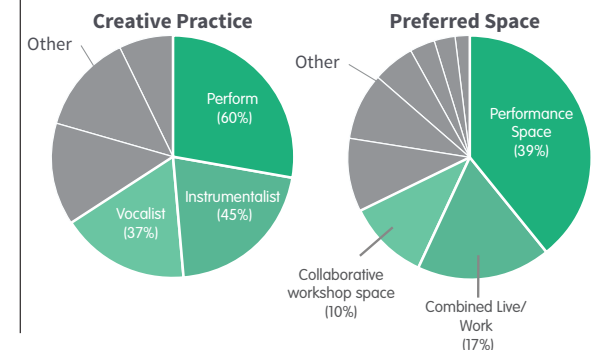
142 Responses
(13% of total responses)

Special Requirements

- Secure Parking (45%)
- Storage Spaces (41%)
- Natural light (40%)

Amenities:

- Cafes and restaurants (72%)
- Public Transport (63%)
- Exposure to audience and clients (60%)



CREATIVE REQUIREMENTS

WRITING



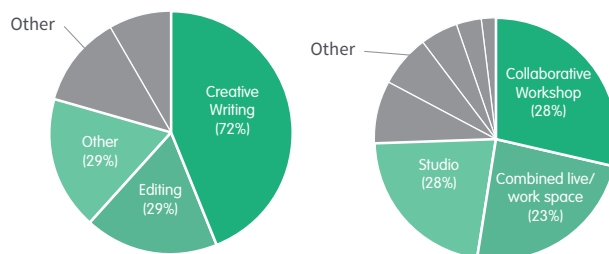
78 Responses
(7% of total responses)

Special Requirements

- Natural light (78%)
- High speed internet (67%)
- Natural ventilation (59%)

Amenities:

- Cafes and restaurants (72%)
- Public Transport (63%)
- Exposure to audience and clients (60%)



ARTS EDUCATION



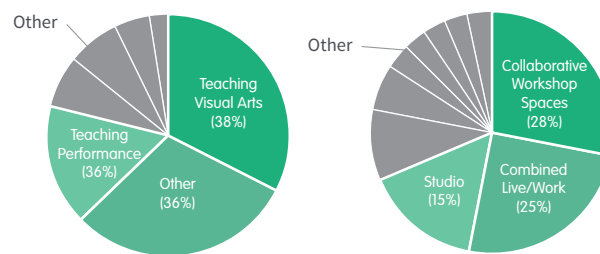
44 Responses
(4% of total responses)

Special Requirements

- Natural light (77%)
- High speed internet (63%)
- Natural ventilation (54%)

Amenities

- Public Transport (81%)
- Parking and Access (72%)
- Cafe and restaurants (68%)



FILM



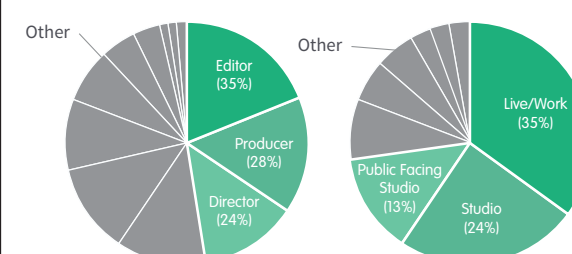
47 Responses
(4% of total responses)

Special Requirements

- High speed internet (61%)
- Natural light (52%)
- Secure Parking (47%)

