



Australian Government

Australia  
Council  
for the Arts



# Re-imagine: **What next?**

Findings from a 2020 national consultation  
of Australia's arts and cultural sector

## Acknowledgements

**The Australia Council for the Arts proudly acknowledges all First Nations peoples and their rich culture of the country we now call Australia. We pay respect to Elders past and present. We acknowledge First Nations peoples as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands and waters on which we live.**

**We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of First Nations peoples and communities to Australian life, and how this continuation of 75,000 years of unbroken storytelling enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards ensuring an equal voice and the equality of outcomes in all aspects of our society.**

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*“My biggest fear is that... we will forget our learnings, and just go back to the way it used to be. That’s not how we should be. **We must look towards the future.**”*

International session participant

*“If there’s that opportunity to imagine a perfect 2030 for our industry, and landscape, it’s **ensuring that all active participants within it have a voice...**”*

CALD session participant

*“**I don’t want today to be a one-off.** I want to have ongoing engagement and to continue the discussion.”*

First Nations d/Deaf session participant

*“**...recovery [is] a long journey...** a collective and collaborative approach will result in better outcomes for all Australians.”*

Submission



# Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Key terms	7
<b>Theme 1:</b> Survival and resilience	<b>12</b>
<b>Theme 2:</b> Centring equity	<b>21</b>
<b>Theme 3:</b> Public value	<b>33</b>
Appendix: The consultation process	<b>41</b>

# Foreword

2020 was characterised by unprecedented disruption and challenges. The arts and cultural sector was among the hardest hit by the pandemic, in a devastating year for so many people in Australia and across the world. It was also a time in which global movements rallied around issues of race, gender and social justice, prompting deep reflection and calls for systemic change.

Towards the end of the year, the Australia Council embarked on a dialogue across the arts and cultural sector. Through a deliberately inclusive process, we aimed to address structural barriers so that everyone across the sector could contribute. The *Re-imagine: What next?* consultation builds on our ongoing work to support our cultural and creative industries in both the present and the future.

The consultation findings highlight ongoing challenges to artists and creative workers' livelihoods, many of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Indeed, for many, survival was and remains the primary concern.

However, the consultation also highlights the resilience of an industry that has long grappled with precarity while continuing to generate and innovate. The findings cast light on challenges of accelerated digital adaptation through the pandemic, and show our creative workers' swiftness in identifying new and more sustainable ways to engage internationally.

Participants spoke clearly and loudly of the immediate need for action, accountability and tangible change to create a just, fair and equitable industry. The consultation also illuminated language shifts that are occurring in other sectors and internationally: away from 'diversity' and 'inclusion' towards 'equity' and 'justice'.

However, as the consultation findings show, there is still much more to be done to ensure an industry in which everyone can participate and thrive, which in turn creates public value, opportunities for equitable growth, and the highest possible returns.

We were pleased to hear so many embracing the public value agenda that we have been driving through our strategy, *Creativity Connects Us*. We are also heartened that the consultation findings so closely align to our strategic objectives that prioritise access and equity; First Nations arts and culture; arts that reflect and connect contemporary Australians; and a thriving and valued cultural industry.

At the Australia Council, we are reflecting on these findings and identifying our actions in response. Many of the actions that participants called for are already well and truly underway at the Council. Some of the challenges identified remain in front of us and will demand more of our attention and leadership.

I thank everyone who participated in this important work. I urge everyone with a stake in the cultural and creative industries to engage with these findings so that together our shared future is one in which creativity connects us all, for the benefit of all of us.

**Adrian Collette AM**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australia Council



# Introduction

**In 2020, a year that changed everything, we asked the arts and cultural sector to participate in a national dialogue about the shared future we can create. We heard from more than 800 people who have provided extensive insight, ideas, ambitions and lived experience.**

Within the context of the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Re-imagine: What next?* consultation asked two big questions:

- *What do we want our industry to look like in 2030?*
- *How do we get there?*

The consultation also asked how the industry could be inclusive of all Australians, support the nation's recovery, and weather future disruptions.

Through more than **100 written submissions and 110 hours of consultation**, the majority of participants called for **significant and radical transformation** to ensure the future sustainability, strength and diversity of Australia's arts and cultural sector.

Participants provided **voice to a 2030 vision of a resilient and thriving industry** recognised for the public value it delivers. An industry in which First Nations culture and leadership are central, all people can participate equally, digital and international activities drive innovation, and artists are paid a living wage.

They spoke powerfully and eloquently about their **needs, experiences and suggestions**, and articulated the **physical and mental strain** of working in an industry characterised by insecure income, unsustainable practice and structural inequity.

**COVID-19 has heightened and made visible** the arts and cultural sector's unsustainable business models and practice. It is now imperative that these issues are transformed to support the future of Australian arts and culture. All actions taken must **improve equity** to ensure the industry thrives and is accessible to all.

The **consultation provided rich intelligence** for the arts and cultural sector, funding agencies and government. It can **inform policy advice, strategic planning, decision making and advocacy**. It also points to **opportunities to partner with other industries** on work already underway.

All segments and players across the ecology will play a role in determining and creating our industry's future.

## Engagement

The consultation engaged 806 participants across:

- **58 discussion sessions**<sup>1</sup> with 518 participants
- **2 public town halls** with 123 participants
- **1 Australia Council staff town hall** with 62 participants
- **103 written submissions** from groups or individuals.

This resulted in:

- **110 hours of consultation**
- **over 1.3 million words** of transcripts and submissions.

*See page 41 for more on the consultation process.*

## Themes and 2030 goals

From the more than 1.3 million words of discussion and submissions, **three key themes** emerged: **survival and resilience, centring equity** and the overarching outcome of creation and expansion of **public value**.

**Six interconnected goals** have been established for a re-imagined and transformed arts and cultural sector leading to 2030 (figure 1).

<sup>1</sup> These included 44 sessions targeted at particular groups, and 14 facilitated by the Australia Council targeted at areas of interest including international regions and festivals.

Figure 1: Overview of themes, focus areas and 2030 goals – *Re-imagine* sector consultation findings

Themes	Survival and resilience	Centring equity	Public value
<b>Focus areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Artists’ livelihoods</li> <li>– Psychological safety</li> <li>– Digital transformation</li> <li>– Mobility and exchange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– First Nations people</li> <li>– CALD people</li> <li>– People with disability</li> <li>– d/Deaf people</li> <li>– Young people</li> <li>– People of gender diverse and intersectional identities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Creating public value</li> <li>– Contribution to society and recovery</li> <li>– Communicating public value</li> </ul>
<b>2030 goals</b>	<p><i>Artists in Australia are thriving – they feel valued, can access a living wage, and work within sustainable and safe practice models.</i></p> <p><i>Digital output is accessible, innovative and embedded, and rewards artists and audiences.</i></p> <p><i>International engagement reflects our diverse identity, builds connections, and is sustainable and innovative.</i></p>	<p><i>First Nations arts and culture is abundant, self-determined and central to national identity.</i></p> <p><i>All people can access opportunities to participate equitably in arts and culture in Australia.</i></p>	<p><i>The Australian arts and cultural sector is valued for its immense contribution to Australian society.</i></p>



# Key terms

**We recognise that terminology is contested, evolving and deeply personal for some people. There is a critical need to ensure terminology does not reinforce structural inequalities or inhibit our ability to fully understand and change them.**

## Ableism

Ableism means treating people with disability unfairly, or systematically excluding them, based on the (often unconscious) belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people need ‘fixing’. It includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalisations of people with disability.<sup>2</sup> Examples of ableist actions include using an inaccessible venue, casting non-disabled actors to play disabled roles, wearing perfume in a scent-free environment, and not having captioning or audio description on content. Ableist micro-aggressions can include using derogatory language.<sup>3</sup>

## Arts and cultural sector/the industry

The *Re-imagine* consultation discussion paper used the term ‘arts and cultural industries.’

