



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Culture and the Arts**

# Present State

An inquiry into the  
visual arts sector  
in Western Australia 2016



Department of Culture and the Arts  
Gordon Stephenson House  
140 William Street  
Perth WA 6000

Telephone: +61 8 6552 7300

Toll Free (country WA callers only): 1800 199 090

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Website: [www.dca.wa.gov.au](http://www.dca.wa.gov.au)

### **About DCA**

The Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) guides the delivery of culture and arts for Western Australia through the provision of policy development, coordination and support services to the Culture and Arts portfolio. DCA also supports the culture and the arts sector.

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# Introduction

The Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) has prepared this discussion paper to provide an overview of the visual arts sector in Western Australia to understand what is required to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the sector.

The paper presents an overview of issues and opportunities identified through consultation with artists and gallery owners in Western Australia and through analysis of available national and international data on the visual arts sector.

This review of the visual arts sector will enable DCA to understand the issues and concerns that need to be considered in developing strategies to address these issues into the future.

## Executive Summary

DCA has undertaken research from available data sources to identify issues and current developments in the sector.

Over the past few years, opportunities for visual artists in Western Australia appear to have declined, prompting calls from the sector to create a more sustainable industry.

Since 2012, at least nine commercial art galleries in Perth have closed. This has led to fewer artists being represented and a reduced number of exhibitions that, it has been claimed, directly impacts interstate and international representation and importantly for Government, compromised the market to drive the quality of the great work the State wishes to develop.

With 30 per cent of Australia's Aboriginal art centres located in Western Australia, a 33 per cent decline in sales nationally between 2004-05 and 2012-13 has had a significant effect on Western Australia's centres and on the commercial galleries that distribute the work. The issue is made more acute as Western Australia receives just 19 per cent of Federal Government funding - the same as Queensland which has only 15 per cent of the nation's art centres<sup>1</sup>.

There appears to be fewer exhibitions for audiences to attend and fewer opportunities to purchase work, which has the corollary of a negative impact on artist and gallery incomes and artist employment. Employment in the visual arts is in a

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<sup>1</sup> The Economy of Place. A Place in the Economy. [http://www.crc-rep.com.au/resource/EconomyOfPlace\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.crc-rep.com.au/resource/EconomyOfPlace_WEB.pdf)

period of transition, with lower than relative average annual growth<sup>2</sup>. This marks the beginning of a potential vicious circle for the sector.

This is despite the investment in the national sector of \$94.3 million since 2003 as a result of the national Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy which had explicit objectives to address some of these issues, and a range of other state and federal government policy initiatives designed to stimulate market activity and income.

The report begins by defining the current scale and status of **professional practicing visual Artists**. National research<sup>3</sup> shows that professional practicing visual artists work supplementary jobs as a result of low income levels. This is primarily due to the inadequate financial return received from their work, caused by declining markets and opportunities to sell their work. The scale of professional employment of artists, particularly Aboriginal artists, is examined through reference to economic studies of visual artists suggesting that these populations are also in decline, even though professional practicing artists are some of the most academically qualified of all arts practitioners.

The life cycle of visual artists' **education and training** is explored and reveal how WA school, TAFE and higher education systems are forecast to produce more visual artists into an uncertain employment environment in the coming decade at a time when formal training in specialist marketing skills is lacking.

An examination of the **visual arts market** demonstrates that there is no current quantitative data on performance of commercial art galleries. While there is some thought that galleries are being undermined by the growth of online opportunities, there is evidence that the online market in visual arts has high dependence on fixed infrastructure galleries.

An oversupply of artists, 'affordable art' of low quality, and lack of an international market in WA may lower prices and compromise long-term development of the sector. The various federal government policy interventions to date have had only mixed results in terms of market development and artist income generation. This is particularly so in Western Australian, with Australia Council funding for WA artists in 2012-13 representing just 2.5 per cent of its national funding rising to still only 6 per cent in 2014-15.

There are examples of initiatives that have been market stimulators, demonstrating that large sales and significant audience attendance are possible.

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<sup>2</sup> DCA, Creative Industries Statistical Analysis for Western Australia.  
[http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Cultural%20Industries/WA%20Creative%20Industries%20Statistical%20Analysis\\_2013\\_web\\_version.pdf](http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Cultural%20Industries/WA%20Creative%20Industries%20Statistical%20Analysis_2013_web_version.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Throsby, D & Zednik, A: Do You Really Expect To Get Paid? An economic study of artists in Australia p.44  
[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do\\_you\\_really\\_expect\\_to\\_get\\_pa-54325a3748d81.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do_you_really_expect_to_get_pa-54325a3748d81.pdf)

The significant number of **commercial gallery** closures since 2008 across Australia, and accelerated in Perth since 2012, has had a number of consequences for the market, artists and art audiences. Commercial galleries are shown to be a vital part of the visual arts ecology stimulating local markets, preparing international ones and introducing new buyers to the online sales environment. Sentiment amongst remaining galleries is cautiously positive and there is opportunity for some well-placed initiatives to address the decline and set the tone for a positive decade ahead.

Western Australia is home to some of the nation's most significant **public and private collections**. These are shown to be an under-utilised resource in terms of stimulating interest in visual art and promoting Western Australia's unique identity. Our identity is the sum of our individual and shared histories, landscapes, peoples, small population across vast distances, our languages and geography. Access to the vast collections in the public and private sector is limited and could be enhanced with leadership from the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) and a commitment to improving the visual arts touring infrastructure of the State.

The sustainability of the visual arts sector is dependent on artists and organisations having long-term access to robust **infrastructure**. It is difficult for visual artists to secure suitable spaces for their arts practice and there is a backlog of urgent capital requirements for many Aboriginal art centres which is impacting on their sustainability. There is also a shortage of physical gallery infrastructure throughout the State to house and exhibit the significant collections the State holds or to receive touring visual arts exhibitions. Significant proposed future developments at the Sunset Heritage precinct, the Perth Cultural Centre, Midland Railway Workshops and East Perth Power Station may offer opportunities for major public-private infrastructure partnerships.

Finally, we examine the status of **public art** in Western Australia. The State Government's Percent for Art Scheme has expended \$47million on 574 projects since it began in 1989 and has been the model for similar schemes across other Government agencies, local government authorities and the private sector. Trends in public art are moving to greater public engagement and short-term interventions which will open up greater funding opportunities. In 2016, DCA will be undertaking a review of public art to map current expenditure, procurement methodologies, objectives, evaluation systems and outcomes by the State Government on public art with a view to establishing best practice guidelines in these areas based on national and international benchmarks.

# 1. Professional Practicing Visual Artists

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## Key points

- No single definition of a professional practicing artist
- Visual arts sector in period of transition with lower than average annual employment growth
- Income levels for visual artists are low despite them being some of the most academically qualified of all art practitioners
- When allied to sentiment from the sector, data is suggesting participation and income levels of artists will have significantly reduced in the last five years

In Australia, there is no agreed single definition of a professional practicing artist. The Australian Tax Office<sup>4</sup>, state agencies, arts organisations and others all have various criteria. The most commonly referred to definition is the NAVA Professional Artist Assessment criteria.<sup>5</sup> Arts organisations and galleries then have varying criteria they recognise for their definition of a professional artist which is usually specified when membership, grants or opportunities are available.

Common criteria for a professional artist include:

- those that have chosen to commit a significant amount of time to their practice;
- are recognised by their peers;
- have regular exhibitions of their work; and
- had work acquired by public or private collections.

## Artist Employment

The [DCA Research Hub](#) presents information about recent research projects and key statistics sourced from independent surveys conducted for DCA and WA specific data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and research partnerships.

As part of its research agenda, DCA commissioned the *Creative Industries Statistical Analysis for Western Australia*<sup>6</sup> report in 2013. This release was an update on the first mapping project undertaken by DCA in partnership with the City of Perth and

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<sup>4</sup> The Australia Tax Office recognises a professional artist for income tax purposes by a lengthy ruling, differentiating between a professional artist and a hobbyist. ATO ruling on a professional artist <http://law.ato.gov.au/atolaw/view.htm?docid=TXR/TR20051/NAT/ATO/00001>

<sup>5</sup> NAVA Professional Artist Criteria [https://visualarts.net.au/media/uploads/files/Premium\\_Plus\\_Professional\\_Assessment\\_Criteria.pdf](https://visualarts.net.au/media/uploads/files/Premium_Plus_Professional_Assessment_Criteria.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> DCA, Creative Industries Statistical Analysis for Western Australia [http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Cultural%20Industries/WA%20Creative%20Industries%20Statistical%20Analysis\\_2013\\_web\\_version.pdf](http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Cultural%20Industries/WA%20Creative%20Industries%20Statistical%20Analysis_2013_web_version.pdf)

the Departments of Industry and Resources and the Premier and Cabinet in 2007. The 2013 report maps the sector employment numbers and growth between 2006 and 2011 from the Census data in the areas of music, visual and performing arts, film, TV and radio, advertising and marketing, software and digital content, publishing, and architecture and design, which includes designer fashion.

WA highlights in the report include:

- Performing arts, visual arts and music are the three largest sectors in employment terms. Despite its relative size, visual arts is in a period of transition with lower than relative average annual growth and below average concentration (as indicated by a location quotient<sup>7</sup> of 0.98). This suggests the industry is at risk (overall) and needing to increase innovation and productivity to be competitive.<sup>8</sup>
- WA's creative employment grew, on average, by 3.2 per cent per annum between 2006 and 2011, which was on a par with the state's workforce growth over the period. However, the rates of employment growth differed between the State's creative services and cultural production segments.
- The three cultural production segments – music, visual and performing arts (1.6 per cent), all grew at a rate below the State's average workforce growth between 2006 and 2011.<sup>9</sup> This compares with the creative services which experienced the strongest growth over the period, with the software and digital content segment showing the highest average annual rate of growth, of 5.3 per cent, followed by architecture and design, which grew at an average annual rate of 4.8 per cent between 2006 and 2011.
- Notable declines were evident in support staff employment in the cultural production industry segments of music, visual and performing arts (down 2.7 per cent per annum)<sup>10</sup>.

A closer look at Perth's creative employment growth by segment reveals above-average growth in a number of specialist and support occupations. The highest growth in Perth's specialists was in architecture and design (6.0 per cent per annum) followed by the cultural production segment of music, visual and performing arts (5.1 per cent per annum). Between 2006 and 2011, specialist employment in music, visual and performing arts segment grew by more than that in all other capital cities considered. A specialist in this context means an artist using their core skills as artists in the sector, whilst support staff are non-creative occupations supporting the core

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<sup>7</sup> A location quotient is a way of showing how concentrated a particular industry is in a region compared to a national average.

<sup>8</sup> DCA, Creative Industries Statistical Analysis for Western Australia  
[http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Cultural%20Industries/WA%20Creative%20Industries%20Statistical%20Analysis\\_2013\\_web\\_version.pdf](http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Cultural%20Industries/WA%20Creative%20Industries%20Statistical%20Analysis_2013_web_version.pdf)

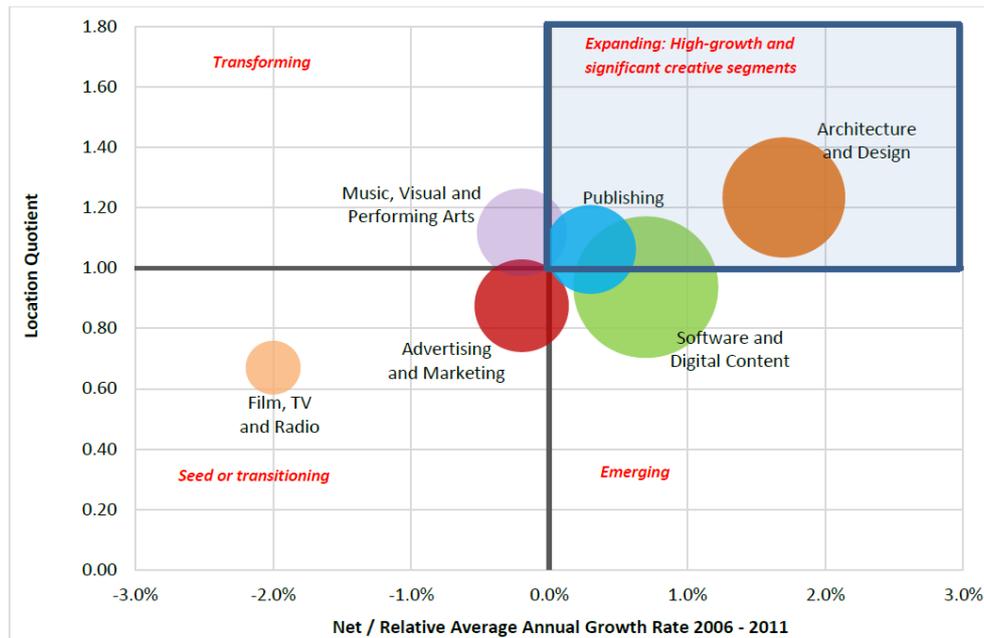
<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

activity. However, a fall of 2.5 per cent per annum in this segment's embedded workers in Perth meant that overall, employment growth in music, visual and performing arts segment fell short of that in other capital cities.<sup>11</sup>

### Figure 1: Creative Industries Statistical Analysis for Western Australia

(Figure 21. Creative Segments Growth and Share, Western Australia, 2006 – 2011)



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, Time Series Profile, 2011 with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates and CCI

An important statistical snapshot of arts and culture employment is the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Employment in Culture, Australia (cat.6273.0)<sup>12</sup>. Analysis of the latest release with data from the 2011 Census reveals the following;

- 3.1 per cent (310,725) of employed people in Australia worked in a cultural occupation. The Census also found that some 3.6 per cent (358,162) of employed people worked in a cultural industry.
- Of the 3.1 per cent, 1,440 people were employed in visual arts and craft occupations. 73 per cent recorded working in arts and cultural industries and just under a quarter in non-cultural industries. Visual artists are more likely to work in non-cultural industries such as advertising, design and media than other artists. For example an artist may work as a graphic designer in the marketing team of a corporate firm.

