

Creative Skills and the Arts and Cultural Sector: Considerations for the new National Cultural Policy

Submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts – Office for the Arts

August 2022

Foreword

The Australia Council is pleased to contribute data and recommendations to the consultation process of the new National Cultural Policy.

This submission outlines the existing evidence base for the value of creative skills and training and the future needs for creative skills advancement.

It is supported by the creative sector leaders and researchers listed below.

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Acknowledgement

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 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.

Introduction

A vibrant, diverse, and innovative arts and cultural sector is the engine room of the cultural and creative industries. We know the cultural and creative industries are a major driver of economic growth, and their impact across society and industry relies on the experimental and ground-breaking work of artists: to generate new ideas, original IP, creative practice development and exceptional talent. Through sustained public investment in artistic expression, a healthy creative ecology with impact and economic value is built.

Arts and creativity also play a vital role in education, supporting the development of core and ‘21st century’ skills, and driving innovation and technology. They inspire us to transform our ways of living and working. And importantly, arts and cultural practice and participation develops skills that drive value across our society and economy, nationally and globally. According to the Australian Bureau of Communications and Arts Research, creative skills have been integral to fastest-growing industries in Australia over the past decade.¹

Through the devastating bushfires in 2020, recent catastrophic floods, and the impacts of COVID-19, the arts have been a constant in our lives. They bind our communities together, tell our stories and share our pain, and have the power to lead our regeneration as we reposition ourselves on the world stage. Australia’s cultural and creative industries are substantial in size and, before the pandemic, cultural and creative activity in Australia contributed \$115.8 billion, or 6.3% of GDP, to our economy.² In 2016, more than 645,000 people (6% of the workforce) worked in the cultural and creative industries in Australia as their main industry of employment.³ This is over three times the mining industry and more than 15 times aviation.⁴

However, in 2020 alone, it was estimated that Australia’s live entertainment industry lost \$1.4 billion in revenue⁵ due to the immediate impacts of the pandemic. In 2021, a national survey of over 3,000 professionals in the music and wider performing arts sector found that over 32,000 gigs and events were cancelled, equating to nearly \$94 million of lost income between 1 July 2021 to 31 August 2021.⁶

Over the course of the pandemic, the industry also lost thousands of creative workers to other sectors, resulting in a severe skill and labour shortage. Globally, more than ten million creative sector jobs were lost, with increasing digitisation further disrupting traditional business models and ways of earning creative income.⁷

These disruptions have had a profound effect on the ways in which people view the value and viability of creative careers, precisely at a time when creativity is required for recovery and responding to change. We need to address the current skills gaps and labour shortages as a priority, providing targeted training to rebuild the creative workforce and ensuring the sector continues to thrive. We also need to build confidence in creative sector careers and better equip

¹ Australian Bureau of Communications and Arts Research (BCAR) 2019, [Creative Skills for the Future Economy](#).

² Based on 2017–18 data. Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research (BCARR) 2020, [Cultural and creative activity in Australia: 2008–09 to 2017–18](#).

³ Meeting of Culture Ministers 2019, [Cultural Funding and Participation Australia 2019, Employment in Culture](#).

⁴ ABS 2019, [Australian Industry, 2017–18](#).

⁵ Live Performance Australia [Media Release](#) 21 October 2021

⁶ I Lost My Gig Australia 2021, [Survey Results from 1 July 2021 to 31 August 2021](#).

⁷ Unesco 2022, [Reshaping Policies for Creativity](#)

young creatives to apply their skills across sectors – responding to future demands and disruptions.

Investment in professional creative education, training and practice enables experimentation and long-term development of careers, risk-taking and innovation, networked creative ecologies and unexpected pathways. All of these are essential to a thriving, globally competitive sector that can be a driver growth and preparedness for the future.

The following submission outlines a growing body of evidence for the value of creative skills across the workforce and the economy. It provides data on the skills and training needs of the arts and cultural sector, along with recommendations about how to address the current vulnerability of the sector.