Amenities

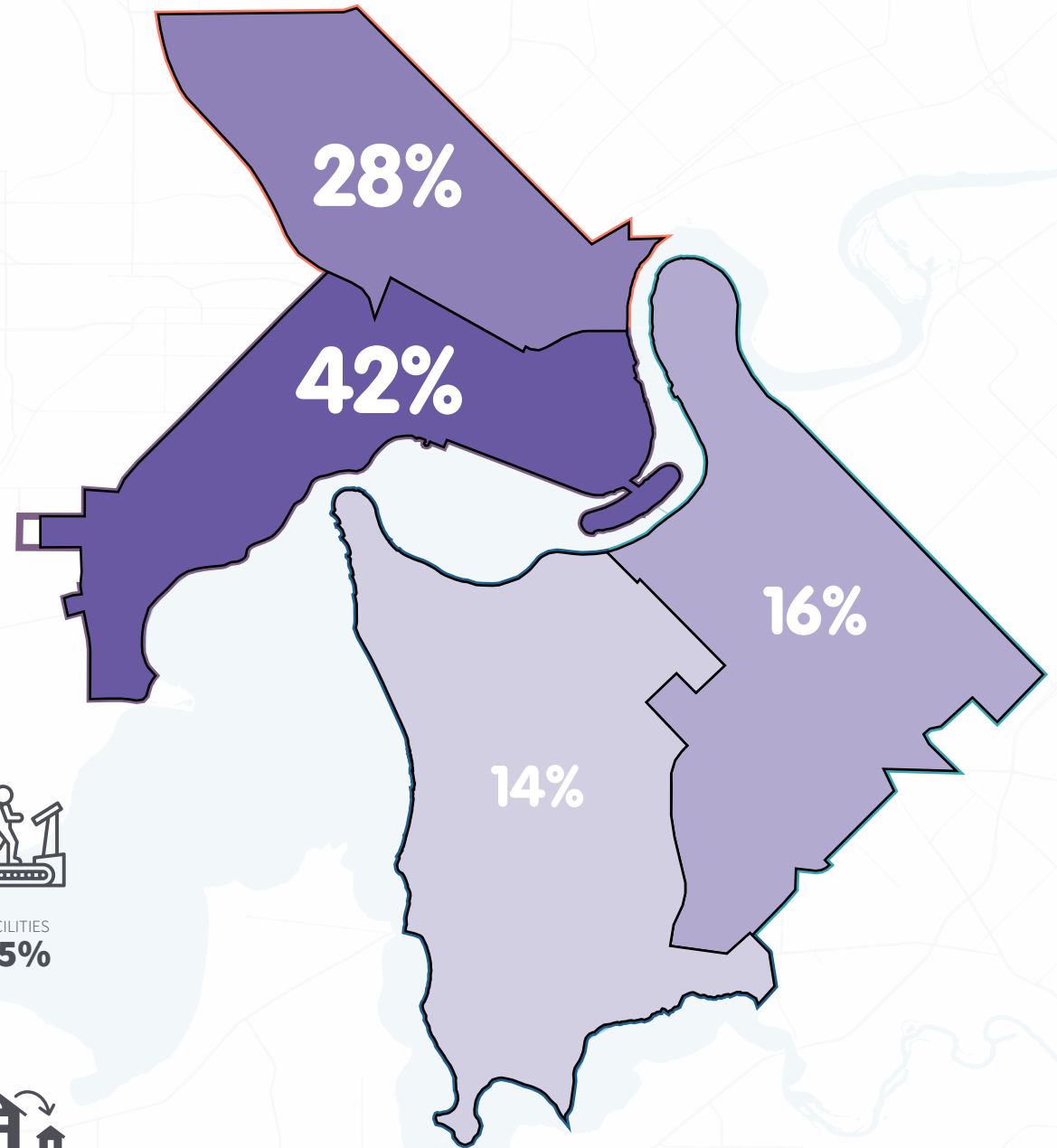
- Cafe and restaurants (81%)
- Public Transport (63%)
- Entertainment and Cultural Uses (63%)



*Participants were allowed to choose more than one option and the top three options are displayed above.

Where?

What is your preferred LGA to have a space in?



ATTRACTIONS (TOP 5)



CREATIVE / SHARE
SKILLS
67%



CULTURAL
PRODUCTION
57%



BUZZ + ACTIVITY
46%



AUDIENCES
44%



FACILITIES
45%

BARRIERS (TOP 5)



AFFORDABILITY
75%



DIFFICULT PARKING
50%



ACCESS + LOADING
23%



SAFETY
20%



LESS SPACE
16%

What?