<sup>11</sup> DCA, Creative Industries Statistical Analysis for Western Australia  
[http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Cultural%20Industries/WA%20Creative%20Industries%20Statistical%20Analysis\\_2013\\_web\\_version.pdf](http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/New%20Research%20Hub/Research%20Documents/Cultural%20Industries/WA%20Creative%20Industries%20Statistical%20Analysis_2013_web_version.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> ABS 6273.0 - Employment in Culture, Australia, 2011  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6273.0Main+Features12011?OpenDocument>

- In Western Australia, the creative workforce represents 2.51 per cent of the State's total workforce.

The next Australian Census of Population and Housing will be held in August 2016 with a future release of Employment in Culture statistics due for release in 2017.

## Artist Income

Artist income is multifaceted and complex to analyse, as personal earnings can come from various sources including jobs and grants. Visual artists can work in a number of roles concurrently including:

- producing work for exhibition or commission
- making work to sell products
- working in partnership with other artists or professionals in arts-related or non-art related fields
- being employed as a teacher, consultant or arts administrator
- working as a community artist or cultural development facilitator

David Throsby and Anita Zednik in the 2010 report *Do you really expect to get paid?*<sup>13</sup> were able to segregate artist income from their primary creative activity, income from arts related work such as teaching and non-arts related income from an occupation not connected to the arts. The results are from 2007-2008 and are still used as one of the main sources of income inquiry for the arts in Australia.

**Table 1: Mean earned income of Australian artists in the financial year 2007/08 (\$)\***

	Visual Artists	Craft Practitioners	All artists inc, musicians, dancers, writers, actors etc
Creative Income	\$15,300	\$22,000	\$18,900
Arts-related income	\$7,800	\$7,800	\$8,800
Total arts income	\$23,100	\$29,800	\$27,700
Non arts-related income	\$11,800	\$8,500	\$13,500
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$34,900</b>	<b>\$38,300</b>	<b>\$41,200</b>

\*Extract from Throsby and Zednik 2010 (table 27) Creative income is from primary creative activity. Arts-related income is income from other arts-related work such as teaching, arts admin and community arts.

<sup>13</sup> Throsby, D & Zednik, A: Do You Really Expect To Get Paid? An economic study of artists in Australia 2010 [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do\\_you\\_really\\_expect\\_to\\_get\\_paid\\_54325a3748d81.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do_you_really_expect_to_get_paid_54325a3748d81.pdf)

Throsby and Zednik explain that analysing the income from previous surveys indicates that income trends have been increasing with inflation but have deteriorated in comparison to other professionals.

The Throsby and Zednik study does not show a state breakdown therefore ABS statistics need to be referenced to provide figures for Western Australia.

The ABS Employment in Culture, Australia, 2011 data<sup>14</sup> shows nationally that the majority of artists earn \$400 to \$599 per week, averaging approximately \$26,000 per annum. The following table shows the figures for Western Australia from the Census data that only records earnings from the main occupation, unlike the Throsby and Zednik study that reports on artist income from all sources.

**Table 2: ABS Employment in Culture, Western Australia, 2011 (Cat. 6273.0) Persons employed in cultural occupations, by total personal income (weekly) 2011**

<b>Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals</b>	<b>&lt; \$200</b>	<b>\$200-\$299</b>	<b>\$300-\$399</b>	<b>\$400-\$599</b>	<b>\$600-\$799</b>	<b>\$800-\$999</b>	<b>\$1000 and over</b>	<b>Total persons</b>
Painter (Visual Arts)	32	52	47	40	22	17	34	264
Potter or Ceramic Artist	0	13	0	14	0	4	5	36
Sculptor	0	3	13	12	11	7	21	67
Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals, nec	25	25	21	30	19	15	27	165
Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals, nfd	10	3	6	3	3	0	3	31
Photographer	94	54	75	151	124	116	231	872
<b>Total Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>1,435</b>

\*Extract from ABS Employment in Culture, Australia, 2011 (Cat. 6273.0)

\*note: nec = Not Elsewhere Classified and, nfd = Not Further Defined categories

Graduates Careers Australia provides reports every year on the trends in employment status through surveys of all higher education graduates. The 2015 GradStats<sup>15</sup> report found that those in the art and design field in 2014 were earning approximately \$40,000 per annum. It was noted that graduates in this industry can take longer to find relevant full-time employment in areas they were trained in, due to the relatively small number of available positions.

<sup>14</sup> ABS Employment in Culture, Australia, 2011 (Cat. 6273.0) <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6273.0>

<sup>15</sup> Graduate Careers Australia, GradStats Dec 2015 [http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/GCA\\_GradStats\\_2015\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/GCA_GradStats_2015_FINAL.pdf)

Graduates Careers Australia also provides industry specific summaries. From the 2015 survey of 3,640 students from Visual/Performing Arts Bachelor Graduates in Australia there were 44.5 per cent available for full-time work after graduation. Of those a further 48.3 per cent found full-time employment. The three most frequently reported occupations were: Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals; Arts and Media Professionals and Sales Assistants and Salespersons.<sup>16</sup> Those graduates that continue tertiary study into a Masters or PhD most frequently ended up as Education Professionals.<sup>17</sup>

For graduates who do not find employment in the visual arts industry, Throsby and Zednik (2010) found that just over one-quarter of visual artists experienced unemployment in the period 2004-2009. Of those unemployed approximately 40 per cent experienced difficulty accessing unemployment benefits because their art skills were not recognised or valued and they were expected to undertake work unrelated to their qualification<sup>18</sup>.

With "more than half of all artists (56 per cent) earning less than \$10,000 from their creative income, and only 12 per cent earned more than \$50,000 from this source, in 2007-08", it is common for practicing artists to work additional jobs in order to fund their artistic careers in Australia. Even when other arts-related earnings and non-arts income are added in, the gross incomes of artists, from which they must finance their professional practice as well as the demands of everyday living, are substantially less than managerial and professional earnings. Indeed their total incomes on average are lower than those of all occupational groups, including non-professional and blue-collar occupations".<sup>19</sup>

A number of European countries support artists through a variety of social security systems.<sup>20</sup> Arts Council England also undertook an international review of the tax status and possible support mechanisms for artists in 2002 with case studies for Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland and The Netherlands.<sup>21</sup>

There have been previous campaigns for artists to receive remuneration via social security schemes. The National Association of Visual Arts (NAVA) developed a set of proposals<sup>22</sup> prior to the 2007 federal election with one positive outcome being the Artstart scheme provided to graduates by the Australia Council. However, the

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<sup>16</sup> Graduate Careers Australia, Visual/Performing Arts, Bachelor Graduates (All)

<http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/Research/GradJobsDollars/BachelorAll/VisualPerformingArts/index.htm>

<sup>17</sup> Graduate Careers Australia, Visual/Performing Arts – Masters Research/PhD Graduates

<http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/Research/GradJobsDollars/MasterResearchPhd/VisualPerformingArts/index.htm>

<sup>18</sup> Throsby, D & Zednik, A: Do You Really Expect To Get Paid? An economic study of artists in Australia 2010

[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do\\_you\\_really\\_expect\\_to\\_get\\_paid\\_54325a3748d81.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do_you_really_expect_to_get_paid_54325a3748d81.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Compendium - Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/comparisons-tables.php?aid=34&cid=45&lid=en>

<sup>21</sup> Clare McAndrew. Artists, taxes and benefits an international review. Research Report 28, December 2002

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/317.doc>

<sup>22</sup> NAVA Social Security campaign for artists <https://visualarts.net.au/advocacy/social-security-artists/>

Artstart scheme was cancelled in May 2015 due to the 2015-16 Federal budget measures.<sup>23</sup>

With regard to Aboriginal visual arts, recent research published by The Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation demonstrates that Western Australian has a total 31 per cent of Australia's working Aboriginal artists.<sup>24</sup> They represent one of the few long-term success stories in remote communities, generating self-employment and income.

The Ministry for the Arts<sup>25</sup> recognises artists face significant income and employment challenges and is investigating ways to support Australian artists better and help them generate more income, through:

- consideration of adding arts activities to the criteria for employment and community participation in Work for the Dole programs
- a Social Security and the Arts policy across relevant Australian Government agencies to ensure coordinated information to artists on important issues surrounding career development, including information on the various tax, social security, employment and grants systems
- exploration of ways to adequately protect artists' copyright given the challenges posed by emerging platforms and changes in consumer patterns

The outcomes of these policy initiatives need to be seen but for now, the broad picture of artist income and employment is mixed.

Most of the economic and employment studies were undertaken before the global financial crisis, the decline in commercial galleries and the pending changes to superannuation laws which will require the investor to store the investment in archival conditions and provide receipts to its location. These changes come into effect by June 2016 and there has been a flood in the second hand sales market and decrease in gallery sales due to this change and are discussed in detail in the Arts Market chapter.

The anecdotal evidence suggests that participation and income levels of artists have significantly reduced over the past five years.

The paper will next explore issues and themes that may impact sector growth in the short and long term.

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<sup>23</sup> Australia Council Outlines 2015-16 Budget Impact <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/news/media-centre/media-releases/australia-council-outlines-2015-16-budget-impact/>

<sup>24</sup> The Art Economies Value Chain reports: Methodology and Art regions [http://www.crc-rep.com.au/resource/CR005\\_AEVC\\_MethodologyArtRegions.pdf](http://www.crc-rep.com.au/resource/CR005_AEVC_MethodologyArtRegions.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Ministry for the Arts – support for artists <http://arts.gov.au/funding/opportunities/artists>

## 2. Education and Training

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### Key points

- The arts contribute to the wellbeing of children
- Artist-in-Residence programs have a positive impact on student learning, community engagement and professional learning for teachers and artists
- Visual artists have clear preference for formal training
- School and TAFE systems forecast to produce more visual artists into an uncertain employment environment but with growing employment opportunities in school and TAFE systems
- Formal training in specialist marketing skills is lacking and may compromise opportunities for artists to sell their work adding more pressure on income levels

### Visual Art in Schools

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA<sup>26</sup>) is an independent statutory body responsible to the Western Australian Minister for Education. SCSA is responsible for developing an outline of curriculum and assessment which takes into the account the needs of WA schools, teachers and students.

In 2015, SCSA released the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline*<sup>27</sup> (the Outline) for all students from Kindergarten to Year 10 (K-10).

The Outline currently encompasses the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) Australian Curriculum<sup>28</sup> English, Mathematics, Science and History. Year-level syllabuses for Humanities and Social Sciences, Health and Physical Education, Technologies and The Arts have been adapted by SCSA and were released for WA school familiarisation in 2015.

Prior to its review by the Federal Government, *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts* required students to study all five art subjects – Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts - across 'bands of year levels'<sup>29</sup> Foundation to Year 10. The national curriculum was based on the assumption that all students would have studied the five subjects by the time they left primary school.