The terms ‘arts and cultural sector’, ‘the industry’ and ‘our industry’ have been used interchangeably in this findings report.

In keeping with broader national industry definitions, the Australia Council is stepping towards use of the term ‘cultural and creative industries’, depending on the context. For example, in addition to arts, the cultural industry can include museums, libraries, teaching and national parks. And in addition to the arts, the creative industry can include software development and fashion.

## Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

CALD is an increasingly contested category used in reporting on Australia’s cultural makeup. While considered no longer fit for purpose, the term CALD is still commonly used as a measurement of diversity across many policy areas including arts and cultural engagement. We use this term with respect and recognise its limitations.

The Australia Council aims to contribute to ways terminology can evolve for future research and policy development. One of the clear calls for action from ‘CALD’ session participants in the *Re-imagine* consultation was not to be called ‘CALD,’ but to use a term which centred them. Participants identified with alternative terms including ‘global majority’. Work is in progress by key national industry bodies (with lived experience)<sup>4</sup> to determine appropriate, consistent and self-determined terminology for data collection and reporting. The Australia Council is part of this national conversation.

2 Eisenmenger A 2019, ‘Ableism 101,’ *Access Living*. <https://www.accessliving.org/newsroom/blog/ableism-101/>

3 People with Disability Australia, *What is ableist language and what’s the impact of using it?* <https://pwd.org.au/resources/disability-info/language-guide/ableist-language/>

4 Led by Diversity Council Australia (DCA) and the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA).

## Cultural safety

The term cultural safety originally comes from the work of Maori nurses in New Zealand and is defined as ‘An environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.’<sup>5</sup>

Cultural safety is more than developing cultural competency: it is a paradigm shift that requires people to examine structural inequities such as class, power and structural racism. This requires people and institutions to engage in deep, critical and ongoing self-reflection: ‘a stepping back to understand one’s assumptions, biases, and values, and a shifting of one’s gaze from self to others and conditions of injustice in the world.’<sup>6</sup>

## d/Deaf people

There are various terms for describing people with varying degrees or kinds of deafness.

Deaf (with a capital D) is used to describe those who use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) to communicate, and who identify as members of the signing Deaf community.

People in this group may also identify themselves as ‘culturally Deaf.’ They are more likely to have been born deaf or become deaf early in life.

deaf (with a small d) is a more general term used to describe the physical condition of not hearing. It also describes people who are physically deaf but do not identify as members of the signing Deaf community.<sup>7</sup>

The term d/Deaf is used in this report. Participants also used the terms ‘hard of hearing’ and ‘deafblind’ and highlighted diversity within the d/Deaf communities and the different needs this gives rise to.

## Equity

Equity is about systematic fair treatment to create and sustain equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. This includes deliberate affirmative actions and distribution of resources.<sup>8</sup>

The consultation highlighted a language shift in the arts and cultural sector from ‘diversity’, to more active language of ‘equity and justice’ that centres people who have been marginalised.

5 Williams R 1999, ‘Cultural safety – what does it mean for our work practice?’ *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 23(2).

6 Kumagai A and Lyson M 2009, ‘Beyond cultural competence: critical consciousness, social justice, and multicultural education,’ *Academic Medicine* 84(6): 782-787.

7 DeafNav is a centralised portal to help understand, access and connect with the d/Deaf and hard of hearing community. See DeafNav Glossary. <https://deafnav.com.au/understand/deafness-and-hearing-loss/what-is-deafness/glossary>

8 BYP Group 2020, What is cultural equity? <https://www.bypgroup.com/news/2020/11/27/what-is-cultural-equity>

## First Nations

The terms ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’, ‘First Nations’ and ‘Indigenous’ are used interchangeably in this report to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, arts and culture. The primary term used is First Nations in recognition of First Nations peoples’ role as the original custodians of this country. We understand that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not comfortable with some of these words. The Australia Council means only respect when we use these words.

## Gender diverse

The term gender diverse is used to recognise that a person’s sex, gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may change over time.<sup>9</sup> All consultation participants were asked optional demographic questions about their gender identity, including whether they identified as non-binary/gender fluid. Participants self-selected to take part in the ‘gender diverse’ session.

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person’s identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Aspects of identity can include First Nations identity, gender identity, sex, colour, race, visa status, language, age, disability, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and criminal record. Forms of discrimination can include ableism, ageism, sexism, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, intersex discrimination and social stigma.<sup>10</sup>

## Lateral violence

Lateral violence describes the way people in positions of powerlessness can covertly or overtly direct dissatisfaction inward towards each other, towards themselves, and towards those less powerful than themselves.<sup>11</sup> Lateral violence is a product of complex historical, cultural and social dynamics. It results in a spectrum of behaviours that can include gossiping, jealousy, bullying, shaming, social exclusion, family feuding, organisational conflict and physical violence. Lateral violence thrives due to power imbalances, a lack of self-determination and control, identity conflict, negative stereotypes and trauma.<sup>12</sup>

9 Australian Human Rights Commission 2013, *New protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status*. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/lgbti/projects/new-protection#>

10 Victorian Government 2021, *Understanding intersectionality*. <https://www.vic.gov.au/understanding-intersectionality>

11 Understandings of lateral violence in Australia have been influenced by Canadian Aboriginal discussions, including this 2008 definition from the Native Counselling Services of Alberta, cited in Clark Y and Augustinos M 2015, ‘What’s in a name? Lateral violence within the Aboriginal community in Adelaide, South Australia,’ *The Australian Community Psychologist*, 27:2, p.19.

12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2011, *Social Justice Report 2011*, Australian Human Rights Commission, p.8.

### People from non-privileged backgrounds

There are various forms of ‘privilege’ which can affect people’s access to arts and cultural opportunities. These include age, geographic location, socioeconomic background, current income levels, and highest level of education attained. We have used the term ‘non-privileged’ in this report rather than ‘less privileged,’ as the word ‘less’ implies a ‘normal’ benchmark which some people are falling short of. We acknowledge that the term ‘non-privileged’ still centres the experience of those ‘with’ privilege, while recognising that this is an evolving area of language usage.

### People with disability

The term ‘people with disability’ is widely used in Australia, including by disability advocates and peak bodies.<sup>13</sup> There is increasing use of self-identifying terms such as ‘disabled’, including in advocacy for change.<sup>14</sup> This report uses the term ‘people with disability’ with respect, and we will continue to recognise self-identification and engage in dialogue as the terminology evolves.

### People with lived experience of marginalisation

This term is used to collectively refer to First Nations people, people with disability, d/Deaf people, CALD people and gender diverse people. These are groups that have been found to be under-represented in the arts and cultural sector.<sup>15</sup>

### The social model of disability

The social model of disability was developed by people with disability. It says people are disabled by barriers in society (such as buildings not having a ramp or accessible toilets), or people’s attitudes (like assuming people with disability can’t do certain things). Unlike the medical model of disability, the social model says people are not disabled by their impairments or differences. The social model helps us recognise and remove barriers that make life harder for people with disability.<sup>16</sup>

13 People with Disability Australia, *Language Guide*.

14 Hadley B 2020, *Allyship in disability arts: Roles, relationships, and practices*.

15 Including Australia Council forthcoming 2021, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia’s arts and cultural sector*. Diversity Arts Australia, BYP Group and Western Sydney University 2019, *Shifting the Balance: Cultural diversity in leadership within the Australian arts, screen and creative sectors*.

16 Australian Federation of Disability Organisations 2021, *Social Model of Disability*. <https://www.afdo.org.au/social-model-of-disability/>

### **Structural racism (also called systemic racism or institutional racism)**

Structural racism is not about specific actions of a few individuals or organisations – it is a power imbalance within social, political and economic systems. It includes (often unconscious) norms, cultural representations, policies and institutional practices that reinforce inequity. It relates to elements of our history and culture that have enabled the endurance of privileges and disadvantages based on race. Structural racism can be invisible to those who privilege from it.<sup>17</sup>

### **Young people**

There are no standard definitions of young people in Australia. Participants self-selected to take part in the ‘children and young people’ consultation session.