What type of space are you interested in?

LIVE SPACE ONLY

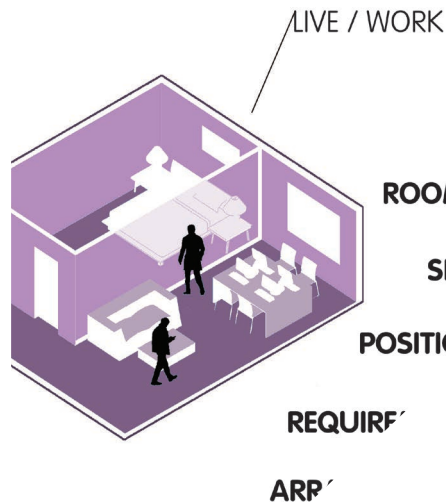
3%

LIVE/WORK SPACE

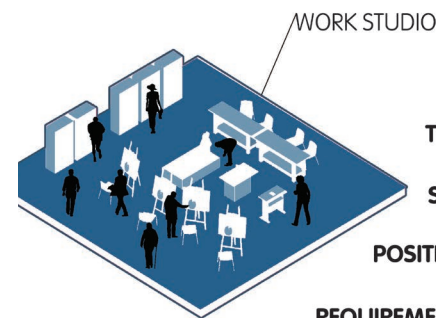
19%

WORK SPACE

78%



- Rooms** 39% - 2 Bedrooms*
20% - 1 Bedroom
17% - 3 Bedroom
- Size** 41% - Medium Room (Living Room)
27% - Large Room (Double Garage)
20% - Warehouse Size
- Position** 45% - No Preference
24% - Ground Level
19% - Upper Level
- Requirements** 68% - Natural Light
57% - High Speed Internet
52% - Natural Ventilation
- Arrangements** 60% - Co-located studio & accommodation
35% - Live in close vicinity to studio
- Amenities** 70% - Public Transport
63% - Cafe/Restaurants
53% - Exposure to audience



- Type** 25% - Public Facing Studio*
21% - Collaborative Workshop
18% - Performance Space
- Size** 32% - Large Room (Double Garage)
27% - Medium Room (Living Room)
20% - Warehouse size
- Position** 45% - No Preference
32% - Ground Level
11% - Street front
- Requirements** 69% - Natural Light
47% - High Speed Internet
47% - Natural Ventilation
- Amenities** 67% - Cafe/Restaurants
63% - Public Transport
55% - Exposure to audience

*Participants were allowed to choose more than one option and the top three options are displayed above.

Creative Requirements

Summary of implications and assumptions

The implications of the survey findings to the key aims of the report to the provision of space include:

- The potential for demand for space is significant (ie, at least 900 survey respondents)
- The demand appears to exceed both current and foreseeable supply of spaces
- At least half of the demand for space is from creatives in the visual arts sector, implying that most demand is focused on visual arts spaces and hubs. This has an implication for design, size and fit-out (especially practice specific fit-outs, ranging from photography, printmaking, painting, sculpture etc, all of which have very different requirements)
- The next significant cohort are creatives in music and performance (ie, collectively over a quarter of survey respondents). This likewise has an implication for the supply of fit-for-purpose spaces. It also suggests that these cohorts can also play a significant role in place-activation of precincts of inner urban neighbourhoods through programming and audience attraction. (A conflicting consideration also exists in relation to nuisance and disturbance if not appropriately managed).
- Most creatives (78%) were interested in working spaces, implying new or repurposed projects should focus on delivering fit-for-purpose studios, spaces or hubs. The modest demand for live-work spaces however could be readily provided in new projects (such as mixed use apartment projects).
- Most creative sectors have a desire for space to be 'public facing' (or 'audience / consumer facing'), suggesting that they could play a role in activating underutilized ground-floor spaces. The motivation for this may be partly economic driven - providing the ability to make and display work from the same location, resulting in cost savings.
- Most creatives commonly desire spaces with natural light, natural ventilation, storage and loading, safe parking and access. In particular, there is a preference for larger spaces (ie, 'medium' to 'large' room size, or approximately 20m² to 40m², exclusive of storage space). These criteria are matters that need consideration in the delivery of spaces (either repurposing or new spaces) through mechanisms such as design guidelines to ensure space is fit for purpose