Key points

- All Australians benefit from investment in arts and culture – the engine room of the cultural and creative industries
- Creative skills built by the arts are essential to the 21st century professional skillset, enabling adaptability, experimentation, and innovation.
- The cultural and creative industries make critical contributions to education, health, technology, sciences and other government portfolios.
- The arts and cultural sector is typically characterised by low levels of pay, poor terms and conditions.
- Following multiple cancellations of festivals, literary events, live performances and art fairs, many highly skilled workers have left the arts and cultural sector.
- An increase in demand for key skills across the creative sector has resulted in greater competition for an already limited pool of skilled workers.
- There is a need to upskill creatives and creative organisations with contemporary business and finance skills.
- There is a need to upskill and improve digital literacy amongst creatives and creative organisations.
- There is a need to coordinate and build clear pathways to the creative workforce throughout different stages of the education system.

Summary recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Establish clear industrial settings and regulation to improve the sustainability of the industry, and ensure the industry is competitive in the current and future labour market.
 - **Recommendation 2:** Consider flexible work arrangements for creatives working in contract-to-contract environments, as well as an entitlement to superannuation payments and portable Long Service Leave.
 - **Recommendation 3:** Develop inclusive pathways to the creative sector by ensuring reasonable adjustments to contracts, flexible work hours for carers, and both structural and cohort support for traditionally underrepresented communities.
 - **Recommendation 4:** Work with industry and education providers to audit the skills and education needs of the creative sector, building on existing Australia Council research.
 - **Recommendation 5:** Support the Australia Council for the Arts to convene a working group with government, educational institutions and industry to address skills and infrastructure pressure points and to develop a national framework to support creative skills and workforce growth.
 - **Recommendation 6:** Increase training opportunities, with an emphasis on empowerment and confidence-building including through internships and apprenticeships, and increased investment into the practise-based training organisations, to attract those who may not have considered a career in the arts and cultural sector.
 - **Recommendation 7:** Support the Australia Council for the Arts to work with key portfolio agencies to promote cross-portfolio collaboration and strategic partnership and investment opportunities to drive job creation and economic value, and inspire innovation across sectors.
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Creative skills are essential for the future success of the nation

All Australians benefit from investment in arts and culture, the engine room of the cultural and creative industries

- **Nearly every Australian – 98% of us – engages with arts and culture in some way, whether it be through listening to music, reading, engaging online, attending cultural events or engaging with the arts of our cultural background.⁸**

⁸ Australia Council 2020, *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*

- **The arts, and the cultural and creative industries which they sustain, are embedded across the economy and vital the future success of the nation.**
- **Public investment in arts and culture allows for risk taking and experimentation that can lead to significant commercial success.**
- **In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, arts and culture are even more important as a driver for economic growth, jobs and prosperity and to build a healthy, connected nation.**

Sustained investment in arts infrastructure is necessary for commercial success

Case study: Baz Luhrmann

Baz Luhrmann is one of Australia's most commercially successful directors.

Box office earnings for his films run well into the hundreds of millions, with *The Great Gatsby* (2013) grossing US\$353.7 million, *Australia* (2008) grossing US\$211.8 million, *Moulin Rouge!* grossing US\$184.9 million, and *Elvis*, released in Australia and the USA in June 2022, already grossing over US\$260 million.⁹

This success would not have been possible without investment in Baz Luhrmann as a young creative, and local creative infrastructure through which to develop his networks and skills.

Baz Luhrmann's break out production, *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), originated in a short play Luhrmann wrote with fellow students while studying at NIDA in the early 1980s. The play was later developed further into a theatre production, and opened at The Wharf Theatre in Sydney in 1988.

Strictly Ballroom was part funded by the NSW Film and Television Office, and the Australia Film Finance Commission. Ultimately, it received standing ovations at the Cannes Film Festival and earned US\$11.7 million worldwide.¹⁰

In order to have figures like Baz Luhrmann, we need to ensure the conditions for their emergence, supporting local creative ecologies and the training institutions through which they are produced.

Investment in local artistic infrastructure is investment in the future of Australia's creative industries and in Australia's reputation on the world stage.

⁹ Figures from [Box Office Mojo by IMDb Pro](#), viewed on 15/08/2022.

