

WEST
DARLING
ARTS

BROKEN HILL

CREATIVE ARTS HUB

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES SUMMARY REPORT

APRIL 2024

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of findings and implications from community and stakeholder engagement to inform the Broken Hill Creative Arts Hub.

Background

Broken Hill's reputation as a centre for arts practice has accompanied its mining town persona throughout its history. The arts have played a pivotal role in life in the city, and Broken Hill has attracted artists from all over the world to live and work here, taking advantage of the landscape, lifestyle, and incredible clarity in the light and atmosphere, creating an inspirational environment in which to practice art.

The arts and creative practice have softened the mining town narrative over the decades. The community is supportive and is stronger culturally and socially, due to emerging and widely practiced artists residing in Far West NSW. Creative and artistic pursuits are seen as a basic and necessary facet of life in this isolated area.

Home to creatives of all disciplines - artists, writers, filmmakers, musicians, actors and more - their work is integral to historic and contemporary narratives of our city. Creatives are central to any experience of Broken Hill and the community show up to support visiting filmmakers, the newest art galleries, and big cultural events.

The opportunity to secure funding for a contemporary arts space in Broken Hill has presented itself, in line with the NSW Government's new Creative Communities Arts Policy.



Artist Verity Nunan's work at the 2024 Living Heritage Festival

CALLING ALL CREATIVES!

WEST DARLING ARTS IS ON A QUEST TO TRANSFORM BROKEN HILL INTO A HAVEN FOR CREATIVES WITH A NEW CREATIVE ARTS HUB. FROM THEATRES TO GALLERIES, YOUR IDEAS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. SUBMIT YOUR SUGGESTIONS BY MARCH 25.

CREATIVE ARTS HUB CONSULTATION



WEST DARLING ARTS

Meet with West Darling Arts as we formulate a plan for the long-term development of a Creative Arts Hub in Broken Hill.

Broken Hill City Gallery
2pm on Friday March 8th



Engagement Approach

The purpose of community and stakeholder engagement was to inform the development of an application for funding for a creative arts hub in Broken Hill.

The objectives included gathering information from a wide range of practicing and non-practicing artists, arts groups and associations, creative industries, and community people.

Engagement activities were designed to reach a wide demographic spread.

The engagement provided the community an opportunity to help shape the future of planning for a central piece of arts infrastructure. To do this, people were supported to identify gaps in what is already offered in the city and to express what increased arts infrastructure would mean for the arts community now, and in the future.

This document is a snapshot of the value of arts and creativity personally, professional, economically, and culturally in Broken Hill, and its effect on liveability.

Through online surveys and in-person discussions, respondents were encouraged to consider the past, present, and future.

KEY SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

80

responders to the survey
(online and paper based)

15

people and or small groups
who were interviewed

8

consultations with creative
industry/ arts groups

20

pop up consultations

40

Additional comments



**160 PEOPLE FROM BROKEN HILL AND THE FAR WEST NSW
REGION INCLUDING CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS AND
ORGANISATIONS, PROVIDED THEIR INSIGHTS INTO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A CREATIVE ARTS HUB FOR BROKEN HILL**

KEY IDEAS TO EMERGE FROM THE CONSULTATION

Community

Create a welcoming place for locals and visitors with assets, facilities, and spaces that foster creativity and allow people to make art. Enhance the opportunity for community projects and activities to foster social cohesion locally and for visitors.

Connectivity

Between people, between emerging and established artists, between teachers and students, between young people, between peers, and between Broken Hill and the people and opportunities that exist beyond our region. Utilise the national creative community to bring creative learning and development opportunities via high-speed and reliable connectivity.

Commercial

Enhance the conditions for careers in the arts in Broken Hill. Fill the gap for easy access to art supplies, art classes, workshops for children, workshops by visiting practitioners, small audience performances, and tuition by professionals. Include a retail space to stock small item artwork and branded merchandise by local artists. Create partnerships and share opportunities with other arts hubs, arts schools, and film schools.

New Activities

Increase opportunities for new creative expression for a range of people, some of whom may not have had the opportunity before. Popular suggestions include a Foundry, a multipurpose space, a community kitchen, soundproof musical facilities, theatre and filmmaking assets, printing (3-D and traditional screen), and high-speed connectivity to bring the opportunity to learn from others individually or communally.