17 The Aspen Institute 2016, *11 Terms You Should Know to Better Understand Structural Racism*.  
<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/structural-racism-definition/>

# Theme 1: Survival and resilience

**For many creative workers, the pandemic has further exacerbated the insecurity and instability of livelihoods, businesses and ways of working, as well as a sense of not being valued. COVID-19 has also accelerated the digital transformation that was underway and the need to rethink international mobility and exchange.**

Many participants expressed their frustration at having to explain artists' ways of working to employment service providers. They called for **recognition of grant applications and creative work** in the JobSeeker compliance framework.

For others, COVID-19 provided an opportunity to step back from **the culture of overwork** that they identify as driving the sector. For some, COVID-19 has even provided a rare chance to enjoy temporary income security through the JobKeeper or JobSeeker programs, highlighting the potential of a **universal basic income for artists**.

During the pandemic, the industry has shown great resilience and innovation. But there is a consistent view that the **current industry culture of busy-ness, precarity and poor remuneration are unsustainable**. Artists expressed feelings of **anxiety, insecurity and exhaustion** with existing arts funding and other industry structures, and **a need for new, sustainable business models to support creative practice**. Their psychological safety depends on improvements that ensure artists feel empowered and work within an industry that is thriving, fair and enabling. Participants also called for **time and support to recover from the pandemic** before planning long term.

Participants' suggestions for the decade ahead included **artist investment funds** to cover needs usually met by employers, and **alternative models of wealth building**, such as impact investment or artists' trusts. They called for a **centring of artists within the industry and funding models**, including linking organisational funding to the employment of artists, or investing directly in artists rather than projects or organisations. Participants suggested that funders revise KPIs and funding to focus on impact instead of outputs.

Participants also called for greater support for **alternative business models to the non-profit, board-led structure**, including support for collectivist wealth creation structures and entities operating for-profit in 'commercial' art forms. These suggestions were made amid both the wider calls to work towards resourcing **a living wage for artists**, and for strategies to enable **the sector to become more self-sustaining**. Equitable access to **capacity building** is needed to assist with this.<sup>18</sup>

While the consultation suggested a need to diversify sources of financial support beyond public investment, it also highlighted **a demand for more small, easy to access grants**,

<sup>18</sup> Collectively, these views re-emphasise the importance of the Council's current research into the changing contexts for artistic and creative work, opportunities for artists within other sectors, and our programs supporting arts organisations to innovate with business models. Research includes: Throsby and Petetskaya 2017, *Making Art Work: An economic study of professional artists in Australia*; Australia Council 2019, *Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning Program in Schools*; Australia Council (forthcoming), *Creativity at Work: Interdisciplinary learning in industry and community settings*; Australia Council (forthcoming), *Graphic Storytellers at Work: Cross-industry opportunities for cartoonists, illustrators and comics-makers*. Examples of business model innovation include: Future Form: Transform your arts business model, in which up to 24 participants from 12 organisations work with industry experts to transform and innovate their core business model (managed by Capacity Building); and the recently opened Sector Recovery Initiatives, which support the sector to re-imagine practice and operations, and test ideas and models for a more resilient, equitable and thriving future.



such as those pivoted to during COVID-19. This included favourable views of **expression of interest (EOI) processes** which place less upfront burden on applicants. Other suggestions included grants awarded via lottery to improve the fairness of funding distribution, and options for artists to communicate applications in more culturally appropriate or familiar ways. Participants also asked for longer lead-in times, more support developing applications and projects, and greater coordination across different funding agencies.

The findings underscore the need for digital capacity building and strategies.<sup>19</sup> Participants highlighted the **creative possibilities of digital transformation** and that **developing digital work takes time and investment**. They also pointed to a number of challenges around **equitable access, ownership, distribution and monetisation**. Participants called for **professional development**, investment in **new and emerging digital art forms** and **models that support access to local content**, as well as investment in live experiences.

**Disruption to international touring and engagement** during the pandemic has resulted in significant loss of income for Australian artists. While participants agreed on **the importance of international engagement**, some pointed to the unsustainable nature of extensive international touring, both financially and for the climate.

They described a 'post-touring' world and ways **international engagement has already shifted to other forms of mobility and exchange**, including licencing work to international artists and virtual residencies. Participants suggested **staying longer in a single location, hybrid digital and live models, funder support for carbon offsets, and moving artists or IP rather than sets**.

While calls for re-localising activities were met with caution about parochialism, participants felt the way forward was **a shift towards hyper-local arts with rich, niche global reach and connections**. This includes tapping into the rich multicultural diaspora in Australia and overseas. Some participants believed Australia should aim to **become a net exporter of arts and cultural products and services**, in particular **music and literature**.

Throughout these discussions, consultation participants were keen to acknowledge issues of **equity and social justice** and the critical role they play in shaping survival and resilience. Artists with lived experience of marginalisation described being **mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually exhausted** by the **systemic inequities** and **lack of accessibility and cultural safety** in the industry. Others described a **pace of work** that doesn't allow time to work with First Nations protocols or artists with lived experience of marginalisation.

**COVID-19 has provided an opportunity for re-considering business models, income streams and ways of working for the industry**. However, any such reconstruction will also require close attention to questions of equity to ensure that new structures of financial and cultural support do not repeat or increase previous inequalities and injustices.

<sup>19</sup> Across 2020 and 2021, the Council has conducted significant work to build sector capacity in the digital sphere, developing a digital cultural strategy and conducting research into digital cultural engagement and issues of access and inclusion online. See: Australia Council (forthcoming), *In Real Life: Mapping Digital Cultural Engagement in the first decades of the 21st Century* (working title).

Figure 2: Survival and resilience theme – summary of findings

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030	
<p><b>Artist livelihoods</b></p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the struggle to survive as artists.</p>	<p>Targeted sessions</p> <p>Town Hall Council facilitated</p> <p>Submissions</p>	<p>Almost all</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>All</p> <p>About half</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>income insecurity leading to exhaustion and psychological distress</li> <li>administrative burdens and barriers accessing grants</li> <li>weaknesses of non-profit arts organisational model and limitations on the structures that can receive public support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adjustment of JobSeeker eligibility and compliance framework</li> <li>education of employment service providers about creative work</li> <li>grant process reforms that centre artists, reduce administrative burden and increase fairness and transparency</li> <li>small, easy to access grants</li> <li>support for alternative business models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improvements in industry capacity e.g. enhanced ability to engage with diverse business models, investors, industry regulation and service bodies</li> <li>strategies that resource a living wage for artists</li> <li>an artist investment fund that covers needs typically met by employers</li> <li>impact investment and wealth building as ways of supporting artists</li> </ul>	<p><b>Artists in Australia are thriving – they feel valued, can access a living wage, and work within sustainable and safe practice models.</b></p>

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030	
<p><b>Psychological safety</b></p> <p>Artists' psychological safety is closely linked with sustainable livelihoods, public value and cultural safety.</p>	<p>Targeted sessions</p> <p>Town hall</p> <p>Council facilitated</p> <p>Submissions</p>	<p>Almost all</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>About a third</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>income precarity and the culture of busy-ness</li> <li>lack of cultural safety and accessibility</li> <li>a sense of not being valued</li> <li>the need to recover from impacts of COVID-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prioritisation of cultural safety and accessibility across all aspects of the industry</li> <li>slower work e.g. revised KPIs, a focus on impact instead of outputs, rest residencies, a culture of care</li> <li>addressing of COVID-19 impacts, e.g. art form specific recovery roadmaps, mental health support, targeted support for First Nations elders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>see the shifts listed above under artist's livelihoods and those listed under the centring equity theme</li> </ul>	