¹⁰ Figures from [Box Office Mojo by IMDb Pro](#), viewed on 15/08/2022.

Creative skills built by the arts are essential to the 21st century professional skillset, enabling adaptability, experimentation, and innovation

- **Creative skills are key to sustaining economic growth**, which is why it is essential that we address the current gaps and shortages as a priority to ensure the sector continues to thrive.
- **Creative skills are embedded across the workforce and economy.** Around a quarter of those employed in information, media, and telecommunications, and a fifth of those employed in professional, scientific and technical services hold a formal qualification in a creative skill.¹¹ In 2016, around 9.5% of those employed in Australia (around one million workers) held a formal creative qualification as their highest form of qualification. This does not include those that have learned skills through creative practice/learning by doing or those whose highest qualification is in traditionally non-creative industries.¹²
- **Creative skills have been integral to the fast-growing industries in Australia over the past decade**¹³ and, prior to COVID-19, creative employment was growing at a rate nearly twice that of the Australian workforce.¹⁴ In their [The Future of Work After Covid](#) report, the McKinsey Institute predicted 'creatives and arts management' are among the occupations predicted to increase their share of employment. Workers will need to learn more social and emotional skills, and time spent on technological skills (as opposed to manual skills) will increase.¹⁵
- **Australian and international studies have identified a growing need for creative thinking and skills in the workforces of the future.**¹⁶ As well as fuelling our talent pipeline and job growth, investment in arts and creativity can cultivate new ideas, technologies and innovation.
- **The demand for creative skills is expected to increase as the automation of goods and services continues.**¹⁷ Artists have skill sets that are less susceptible to machine substitution like handling ambiguity and high-level subtle decision making. Creative, digital, design and engineering occupations will be increasingly in demand as they are strongly complemented by digital technology.¹⁸
- **Interdisciplinary thinking is one of the skills considered essential for innovation and future workforce needs.** Over half (51%) of artists work across more than one art form and are also increasingly applying their artistic skills in a range of industries. Community arts and cultural development (CACD) artists are the most likely to do so (69%), most commonly in education, the non-profit sector, health, and welfare.¹⁹

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Communications and Arts Research (BCAR) 2019, [Creative skills for the Future Economy](#).

¹² As above.

¹³ Including 'Professional, Scientific and Technical services'. Australian Bureau of Communications and Arts Research (BCAR) 2019, [Creative skills for the Future Economy](#).

¹⁴ Cunningham S and McCutcheon M 2018, [The Creative Economy in Australia: Cultural production, creative services and income: Factsheet 1](#).

¹⁵ McKinsey Global Institute 2021, [The Future of Work After COVID-19](#). Bakshi H, Downing J, Osborne M and Scheider P 2017, [The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030](#), Pearson and Nesta.

¹⁶ McKinsey Global Institute 2021, [The Future of Work After COVID-19](#). Bakshi H, Downing J, Osborne M and Scheider P 2017, [The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030](#), Pearson and Nesta.

¹⁷ Australia Council 2017, [Making Art Work: A summary and response by the Australia Council for the Arts](#).

¹⁸ Bakshi H, Downing J, Osborne M and Scheider P 2017, [The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030](#), Pearson and Nesta.

¹⁹ As above.

The creative sector makes critical contributions to education, health, technology, sciences and other government portfolios.

- **There has been a significant increase in the number of artists applying their artistic skills in other industries.** In 2016 just over half of all artists were using their artistic skills outside the arts (51%, up from 26% in 2009), with more than four in five of these artists generating income from that work (83%). Of those artists who applied artistic skills in other industries, four in ten were working in education (including teaching) and research (39%).²⁰
- **There is growing evidence of the power of the arts to teach core subjects,**²¹ to improve both short-term and long-term academic outcomes,²² and of the effectiveness of creative interdisciplinary learning for rehearsing and preparing for ‘real world’ encounters and problems.²³ Research also suggests the need for schools to transform themselves, developing deeper, more critical and creative learning environments that are relevant to contemporary social demands.²⁴
- **The arts and health sectors have significant and growing connections,** covering primary care, hospital care (acute and chronic), rehabilitation, and respite care. Therapy techniques exist in all major art forms, including visual art, music, dance, and drama.²⁵
- **The arts can save money across health services and social care.** In the United Kingdom doctors are prescribing art, providing up to £11 return on investment for every £1 invested, as well as employment and income for artists.²⁶
- **The arts have been shown to improve quality of life in myriad ways** including increasing mental wellbeing;²⁷ addressing loneliness, mental health and ageing;²⁸ and social inclusion;²⁹ producing positive wellbeing impacts for young people;³⁰ and treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and helping communities recover from trauma.³¹