Credit: Peter Ciemmitt

- Most practitioners desired a location proxemic to activity centres or precincts (namely, in places with cafes, restaurants, public transport, audiences, amenity). This suggests an alignment for delivering spaces as a part of activity centre or precinct development.
- Creatives frequently desired proximity to fellow creatives (cultural cross-pollination, motivation, collaboration and inspiration), suggesting a preference for the provision of space in hubs. (Note the lack of cross-pollination is cited as a reason for creatives pursuing career development outside of WA in the following report section).
- Creatives frequently cited their capacity to contribute events, exhibitions (including openings), workshops, skill development and social engagement as a part of taking up space. This reinforces their positive contribution to place activation and community development if spaces are well placed in activity centres and precincts (including the potential to provide 'early colonisation' of transitioning industrial or commercial precincts).



Credit: Jarrad Seng

Stakeholder Feedback

04

Testing assumptions
with industry leaders

National / International Artists

“Artists who have Left”

In order to gain an appreciation of key ‘push/pull’ factors influencing arts practitioners to leave or return to Perth, the project also involved conversations with select creatives; Abdul Abdullah (visual artist - Perth, Melbourne, Sydney), Troy Roberts (musician - Perth, Miami, New York), Chris McNulty (musician-Melbourne, New York, Perth) as well as academic, Ted Snell, who has examined and published discussions on the Perth diaspora. These conversations were focused on identifying common factors which are germane to the role of creative spaces, as well as wider reaching issues.

Whilst cultural and creative infrastructure within a city play some part in attracting and keeping creatives particularly significant artists, ultimately, key reasons for significant artists to leave Perth revolve around their career development. In particular, this includes:

- Access to greater audiences and touring opportunities
- Access to greater markets, larger collector bases and larger collector budgets
- Opportunities for better education offering wider perspectives
- Better linkages and connections within the sector
- Better visibility within academic and institutional networks (such as a stronger curatorial culture, “talent scouts”, profile development within critical circles)

- Better visibility within national or international arts media (profile development)

Many of these considerations are beyond the scope of this project to consider. However spatially, notable attractors in other cities includes the greater abundance of arts hubs that provide critical engagement, common networking, walk-in “talent scout” exposé and better commercial exposure (i.e. supporting livelihoods). The nature and design of spaces is important; good hubs need collaboration spaces or even daily common areas such as communal kitchens, incidental meeting and conversation areas, without which, practitioners remain isolated even within the Arts hub.

Conversely attractors that retain creatives in Perth or encourage their return include:

- Lifestyle, particularly climate and environment
- Familial or social connections
- Affordability, particularly for work spaces and living
- Easy access and parking (many creative practices involve transport and loading for materials, products, works or instruments)
- Perth’s proximity to South East Asian and Indian Ocean rim audiences and activity.

INTERVIEWEES:

Abdul Abdullah (visual artist)

Chris McNulty (musician)

Troy Roberts (musician)

Ted Snell (academic)



Chris McNulty
Credit: John Abbott

It is also felt by returning artists that once national or international profile is established, it is easier to return to Perth to base their practice on the West Coast, but remain connected to national and international networks and audiences.

Some further west coast arts sector attributes and opportunities include:

- Greater ease in obtaining institutional exhibitions (eg, PICA, Laurence Wilson etc) which is important for CV development, and
- In music and performance, the presence of highly accomplished and international standard practitioners to support high level collaboration.