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<sup>26</sup> School Curriculum and Standards Authority <http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/>

<sup>27</sup> Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline <http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/>

<sup>28</sup> Australian Curriculum <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Home>

<sup>29</sup> The Australian Curriculum: The Arts <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/the-arts/structure>

The adaptation of the national arts curriculum by SCSA addressed the State Government's concern about the amount of content (to be identified as core and additional)<sup>30</sup>; teachers would be required to deliver in schools, particularly primary schools, to meet the national curriculum structure objective.

With generalist primary teachers in mind, and based on the assumption that not all WA primary schools have access to specialist arts teachers, the Outline in The Arts was written on the basis that, '... all students will study at least two arts subjects from pre-primary to the end of Year 8...'; students must study a performance subject (dance, drama or music) and a visual subject (visual or media arts). In Years 9 and 10, the study of the arts is optional<sup>31</sup>.

This more manageable curriculum however does not prohibit schools from providing students with opportunities to engage with all five arts subjects. In fact, SCSA sees its new curriculum for the arts as an opportunity for schools to strengthen their engagement with artists and arts and cultural organisations.

"The arts industry complements the provision of the arts syllabus in schools through programs and partnerships. The industry increasingly provides specialist services for schools, as appropriate, through experiences such as visiting performances, demonstrations and exhibitions, artists in residence, professional development for teachers, and access for students and teachers to specialised facilities in galleries, concert halls, theatres and other arts venues." <sup>32</sup>

By 2018 (when all syllabuses will become part of the mandated curriculum for the planning, assessment and reporting of student progress in WA), artists and arts and cultural organisations should be ready to, if not already doing so, directly engage teachers to assist them to deliver '...rich, sustained, rigorous learning in each of the subjects of The Arts.'<sup>33</sup>

As one of the new mandatory arts curriculum requirements, schools must provide study in a visual arts subject. SCSA defines the visual subjects<sup>34</sup> as visual arts (incorporating the three fields of art, craft and design) and media arts (analysing past technologies and using existing and emerging ones; experimenting with media genres and styles; and, exploring different communication practices).

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<sup>30</sup> Western Australian Jurisdictional Response to the Australian Government Review of the Australian Curriculum, School Curriculum and Standards Authority <http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/publications/circulars/11to12-circulars/archive/2014/ecircular-edition-03-2014>

<sup>31</sup> The Arts; Overview <http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/p-10-curriculum/curriculum-browser/the-arts>

<sup>32</sup> School Curriculum and Standards Authority <http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/p-10-curriculum/curriculum-browser/the-arts/arts-overview/ways-of-teaching>

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*

With the new SCSA curriculum Outline, the opportunity now exists for increased collaboration between professional arts practitioners and WA schools. It is predicted that the new curriculum changes should increase the children's participation in cultural activities in the future. Trends in participation will be monitored as there is potential for schools to prioritise other STEM units ahead of the visual arts.

The latest ABS issue of the Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities 2012, shows that about one third of WA children aged five to 14 years participated in at least one cultural activity (playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing, drama or organised art and craft) outside of school hours and of those children, 5.9 per cent undertook organised art and craft.<sup>35</sup>

## Arts contribute to children's wellbeing

There are many research reports that show how the arts contribute to the wellbeing of children and provide the environment to develop critical and creative thinking skills. The *Creative Connections: An Arts in Education Partnership Framework (Creative Connections)* works to the dual approach of Education in Art and Education through art.<sup>36</sup>

Children who have a positive experience and develop strong arts learning skills are more likely to go on to tertiary arts education. It was observed that children involved in arts programs scored better in problem solving, planning, communication and working with others, than students who were not involved in arts programs. It appears that a narrowly conceived curriculum, in which the arts are either not offered or are offered in limited and sporadic amounts, exerts a negative effect on the development of critical cognitive competencies and personal dispositions.<sup>37</sup>

A growing body of international and Australian research demonstrates the multiple benefits of an arts-rich education from an early age. Over and above the obvious development of individual creativity and self-expression, school based arts participation can increase learners' confidence and motivation, thereby improving school attendance rates, academic outcomes and the wellbeing and life skills of children and young people.<sup>38</sup>

Now the impact of the arts on student achievement, drawn from extensive empirical studies and quantifiable evidence, supports the contention that all of the established

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<sup>35</sup> ABS 4901.0 - Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia, Apr 2012  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4901.0>

<sup>36</sup> Creative Connections: An arts in education partnership framework 2010-2014  
[http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Developing%20Arts%20and%20Culture/Arts%20and%20Education/Dev%20WA%20Arts%20and%20Cult\\_Arts%20and%20Ed\\_Creative%20Connections%202010%20-%202014\\_2010.pdf](http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Developing%20Arts%20and%20Culture/Arts%20and%20Education/Dev%20WA%20Arts%20and%20Cult_Arts%20and%20Ed_Creative%20Connections%202010%20-%202014_2010.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> First We See The National Review of Visual Education (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles, 1999:44) p. 55  
[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/nrve\\_final\\_report-5643bb9a6763e.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/nrve_final_report-5643bb9a6763e.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs - National Education and the Arts Statement 2007 [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/National\\_Education\\_Arts\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Education_Arts_Statement.pdf)

art forms – dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts – improve the grades of those students with access to quality arts experiences (Fiske, 1999). Studies have concluded:

- Nourishing students' creative skills does have a positive impact on learning outcomes (Burton, Horowitz and Abeles, 1999)
- Higher order thinking skills and cognition are increased as a result of arts learning (Deasy, 2002)
- Fostering students' capacity to connect with the world and each other is greatly improved for those with arts learning opportunities (Fiske, 1999).
- Students who engaged with the arts in schools as active participants – as makers and doers of the arts – were more likely to do better in academic and social spheres than those who passively consumed the arts<sup>39</sup> (Fleming, Gibson, Martin, Anderson, Sudmalis 2015)<sup>40</sup>

There is vast global evidence for the benefits, and therefore support, for arts education:

- From the 2014 national survey *Arts In Daily Life*<sup>41</sup> on Australian participation in the arts, an overwhelming 89 per cent of respondents confirmed that 'the Arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian'.
- In 2008, the report from the *Australia 2020 Summit*<sup>42</sup> called for educational authorities to 'Mandate creative, visual and performing arts subjects in national curricula with appropriate reporting requirements for schools'.
- Internationally, UNESCO affirmed<sup>43</sup> 'arts education as the foundation for balanced creative, cognitive, emotional, aesthetic and social development of children, youth and life-long learners'.
- The US passed a new Bill for Arts Education in December 2015 which states 'clear support for well-rounded education, which is defined, and includes the arts'.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>The Conversation March 2014 <http://theconversation.com/the-new-national-arts-curriculum-could-make-for-better-schools-24537>

<sup>40</sup> The statement is from the article about the paper... 'The Role of Arts Participation in Students' Academic and Nonacademic Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study of School, Home, and Community Factors, Journal of Education Psychology 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Arts in Daily Life: Australian Participation in the Arts. May 2014  
<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/arts-in-daily-life-australian-5432524d0f2f0.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Australia 2020 Summit [http://pandora.nia.gov.au/pan/81461/20080610-0000/www.australia2020.gov.au/final\\_report/index.html](http://pandora.nia.gov.au/pan/81461/20080610-0000/www.australia2020.gov.au/final_report/index.html)

<sup>43</sup> Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education  
[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Seoul\\_Agenda\\_EN.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Seoul_Agenda_EN.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> USA Bill for Arts Education <http://blog.americansforthearts.org/2015/12/02/%E2%80%9Cwaiving%E2%80%9D-goodbye-to-no-child-left-behind>

## ArtsEdge

DCA, through *Creative Connections*<sup>45</sup>, and its partnership with the Department of Education, takes the lead role in the promotion of the arts in education in WA, recognising the three key principles of the long standing 2007 National Education and the Arts Statement:

- All children and young people should have a high quality arts education in every phase of learning;
- Creating partnerships strengthens community identity and local cultures; and
- Connecting schools with the arts and cultural sector enriches learning outcomes.

DCA supports arts education of school aged young people through ArtsEdge. The ArtsEdge program is a key mechanism for delivering *Creative Connections*' objectives.

ArtsEdge facilitates collaboration between the education, arts and cultural sectors. By creating opportunities through partnership, ArtsEdge aims to encourage, develop, promote and celebrate learning environments which spark creativity in young people and their school communities. By providing assistance with partnership development, and creating relevant arts in education resources, ArtsEdge recognise and promote the value of arts and culture across the curriculum.

The conclusion of the above is that in the long term, there will be both a potential increase in visual arts practitioners due to greater exposure to the arts through the curriculum supported in the immediate and short term with opportunities for visual artists to support teachers in education settings.

Currently, artists working in the education system Kindergarten to Year 12 (K-12) derive most of their income from education employers and limited income from traditional creative arts practice.

ArtsEdge undertook a survey *Teaching Artists: Unearthing the Western Australian Network* in March to May 2015. Results show that:

- 73 per cent of respondents now use the term 'Teaching Artist'<sup>46</sup> to describe their professional practice or part thereof.

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<sup>45</sup> Creative Connections Partnerships Framework

[http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Developing%20Arts%20and%20Culture/Arts%20and%20Education/Dev%20WA%20Arts%20and%20Cult\\_Arts%20and%20Ed\\_Creative%20Connections%202010%20-%202014\\_2010.pdf](http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Developing%20Arts%20and%20Culture/Arts%20and%20Education/Dev%20WA%20Arts%20and%20Cult_Arts%20and%20Ed_Creative%20Connections%202010%20-%202014_2010.pdf)

<sup>46</sup>Terminology defined: <http://www.artsedge.dca.wa.gov.au/spotlight-on-success/Pages/Teaching-Artists.aspx>

- More than half of respondents recorded they supplemented or complemented their career with work in their 'Professional Arts Practice' (58 per cent). However, 50 per cent also recorded that this supplementary or complementary work was undertaken through their employment by an arts and cultural organisation.

The Federal<sup>47</sup> and State government focus on STEM education (Science, Technology, English, Mathematics) highlights the need for an increase injection of creativity into teaching and learning practices to ensure schools deliver, and students receive, a balanced curriculum. A lack of focus on the arts in this specialised context compromises students' academic potential and may deny them a chance to achieve in other areas of their lives.

## Artist-in-Residence at schools

Western Australian visual and media artists specialising in school engagement have traditionally experienced strong connections within the education sector. Individual visual artists especially provide valuable collaborative teaching opportunities for schools and have delivered high quality arts experiences for students.

Research suggests that artist residencies in schools are highly beneficial to arts learning and teaching practices in schools, as well as fostering the further development of a professional artist's practice.

A key deliverable in engaging professional artists working within an educational environment is the Creative Education Partnerships: Artist-in-Residence Initiative (AiR). The AiR program was managed for the Federal Government by the Australia Council for the Arts and delivered in Western Australia by the DCA and the Department of Education under the title 'Artist-in-Residence (AiR) Grants Program'.

In 2015 the Australia Council for the Arts announced it would no longer fund the AiR Grants Program initiative nationally. As a result, employment opportunities for WA visual and media artists through this program will be diminished.

Even with the future of AiR in doubt there have been positive outcomes achieved over the duration of the program.

DCA's Artist-in-Residence (AiR) Grants Program provided funding between 2010 and 2015 with 64 per cent of projects having a visual art focus. All of the projects incorporated some elements of visual arts practice. These projects have provided gainful employment in WA public schools for more than 32 artists, enabling in-depth

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<sup>47</sup> Education Council of Australia Endorsement of STEM Education Strategy 2016-2026  
<http://www.educationcouncil.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/Education%20Council%20Communique%20-%2011%20December%202015.pdf>

engagement to be achieved through extended residencies lasting up to three school terms.

The AiR style model of employment creates dynamic creative collaborations between artist and teacher. More than 400 teachers worked alongside artists, and 59 pre-service teachers were engaged through the AiR program up until the end of the final funding round in 2015.

The skills transfer from artist to teacher, and the learning outcomes achieved by students has also attributed to an estimated public audience attendance of 19,448 through visual and media arts exhibitions associated with AiR projects.

Research<sup>48</sup> supports the AiR model, particularly for visual and media artists, as continuing to be viable both in terms of employment and professional learning.

With the new SCSA curriculum Outline, the opportunity now exists for increased collaboration between professional arts practitioners and WA schools.