²⁰ Australia Council 2017, [Making Art Work: A summary and response by the Australia Council for the Arts](#).

²¹ Dunn J, Bundy P, Jones A, Stinson M, Hassall L, Penton J, Lazaroo N and Le L 2019, *Creating Critical Connections through the Arts: The Y Connect Report. Examining the impact of arts-based pedagogies and artist/teacher partnerships on learning and teaching in one Australian secondary school*, Griffith Institute for Educational Research. Smithrim K and Uptis R 2005, ‘Learning through the Arts: Lessons of Engagement’, *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, Vol. 28, No. 1/2, pp. 109–127.

²² A New Approach 2019, Transformative: Impacts of Culture and Creativity, *Insight Series Two*. Ewing R 2010, *The Arts and Australian Education: Realising Potential*.

²³ Martin BH and Calvert A 2018, ‘Socially Empowered Learning in the Classroom: Effects of Arts Integration and Social Enterprise in Schools’, *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 11, No. 2.

²⁴ Jefferson M and Anderson M 2017, *Transforming schools: Creativity, critical reflection, communication, collaboration*. Hal C and Thompson P 2017, *Inspiring School Change: Transforming Education through the Creative Arts*.

²⁵ See Fancourt D and Finn S 2019, [Cultural Contexts of Health: The role of the arts in improving health and well-being in the WHO European region](#). Parkinson C 2018, [Weapons of Mass Happiness: Social justice and health equity in the context of the arts](#), *Music, health and wellbeing*. Chandler M 2018, [Cultural wounds demand cultural medicines](#), *Determinants of Indigenous People's Health in Canada: Beyond the social*.

²⁶ All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts 2017, [Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing](#).

²⁷ Davies et al 2015, [The Art of Being Mentally Healthy: A study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population](#), *BMC Public Health* 16:15.

²⁸ All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts 2017, [Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing](#).

²⁹ First reported in: Slawson N 2017, [It's Time to Recognise the Contribution Arts Can Make to Health and Wellbeing](#), *The Guardian*, 11 October.

³⁰ Patternmakers 2017, [ATYP Impact Evaluation](#).

³¹ Baker et al 2017, [A Systematic Review of the Efficacy of Creative Arts Therapies in the Treatment of Adults with PTSD](#), *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 10:6.

- **For First Nations people in remote Australia, practising culture, including through arts participation, is key to improving wellbeing.** Empowerment and spirituality are pathways between practising culture and wellbeing (measured through ‘life satisfaction’).³²
- **Arts and culture can also play a vital role in Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage.** First Nations arts and cultural participation can support the development of strong and resilient First Nations children; improved school attendance and engagement; higher levels of educational attainment; improved physical and mental health; greater social inclusion and cohesion; more employment, economic opportunities and meaningful work; safer communities with reductions in crime and improved rehabilitation; the prevention of suicide; and empowerment, community connectedness and wellbeing.³³
- **Arts and cultural workers make essential contributions to law, government and non-profit sectors, and are valued for their capacity to interpret and communicate complex messages to diverse groups.** Research on graphic storytellers shows how they communicate complex ideas in health and legal contexts.³⁴

The creative sector is facing a shortage of labour and skills

The arts and cultural sector is typically characterised by low levels of pay, poor terms and conditions.