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030	
<p><b>Digital transformation</b></p> <p>The digital adaptation highlighted the creative and access possibilities of working in digital spaces. But there are challenges around equitable access, ownership and creation.</p>	<p>Targeted sessions</p> <p>Town hall sessions</p> <p>Council facilitated</p> <p>Submissions</p>	<p>More than half</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>About a third</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing digital work takes time, experimentation and investment</li> <li>need to balance digital with live experiences</li> <li>barriers to equitable access by artists and communities</li> <li>algorithmic bias and digital convergence creating barriers for Australian artists and access to Australian content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time and support to develop meaningful ways of working online</li> <li>investment in new and emerging digital art forms</li> <li>support for local content models</li> <li>testing of new digital business models</li> <li>systems to ensure collecting societies collect digital revenues for artists</li> <li>support for partnerships and knowledge sharing with experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>universal access to fast Internet and low-cost data</li> <li>digital data insights about the arts and cultural sector are captured and shared</li> <li>digital sovereignty and ownership for First Nations artists</li> <li>futureproofing Australian content on digital platforms</li> </ul>	<p><b>Digital output is accessible, innovative and embedded, and rewards artists and audiences.</b></p>

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
<p><b>International mobility and exchange</b></p> <p>The pandemic has illuminated the unsustainability of current models of international mobility and exchange.</p>	<p>Targeted sessions</p> <p>Town hall</p> <p>Council facilitated</p> <p>Submissions</p>	<p>About half</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>Less than a third</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• importance of international engagement</li> <li>• pressure to tour with a high volume of events and locations</li> <li>• questions over touring sustainability</li> <li>• impact of pre-COVID-19 ways of working on climate responsibility</li> <li>• lack of equitable access to traditional international activity</li> <li>• challenges of reciprocity and intercultural collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a shift towards hyper-local arts with global connections</li> <li>• changes to international engagement e.g. staying longer, moving ideas rather than sets, digital and live hybrids</li> <li>• Australia as a net exporter of arts and cultural products and services, e.g. music and literature</li> </ul>	<p><b>International engagement reflects our diverse identity, builds connections, and is sustainable and innovative.</b></p>

*“The issue is not just lack of income, but **security of employment...**”*

Submission

*“**I’m just hamstrung by this crazy amount of administration...** It’s just this system that’s just working against you all the time.”*

Open session participant

*“**Quick response, light EOs,** all the things we have ‘pivoted to’ during the pandemic should just stay.”*

Open session participant

*“I rely on my disability employment service, but **they just don’t know what to do with creative people.** It’s like speaking into the void once a fortnight.”*

Disability session participant

*“...a cultural society gives value to [artists]... they’re integral, **they are cared for, they are respected...**”*

Open session participant

*“At the moment **we’re in this very fragile, gig-based situation,** and what something like JobKeeper, JobSeeker has shown us is that the argument for a **UBI [universal/unconditional basic income]/an artist’s wage is so important.**”*

Open session participant

*“**There’s also that pathway of entrepreneurship...** learning to build your concept and your project management skills and your business capacity to take your idea as your own and launch into the world.”*

Regional/remote session participant

*“We need to push towards **changing that model into, ‘OK, yes, you can make a profit. And you absolutely should...’**”*

First Nations session participant



*“I think we need to **shift all the language around the number-driven success measures**, because it’s, I know, it’s killing me...”*

Open session participant

*“**So this idea of speed and getting to the next deadline, I think is quite damaging.**”*

Open session participant

*“**...Recognising the emergence of new business models and markets** and ensuring that appropriate frameworks are in place to support these.”*

Submission

*“We are at an extraordinary threshold of things that we still haven’t yet even imagined... **[Digital will have] its own sense of possibility, its own aesthetic, its own poetic space...**”*

Town hall participant

*“People are desperate to feel the heart and soul of others, they’re sick of digital... **audiences want to be touched.**”*

Open session participant

*“**There is a digital divide...**as you move down the class structure...we often don’t have the income to invest in that infrastructure, or the expertise.”*

Open session participant

*“**As long as content becomes increasingly algorithmic driven, it will be inequitable and unjust.** Algorithms reinforce existing inequity of content, revenue, audiences, without quotas and accountability.”*

Open session participant

*“This convergence of tech and platform culture and online content in arts and culture is the biggest risk... **Sector leadership required to bring tech and arts and culture together to look at future proofing...**”*

Open session participant

**“Often we think of international engagement purely as touring. But of course, that is not true... That is quite an antiquated market model way of thinking about it.”**

Town hall participant

**“How can we use this moment to shift the value of what we do and how we are measured?”**

International session participant

**“How do we enable Australian artists to be international without leaving Australia? Many artists do not have capacity for physical mobility. We need to shift thinking on what mobility is.”**

International session participant

**“How we can use the existing populations of Australians that we have scattered across the globe to be intelligently, actively accessing resources? Because they do exist, and at the same time leave a smaller environmental footprint?”**

Town hall participant

## Theme 2: Centring equity

**Almost all sessions discussed the need for structural and systemic transformation of the industry to achieve equity and a safe and just environment. This included calls for equity standards and quotas tied to investment, and for pathways for people with lived experience of marginalisation. Making equity, accessibility and cultural safety central to all aspects of the industry will ensure a thriving, dynamic and resilient ecology.**

These discussions incorporate experiences and feedback from:

- First Nations people
- CALD people
- people with disability
- d/Deaf people
- young people
- people of gender diverse and intersectional identities.

Across these groups, **participants called for greater self-determination, infrastructure,<sup>20</sup> career pathways and cultural safety; increased understanding of intersectionality; grant system reform to remove systemic barriers; and support for peer-to-peer networks, alliances and safe self-determined spaces.** Self-determination is key to the ethical and effective improvement of equity in the industry.

Participants with lived experience of marginalisation highlighted **lateral violence** caused by a lack of resources and **called for public investment to be redistributed to support a broader range of cultural values and art forms.** They described experiences of **inequity; exploitation** by ‘white’-led organisations; and the **bias in perceptions of ‘merit’ and ‘excellence’** which are tied to privilege. These concerns are examples of **structural racism.** Participants also highlighted experiences of **ableism:** in hiring, decision-making, support structures and ways of working, and in a lack of accessibility standards and cultural safety.

Participants with lived experience of marginalisation believe **organisations and decision-makers should be held accountable,** including through specific guidelines and expectations. And while they acknowledged the power of using identity as a way to enforce equitable distribution of investment, they also hoped people would not always be required to **‘perform’ their identities** to access opportunities. They called on organisations to support them to develop their own infrastructure and opportunities and to make space for **First Nations approaches, leaders and models of leadership.**

Participants with lived experience of marginalisation called for **pathways into all industry roles and leadership positions** and called on decision-makers to **make space, shift power, update their policies and implement equity measures and accessibility standards.** Across the board, participants with lived experience of marginalisation called for **equitable representation – on panels and in leadership, decision-making and funding agencies.**

<sup>20</sup> Including organisations and venues of all sizes and across art forms, skilled technicians, artists and arts workers, pathways, and diverse forms of investment and business models.

**First Nations participants** spoke of the **strength and resilience** of their communities; the need for **intergenerational healing**; and what is needed to achieve a **self-determined First Nations arts and cultural ecosystem**, including pathways into all roles. They called for additional investment to **support young people and intergenerational skills development**; continued support for **digital connections and networks**; protection of and compensation for **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)**; and a **First Nations artists investment fund**.

**CALD participants** described feeling excluded from major arts and cultural organisations and funding opportunities. They highlighted **barriers** including language, institutional recognition such as training or reference letters, and the longer amount of time it can take to reach the same 'achievements' as other applicants. They called for **mentorships, pathways, and rebuilding** that goes beyond symbolic commitments to diversity by **shifting resources** and providing **cultural safety**. They called for the updating and activating of **anti-racism policies**, the introduction of quotas and standards, and a fundamental shift from thinking about 'diversity and inclusion' to **ethics, equity and social justice**. **This includes no longer using language like 'CALD'**. Some CALD participants are creating their own structures and opportunities and participants highlighted the value of **grassroots collectives and businesses**.