The AiR Grants Program embodies 'education in art and education through art' principles, as outlined in *Creative Connections*. A number of projects in schools with high Indigenous student populations also supported the Federal Government's *Closing the Gap* strategy to reduce Indigenous disadvantage.

During the four-year pilot program from 2010-13 a total of 27 AiR residency projects were delivered. These involved 56 schools including primary and secondary schools, one early childhood education centre, district high schools and one school for children with special educational needs. A Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) group was also represented. Eight projects were conducted in remote and regional locations and these projects incorporated 21 schools. Students from regional and remote areas were also represented in the Hospital School Services residency (2013). These residencies involved 114 artists-in-residence, supporting artists and arts and cultural organisation staff.

Throughout the course of the pilot AiR Grants Program, the evaluation research has strongly suggested that the presence of a well-structured artist-in-residence program can have a positive impact in a number of different domains. These include enhanced student learning and community engagement, broader understanding of the value of the arts in education, and professional learning for educators, artists and pre-service teachers.<sup>49</sup>

Artists and arts and cultural organisations rated their overall experience of working in the AiR schools very highly and reported diverse professional learning outcomes. A number of artists developed new business ideas as a result of their AiR experiences.

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<sup>48</sup> AIR Grants Program Western Australia, Pilot Evaluation Report 2010-2013  
<http://www.artsedge.dca.wa.gov.au/artists-in-residence/Pages/Something-in-the-AIR.aspx>

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*

Whilst the longer term consequences on the visual arts sector of new entrants is potentially improved by the curriculum, the reliance on the education sector for visual artists in Western Australia can't be overstated. Future advocacy at local and national level for the continuing development of these partnerships and reinstatement of AiR is also now apparent.

## Visual Artist Training

There are two levels of an artist's education; firstly as a student in the primary and secondary curriculum school system which has been discussed earlier in this chapter, followed by specialist training in the tertiary sector of professional artists and ongoing professional development post-graduation.

On a national scale the economic study by David Throsby and Anita Zednik discovered that artists are highly educated with 65 per cent holding a tertiary qualification. Artists also require additional training to learn how to run a business. There are currently many programs and initiatives provided by private, local government and funded organisations that offer professional development training to artists.

Artists undertake a variety of paths to be able to practice as a professional. Most artists will follow the straight path of training at a tertiary institution and later supplement their skills through other training courses. Some artists claim to be self-taught by learning skills as they go. It is quite common for artists to undertake further training in different areas of practice to increase their skills and consequently find more opportunities available to them<sup>50</sup>.

In the Throsby and Zednik study, nearly half of all artists regard formal training as the most essential way to prepare them for an artistic career. The study defined the different types of training into:

1. Formal training – training that leads to an award given by an institution, such as university, TAFE, Art/Craft/Design school
2. Private training – private tuition and mentorship
3. Other training – apprenticeship, workshops, summer school, short courses
4. Self-taught – self-directed study
5. Learning on the job

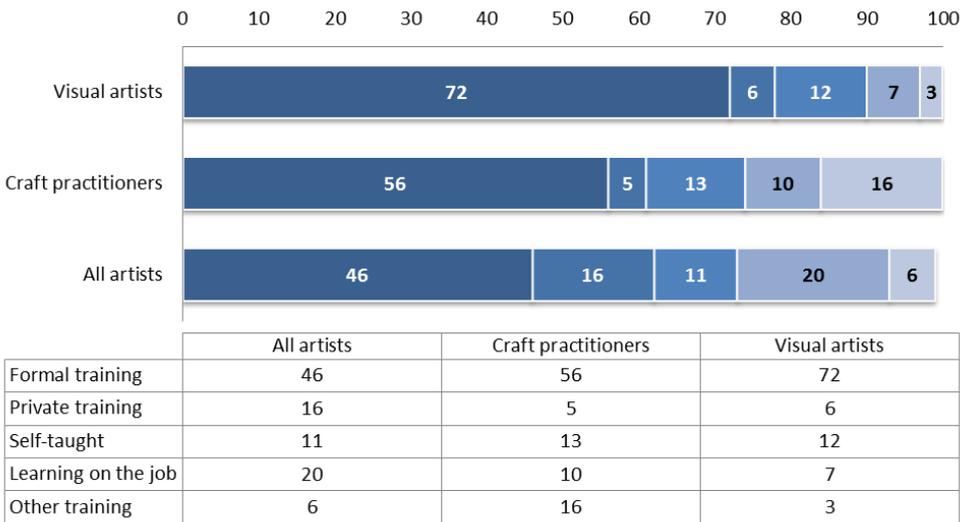
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<sup>50</sup> Throsby, D & Zednik, A: Do You Really Expect To Get Paid? An economic study of artists in Australia p.26 [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do\\_you\\_really\\_expect\\_to\\_get\\_paid-54325a3748d81.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/do_you_really_expect_to_get_paid-54325a3748d81.pdf)

Artists were asked to record the type of training they had undertaken and were then asked to respond to what they thought was the 'most important' training to become an artist. Table 3 shows that visual artists regard formal training to be the most important means of training for practising professional artists.

Throsby and Zednik undertook further analysis of this group and discovered that as an artist gets older they consider that experience and learning on the job becomes more important in their development. As formal training is such an important component of visual artists' learning, the trends in this area are worthy of analysis.

**Table 3: Most Important training to become an artist (per cent)**



note: "All artists" includes: writers, visual artists, craft practitioners, actors, dancers, musicians, composers, community development

The ABS Arts and Culture in Australia: Statistical Overview, 2014 (cat 4172.0)<sup>51</sup> Training in the Arts, segments data into three main areas;

- Participation in selected cultural activities
- Students undertaking a higher education in the field of arts and crafts (excluding TAFE)
- Students in vocational training in field of creative arts

The ABS has sourced data from the Australian Government Department of Industry, now Department of Education and Training. In 2012 there were 86,547 students undertaking a creative arts course in the field of creative arts at a higher educational institution across Australia. Creative arts comprise the following educational fields: performing arts, visual arts and crafts, graphic and design studies,

<sup>51</sup> Arts and Culture in Australia: A Statistical Overview, 2014 (cat 4172.0) <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4172.0main+features222014>

communication and media studies and other performing arts. Nearly 8.3 per cent (7,177 students) were located in Western Australia.

This is an increase of 4 per cent from 2011 with 83,167 students that undertook a tertiary course in the field of creative arts in Australia with 10 per cent (8,900 students) located in Western Australia.

The 2014 ABS report also shows that in 2012 vocational training such as TAFE, had a total of 51,958 students enrolled in creative arts courses with 13 per cent (6,837 students) located in Western Australia. This is a decrease from 2011 national figures with 53,600 students enrolled in creative arts courses, but a larger proportion of WA based students at 14 per cent (7,500 students). Unfortunately, the ABS statistics are not segmented to identify visual artists<sup>52</sup> separately but a recent paper by Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) offers some better insight.

In December 2014, IBSA released a report reviewing the skills sets and qualifications of visual art TAFE courses.

The report identified that the largest numbers of enrolments in the cultural and creative industries were in the CUV11 Visual Arts Crafts and Design Training Package, with 36.6 per cent of the total enrolments. This is compared to enrolments in CUF07 Screen and Media (second highest enrolments with 25.2 per cent), CUS09 Music, CUE/CUA Live Performance and CUL11 Library Information and Cultural Services.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) shows that VET enrolments across Australia were 1,789,100 students enrolled in the VET system in 2014. The total VET enrolments for Arts and Culture (CUV) course in 2014 nationally was 28,579 with 6,121 (21 per cent) located in WA.<sup>53</sup>

If these trends are consistent within Western Australia, and unfortunately there are no state breakdowns for this, it would appear that there will be an oversupply of trained visual arts and designers in relation to employment opportunities and market access. Whilst for certain segments like graphic designers there may be demand from advertising services which is expected to rise; the outlook for the remainder of the sector is more uncertain.

What is not yet known will be the impact on the sector of the changes in fee structures for vocational training.

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<sup>52</sup> Data is available through the Australian Government, Department of Education and Training; Higher Education Statistics portal named UCube <https://www.education.gov.au/ucube-higher-education-data-cube>

<sup>53</sup> NCVER, Vet Students by Industry. Arts and Culture (CUV) <http://data.ncver.edu.au/resources/vsi.html>

## Effect of fees on vocational enrolments

Media commentary suggests that uncapped fees are curtailing all TAFE enrolments. With the rise in fees in 2014 there had been a 9 per cent drop in TAFE student enrolments in WA from 121,000 in 2013 to 110,000 in 2014.<sup>54</sup> However, these changes are disputed to be the result of normal trends in economic cycles and not the outcome of fee changes.

The Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) Environmental Scan 2015<sup>55</sup> identifies factors having impact on skills needs of the workforce and considers how the national training system, services and industry are responding. The report shows that even though the estimated growth forecast was to increase by 1.9 per cent annually up to 2014, that in fact the number of student enrolments in the vocational system had decreased by 3.4 per cent.

It is estimated the sector is affected by multiple factors including;

- rising unemployment increasing demand for upskilling
- changes in funding models
- demand for new training packages
- competition with education providers
- rising international student numbers due to lower value of Australian dollar
- those seeking professional development opportunities
- higher level VET qualifications becoming more desirable

“Quality remains topical for all VET stakeholders. New regulatory standards for training providers and regulators were approved in September 2014 to underpin a risk based regulatory system. They aim to introduce important changes to strengthen industry engagement, improve the quality of training and reduce the regulatory burden on training providers.”<sup>56</sup>

Policy think-tank the Grattan Institute discussed uncapped fees in their 2013 report *Keep the Caps Off*<sup>57</sup>. The overview of the report is that;

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-28/drop-in-tafe-student-numbers-linked-to-fee-rise-labor/6428766>

<sup>55</sup> IBSA Training and Education Industry Environment Scan 2015  
<https://www.ibsa.org.au/sites/default/files/media/IBSA%20Environment%20Scan%202015%20Training%20and%20Education%20Industry.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*

<sup>57</sup> Keep the caps off! Student access and choice in higher education <http://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/195-Keep-the-caps-off.pdf>

"...the demand-driven system is to increase access to higher education for people from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds. The aim is that low socioeconomic background students will make up 20 per cent of domestic undergraduate students by 2020." (p.11)

The report further argues that even though the demand-driven system did not start until 2012 that university behaviour changed before this. Since the system was announced in 2009 there were three broad discipline areas affected with increased demand in health, science and engineering. Creative Arts remained relatively stable. (p.15)

Re-capping of students fees, it believes, would reduce higher education enrolment places by 20,000-25,000 over each year from 2014 to 2016. (p. 25)

The Grattan Institute concludes that the demand-driven system is achieving its goals with universities being able to meet demand by creating additional places. Grattan considers that per student funding issues require a policy adjustment, not a policy reversal. (p.28)

IBSA has already noted this at some level, arguing that there is a continued need for the visual arts, crafts and design industry to improve its marketing skills to maintain a sustainable practice but what will also be required is a stimulation of the local visual arts market.

FutureNow is the training council for the Creative and Leisure Industries in WA. FutureNow works in partnership with Government and key stakeholders to deliver quality education and training outcomes.

The *Workforce Development Plan 2015, Cultural and Creative Industries*<sup>58</sup> published by FutureNow, identifies the need for digital and information technology training, partnerships, business deployment, new sources of finance, people and business management.

Arts and cultural education and training supports social and cultural inclusion but the closure of two vocational arts training courses from Albany's Great Southern Institute of Technology and Polytechnic West's Midland studios has reduced opportunities. FutureNow sees that vocational education is the essential link to deliver a sustainable sector.

So what does this mean for the visual arts sector? When taken with the potential growth of children that will want a career in the visual arts through curriculum reform and access through school, and the demand for vocational and formal higher education training that artists prefer (which may slow due to the abolition of capped

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<sup>58</sup> FutureNow, Workforce Development Plan 2015, Cultural and Creative Industries  
<http://www.futurenow.org.au/current-plans.html>

fees), there will be a potential glut of visual artists trying to access an employment market that is currently trending slower in its growth than other parts of the arts and creative industries sector. With a decline in fixed infrastructure outlets for sale in WA, which may in the short term be partially offset by online opportunities which appear to trend towards 'affordable art' with smaller margins (discussed in the visual art market chapter), there appears to be a mismatch between sales/distribution outlets and visual artists that may require policy interventions.