- **Artists continue to earn below the workforce average, and artists’ creative income is declining.** In 2016, when the last national professional and practising artist survey was conducted, the average **total annual income for artists was \$48,400** – 21% below the workforce average. Average **creative income was \$18,800** – down by 19% since the last survey.³⁵
- **Fewer than half (47%) of artists accrue superannuation through a scheme with an employer** (most likely associated with part-time or casual employment outside the arts). 32% are members of industry superannuation funds, and 55% are relying on personal savings and investments.³⁶
- **The majority of artists (67%) continue to report some reliance on a spouse or partner’s income to support their creative work, with 32% considering it extremely important.** While there has always been a significant barrier to a career in the arts for

³² Australia Council for the Arts 2017, *Living Culture: First Nations arts participation and wellbeing*. Retrieved from <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/living-culture/>

³³ See pages 13–18 of the Australia Council’s submission to the Closing the Gap Refresh. Key references include: Australia Council 2017, *Living Culture: First Nations arts participation and wellbeing*, retrieved from <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/living-culture/>. Ware V 2014, *Supporting Healthy Communities Through Arts Programs*, AIHW. Office for the Arts 2012, *Culture and Closing the Gap, Commonwealth of Australia*.

³⁴ Grant P, Clark G, MacFarlane E and Scott R 2021, *Graphic Storytellers at Work: Cross-industry opportunities for cartoonists, illustrators and comics-makers*, Australia Council for the Arts.

³⁵ Throsby D and Petetskaya K 2017, *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*.

³⁶ As above.

people who do not have an alternative means of support, the increasing financial challenges raise questions about equality of access to arts careers into the future.³⁷

- **Around a quarter of artists report their copyright has been infringed in some way (26%), and one fifth their moral rights (21%).** Of those reporting copyright infringement, 37% have taken action and 59% report these actions have been successful.³⁸
- **A recent survey of people who work in the music and live performing arts industries found that just 15% of respondents said they felt safe at work all of the time,** with 35% saying they had been **exposed to unsafe working conditions** over the past 12 months.³⁹

Following multiple cancellations of festivals, literary events, live performances and art fairs, many highly skilled workers have left the creative sector.

- **COVID-19 has exacerbated artist vulnerability as many have lost multiple sources of income.**⁴⁰ Before COVID-19, artists already earned below the Australian workforce average and often received income from multiple sources.
- **The pandemic has affected artists' mental health and caused artists to contemplate leaving the sector in search of financial security.**⁴¹
- The ABS Labour Survey in March–May 2020 highlighted the long-term impact of job losses and how **large numbers of people were leaving the arts and recreation services industries:**
 - In arts and recreation services and accommodation and food services, the two industries most heavily impacted by COVID-19, a relatively large proportion (around one-third) of people employed in these industries in February were no longer employed in May.
 - Of those remaining in employment in May, there was a noticeably higher proportion of people from the arts and recreation services industry who had changed industries, compared to accommodation and food services.⁴²
- **An ongoing challenge for the sector is the perception that many creative roles, particularly those on the production side, are not considered to be 'real jobs'.** This can result in unsupported, untrained and ultimately unsafe workplaces. This instability is driving people away from the sector, and there needs to be a focus on training that empowers and provides resilience and confidence when equipping students for future work.

³⁷ As above.

³⁸ As above.

³⁹ Support Act 2022, [Mental health and Wellbeing in Music and the Live Performing Arts](#)

⁴⁰ Forthcoming research from the Australia Council *Impacts of COVID-19 on the Cultural and Creative Industries*

⁴¹ Flore J et al 2021, '[Creative Arts Workers During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Social imaginaries in lockdown](#)', *Journal of Sociology*.

⁴² ABS 2020, Insights Into Industry and Occupation.

An increase in demand for key skills across the creative sector has resulted in greater competition for an already limited pool of skilled workers.

- **Across Australia, the cancellation of festivals, literary events, live performances and art fairs had a devastating effect on job stability, and many highly skilled creative workers left the arts and cultural sector.** Many artists have also considered giving up their artistic practice. The Council's next professional artists survey in 2023 will explore these trends and provide more information on the impacts of the pandemic on artists' lives and working conditions.
- **In a competitive labour market, the arts and cultural sector are often unable to match the pay, terms and conditions and security offered by other sectors further compounding the ability to retain the workers.** Where resource training and professional development opportunities are provided regularly to staff in other sectors, the creative sector is often unable to match these employment conditions, making it difficult to compete in a market that is already squeezed.
- This is further compounded by **limited workforce training, ad hoc professional development opportunities**, and skilled staff undertaking creative roles in businesses outside the sector, resulting in a 'skills drain'.