**Participants with disability** highlighted the **differences** among people with disability and the need to improve the **cultural safety and representation** of CALD and First Nations people with disability. They described the **burden of having to educate** and of **being the only person with disability** in an organisation or program. They called for **clear accessibility standards, quotas and targeted funding** streams centring artists with disability. Participants with disability welcomed **the shift to digital during the lockdowns**, making consultations, training and events more accessible for many. They highlighted the need to continue to **improve accessibility** and called for employers to keep **online work arrangements** that have been a game changer for some people with disability. However, they also highlighted that **digital technology** is not the answer to all accessibility requirements.

**Deaf participants** explained the challenge of being grouped with people with disability given their **different lived experiences, identities and cultural languages**. They highlighted the **diversity of needs** within the d/Deaf community. They called on organisations to **consult with the d/Deaf community** about their **access needs and preferences** and to consider **accessibility at the project design stage**. They highlighted challenges with providing **Auslan grant applications** and called for **a simpler process** in which they have more agency and specific **d/Deaf-led funding rounds**. They called for **sign languages** to be formally recognised as languages.

Participants described a **disconnect between public arts investment and young people's interests**, including a lack of support for 'commercial' art forms or underground spaces in which young people test boundaries. They called for **greater understanding and investment in the way young people engage** in culture and **more diverse and sustainable career pathways**. This includes greater promotion of **arts subjects and careers in schools and tertiary education**, including **artist-in-residence programs** and opportunities to connect with **role models** – particularly for young people with lived experience of marginalisation or non-privileged backgrounds.

Participants described gaps in **tertiary education**, opportunities for greater relevance, and its **increasing cost**. Current **pathways into the industry via unpaid work are also a barrier** for many young people. They called for more deliberate and supported formal and informal pathways such as **traineeships, apprenticeships, mentorships and cadetships**. They highlighted the potential for **a cradle-to-grave approach to the arts** in Australia, similar to that employed in sports, with grass-roots support feeding the next generation of artists and audiences.

Participants explained that **identity is intersectional and fluid** and called for **greater understanding and representation of intersectionality** in the industry. People of gender diverse and intersectional identities described the importance of **supporting older artists from marginalised backgrounds**, as it can take them a longer time to meet eligibility criteria. Participants called for grassroots, **peer-to-peer mentoring networks and alliances** across people of intersectional identities and lived experiences of marginalisation. They suggested **building accessibility into arts practice**.

**The *Re-imagine* consultation raised a clear call to action for the industry, and a leadership opportunity for the Australia Council, to combat systemic inequities, ableism and structural racism.** Equity for the industry will be achieved if it is systemically fair to people of all races, backgrounds, intersectionalities and abilities.

Figure 3: Centring equity – summary of findings

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
<b>First Nations participants</b> Opportunity to address structural racism by centring First Nations approaches, knowledge and leadership.	First Nations targeted sessions Targeted sessions Town hall Council facilitated Submissions	All Almost all Almost all All About half	<p><b>First Nations participants</b> described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the strength, resilience and cultural expertise of First Nations communities</li> <li>the need to heal from intergenerational trauma</li> <li>the Western worldview in arts and culture in Australia</li> <li>exploitation by 'white'-led organisations</li> <li>a lack of self-determination and infrastructure</li> <li>lateral violence caused by lack of resources</li> <li>a lack of career pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public investment tied to equity and industry standards for First Nations people</li> <li>grant system reform to remove systemic barriers for First Nations people</li> <li>investment to support young people, succession planning and intergenerational connection</li> <li>diverse career and income pathways for First Nations artists and arts workers</li> <li>compensation for First Nations cultural capital</li> </ul>	<p><b>First Nations arts and culture is abundant, self-determined and central to national identity.</b></p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a self-determined First Nations arts and cultural ecosystem</li> <li>protection beyond survival of the world's longest continuously living culture</li> <li>centring of First Nations knowledge and leadership across the arts and cultural sector</li> <li>a First Nations artist investment fund</li> <li>centring of culturally appropriate First Nations approaches to expand cultural benefits and wellbeing of current and future generations of all Australians</li> </ul>		



Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• embedded self-determination and cultural safety for First Nations people</li> <li>• cementing of First Nations people's rights and protections</li> <li>• continued support for digital connections between First Nations peoples</li> <li>• support for collective action among First Nations peoples</li> </ul>		

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030	
<p><b>People with lived experience of marginalisation and non-privileged backgrounds</b></p> <p>Opportunity to address systemic inequities in the arts and cultural sector.</p>	<p>Targeted sessions</p> <p>Town hall</p> <p>Council facilitated</p> <p>Submissions</p>	<p>Almost all</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>All</p> <p>About half</p>	<p><b>CALD participants</b> described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eurocentric concepts of excellence and art that exclude CALD artists, values and art forms</li> <li>• requirements to perform their identities to access funding</li> <li>• symbolic commitments to 'diversity'</li> <li>• a lack of self-determination and infrastructure, including peak bodies and service organisations that aren't representative</li> <li>• lateral violence caused by insufficient resources and pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public investment tied to equity quotas and industry standards for CALD people</li> <li>• grant reform to remove systemic barriers for CALD people</li> <li>• pathways for CALD artists and arts workers</li> <li>• updating and activating of anti-racism policies</li> <li>• safe and self-determined spaces for conversations and practice development</li> <li>• rebuilding practice and governance systems through First Nations-led methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shifts away from Western concepts of 'art,' excellence and value</li> <li>• support for self-determination for CALD people</li> <li>• support for alternative investment models and collective action</li> <li>• CALD people fulfilling ethical responsibilities as settlers on First Nations Countries</li> <li>• shifts in language, such as no longer using 'CALD'</li> </ul>	<p><b>All people can access opportunities to participate equitably in arts and culture in Australia.</b></p>

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
		<p><b>Participants with disability</b> described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ableism and a lack of organisational accountability or cultural safety</li> <li>• lateral violence caused by lack of resources</li> <li>• a lack of understanding about accessibility and cultural safety across the arts and cultural sector</li> <li>• digital technology as not the answer to all accessibility requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public investment tied to accessibility standards and quotas for people with disability</li> <li>• support for artists with disability throughout their careers</li> <li>• improved accessibility of existing arts and cultural infrastructure, information and access points</li> <li>• maintenance and improvement of online accessibility</li> <li>• improved accessibility and diversity in the disability arts community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public investment to centre artists with disability rather than institutions</li> <li>• support for alternative investment models and collective action</li> </ul>	

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	<p><b>d/Deaf participants</b> described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ableism and a lack of cultural safety for d/Deaf people</li> <li>• power held by ableist organisations</li> <li>• inequitable access to arts and culture</li> <li>• diverse access needs, including for the First Nations d/Deaf community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public investment tied to accessibility standards and quotas for d/Deaf artists</li> <li>• d/Deaf representation in arts funding and decision-making</li> <li>• grant system reform to remove systemic barriers for d/Deaf people</li> <li>• support for d/Deaf people's collective action and peer connections</li> <li>• addressing the First Nations d/Deaf community's specific access needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• equitable access for d/Deaf people to arts and culture as creators, workers and audience members</li> <li>• support for d/Deaf people to self-determine their own arts and cultural experiences</li> <li>• formal recognition of sign languages as languages</li> </ul>	Goals 2030

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
		<p>Participants described <b>young people</b> in the arts and cultural sector and cultural sector facing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a disconnect with 'arts and culture'</li> <li>• a disconnect between public arts investment and young people's interests</li> <li>• schools not valuing arts subjects or careers</li> <li>• gaps in tertiary arts education and increasing cost</li> <li>• lack of pathways into sustainable careers</li> <li>• additional barriers for young people from non-privileged backgrounds and/or with lived experience of marginalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listening, co-design and involvement in decision-making</li> <li>• pathways into the arts and cultural sector</li> <li>• greater support for arts in schools, e.g. artist-in-residence programs and arts in the curriculum</li> <li>• integration of arts across the lifecycle</li> <li>• support for self-determined and non-traditional processes, practices and pathways for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arts and culture that embeds the rights of young people</li> <li>• respect for the role of elders in supporting young people</li> <li>• support for multidisciplinary career pathways</li> </ul>	