## 3. Visual Arts Market

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### Key points

- No current quantitative data on performance of commercial art galleries
- The visual art market in Western Australia has high dependence on fixed infrastructure galleries
- An oversupply of artists, affordable art, and lack of international market in Western Australia may lower prices and compromise long term development of sector
- The international online art market reached \$3.27 billion, up 24 per cent in the last 12 months. Government policy interventions to date have had mixed results in terms of market development

In 2014 Artsource and the UWA Cultural Precinct co-presented *The Undiscovered Symposium: A National Focus on Western Australian Art* as a platform for the visual arts community to discuss current topics affecting the sector. A significant issue that was put forward is the lack of opportunities for professional artists to exhibit and sell their work. The sale and exhibition of artists' work increases their income and reputation and may lead to other financially sustaining activities such as teaching and commissions. The commercial market also acts as an important moderator and driver of high quality art.

There has not been any study undertaken since the year 2000 of commercial galleries in Australia since the ABS release *Commercial Art Galleries, Australia, 1999-2000*. At the end of June 2000, there were 514 commercial art gallery businesses operating in Australia with a total income of approximately \$132 million. WA recorded 22 commercial galleries with a total income for the state at \$3.5 million<sup>59</sup>. At that time, the importance of the Aboriginal market is difficult to overstate. Aboriginal art sales in those galleries surveyed made up of 42.37 per cent of total sales.

As with quantitative data on sales, there has not been an analysis conducted of available exhibition spaces throughout the State, or an analysis of the presentation of local or touring product to determine if there is a broad decline in accessibility.

What is clear is that in the Aboriginal arts market report, *The Economy of Place - A Place in the Economy*<sup>60</sup>, showed that they found it hard to make a profit, due to the

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<sup>59</sup> ABS Commercial Art Galleries, Australia 1999-2000 (cat, 8651.0) [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/4C63473F3AD7DF13CA256AB70005A2BC/\\$File/86510\\_1999-2000.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/4C63473F3AD7DF13CA256AB70005A2BC/$File/86510_1999-2000.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> The Economy of Place - A Place in the Economy: A value chain study of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art sector <http://www.crc-rep.com.au/resource/EconomyOfPlace/index.html#1/z>

combined effects of falling sales, oversupply, unstable market conditions, changing policy and consumer caution.

Nationally, both commercial galleries and Aboriginal art centres have expressed some confidence in the future, however the limited evidence on the scope and scale of private art businesses results in incomplete knowledge of the current status of the sector and importantly the potential impact of any policy response.

## More artists and affordable art

Commentary from WA gallery proprietors mentioned in the Commercial Galleries chapter of this report speculates that one of the reasons the fine art market has depreciated is due to the oversupply of 'affordable art'.

'Affordable art' has long been a contentious issue for the fine art sales market. Artists are conflicted with pressures from peers and agents that if they circulate their fine artwork designs into marketable products then they are 'selling out' their quality and reputation and potentially deflating the value of the arts market. A business model of greater volume at the expense of lower quality may meet consumer demand in the short term, but could have longer term impacts on the viability of physical gallery spaces making an artist's income in fine art sales and in certain mediums not possible. This is counter intuitive to the approach of the creative industries sector that generally encourages newer production methods as a means of reducing unit cost.

The growth of art fairs has altered the balance between gallery, art fair and online sales and generally stimulated the market; however, the extent to which the fairs have increased artists or galleries income is not clear.

To add to the lack of clarity, the population ratio of artists has been increasing since collection began by the ABS in 1993<sup>61</sup> and earlier by cultural economists in the 1980's potentially spreading the wealth too thinly. Factors for the increase in the population of artists include:

- Artists now have a greater access to materials and can order products online.
- There is a generational society shift that has allowed young people the opportunities to pursue a career in the arts instead of following a career forced upon by their parents for a more financially sustainable profession.

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<sup>61</sup> ABS Cultural Trends in Australia 1994  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4172.01994?OpenDocument>

- Individuals who have started a lucrative profession make a career change to pursue their unfulfilled desire to make a livelihood as an artist, such as bankers becoming painters<sup>62</sup> and lawyers that become sculptors.<sup>63</sup>
- There are a multitude of online resources and articles<sup>64</sup> that provide information on how and where to sell art online.
- Artists can learn business skills from online resources or training workshops. Limited business skills are taught in tertiary education that leave graduates without enough skills to maintain a sustainable practice and continue their career. DCA invests in organisations that provide business development programs for visual artists, for example Artsource, Community Arts Network WA, Country Arts WA, Art on the Move and Propel Youth Arts WA.<sup>65</sup>

## Online art market

As the population of visual artists continues to grow, so does the segmentation of practice making it harder to match pathways of career and access to markets. At one level, proportionately more visual artists are creating work using more innovative business opportunities available with new technology. This facilitates the increasing supply of affordable art with online print-on-demand portals such as Redbubble, Society6, Zazzle and DeviantArt that all have various levels of commission. These sites allow artist's to upload their artwork and designs that can then be printed onto a large range of products for the consumer.

There are also online e-commerce marketplaces for creatives to sell handmade works such as Etsy. It is hard to ignore the reach of the Etsy market when figures show that Etsy has grown to an online community of 1.6 million makers with more than 24 million buyers. At a recent Art Month Sydney talk, *Etsy or Regreetsy*<sup>66</sup> revealed that the online market has been a positive experience for some artists but many remain sceptical. It also seems when artists become successful on Etsy and reach a certain size that they move on to other e-commerce platforms such as Big Cartel or Shopify that offer more flexibility and control of their business.<sup>67</sup> There are many alternatives

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<sup>62</sup> The Guardian, From Banking to Painting 10.04.12 <http://www.theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/career-change-banking-professional-artist>

<sup>63</sup> Forbes, Success Story 30.1.14 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/#/sites/hesterlacey/2014/01/30/success-story-5-hints-on-achieving-a-radical-career-change/>

<sup>64</sup> Artshub, 92 skills you need to run an arts business <http://www.artshub.com.au/education/news-article/features/arts-education/>

<sup>65</sup> DCA funded organisations that provide business skill development <http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/funding/organisations-funding/funded-organisations/>

<sup>66</sup> Artshub; Etsy or regreetsy? 8.3.16 <http://visual.artshub.com.au/news-article/features/visual-arts/gina-fairley/etsy-or-regreetsy-250726>

<sup>67</sup> How Etsy Alienated Its Crafters and Lost Its Soul <http://www.wired.com/2015/02/etsy-not-good-for-crafters/>

to Etsy with one artist providing a very comprehensive list of alternatives comparing e-commerce platforms for creatives.<sup>68</sup>

These changes do not, however, support a raft of other visual artists nor galleries with fixed infrastructure.

The international 2016 Hiscox Online Art Trade Report<sup>69</sup> that surveys all art markets except Australia, found that the gallery sector is slowly adapting to offering its work for sale online with 28 per cent offering the option (up from 22 per cent in 2013). "The international online art market reached \$3.27 billion, up 24 per cent in the last 12 months." The online and fixed gallery distributors feed off one another; however the fixed gallery market in WA is at risk from local factors such as rent, critical market mass and changes in buyer market. The WA gallery proprietors noted that there is no longer a younger generation of collectors buying fine art from them in person. This trend is supported by Hiscox that found Generation Y (18-35 year olds) are large social media followers and 46 per cent buy art online, with 81 per cent of them buying fine art.

At present, price and quality seem less of an issue than purchasing preferences. That is, affordable art is not necessary to meet demand. In the 2016 report, Hiscox found that the most popular category of fine art bought online is paintings and prints which made up 72 per cent of buyers in the last 12 months. The majority of online sales (27 per cent) were bought in the £1,000 to £5,000 range but at the same time 3 per cent of buyers purchased paintings in the £50,000 and above category.

As long as affordable art is promoted by popular culture through interior design companies, renovation shows and real estate firms (to name a few), there will continue to be a market. The question is whether this helps raise artists' income and liveability or supports the sustainability of fixed infrastructure galleries which are vital for the online market and where the profit margins lie.

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<sup>68</sup> Ecommerce platforms for creatives <https://gracedobush.com/2014/11/21/comparing-e-commerce-platforms-for-makers/>

<sup>69</sup> The Hiscox Online Art Trade Report 2016 <https://www.hiscox.co.uk/online-art-trade-report/>

## Auction houses

Auction houses play a vital role in the global art market. In 2015 the global Fine Art Market stabilised in the West and contracted in China. The *Art Market in 2015*<sup>70</sup> reports that Western art auctions have generated \$11.2 billion which is a growth of +212 per cent over the last decade.

The global fine art market consists of paintings, sculptures, installations, drawings, photographs, videos, tapestries and prints. It does not include antiques, anonymous cultural goods and furniture.

The number of works offered for sale worldwide has grown by three per cent, with 865,700 lots offered for sale. China with a market share fell to 30.2 per cent has relinquished its top position to the United States who have recovered position as the dominant market, with a market share of 38.4 per cent. Australia is listed as ninth (the percentage of market share is not cited in the report).

Modern Art (artists born 1860-1920) has the highest turnover for artistic period with 47 per cent of the market. Contemporary art (artists born after 1945) hold 11 per cent of the market. Paintings are still the dominant medium, with 969 lots above the million dollar threshold, but 75 per cent of paintings and sculpture sold are less than \$7,200. Sculpture captures 16 per cent and drawings 8 per cent of the market.

In December 2015, ArtsHub<sup>71</sup> summarised the Art Sales Digest<sup>72</sup> report stating that the Australian 'auction market was \$109.25 million, which was 3.2 per cent or \$3 million up on last year's figures.' The major Australian auction houses had just over 19,500 lots on offer which is an increase from 2014 of 3.25 per cent (18,886 lots).

Even though this is an increase from 2014, it does not yet compare to the peak market in 2007 when the turnover reached \$175.6 million.

The top selling auction in April 2015 was Sotheby's Australia with \$11.26 million, including the buyer premiums.

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<sup>70</sup> The Art Market 2015; artprice.com [http://imgpublic.artprice.com/pdf/rama2016\\_en.pdf](http://imgpublic.artprice.com/pdf/rama2016_en.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> ArtsHub <http://visual.artshub.com.au/news-article/news/visual-arts/gina-fairley/what-art-market-2015-the-year-under-the-gavel-250141>

<sup>72</sup> Arts Sales Digest <http://www.aasd.com.au/>

## Aboriginal art market

The Aboriginal art market is illustrative of this issue. The Aboriginal art market also records an oversupply in the art market with figures released in *The Economy of Place, A Place in the Economy* report 2015 (pp14-15) noting:

*“However, analysis indicates there were over 60,000 art products produced but not sold between 2003 and 2012. While production levels have fallen in the last two years, they appear to still be significantly above the level of sales. Together with other contributing evidence such as the increasing length of time art products are in stock, this indicates a continuing over-supply problem.*

*Nearly two-thirds of all art products made by Art Centres were in the under \$250 price range – and almost 90 per cent were under \$1,000. Art products over \$5,000 in price made up only 1.1 per cent of all products, though they generated over 20 per cent of Art Centre sales. The dominance of paintings is also important to note; while they represent about two-thirds of all art products made, they generate 90 per cent of all sales.*

*It is likely that a combination of over-supply; buyer interest shifting to smaller, lower priced works; and overall market conditions have contributed to a long-term decline in the average price of art products. This is particularly noticeable in the average price of paintings, with a steady decline in the average price from a 2005 high of \$885, to almost half that by 2012, of \$449.*

*Although there is a perception that the art market is dominated by expensive masterworks, most buyers prefer smaller, portable and accessible art products.”*

However, the majority of remote Aboriginal art centres are financially fragile, artistic and commercial success is inconsistent across gender, age, location and production and the sector is undergoing a rebuilding phase as growth in art centres and art production has not been matched by demand. While sales are improving after steep falls, the supply chain is characterised by a lack of trust and cautious buyer behaviour, now exacerbated by the reduction in commercial gallery distributors.<sup>73</sup>

While at one level this meets consumer demand, the combination of oversupply, smaller margins and lower quality risks the sustainability of the art centres, as well as the other distributors of their work.

Any policy intervention to stimulate volume of sales therefore runs the risk of compromising quality of the art with the potential unintended consequence of reducing sustainability. If no regard is paid to the fixed gallery sector then the

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<sup>73</sup> The Economy of Place - A Place in the Economy: A value chain study of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art sector <http://www.crc-rep.com.au/resource/EconomyOfPlace/index.html#1/z>

benefits of the online sector for artists will also be compromised and the relationship between the two is important to be cognisant of.