Issues with staff recruitment and retention

2021 reporting from the Australia Council's multi-year investment organisations offered the following free-text responses to the question 'What were your main challenges this year':

'Our organisation experienced **a high turnover of staff** due to the increased challenges about by the pandemic, higher workloads and low salaries ... The **rapid turned over staff and loss of corporate knowledge** has destabilised the team and represents **losses in productivity.**'

'The loss of corporate memory and relationships put a strain on the team and is compounded by the time and cost required for backfilling, recruitment, onboarding and offboarding. This is not to mention **the skills-shortage being experienced across producing, production, marketing and management roles in the sector and wage pressures this causes.**'

'Confidence was low and **there was a move to other professions** as well as an exit from the industry by **crucial theatre production staff.**'

'**Artists leaving the industry** and seeking employment outside the arts.'

The skills development needs of creatives and creative organisations

There is a need to upskill creatives and creative organisations with contemporary business and finance skills.

- **Arts and culture organisations** have **limited financial literacy** and are less likely to have formal review processes in place than other not-for-profits.⁴³
- A 2021 survey tracking independent artists' uptake of the Australian Government's COVID-19 assistance showed that **while 88% of respondents work as sole traders/freelancers/self-employed, only two in five had applied for a small business grant**.
 - Of those who applied, over half were successful.
 - For one quarter (25%) this was because they **couldn't provide support documentation on decline in income**.
 - One in five respondents hadn't applied because: they **didn't know these grants existed** (21%) or they **didn't have enough information about their eligibility** for these grants (21%).

There is a need to upskill and improve digital literacy amongst creatives and creative organisations.

- First Nations artists still face challenges around **digital exclusion** and **poor access to the internet**.⁴⁴ In addition, the rapid development of shared online platforms may also provide new opportunities for **exploitation and unethical practices**, and points to the need for protection of **Indigenous sovereignty**.
- Research conducted with 73 Australian cultural organisations in the wake of COVID-19 also found that **some organisations experience digital exclusion**.⁴⁵ Creating and sharing digital cultural content requires specialised abilities that are not always evenly distributed to all institutions, and some organisations find it difficult to access appropriate devices and platforms.

⁴³ Australia Council 2020, [Arts and Culture Governance Report](#).

⁴⁴ For First Nations people, digital exclusion is exacerbated by a lack of affordable in-home internet access and appropriate devices. An estimated 30% of First Nations people living in remote indigenous communities do not have household access to internet or telephone services. See Featherstone D 2020, [Remote Indigenous Communications Review](#), ACCAN.

⁴⁵ Holcombe-James I 2019, 'Barriers to Digital Participation Within the Australian Cultural Sector: Mediating distance, unlocking collections', RMIT University.

Sustainable careers: investing in education

There is a need to coordinate and build clear pathways to the creative workforce through different stages of the education system

- **Young people are the lifeblood of the arts and cultural sector** and, in a sector typically defined by instability, it is time to equip students of the future with transferrable skills to prepare them for a career that is essentially unknown.
- One of the first casualties of COVID in an education setting, was the deprioritising of creative subjects in primary and high schools. **The importance of schools in teaching the value of the arts is unparalleled. The arts are a place for growing and discovery; for students to take risks in their creative exploration.** Arts and creative activities can help students develop personal, social and cognitive skills that transfer to a wide range of activities and social situations and improve performance in their future careers.
- **A recent research partnership between the Australia Council for the Arts and the Sydney Opera House demonstrated the importance of creativity for developing healthy, happy and resilient citizens replete with the technical knowledge and creative thinking capabilities required for the jobs of the future.** It also identified new and exciting directions for cultural organisations and professional opportunities for artists and creative work.⁴⁶
- **Ensuring young people are made aware of the wider business and technical roles available in the creative sector,** is necessary if future skills shortages are to be avoided.
- **Our schools and institutions need to look at innovative ways to encourage people from diverse backgrounds to aspire to a career in the creative sector** to ensure there is talent with appropriate skills coming through the pipeline.
- **In a tertiary setting there is a need to ensure courses develop both ‘deep’ skills and a wider range of other skills too.** There is an increasing need for young people, and future graduates to hold specific creative skills, combined with an ability to collaborate across disciplines, work with other people and respond to immediate challenges.⁴⁷
- **Creative graduates also need support in developing the language of their ‘transferable skills’ and developing the confidence to apply these across professional contexts.** Identification and discussion of transferable creative skills should be integrated into creative training so that students can understand the wider value of their professional offering.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Australia Council 2020, *Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House’s Creative Leadership in Learning program in schools.*