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
<p><b>Participants of gender diverse and intersectional identities</b> described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a lack of understanding of intersectionality</li> <li>• requirements to perform specific identities for funding</li> <li>• intersection of identities with privilege</li> <li>• lateral violence caused by limited resources</li> </ul>		<p><b>Participants of gender diverse and intersectional identities</b> described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a lack of understanding of intersectionality</li> <li>• requirements to perform specific identities for funding</li> <li>• intersection of identities with privilege</li> <li>• lateral violence caused by limited resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public investment tied to equity quotas and industry standards for people of intersectional identities</li> <li>• alliances supported among people with lived experience of marginalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• embedding of fundamental cultural rights</li> <li>• embedding of equity and justice for all people</li> <li>• embedding of accessibility into arts practice</li> </ul>	



*“**We’re such a resilient mob...** really strong and deadly and look after yourself, and **we will lead the new way forward.**”*

First Nations session participant

*“There’s a lot of potential in a **dialogue together and bringing Australian and Indigenous artists together** to have conversations.”*

First Nations session participant

*“What we want is active thinking about how we can go on to support a living diverse [culture], and **respect for traditional owners, respect for First Nations to really make those links and take us into the 21st and 22nd centuries** as a country that is no longer trying to pretend it’s somewhere else.”*

First Nations session participant

*“**For me, culture and art isn’t separate.** It just rolls into one.”*

First Nations session participant

*“From a ‘white’ lens, there has been a value put towards **people who have traditional knowledge versus contemporary traditional knowledge...**”*

First Nations session participant

*“More than ever **we need equity-based models of working...** Representation alone subjects marginalised people to unsafe situations.”*

Submission

*“It’s not just about including everyone into what this current framework is, but **it’s actually about changing the entire structure.**”*

CALD session participant

*“No matter where you climb up the ladder, **it’s always ‘white’ up the top.**”*

CALD session participant

*“**‘Experience’ and ‘merit’ keep the status quo of inequality going.** It so much harder for under-represented creatives to gain this merit and experience.”*

CALD session participant

*“When it comes to disability, **our needs are so disparate** and we have all got different things that we need to say.”*

Disability session participant

*“**Why is it only one person at the table?**”*

Disability session participant

*“**Quotas, you have to fill** from various kinds of backgrounds and having that diversity, that’s the way to do it.”*

Disability session participant

*“**I don’t identify as being a disabled person, I just can’t hear.**”*

d/Deaf session participant

*“I think that if we want to vision a future of inclusivity, it includes all people from birth... I would love to see that discussed: **children as citizens.**”*

Youth session participant

*“...sometimes I feel like **I have to really throw my queerness or throw my brownness to an organisation for money.**”*

CALD session participant

*“**The system is quite discriminatory towards older artists** and minority groups in dance and performance.”*

Gender diverse session participant

*“Building **peer to peer support...** using technology to do that, despite remote boundaries.”*

Regional/remote session participant

*“**Require, don’t just recommend, diversity.** And hold our arts boards to account.”*

Submission

## Theme 3: Public value

**Almost all sessions touched on the need for Australia’s arts and cultural sector to create, grow or communicate public value. The consultation reinforced that there is a narrow view of ‘the arts’ and that public value creation is limited by a lack of equity in the industry. Participants highlighted the importance of arts and cultural activity across Australians’ lives and communities, across government portfolios, and in our recovery from the pandemic. They also highlighted the need to communicate this value effectively.**

### What is public value?

**Public value refers to the collectively desired benefits and outcomes that are driven by public investment.**<sup>21</sup> It refers to benefits which are (theoretically) equitably accessible to all members of the public, such as parks, the rule of law, clean air, education, and arts and culture. Public value also refers to what people desire or value beyond their self-interest.<sup>22</sup>

**The benefits of arts and cultural experience are countless and well documented.**

They include significant public benefits such as health and wellbeing, social connection and cohesion, expression of self and community identity, healthy child development and ageing, and supporting local economies through tourism. **However, these benefits are not always widely recognised and access to arts and cultural experiences is not yet equitable.**

**The Australia Council has been pursuing a public value agenda in recent years.**

Our strategy, *Creativity Connects Us*,<sup>23</sup> outlines our commitment to increasing public engagement with transformational cultural experiences; ensuring our arts reflect the diversity of Australia’s population; raising broader awareness of the ways arts and creativity enrich the lives of all Australians; and advocating for the critical role of public investment in driving social, cultural and economic outcomes.

**Experiencing arts and culture is not a pastime of the elite.** Australia Council research shows 98% of Australians already engage in the arts in many ways, including listening to music, reading, attending in person, engaging online, and creating.<sup>24</sup>

21 Until the 1990s, the value of government investment was assumed to be equal to its cost. The term ‘public value’ was coined by the Harvard Professor Mark Moore in 1995 in arguing that public administration could be improved with the goal of increasing public value. Moore M 1995, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*, Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.

22 BYP Group 2020, *What is public value?* <https://www.bypgroup.com/news/2020/11/27/what-is-public-value>

23 See: Australia Council 2021, *Creativity Connects Us: Corporate Plan 2020-24*.

24 Australia Council 2020, *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*.

**However, our research also tells us that many Australians have a narrow interpretation of what constitutes ‘the arts’** and that there is a growing sense of the arts as elitist or ‘not really for people like me’. In response to our 2017 research findings,<sup>25</sup> the Australia Council has been expanding our language to include broader notions of culture and creativity and ways Australians engage.

**A narrow view of the arts is an international concern.** Some still see arts and culture as a luxury, or an indulgence for better times, rather than as key to building a more resilient and well-resourced society and economy. There remains work to be done to shift public perceptions about the breadth of arts and culture so that the benefits of a well-supported cultural sector flow freely to our communities.

**Our research also tells us that inequalities remain in the way Australians attend cultural events, including in relation to income and disability.**<sup>26</sup> Cultural equity is vital to the health and wellbeing of Australian communities and for generations to come.

*Re-imagine* participants spoke of the imperative to drive public value by ensuring arts and culture investment is linked to **equity and impact**. They challenged the primacy of ‘Eurocentric’ arts institutions in Australia.

Participants highlighted the public value of **outdoor festivals and activities** for meaningful and safe community building post-COVID. They noted the integral role of place-based, outdoor and pop-up arts activity in **economic re-activation and recovery**, particularly in regional areas. Participants also highlighted **public libraries** as a focal point for communities with growing opportunities for arts and creativity.

Participants suggested **local, community-led decision-making structures** for arts and cultural investment and tying funding to public value creation and **climate responsible policies**. They highlighted a wealth of **opportunities to integrate arts and culture across portfolios**, from health, education and aged care, to tourism, disaster recovery and resilience. Participants called for **sustained cross-portfolio engagement** and **new cross-industry partnerships**. Many called for **a whole of government cultural policy framework**.

Participants spoke of **culture in broad terms**, including food, sport, digital and civic engagement. They reinforced the need, identified by the Council in previous research,<sup>27</sup> to **expand the language around ‘the arts’** to better connect with a broader public. Participants also expressed confusion around which terms and arguments to use; and called for **a strong unified message** to champion public value while still enabling pursuit of diverse and complex objectives and needs.

25 Australia Council 2017, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*, p.11-12. See also: Australia Council 2020, *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*, p.51.

26 Australia Council 2020, *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*.

27 See breakout box on above.

Participants offered a self-critique of an industry that has been too inward looking and not unified. They highlighted **opportunities to build on connections and solidarity** created during the pandemic to further mutual interests and increase **collaboration and cooperation**. Participants called for **a collective voice** that can speak beyond ‘the echo chamber’. They highlighted the inability of existing peak bodies and service organisations to advocate effectively with limited resources.