There have been a number of initiatives developed and/or implemented to stimulate demand for visual art such as art loan schemes, art fairs, home open exhibitions, and specific industry initiatives.

## Art loan schemes

Arts Council Wales has their own art loan scheme Collectorplan<sup>74</sup> that was launched over 30 years ago with more than 50 galleries now participating in Wales. Utilising much the same model as Own Art in the UK, Collectorplan provides an interest free loan over a 12 month period up to a maximum of £5,000 (approx. \$10,000 AUD).

Own Art<sup>75</sup> started in the UK in 2004. Own Art is a Creative United<sup>76</sup> program that is an initiative of Arts Council England. Through the scheme, people can purchase art through a layby system over a ten month interest-free loan. This UK system has a network of 221 member galleries across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015, the Own Art scheme provided 4,683 loans totalling £3.9m (approx. \$8M AUD) in value. The average value of an Own Art loan in 2014-15 was £823 (approx. \$1,700 AUD)<sup>77</sup>.

Feedback from 37 per cent of the Own Art member galleries state that they have experienced incremental increase in sales by using the scheme. Own Art have diversified their value by providing advice through their news and social media hub Art Intelligence. The social impact report show high levels of customer satisfaction and repeat business.

In Australia, Tasmania was the first state to establish an art loan scheme. COLLECT<sup>78</sup> was established in 2010 and based on the UK's Own Art system. COLLECT has grown by 20 per cent per annum, although Arts Tasmania believes these figures will now plateau. Just over 1300 loans have been made under the scheme so far, and is yet to have a bad debt. In the financial year 2013-14, the scheme provided \$1,374,183 for 451 Tasmanian artworks, which works out to be an average of \$3,046 per loan.

COLLECT was established through Arts Tasmania as an agency of the Department of State Growth which had an existing Business Loan program, as part of the Business, Finance and Compliance unit. Arts Tasmania was able to utilise the internal expertise and resources of the Department to process the credit checks, establish the loan

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<sup>74</sup> Collectorplan <http://www.arts.wales/arts-in-wales/collectorplan>

<sup>75</sup> Own Art scheme UK <http://www.ownart.org.uk/>

<sup>76</sup> Creative United, UK finance for creative businesses <http://www.creativeunited.org.uk/>

<sup>77</sup> Creative United Annual Report 2014/2015

[http://www.creativeunited.org.uk/resources/images/FINAL\\_CU\\_AnnualReport\\_2015\\_DIGITAL\\_\(lo\\_res\).pdf](http://www.creativeunited.org.uk/resources/images/FINAL_CU_AnnualReport_2015_DIGITAL_(lo_res).pdf)

<sup>78</sup> COLLECT, Tasmania <https://www.collect-art.com.au>

and collect payments. The funds for the loans for the Scheme were met from Arts Tasmania's own funding.

Arts Tasmania believes that the scheme has been very effective. The commercial galleries see it as very useful in the circumstances where a customer is unsure whether to purchase an artwork, and being able to say that an interest-free loan is available for the artwork over 12 months can 'seal the deal'.

In 2014, the City of Sydney council endorsed the Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014-2024. One of the initiatives presented was to investigate interest-free loans of artworks similar to the Tasmanian scheme and similar models operating overseas. The City of Sydney provided seed funding to 10 Group, which is a Sydney based company that specialise in art engagement, to support the establishment of Art Money<sup>79</sup>. Launched in April 2015 the Art Money system differs from other art loan schemes in that it uses private investors' money instead of government funding, describing itself as the first commercial art loan program in the world. Within six months of the launch of Art Money, participating galleries increased from 26 to 100 across Australia and facilitated 120 loans for artworks ranging between \$750 and \$5,000, with 18 per cent of loans for first time art buyers.<sup>80</sup>

Art Money is now available across Australia and New Zealand. At February 2016, Art Money has only five WA galleries as part of the scheme.

## Major International Visual Arts Events

In 2013 representatives from WA arts organisations undertook a feasibility study by an independent consultant to determine the viability of an international arts event. *The Major International Visual Arts Event in Western Australia: Feasibility Study 2014*<sup>81</sup> was released in 2015 and identified four initiatives to stimulate the art market in Western Australia:

- Continuum – A large scale triennial Aboriginal art and culture project involving eight individual events staged in major galleries. Requires \$4.4M over three years. Gross cost \$6.9M and estimated revenue \$2.5M.
- Monsoon Projects – Develop projects and professional connections to the Indian Ocean Rim. Requires \$469,000 over three years. Gross cost is \$1.02M and estimated revenue \$555,000.
- SYNEKTICA – Experimental arts festival. Requires \$3.5M over three years. Gross cost \$4.7M and estimated revenue \$1.2M.

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<sup>79</sup> Art Money, Sydney art loan scheme <https://www.artmoney.com/au>

<sup>80</sup> Creative City Sydney blog <http://www.creativecitysydney.com.au/blog/art-money-after-6-months/>

<sup>81</sup> Major International Visual Arts Event in Western Australia: Feasibility Study 2014 <http://www.artsource.net.au/WhatsOn/FEASIBILITY-Major-Visual-Arts-Event>

- The Big Idea - A program of large scale site specific installations. Requires over \$2M over two years, but for full effect would need \$5M biannually for next ten years.

The consultants have recommended that Continuum and Monsoon projects to be implemented as the major visual arts events for WA.

In relation to the Major International Visual Arts Event a potential focus for Continuum could be to key in to the Art Fair zeitgeist to stimulate demand for the local arts market; in particular the Aboriginal Arts Market for which WA is clearly nationally and internationally significant. The event would likely benefit from exhibiting established artists and focus on making explicit links between fixed gallery and studio spaces supported by a retail web presence.

Any further steps to be undertaken regarding the Major International Visual Arts Event are now being considered by the organising committee.

## Art Fairs

In terms of stimulating the arts market, a recent article in *The Conversation*<sup>82</sup> noted that art fairs have become a global phenomenon. The article cited two prominent and established art galleries in London which claimed "60 per cent of their trade went through the art fairs, 25 per cent through online sales and only 15 per cent through the gallery door". The results are similar for the Art Basel Hong Kong Art Fair that has an even higher domination of the local art market. The article refers to the 2015 The European Fine Art Fair Foundation (TEFAF) Art Market Report that claims the global art market in 2014 has risen to highs never seen before, worth approximately AU\$80.65 billion. The top major art fairs in the world produced 40 per cent of all dealer sales and about 20 per cent of the total global art market.

Nationally, Art Fairs Australia announced sales of AU\$14 million from the 2015 Sydney Contemporary which was attended by 30,000 people.

The *Conversation* article concluded that the standard of Australian art meets international competition but that marketing is very poor. If there is going to "philanthropic and government subsidies, they need to be directed at getting Australian art into the international circuit of art fairs and the international art market."<sup>83</sup>

However, Australian galleries find the international art fairs too costly and few regularly participate, while government's priority has been to stimulate local demand and activity.

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<sup>82</sup> The Conversation. Friday essay: the art market is failing Australian artists <http://theconversation.com/friday-essay-the-art-market-is-failing-australian-artists-51314>

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*

Recently the 2016 Melbourne Art Fair was cancelled after three high profile galleries withdrew their applications.<sup>84</sup> This was a shock announcement for the industry as the Melbourne Art Fair is one of the longest running art fairs in the world.

In 2014, the Melbourne Art Fair attracted 80 galleries and generated \$8 million in art sales, so the impact of the cancellation affects most importantly the artists who will lose sales on work they would have already been preparing for the event.<sup>85</sup>

The internationalisation of such a fair/market should also be considered in the context of the growth and scale of the local Asian market. The Chinese market is currently the fastest growing fine arts market in the world<sup>86</sup> and recent successful cultural exchange and exhibition programs of Aboriginal Art in particular, and closer collaboration between the Chinese and WA Governments justify a firm policy response in this area.

There is a key role in support of this international market development from the Art Gallery of Western Australia as part of the general ecology. Commercial galleries, critical writing, curated group exhibitions, and importantly, support for local artists from the State gallery - are each necessary to see any increase in international art sales. Without this infrastructure, the onus falls to individual artists to seek out international markets and so the State loses its local assets. Developing vital local markets leads to developing international markets - it is difficult to have one without the other.

## Home Open exhibition schemes

The Home Open/Open Studios model is an innovative opportunity for the sustainability of the visual arts market. In this model, artists' work is exhibited in private homes or the artists' own studios, opened to the public for a finite period of time.

The inaugural Artist Open House Fremantle<sup>87</sup> event ran for two weekends in November 2014 and featured the work of 26 artists exhibited in five private homes. Attendance was high and the event generated sales in excess of \$140,000. The artists are charged a commission on a sliding scale depending on their level of participation, ranging from 20 - 40 per cent, which is lower than typical commercial gallery rates in Perth.

The Margaret River Region Open Studios<sup>88</sup> ran across two weeks in April and May 2014. Artists paid a flat fee (approx. \$250) to participate. There were 54 studios in the

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<sup>84</sup>ArtsHub, Melbourne Art Fair cancelled in shock announcement <http://visual.artshub.com.au/news-article/news/visual-arts/gina-fairley/melbourne-art-fair-cancelled-in-shock-announcement-250564>

<sup>85</sup> The Australian, Late bid to replace Melbourne Art Fair after its cancellation <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/late-bid-to-replace-melbourne-art-fair-after-its-cancellation/news-story/4bc2b40c3cfba72f106939f7e020636c>

<sup>86</sup> ArtTactic, Chinese Art Market <http://arttactic.com/categories/art-markets/chinese-art-market/>

<sup>87</sup> Fremantle Open House <http://artistopenhousefremantle.com/>

<sup>88</sup> Margaret River Region Open Studios <http://www.mrros.com.au/>

Margaret River region open to the public and overall sales of between \$100,000 and \$140,000 were made.

It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for the success of these two events, but it is possible to speculate. The demands on organisers of promoting a single, discrete event were less than promoting monthly exhibitions and avoided the issue of 'publicity fatigue'; as a result they were able to secure significant media attention which translated to higher audience figures. The level of variety available to the public was higher than a typical gallery exhibition, and the domestic environments countered the perception that galleries are intimidating. Artists were present during the event, which was also a draw card for the public who don't often get to meet the artist in a gallery context.

It is worth noting that both the Margaret River Region Open Studios and Artist Open House Fremantle were previously unsuccessful in applications to DCA's Arts Development grants program that was assessed by a peer panel.

## Revealed - Emerging Aboriginal Artists from Western Australia

Revealed is an exhibition, art market, symposium and professional development program, linking emerging Aboriginal artists and arts centres from across WA with audiences and opportunities in Perth.

In 2016, Fremantle Arts Centre hosted Revealed for the first time, under a new delivery model. This is the fifth time the event has been held and is funded by the State Government through the Department of Culture and the Arts and the Federal Government through the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program. In previous years, Revealed has been held in the Perth Cultural Centre with the support of Central Institute for Technology; Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The event is designed to provide a platform for emerging Aboriginal artists and development opportunities for art centre managers and artworkers.

In 2015, Revealed represented 85 per cent of the State's Aboriginal art centres. The marketplace held over one day in the Urban Orchard attracted 5,200 people and sold \$132,327 worth of original artworks. The exhibition held at Gallery Central, Perth sold \$38,905 of artworks and was visited over the duration of the exhibition by 1,200 people.

The 2016 event held at the Fremantle Arts Centre again included the exhibition and one day marketplace. The exhibition received a total of 15,767 visitors which is more than ten times the audience in 2015. Exhibition sales reached \$51,345 which is nearly a 32 per cent increase from 2015. The marketplace in 2016, whilst having a reduced audience of 3,800, achieved exponential sales totalling \$316,000 in the one day.

## 4. State & Federal funding to visual arts

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### Key points

- During 2010-15, DCA funding programs awarded 31 per cent of grants to individual visual arts and craft artists, the highest proportion of funding for any art form in that period.
- DCA invests in seven organisations through its Organisation Investment Program that are entirely or partially involved in visual arts programs totalling nearly \$3 million per annum.
- The recent results of the Australia Council four year funding program shows that no Western Australian visual arts organisation has been successful outside of FORM and PICA currently funded through the Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy.
- The Australian Government's new Catalyst program has funded ten Western Australian projects to a value of \$1,253,570. This represents 5.38 per cent of the total funding provided across all jurisdictions, which is well below WA's per-capita share of population of 11 per cent.