Community Gallery

A place that can be used for community exhibitions for groups or individuals. A place welcoming to locals and embracing of culture. A place for friends, family, and community to gather to celebrate the work of local artists.

KEY IDEAS TO EMERGE FROM THE CONSULTATION CONT.

Limitations

Broken Hill is rich in assets used by an array of artistic and creative groups. These physical assets are ageing and the groups are dependent on volunteers managing high governance needs.

There are limitations to hire and utilise appropriate arts spaces for private events. Many existing spaces are not suitable for large scale facilities for artists and creatives.

Artist Joshua De Gruchy during his GLAMFest 2024 artist's residency



NEW IDEAS BUILT ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS

The Creative Arts Hub consultative process undertaken by West Darling Arts in 2024 echoed themes from the Broken Hill City Council's Cultural Plan engagement report from May 2021. The below findings from BHCC Cultural Plan 2021-2040 confirm current needs and strategic goals for culture in Broken Hill.



Preserving and sharing Broken Hill's rich history, heritage and local stories

Broken Hill has a unique history and heritage that community members are proud of, including Broken Hill's mining history and social history. Many told us they value the existing museums, buildings, places and people that are already doing a great job of presenting the City's history, heritage and stories. However, respondents told us they think there are many more opportunities to share local stories, including in the public domain. In particular, people said that there are still "untold" stories in Broken Hill that they would like to see preserved and told into the future, including First Nations, migration and multicultural stories.



Increasing visibility and recognition of Aboriginal culture and people

Community members told us that they would like to see more recognition, visibility and opportunities to platform and learn from Aboriginal culture, history and people in Broken Hill. Some opportunities for increased sharing of First Nations culture in the public domain were identified, including new public art designed in partnership with local Aboriginal artists and community.



Engagement and cultural participation for all ages, especially young people

Community members told us they value how arts and cultural programs, events and festivals bring the Broken Hill community together and help to create a shared sense of belonging. People suggested varied ideas for more arts and cultural activities, ensuring that there is 'something for everyone' to participate in in Broken Hill. In particular people highlighted a need for more cultural participation opportunities for young people and teenagers, as well as families and children. There was also a clear appetite for more activities available at night and on the weekend.



Improving information and promotion for locals, visitors

Community members told us that there are already a lot of opportunities to participate in arts and culture in Broken Hill, but that they often don't hear about activities until after they have happened. Survey respondents identified poor information and promotion as the main barrier to cultural participation in Broken Hill, and residents and visitors alike suggested they would like to see a more coordinated approach to promoting what's on, such as a website or app.



Broken Hill's natural environment and cultural identity are intertwined

Community members highlighted that one of Broken Hill's most unique strengths when it comes to culture, is its unique natural environment and location in the outback- which in turns shapes and defines local identity and culture. People think there are more opportunities to provide and promote arts and cultural offerings that relate to the natural environment to encourage visitation (e.g. outdoor cinema, outdoor concerts, stargazing, cultural trails etc.)



Improving existing cultural venues and spaces

Community members told us that Broken Hill doesn't need more cultural venues and spaces - but that there is a significant opportunity to upgrade and repurpose existing spaces, including heritage and unused buildings for cultural uses. Many would also like to see empty shopfronts in the CBD be made available for temporary and permanent arts and cultural uses to activate streets and support local creatives.



Activating public domain with art and culture

Community members told us that they think there are opportunities to further integrate arts and culture into Broken Hill's public domain (including streets, parks, buildings and landscape) to add colour, creativity and beauty to everyday life, enliven and activate streets and attract more visitors.



Opportunities for improved collaboration and partnerships

We spoke with community members representing a broad range of community and cultural groups, many of whom told us that there is a lot of passion and energy in the community but there is a clear need for more coordination and sharing of information and resources to deliver better outcomes together. People told us they appreciate all the existing opportunities for connection and partnership through various meetups and interagencies.



Culture as economic driver

Broken Hill community members are very aware of the value of arts and culture in attracting tourists and visitors to Broken Hill. Many people told us their ideas to further promote Broken Hill to attract more visitors, including ideas for major events and festivals. People also spoke about the opportunities that exist through boosting the film industry in Broken Hill, whilst ensuring that locals have the skills and access to benefit from these opportunities.



Supporting existing organisations and initiatives

Community groups and organisations told us that they would like to see more support from Council for their existing initiatives, with strong support for Council providing and facilitating training, skill sharing and grant funding opportunities to support local outcomes.