Participants made a range of suggestions, including incorporating arts experiences in Medicare and private health rebates; employing artists in aged care; and learning from other industries. Some suggested a **public health campaign or message**, such as Arts Council England’s ‘Be creative, be well’ message,<sup>28</sup> a ‘Find 15’ campaign about arts and culture for wellbeing, or cultural gyms for ‘cultural fitness’.

Participants called for a groundswell of **grass-roots and systems-level advocacy** activity and collective action. They highlighted opportunities to learn from sport and social justice movements that have mobilised effectively. They called for **easy to use messages and information** and capacity building in **core advocacy skills** to build **influential allies across portfolios and industries**.

28 Ings R, Crane N and Cameron M 2012, *Be Creative, Be Well: Arts, wellbeing and local communities: An evaluation*, Arts Council England.

Figure 4: Public value theme – summary of findings

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
<b>Creating public value</b>	Targeted sessions	Almost all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arts and culture are broader than ‘the arts’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>integration of creativity and culture into the understanding of the arts</li> </ul>	<b><i>The Australian arts and cultural sector is valued for its immense contribution to Australian society.</i></b>
Opportunity to grow public value through a broader view of ‘the arts.’	Town hall Council facilitated	Almost all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lack of equity contributing to reduced public value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>redistribution of public arts investment based on public value, equity and justice</li> </ul>	
	Submissions	Almost all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>disconnect between the largest recipients of public arts funding and the general public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduction of a whole of government policy framework</li> </ul>	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase equity and climate responsibility</li> <li>place-based recovery and local decision-making structures for arts and cultural investment</li> </ul>		

Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030
<p><b>Contribution to society and recovery</b></p> <p>Opportunity to better leverage the significant contribution the industry makes to society through engagement across portfolios.</p>	<p>Targeted sessions</p> <p>Town hall</p> <p>Council facilitated</p> <p>Submissions</p>	<p>Almost all</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>All</p> <p>About a third</p>	<p>Participants suggested working across portfolios and industries including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health and wellbeing</li> <li>• disaster recovery</li> <li>• education and young people</li> <li>• aged care</li> <li>• community resilience</li> <li>• tourism</li> <li>• local governments and libraries</li> </ul>	<p>Integration of arts and culture across portfolios and industries underpinned by core principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acknowledge the inherent value of arts and culture</li> <li>• support artists and communities to self-determine their approaches to social impact and recovery</li> <li>• develop strong partnerships based on shared values</li> <li>• partner with 'unusual suspects'</li> </ul>	



Overarching issues raised by participants	Frequency	Breakdown of issues raised by participants	Short-medium term actions proposed by participants	Fundamental shifts proposed by participants	Goals 2030	
<p><b>Communicating public value</b></p> <p>Opportunity to better communicate the value of the arts and cultural sector in Australia.</p>	<p>Targeted sessions</p> <p>Town hall</p> <p>Council facilitated</p> <p>Submissions</p>	<p>More than half</p> <p>Almost all</p> <p>About half</p> <p>About a third</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need for collective and consistent advocacy</li> <li>• limitations of existing peak bodies and service organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a public health and wellbeing campaign for creativity and arts</li> <li>• arts and cultural sector to learn from other activists and industries</li> <li>• capacity building in policy and advocacy literacy</li> <li>• opportunity for grassroots and systems-level advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaboration rather than competition</li> <li>• a unified voice and consistent message</li> <li>• allies beyond the arts and cultural sector</li> <li>• improved equity</li> <li>• capacity building within the arts and cultural sector to communicate public value</li> </ul>	

*“A lot of **the general public engage with the arts, but don’t actually realise that it is the art**, and it is so threaded through so many different elements of everyone’s lives...”*

Collaborators session participant

*“**A far broader definition of the arts sector** can include history, culture, homemade culture, cinema, pop music, cultural and community festivals and tourism.”*

Submission

*“**I wish we could take the word ‘the’ out of the arts, because ‘the arts’ creates its own kind of ghetto.** If we described it as arts engagement, arts experiences, arts for wellbeing...”*

Collaborators session participant

*“**How do we empower local communities** to determine what arts and culture is delivered in their places and spaces?”*

Collaborators session participant

*“**We need the arts and cultural industries to go to the people, not the other way around.** This would include engagement with community art making, informal and lower production value touring and performances, collaborations with schools, sporting clubs etc.”*

Submission

*“Develop benchmarking programs for access, including **diversity targets** in terms of participation and community leadership.”*

Submission

*“Encourage/make **funding for orgs contingent on climate responsibility.**”*

Town hall participant

***“We’ve got to get out of the echo chamber... we need to be able to discuss across portfolios.”***

Festivals session participant

***“Every age care facility should employ one or two artists or on ongoing basis... and not only in aged care, I think it’s in prisons, in youth prisons, in all sorts of other places...”***

Open session participant

***“People feel very connected when they’re part of an arts performance, whether it’s online or in person, there’s that sense of connection that you get that is so valuable.”***

Open session participant

***“So, what we need to figure out how to do, is to tie that economic recovery and that social recovery to participation in the arts.”***

Youth session participant

***“We need partnerships with local councils, chambers of commerce, regional development organisations, tourism organisations, local business, health and community organisations...”***

Regional/remote session participant

***“Imagine a message so strong and innovative that the arts industry no longer has to fight for its worth.”***

Submission

# Appendix: The consultation process

**Between July and December 2020, BYP Group worked with co-facilitators with lived experience of marginalisation and the Australia Council to conduct a dialogue across the country. Within the context of COVID-19 and its immediate impacts, the wide-ranging consultation with people from across the spectrum of the arts and cultural sector gathered the sector's issues, ideas and ambitions over the next ten years.**

A **discussion paper** set out the key issues of the consultation.<sup>29</sup>

**The two big questions shaping the consultation were:**

- What do we want the arts and cultural industries to look like in 2030?
- How do we get there?

**We broke these questions down into the following four areas of discussion:**

- How will the arts and cultural industries be inclusive of all Australians?
- How will the arts and cultural industries play a significant role in the nation's recovery?
- How will the arts and cultural industries weather future disruptions?
- What other questions should the arts and cultural industries be asking?

Based on a **co-design process with co-facilitators and mental health experts**, the consultation approach was designed with multiple entry points, including culturally safe sessions in which people could self-select to participate. Purposive sampling, targeted recruitment and the creation of culturally safe sessions were critical to **boosting representation from people with lived experience of marginalisation**.

**Sessions were conducted online** due to COVID-19 restrictions and to ensure accessibility for people with disability and living in outer-metropolitan, regional and remote areas.

**Auslan interpreters and live captioning** were provided where needed.

Where possible, **sessions and breakout discussions were capped at 10 participants** to ensure everyone had a chance to be heard.

<sup>29</sup> The paper is available at <https://reimagine.australiacouncil.gov.au>

## Consultation session types

### Targeted sessions

Type	Sessions	Participants
CALD	11	86
Collaborators	2	28
d/Deaf	3	10
Disability	5	38
First Nations	4	21
First Nations d/Deaf	1	5
Gender diverse	1	2
Open	17	213
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>403</b>

Note: There was diverse participation in all sessions, including the open sessions.

### Australia Council-facilitated sessions

Type	Sessions	Participants
Children and young people	2	38
Festivals	1	10
International	4	20
International - Europe	1	3
International - North America	1	5
International - North Asia	1	7
International - South Asia	1	7
Leadership program	1	12
Regional and remote	1	8
States and territories	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>115</b>

## Town hall sessions

Type	Sessions	Breakout sessions	Participants
Public town hall	2	6	123
Australia Council staff town hall	1	3	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>185</b>

**Written submissions:** 103 written submissions were received from groups or individuals.

## Representation

**While the consultation targeted boosted representation from people who have felt excluded in the past, as part of a concerted effort to remove barriers and address systemic inequality, it attracted broad participation and engagement.**

Excluding Australia Council staff, participants in sessions, town halls and submissions were asked optional demographic questions about:

- their self-selection as CALD, First Nations, a person living with a disability, and gender identity
- state/territory of residence
- whether they had applied for funding from the Australia Council before
- (targeted sessions only) If they identified as unwaged independent artists claiming the \$100 honorarium offered by the Australia Council for participating in a session.