The State and Federal Governments provide funding to organisations and individuals for programs which underpin the visual arts sector, in addition to the financial investment from the Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy,

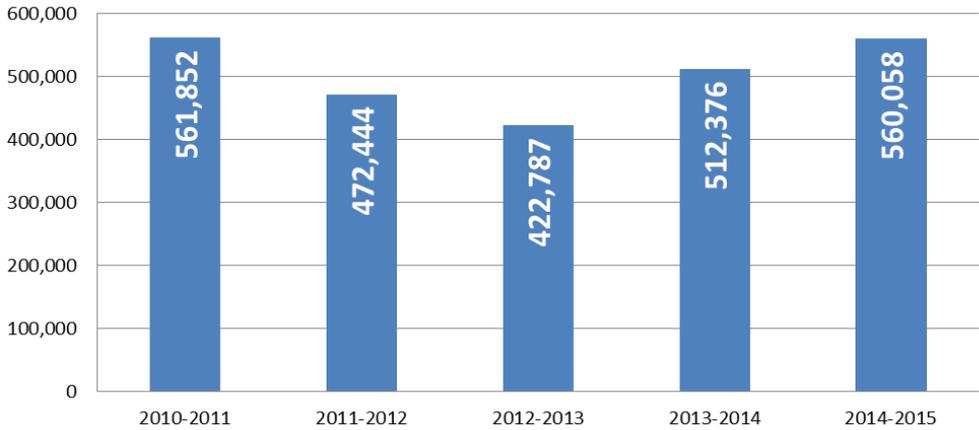
### DCA funding to visual artists

As well as visual art and multi-arts organisations, DCA grant programs provide financial support to individual visual artists, collectives and small independent groups and organisations.

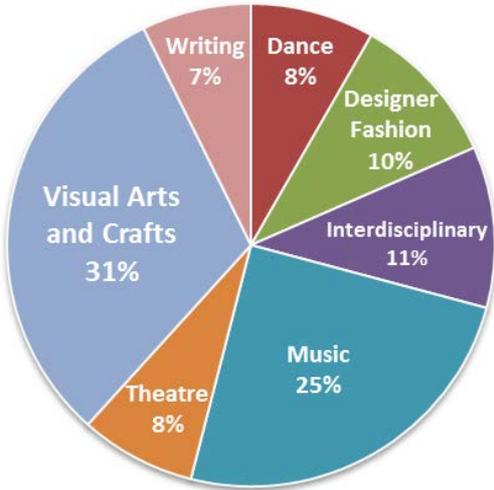
Figure 2 represents funding to individual visual artists across all funding programs at DCA. The variance between years shown in the figure is not indicative of any particular trend as there is no specific allocation set aside for visual arts (or any other art form) in funding rounds. The success or otherwise of applications is dependent on the competitiveness of other applications being assessed in that round.

During 2010-15, 31 per cent of funding from all DCA funding programs was awarded to individual visual art and craft artists, the highest proportion of funding for any art form suggesting that it is unlikely that there will be a significant increase in the proportion of funding allocated to the visual arts sector.

**Figure 2: Funding to individual visual artists across all DCA programs areas from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2015**



**Figure 3: DCA funding to all artforms 2010-2015**



## DCA funding to organisations

Through its Organisations Investment Program, DCA invests in seven organisations that operate entirely or partially in the visual arts and crafts sector:

### **Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) - \$710,000 per annum**

PICA is both a producing and presenting institution that runs a year-round program of changing exhibitions, seasons in contemporary dance, theatre and performance and a range of interdisciplinary projects. Based in the Perth Cultural Centre, it boasts one of the largest exhibition spaces in Australia and has become known for the leading role it plays in the presentation of significant new work.

### **Art on the Move - \$466,608 per annum**

Art on the Move is the peak visual art touring organisation for WA. It provides touring support to deliver contemporary art to the regions and across Australia.

### **Artsource - \$430,766 per annum**

Artsource is a membership organisation for visual artists in WA. Its purpose is to engage with and support WA visual artists with practical, affordable and relevant services, including studios, residencies, consulting, Aboriginal and regional development, publications, professional development and advocacy.

### **FORM - \$308,599 per annum**

FORM is an independent, non-profit cultural organisation that develops and advocates for excellence in creativity and artistic practice in Western Australia. Activities include significant visual arts programs across the State, artist development and exhibitions; place-making and strategy, social and multicultural engagement, cultural infrastructure development, Aboriginal cultural maintenance, research and advocacy.

### **Spaced: International Art Space - \$220,000 per annum**

Spaced is a non-profit organisation that runs an international program of visual arts/new media projects that are based on an in-depth engagement with specific local, social and environmental situations. Activities comprise artist residencies, context-specific projects, solo exhibitions, touring group exhibitions, publications, educational and mentoring programs.

### **Perth Centre for Photography (PCP) - \$109,002 per annum**

PCP is Perth's only dedicated photomedia gallery and provides an environment that promotes the understanding and appreciation of contemporary photographic practices through exhibitions, education, partnerships and membership.

### **Fremantle Arts Centre - \$719,189 per annum**

Fremantle Arts Centre is a leading arts organisation and multipurpose venue that features a contemporary art gallery, retail space showing WA handmade products, comprehensive art courses tailored to children and adults, and an extensive curated exhibition program.

## Australia Council funding to visual artists

The Australia Council figures below are for all visual arts grants for the period 2010-15. The table illustrates how little of the national distribution finds its way to Western Australia, despite Western Australia representing 11 per cent of Australia's population. A fairer distribution of federal funding could alleviate some of the pressures felt in the Western Australian visual arts sector. Analysis of whether this is a systemic issue or a reflection of few applications based on years of relative lack of success, is required.

**Table 5: Australia Council funding to individual visual arts 2010-2015**

Australia Council	Nationally	WA	WA %
2010-2011	\$2,967,513	\$100,000	3.4%
2011-2012	\$2,859,837	\$128,000	4.5%
2012-2013	\$2,778,300	\$50,000	1.8%
2013-2014	\$ 3,773,517	\$100,000	2.6%
2014-2015	\$3,225,257	\$166,378	5.2%

Includes: Arts Projects, Development Grants, Fellowships, Curators, New Work Early/Mid/Established, Awards.

Excludes: International, Residencies, Organisations, Galleries/ARI's.

Source: Australia Council Grants List <https://online.australiacouncil.gov.au/ords/GrantsList>

What is certain is that pressures felt in the WA sector and the knock on impact in the market, could be mitigated in some way by a strategic effort by the Australia Council to examine why such a small distribution to Western Australia exists. Given the amount of funding provided by the State and support of the State's key organisations, quality of application is unlikely to be the issue.

### Australia Council Four Year Funding 2017-2020

The Australia Council Four Year Funding program was originally intended to be a six-year cycle and was introduced as part of an overhaul of the existing Australia Council programs designed to streamline and simplify previous funding programs.

Following the then Minister for the Arts, Senator the Hon George Brandis' removal of \$104.8 million over four years from the Australia Council's budget, the six year funding program was revised to offer four year funding for the period 2017-2020, with a total funding allocation of \$22 million.

The Australia Council received 262 applications to the Four Year Program with 124 (47 per cent) awarded total funding of \$27,214,529.

Of these, 24 Western Australian organisations submitted applications requesting total funding of \$4,444,000; 11 were successful and received nine per cent of the total

funding pool, equating to funding of \$2,554,849 allocated to the State. This is less than the State’s population base of 11 per cent.

There were no visual arts organisations successful in the program. PICA applied, and were successful to the multi-arts panel who will receive a \$300,000 per annum over the 2017-20 period. FORM was unsuccessful to the four-year funding, but do receive VACS support.

## Visual Arts & Crafts Strategy

The Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy (VACS) was developed as a joint initiative of all Australian governments in response to the 2002 Report of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry (the Myer Report), which recommended increased government funding to ensure the sector’s long-term sustainability and vitality.

The first stage of the VACS was announced in 2003 with an initial funding package of \$39 million over four years (December 2003 to June 2007), of which the Federal Government committed half of the funding. Together, the states and territories matched the Federal Government contribution on the basis of a funding formula as follows:

**Table 4: Funding formula for the visual arts and craft strategy**

Jurisdiction	Contribution (per cent)
ACT	1.78
NSW	32.17
NT	2.70
QLD	18.88
SA	8.51
TAS	3.08
VIC	23.19
WA	9.69
Total	100.00

In December 2011, the Federal Government announced the renewal of VACS from 2011-15 to deliver \$55.3 million over four years to the contemporary visual arts and craft sector. The Federal Government provided \$27.7 million to the initiative, with matched funding from state and territory governments.

The original aim of the VACS, was to build a strong, sustainable and dynamic contemporary visual arts sector, characterised by a stable base of organisations, which in turn would support the production and appreciation of works of excellence.

The focus areas for VACS were:

- **support for infrastructure** - directed towards support for art and craft organisations;
- **expanding the market** - directed toward support for touring exhibitions, major events and publications;
- **support for individuals** - primarily delivered via competitive grants processes through the Australia Council and state and territory arts agencies, although some jurisdictions directed this funding in whole or in part to artists-run initiatives; and
- **support for Indigenous art and craft** - delivered via funding to Indigenous visual arts industry service organisations.

With objectives of:

- **Objective 1:** A network of stronger and more responsive arts and craft organisations
- **Objective 2:** An increase in the number of high-quality Australian contemporary visual arts and craft exhibitions and catalogues
- **Objective 3:** New opportunities to tour major contemporary visual arts and craft exhibitions
- **Objective 4:** Increased grant funding for individual artists and craft Practitioners
- **Objective 5:** Increased professional support for Indigenous artists
- **Objective 6:** Increased support for arts and craft publications, to provide opportunities for discussion about individual artists and encourage debate about issues for the sector
- **Objective 7:** Improved market exposure and sales opportunities for artists and craft practitioners
- **Objective 8:** Greater opportunities for public engagement with visual arts and craft

An evaluation of the VACS from 2004-2008 demonstrated some successes. For example, the average number of exhibitions and events by VACS-funded organisations increased from 634 (2001-2003) to 777 a year (2007–2008) and self-reported audience numbers increased by 96 per cent between 2001 and 2008.

However, the Australia Council publication *Talking Points: a snapshot of contemporary visual arts 2012-2013*<sup>89</sup> cited a more modest increase in audience numbers of 25 per cent since 2002, though how this was determined is not known.

There was a marginal increase in the average annual number of contemporary visual arts, craft and design touring exhibitions by VACS-funded organisations from 126 in 2001-03 to 138 in 2007-08. Sales rose from an average of \$3.3 million a year (2001-03) to \$3.8 million (2007-08). However, when adjusted for inflation to 2009 dollars, sales remained at an average \$3.9 million a year over the period.<sup>90</sup>

As there has been no published data since 2008, it is not clear whether the continued funding has been successful or not in stimulating the visual arts market and the relative impact of this on artists and distributors.

In late 2015 the Australia Council announced that FORM and PICA are the two WA organisations to be funded by VACS for a four-year funding agreement.

## Australian Government funding

In May 2015 the Australian Government announced that it would redirect \$104.7 million over four years from the Australia Council budget to a new National Program for Excellence in the Arts (NPEA).

The funding guidelines were released for public feedback. A significant number of responses were received and in June 2015 an announcement was made of a Senate Enquiry into the impact of the budget decisions on the arts sector and the appropriateness of the NPEA. More than 2,000 submissions from across Australia were made to the enquiry.

In November 2015 the new Minister for the Arts, Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield announced that the NPEA will be replaced by Catalyst – Australian Arts and Culture Fund (Catalyst) which would distribute \$12 million annually, as opposed to the NPEA's planned \$20 million and the difference (\$8 million) would be re-allocated to the Australia Council.

Catalyst is administered by the Ministry for the Arts within the Department of Communication and the Arts (DofCA). Catalyst supports creative partnerships that increase participation in cultural life, access to high quality arts experiences in regional communities and international activities that achieve cultural diplomacy objectives.

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<sup>89</sup> Talking Points: A Snapshot of Contemporary Visual Arts 2013-14  
[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/au2000\\_talkingpoints\\_final\\_13\\_-\\_543256d38f5f6.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/au2000_talkingpoints_final_13_-_543256d38f5f6.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Australia Council, Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, Evaluation Report 2010 (not currently available)

The first list of successful recipients has been announced. In total, Catalyst has allocated \$23,317,301 in funding to 125 projects nationally.