A network of creative villages

We spoke with community members from across Broken Hill, and residents told us they would like to see Council support creative outcomes and expression in Broken Hill's villages, in addition to just the CBD. For example, residents of South Broken Hill identified a range of opportunities to create a distinct cultural identity building on the existing strengths of Patton Village.

*Broken Hill Cultural Plan Engagement Outcomes Summary Report (May 2021)
accessed April 2024*

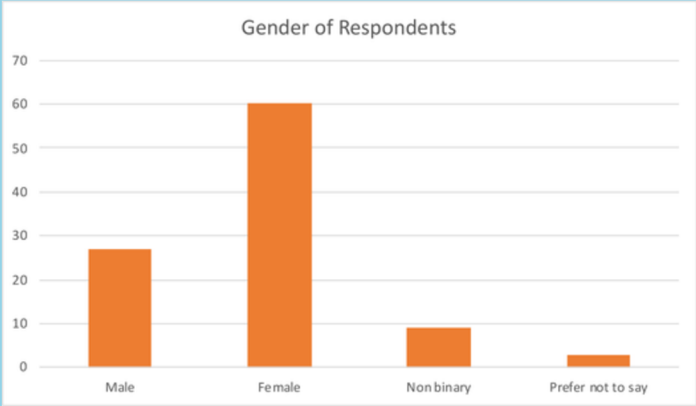
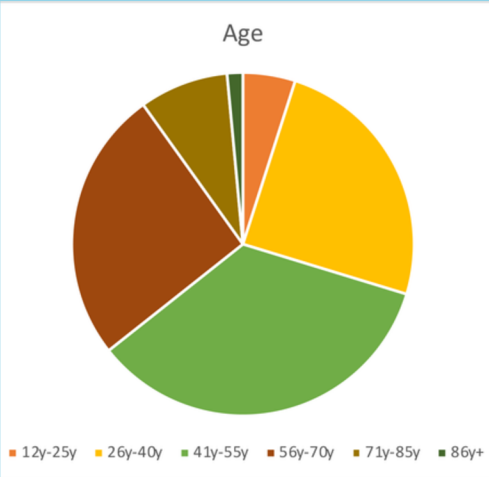


Jewellery making workshop

Engagement Statistics

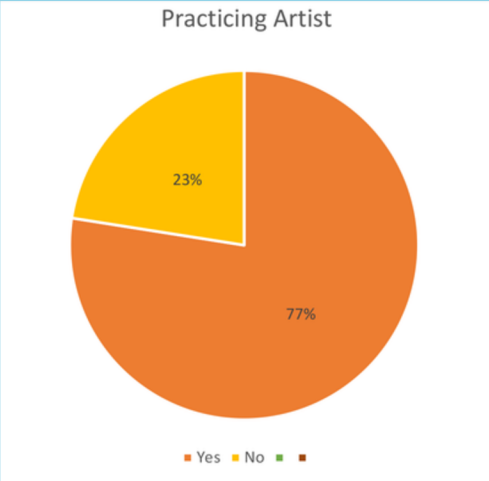
The engagement process was comprehensive and purposefully engaged with a variety of age, gender, and culturally diverse people. The collaborative nature of the engagement process resulted in additional inputs and comments for inclusion.

The **majority of respondents were aged 41-55**, with an equal representation of 25% in the 26-40 and 56-70 age groups. Young people aged 12-25 were 5% of the total respondents.