⁴⁷ Australia Council and QUT 2021, *Creativity at Work: Interdisciplinary learning in industry and community settings.*

⁴⁸ As above.

Recommendations

Area one: Develop pan-industry standards to ensure safe and fair working conditions and the sustainability of the sector.

COVID-19 has amplified the pre-existing vulnerabilities of the arts and cultural sector, and has highlighted the urgent need for better regulation, stronger employment conditions, increased training opportunities and clearer education pathways to creative employment. Stronger economic and social conditions for professional development must be considered as an essential condition to the future security of the industry.

Recommendation 1: Establish clear industrial settings and regulation to improve the sustainability of the industry, and ensure the industry is competitive in the current and future labour market.

Recommendation 2: Consider flexible work arrangements for artists working in contract-to-contract environments, as well as an entitlement to superannuation payments and portable Long Service Leave.

Recommendation 3: Develop inclusive pathways to the creative sector by ensuring reasonable adjustments to contracts, flexible work hours for carers, and both structural and cohort support for traditionally underrepresented communities.

Area two: Improve training to address the skills shortage in the arts and cultural sector

Culture, creativity and education go hand in hand, yet there is no clear path between education, training and employment opportunities.

Strategic investment is needed to address the immediate skills and training shortages, and increase professional development opportunities across the creative sector. While it is important to address the current skills shortages facing the industry today, a long-term coordinated national strategy is needed to ensure the next generation of creative workers are supported and appropriately trained.

Recommendation 4: Work with industry and education providers to audit the skills and education needs of the creative industries, building on existing Australia Council research.

Recommendation 5: Support the Australia Council for the Arts to convene a working group with government, educational institutions and industry to address the skills and infrastructure pressure points and to develop a national framework to support creative skills and workforce growth.

It is important to continue to work to raise awareness of the range of careers in the arts and cultural sector and the benefits of studying creative subjects through effective information, advice and guidance for young people, including through training and apprenticeships.

There is also a need to coordinate and build clear pathways to the creative workforce through different stages of the education system. Better links between the sector, schools and tertiary

institutions could ensure that subjects and training offered are tailored to the skills needs of the sector in the future. Increasing diversity in the workforce could also help address the skills challenge – ensuring that those in the sector adequately represent the wider population.⁴⁹

Recommendation 6: Increase training opportunities, with an emphasis on empowerment and confidence-building including through internships and apprenticeships, and increased investment into the practise-based training organisations, to attract those who may not have considered a career in the arts and cultural sector.

Area three: Develop pathways for creative skills to be better embedded across the economy

Cultural and creative engagement can strengthen wellbeing and social cohesion and can be used across multiple sectors to enhance community outcomes. Creating partnerships, particularly with organisations outside the sector, can encourage the sharing of skills, networking, shadowing and secondments, recognising both deep craft skills and transferable skills when equipping young people for future work.

Australian arts and creativity play essential roles in our health, social cohesion, education, innovation, advancement, economy and international reputation. As well as fuelling our talent pipeline and job growth, investment in arts and creativity can cultivate new ideas, technologies and cutting-edge innovation.

Recommendation 7: Support the Australia Council for the Arts to work with key portfolio agencies to promote cross-portfolio collaboration and strategic partnership and investment opportunities to drive job creation and economic value, and inspire innovation across sectors.

⁴⁹ See Australia Council 2020, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia's arts and cultural sector*.