From the perspective of artists who have left, and from their more distant viewpoint, important Perth brand elements include:

- Perth's consideration as a Capital of Culture
- The preservation of signature venues which have a national and international reputation (eg, Ellington Jazz Club)
- The establishment of postgraduate study centres, particularly attracting International creatives for residencies
- Building on indigenous links, and
- Establishing frameworks for better National connectedness, particularly through arts media, general media and national curatorial networks. In particular, the lack of significant Arts publishing on the west coast is a major issue contributing to absence from National publishing and exposure. The reasons for this are complex, and may be attributed to many factors including a diminishing audience and collectors (visual arts) and a lack of funding and cross-support.



Abdul Abdullah
Credit: Sam Mooy



Troy Roberts
Credit: Jillian Ciemitis



Ted Snell
Credit: Matt Galligan



Credit: Matt Gedling

Arts Hubs

From the survey results, and augmented with feedback through conversations with creatives, it is apparent that space, venues, hubs and clusters play a role in shaping a healthy cultural community.

Stakeholder engagement examined two different types of arts hubs in Perth being:

- organic agglomeration of creative/cultural uses within a precinct, neighbourhood or building, and
- Curated, centre based arts hubs

Organic hubs or precincts such as the Pickle District can occur through a combination of independent initiatives (either in isolation, by individual practices responding to common attractors, or through networking between practices). Local examples as well as national and international case studies indicate that organic hubs or precincts tend to occur in areas where property values and rents are at a low ebb, either due to urban blight or through cyclical preparation for significant redevelopment. Precincts which are attractive to the organic agglomeration of creative land-uses due to low rent and property values also present a threat to sustainability since redevelopment and consequent upward swings and property prices ultimately force arts uses elsewhere. In this sense arts uses are ‘riding the wave of property values’ and may intrinsically be transient, unless retained as a part of new development projects.

INTERVIEWEES:

Lisa McFarlane Reid (Tresillian)

Linton Partington (Linton and Kay)

Carl Pekin (DLGSC)

Organic hubs may comprise disparate landowners, creatives and stakeholders. Consequently, they have limited capacity for Precinct level coordination, instead relying on public oversight and leadership (ie, either State or Local Government). Areas of emerging organic arts hubs may also not be fit for purpose in terms of zoning and built form, requiring the dispensation of planning and building requirements. Arts uses within the Pickle District for example require retrofitting of universal access and public toilets in order to make spaces compliant for larger public events, the fit out costs of which can limit opportunities for greater public activation of surrounding precincts.

Similarly, areas such as industrial precincts may present zoning restrictions which present barriers to transformational cultural activating uses such as small bars, galleries, theatres or civic uses. Where precincts are being contemplated for transformation, it is desirable to establish a new vision (eg, through a Place Vision Plan or a Creative Precinct Action plan) which can in turn guide amendments to the operative Town Planning Scheme.

Curated, centre based arts hubs such as King Street Arts Centre and Tresillian are inherently more sustainable, and less likely to succumb to redevelopment if owned by a public entity such as State or Local government. In such circumstances the public entity will have ownership and control over the property itself (similar to public reservation/ ownership and management of recreation spaces and facilities) thereby providing longevity and certainty to the arts tenants. In this context, the operational success of publicly owned centre based hubs is partly a function of public oversight coupled with stakeholder management. Similar certainty and sustainability can also be provided by independent ownership of arts centres by the arts occupants themselves (note, this is more common in the United States where arts organisations may acquire properties outright).

Successful arts centres/hubs also embody a greater diversity of uses and functions which improve activation of place and diversification of income streams (eg, studio or office lease, space hire, commission on sales and event takings and complementary tenancy leases such as cafes).

It is a common experience that poorly configured arts hubs may do little to activate their setting, nor foster a spirit of community amongst arts practitioners. Design and curation of arts centres hubs need to consider the provision of internal public spaces for tenants to enable greater opportunities for cross-pollination amongst creatives, organisations and with audiences. Where facilities may be multi-level, it is also preferable that place activating uses and audience focussed uses are situated at ground level, with non activating uses such as Studios/workshops or offices is being located at higher levels.