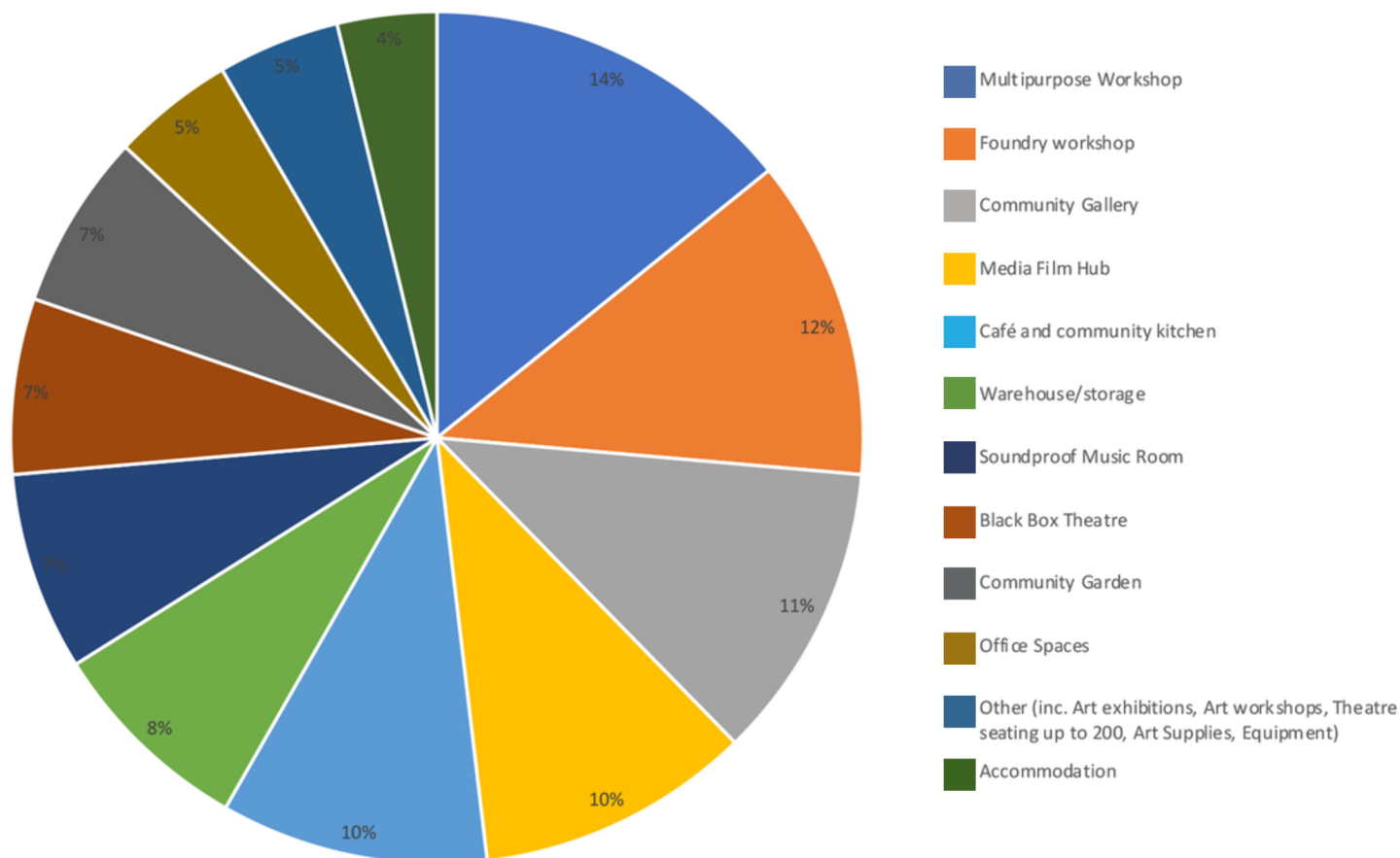
The gender spread of respondents is represented in the chart above. **Women were 60% of all responders** to the survey and those engaged across all engagement activities.

There was a **high number of practicing artists** who responded to online and in-person consultation, making up 77% of the total respondents.



Creative Hub Inclusions

Responders to engagement activities identified the following activities and assets to be included in the Creative Arts Hub as they presented a gap in the community's offering to artists, residents, and visitors.



43% of respondents said their professional practice had been impacted by a lack of those resources

86% of responders said they would take part in classes or activities at a Creative Arts Hub

SUMMARY

The engagement process encompassed a wide cross-section of the Broken Hill and Far West communities and encouraged artists and community members not actively engaged in the arts to provide their input.

The engagement was developed to create a vision for a creative arts hub predicated on available funding and participants were aware that the report was to be used to pursue funding.

The engagement activities also provided an opportunity for the community to come together and discuss identified gaps in community arts in Broken Hill, including barriers to inclusion.

These barriers have been identified throughout this report, and describe how locals and visitors are limited from engaging easily with the breadth of artistic opportunities on offer in our community.

The engagement process highlighted the simple spaces and activities needed to energise and encourage more people to engage with the arts and the community in culturally safe places, in mutual respect, and an environment of inclusion, positivity, and opportunity.

With this valuable information, a business plan outlining identified and desired activities and assets can be developed to support the idea of a Creative Arts Hub in Broken Hill.



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