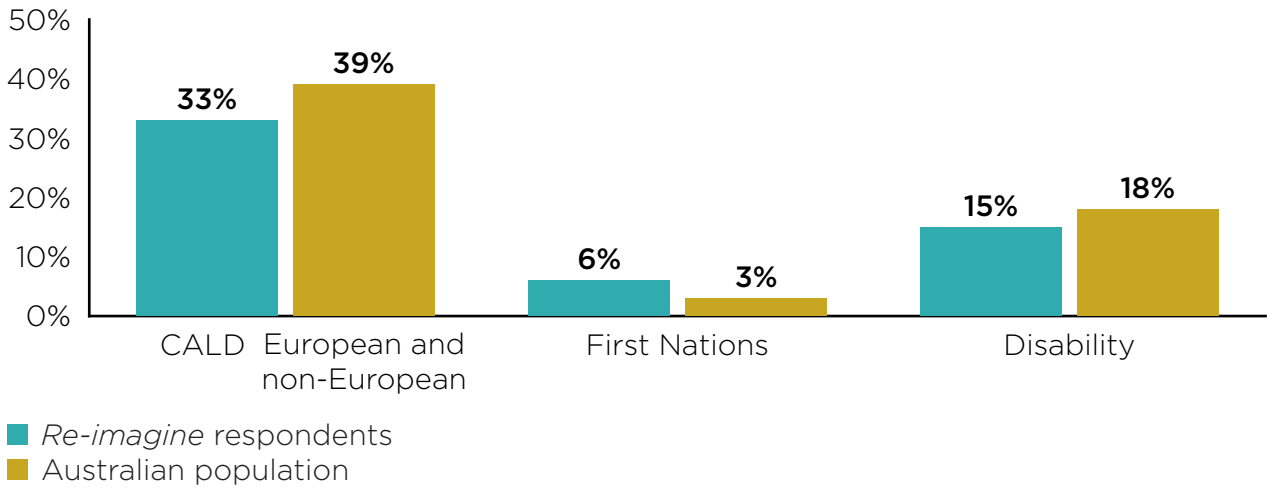
Approximately 76% of participants answered these questions, which forms the basis of this analysis:

- 28% of participants **had not applied to the Australia Council** before.
- 61% of targeted session respondents identified as **independent unwaged artists**.
- Overall, the level of representation of people with lived experience of marginalisation was **higher than among applicants to the Australia Council's core grant rounds**.<sup>30</sup>
- Compared to the overall Australian population,<sup>31</sup> **First Nations** representation was higher but **people with disability** and **CALD people** were under-represented (figure 5).
- Compared to both Australia Council grant rounds and the overall Australian population, **women** were over-represented and **men** were under-represented (figure 6).
- **Victoria had the highest representation** of the states and territories (48%), higher than in the Australian population (25%) (figure 7).

30 Data on representation in Australia Council investment will be published in Australia Council 2021, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia's arts and cultural sector*.

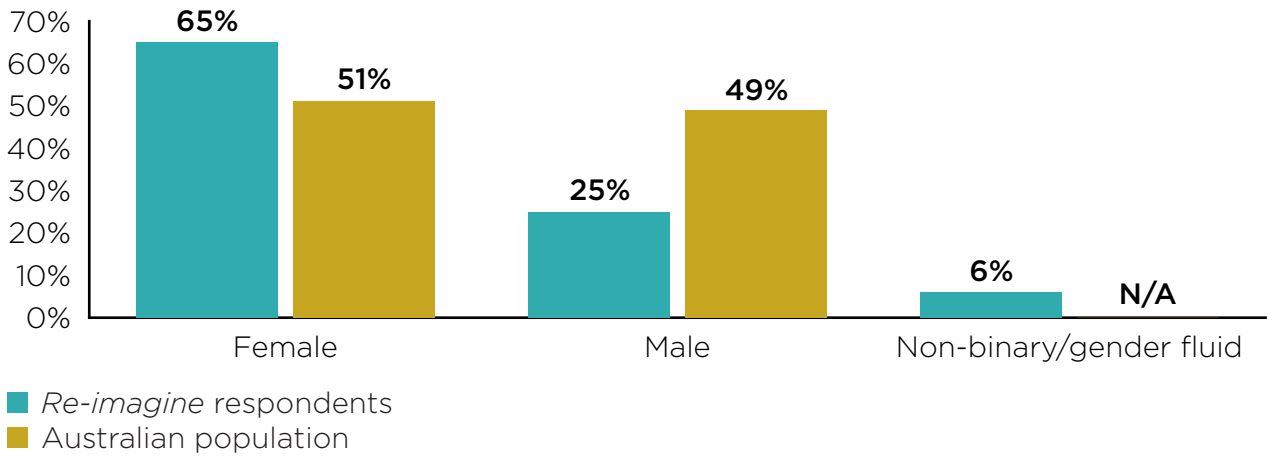
31 Based on ABS Census data and the ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

**Figure 5: *Re-Imagine* participants compared to the Australian population**



Note: This chart draws on the Australian Human Rights Commission’s classification of cultural diversity within Australia, which is not directly comparable with self-selection as ‘CALD’.<sup>32</sup>

**Figure 6: *Re-Imagine* participants by gender, compared to the Australian population**



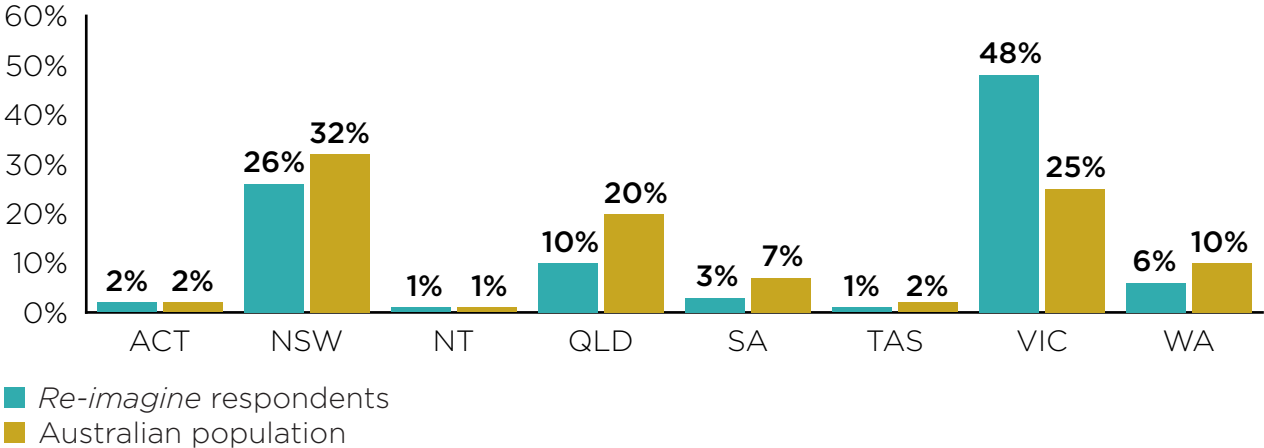
Note: The ABS estimates that 2% of Australians are gender diverse but improved data collection is underway.<sup>33</sup>

32 The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) defines cultural background as a person’s ethnicity and ancestry. Drawing on ABS Census data, it estimates the cultural diversity of the Australian population as 58% Anglo-Celtic, 18% European, 21% non-European, and 3% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Australian Human Rights Commission 2018, *Leading for Change: A blueprint for cultural diversity and inclusive leadership revisited*.

33 ABS 2016, *Standard for Sex and Gender Variables*.



Figure 7: *Re-imagine* participants by state/territory, compared to the Australian population







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