Little evidence is available identifying a minimum size of hub which could be utilised as a guide, however new arts hubs should preferably incorporate sufficient creatives and spaces that support a degree of self sufficiency in terms of income streams from rentals, space hire and commissions/ ticketing. In addition, hubs should have adequate 'critical mass' to effectively support the cross-pollination of arts praxis of the participating creatives, and a potential for outreach and activation.



Credit: Miles Noel
Artwork: Stormie Mills



Government & Development Industry

From the preceding discussion, hubs clearly play a role in fostering a vibrant arts community. They also contribute to the activation of place. The delivery of hubs and other venues and facilities is frequently dependent on State Government, Local Government and private sector initiatives. In addition to undertaking publicly funded projects directly, Local Government holds several levers which can be used to incentivize private sector delivery of cultural infrastructure.

The development industry is very varied and has wide-ranging levels of interest in accommodating cultural and creative uses. Some developers find considerable benefit in fostering synergies with cultural uses for mutual benefit. Apart from incentivised or negotiated provision of space for creatives (i.e. negotiated by LGAs through bonuses or similar mechanisms), private sector philanthropy is also a strong driver of cultural projects, including the provision of space. Philanthropic initiatives, however, do not necessarily always align with LGA strategic planning, necessitating open and positive consideration on the merits of the projects proposed.

INTERVIEWEES:

Randal Humich (Humich Group)

Ella McNeil (Minderoo Foundation)

Naomi Lawrence (Development WA / Landcorp)

Commentary through ongoing working relationships with:

ADC Property (Perth Girls School)

EG Property (Frame Court).

Some key considerations include:

- Openness to provide space if it can lead to a development bonuses for related development projects or if it can be derived or converted from a other pre-existing requirements such as percent for art.
- Recognition that creative spaces, galleries, performance spaces have potential for branding and activation of projects, either as a part of projects, or transition stages (eg, Perth Girls School)
- Apprehension relating to management agreements in clearance of DA conditions. This is particularly manifest where evidence of ongoing arrangements for management (such as Artsource or FORM) may be required as a precondition for development bonuses.

Courtesy: EG Funds

Arts Organisations

INTERVIEWEES:

Tabitha McMullan (FORM)

Soraya Ramsey (Artsource)

Although willing landowners and developers may make spaces available to creatives, the capacity of owners to manage creative spaces such as studios is limited, necessitating the involvement of third-party intermediaries in the long-term management of spaces. To fill this role, the sector relies on a handful of not-for-profit organisations to supply management and operational services to arts hubs where they are not delivered by government nor commercially viable to be delivered by the private sector. In turn, the not-for-profit sector is heavily reliant on public funding as well as other commercial, philanthropic and private income sources.

Historically this function has been served by intermediaries or 'enablers' such as Artsource (WA's peak artist association), FORM, and Mundaring Arts Centre (a recent newcomer to space management) and other smaller organisations.

Artsource in particular has held a depth of knowledge of property, the functional requirements of a wide range of creative and cultural uses, and deep artist data bases and networks to draw upon and achieve best fit between practitioners and spaces. The organization's capacity has been severely reduced through diminished funding streams, leading to a loss of resources and operational knowledge. At present Artsource has only two studio hubs remaining in its inventory (Customs House and Rosemount Hotel) declining from over eighty studios managed by Artsource in 2018. However, the recent return of some public funding to Artsource will help to rebuild the organisation's capacity in this space.

In terms of current studio inventory, Artsource's prevalent studio typology typically comprises small to medium sized spaces suitable for visual arts practices. No studios are available suitable for diverse needs such as sculpture or 3D fabrication.

FORM has previously operated some Studios (Goods Shed, Midland Atelier, Spinifex Hill, Port Hedland Courthouse) although studio management has not been a core part of FORM's business model. FORM is currently embarking on a review of its business plan which may include some increased capacity to manage studios in the future.

Credit: Mingor