The program has funded ten Western Australian projects to a value of \$1,253,570. This represents 5.38 per cent of the total funding provided across all jurisdictions, which is well below WA's per-capita share of population of 11 per cent. Of these ten, only two organisations, FORM and IASKA operate in the visual arts sector, have been successful.

This funding was allocated to six organisations in the Innovation and Participation category and four in the International and Cultural Diplomacy program. There were no WA organisations funded in the Partnerships and Collaborations program.

### Western Australian Recipients of Catalyst funding May 2016

#### Innovation and Participation category

Recipient	Project title	Brief project description	Funding approved
Form Building A State Of Creativity Inc	The Goods Shed, international residency program	To support the establishment of The Goods Shed (TGS), a new West Australian studio development and creative hub which will support visiting artists, residencies, skills-sharing and workshops and provide professional development opportunities for Western Australian artists.	\$400,000
International Art Space Pty Ltd	spaced 3: north by southeast	To support an art-mediated cultural exchange between Australian and Nordic artists and regional communities to create new works which will be presented as a series of solo exhibitions in the host community and subsequently as part of a larger group exhibition presented in Perth and the Nordic region.	\$100,000

## 5. Commercial Galleries

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### Key points

- Commercial galleries are a vital part of the visual arts ecology stimulating local markets, preparing international ones and introducing new buyers to the online sales environment
- Since 2012, at least ten commercial art galleries in Perth have closed
- Reasons for closure are mix of personal decision and plateaued market
- All commercial galleries interviewed identified high infrastructure costs as the major impediment to growth
- Sentiment amongst remaining galleries is cautiously positive

Since 2012, at least ten commercial art galleries in the Perth metropolitan area have closed. These galleries included both long-established businesses and newer ventures that represented both established and emerging Western Australian artists. Among these galleries were some of the State's most significant exhibitors of contemporary art.

This trend of commercial gallery closures is reflected nationwide. Since 2008, at least eight Sydney commercial galleries have closed, while others have chosen to merge operations with former rivals. Approximately a dozen Melbourne galleries have also either closed or merged within the past two years.

These closures have had short-term repercussions for artists and art audiences including:

- fewer exhibition opportunities for artists
- fewer artists able to secure gallery representation, leading to decreased penetration of interstate and international markets
- decline in artists' incomes

For art audiences, there are fewer opportunities to attend exhibitions and purchase art. As has also been demonstrated in the Visual Arts Market chapter, these closures also risk the online market which is reliant upon the fixed gallery sector to introduce buyers into the online environment.

Also outlined in that chapter were investment approaches that have attempted to reactivate the buyers' market such as the two art loan schemes, COLLECT in Tasmania and Art Money in New South Wales available nationally. Both schemes are providing a new incentive for the purchase of artworks. Art Money has provided some initial results showing that 18 per cent of loans in their first six months came from first time art buyers.

As part of the development of this discussion paper, DCA interviewed a number of current commercial gallery proprietors, as well as those who were no longer operating.

Overall the general sentiment is that the art market in Western Australia is down and has plateaued. Over the past five years, most sales have been to corporate collections which is a shift from previous cycles and exposes the galleries to some risks as the economy in Western Australia tightens.

There is a noticeable decrease in visitation to the galleries. One gallery noted that the buying audience in Western Australia is very parochial. Buyer attitudes have changed with more sales generating from events such as the Open House model or festivals.

As a response to the decline in visitation, galleries are also exhibiting in alternative spaces beyond the traditional gallery walls to provide more opportunities for artwork sales.

Gallery owners stated that there has been a noticeable decrease in sales to the long-standing established networks of private collectors. These collectors essentially have no more space available in their homes to exhibit their collections and are therefore not purchasing any more, emphasising the need to stimulate a new generation of collectors.

Collectors, in the opinion of the gallery owners, remain the best advertisement for other buyers interested in developing a collection. Young people are not buying art from their galleries. This could be because owning and collecting art has perhaps lost its status. Or it could be reflective of different buying patterns through either online or direct from artists given the relatively small size of Perth.

Each of the gallery owners interviewed agreed that the principal impediment to the operation of a commercial gallery space is the operating expenses of fixed infrastructure - rent and outgoings. Some commercial galleries are located in buildings they own and therefore must weigh up the ongoing costs of the business against future business opportunities. The increase in land tax from 7 per cent to 11 per cent over the past 12 months has been a significant impost on businesses.

Of those galleries that have closed, some have done so for personal reasons, making generalised assumptions on the reasons for the closures difficult.

There is no specific business model for galleries, with each gallery operating a different model to suit their needs. All seem to be developing their services as opportunities arise, such as collaborating with alternative retail spaces to access a more diverse buyers market. Gallery proprietors have mostly maintained their agent relationship with their artists, or continue to hold project based exhibitions in alternative venues. One gallery is also looking at changing the way they work with the artists, with the artists determining when they are ready to exhibit rather than be locked into a calendar program.

It is assumed that the more relaxed buying environment such as the Open House model is generating more sales than the traditional gallery model. Galleries realise that the stockroom is becoming more important for sales than the exhibition on show. All galleries offer extra services to supplement the business, such as touring shows, work in public settings and working with public and corporate collections. Those Perth galleries still operating have established interstate relationships.

The perception of the gallery owners is that online sales environment is not generating as many sales as believed, which contradicts the data trends in the available research. The galleries feel that the time and effort in maintaining an online presence does not equate to the meagre sales especially in the high end market, again a trend not evident in other areas. It may be the case that fixed galleries may introduce buyers to the online market but not necessarily to the online offer of the galleries they visit.

Not all galleries find art fairs a useful exercise, as the costs involved (renting a booth, travel and freight costs) coupled with low sales can lead to significant financial loss. While DCA has provided financial support to galleries to attend art fairs, it is not considered enough. The galleries recognise though that art fairs are valuable for the artists' and gallery profile. Even without many sales, there are key relationships built with interstate and international curators and galleries at the art fairs. As noted in the previous chapter, the cancellation of the 2016 Melbourne Art Fair will be double edged, with galleries saving on losses, but losing out on market and network opportunities.

## Government interventions

To add to uncertainty in the market, some government policy decisions in recent years have depressed the market further in the opinion of the galleries interviewed.

The decrease in artwork sales has been affected by the changes to the Self-Managed Super Funds (SMSF). From 1 July 2011 artwork, coins, antiques or other collectibles purchased for SMSF's must be stored in a suitable venue which is not the private home or business of the owner. The asset must also be adequately insured and independently valued. The rules apply to all new SMSF investments purchased on or after 1 July 2011. Assets' held prior to this date have until 30 June 2016 to comply with the new rules

The rules regarding SMSF collectibles were amended following the recommendations released by the Cooper Review in May 2010. The original recommendation was to cease collectibles being eligible as SMSF investments. Fortunately a concerted effort from the visual arts sector was able to convince the federal government to only make changes to the storage and valuation conditions of the assets.

Even though there has been much written about the superannuation changes in the media, the commercial galleries report that the rules are now more explicit but have not changed significantly from the original proposal. There is anticipation that there will be a wave of second hand sales in July 2016 when the Self-Managed Super

Funds changes are implemented. The galleries say there was a lot of bad advice and information distributed about the changes that produced panic selling by collectors.

Data from the Super Guide<sup>91</sup> suggest that these changes have already contributed to a decline in investment in art works, leading to the closure of commercial galleries and waning income for artists. There are further concerns that when the final changes are implemented in 2016, investors will seek to divest their portfolios of previously acquired artworks which could potentially overwhelm the market.

According to some gallery owners, another government policy intervention – the Resale Royalty Scheme introduced in 2010 has been damaging to the sector. Under the scheme, artists receive five per cent of the sale price when eligible artworks are resold commercially for \$1,000 or more. Between 10 June 2010 and 15 May 2013, there were 6,801 eligible resales which generated over \$1.5 million in royalties for 610 artists nationally.

An unintended consequence of the Resale Royalty Scheme, noted by some commercial galleries, was that their previous practice of buying outright from Aboriginal arts centres to on-sell had to stop as the resale element was effectively applied twice. In the galleries' view, the resale system was hastily implemented and the artists they represent do not feel that the system has benefited them in any way.

There has been agreement that the Indigenous Art Code<sup>92</sup>, introduced as a result of the 2007 Senate Inquiry into the Australia's Indigenous visual arts industry, did reduce the unethical practices of some unscrupulous buyers and offered another dimension to consumer motivation to purchase from galleries.

## Market initiatives

The commercial galleries could see the benefits of having an art loan scheme like the one operating in Tasmania. They are all aware of the new Art Money scheme available nationally, but are apprehensive of the fees that are imposed on the gallery to be a part of the system. All of the galleries DCA spoke with confirmed that they already have layby systems available to buyers but could see the benefits of a state-run scheme that would have an overarching promotional campaign to activate more sales.

Commercial galleries view Art-Run-Initiatives (ARI) that are run by artists and act in a similar function to galleries, as important stimulators within the arts market ecology. These spaces are a valuable stepping stone for emerging artists to launch their careers and potentially become represented by commercial galleries and also provide the experimental space needed for artists to develop new works.

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<sup>91</sup> The Super Guide <http://www.superguide.com.au>

<sup>92</sup> Indigenous Art Code <http://www.indigenousartcode.org/>

Positive support was indicated for an arts hub where a number of art galleries and ARIs may be located in close geographic proximity to encourage visitation and audience engagement. Some galleries have actively sought vacant buildings located in the metropolitan area for this purpose.

Also fuelling some of the positivity around the current market is that the galleries are clear that the current level of creative production in Perth is of a high quality (however there is a need for more exhibition opportunities for artists) and AGWA through its acquisition policy and the *WA Focus* exhibition program is raising the profile and status of the local market.

In summary, the galleries are divided about the investments provided by government to art galleries and ARIs. Not all galleries agree that commercial or ARI spaces should receive government support, arguing that they should be self-supporting to allow all galleries an equal chance to succeed. There is a view that government support of programming for not-for-profit venues is a disincentive for commercial galleries.

The galleries believed that government has a role to play in promoting the sector through initiatives like the Free Market Visit program to bring critics, curators and journalists to Western Australia.

## 6. Art Museums and Collections

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### Key points

- Western Australia is home to some of the most important public, community and private collections of visual art in the country, particularly Aboriginal art
- The Art Gallery of WA (AGWA) has as its key strength its pre-eminent holdings of Western Australian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal art
- Warburton Arts holds the largest collection of Aboriginal art in Australia that is held by Aboriginal people themselves
- The National Museum of Australia acquired all 140 works produced through FORM's *Ngurra Kuju Walyja — One Country One People — the Canning Stock Route Project*, the most visited exhibition in the history of the Museum
- The State universities present exhibitions featuring the work of artists based in Western Australia and their collections hold some of the most significant collections of work by many Western Australian artists
- Public access across the State and interstate/international touring exhibitions to the vast collections in the public and private sector is limited and could be enhanced with a commitment to improving the visual arts touring infrastructure of the State
- A new public-private approach to shared infrastructure for public and private collections could be of enormous value to providing access for the community

Western Australia is home to an incredibly diverse and rich series of collections that together represent an important and significant snapshot of our history and contemporary life that is unique to the Western Australian identity.

Improving access to these collections should be a priority. Curatorial leadership, public/private partnerships, improved physical gallery infrastructure and travelling exhibition programs that showcase these great state assets, will serve to stimulate interest in Western Australia, arrest the declining arts market and enhance the civic pride in the State.

## Art Gallery of WA

The Art Gallery of WA (AGWA) Annual Report 2014-15<sup>93</sup> (Appendix A) shows a new vision for the State's leading gallery institution. The *Essence of AGWA* is a new vision for the gallery with the purpose ... "to become passionate about culture and the arts, inspire your own creativity, expand how you see the world, build a collection that you love and care for"...

AGWA holds the State Art Collection which currently includes more than 17,000 works in all media including painting, sculpture, design, craft, multi-media, installation and works on paper, including photographs, prints, drawings and watercolours. It has an ongoing program of collection displays,<sup>94</sup> along with public programs and online resources, including a view to expand the number of collection works available online.

The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation (the Foundation), raises acquisition funds to develop the collection and in 2011 the \$25 million TomorrowFund was established for the acquisition of contemporary Western Australian, Australian and international art.

The TomorrowFund began with a \$10 million commitment from the State Government to establish an endowment fund for the purchase of contemporary works of art. The Government's challenge to the corporate and private sector was to match their \$10 million pledge dollar-for-dollar, at which point they would provide an additional \$5 million. This goal was reached in 2011, and the \$25 million TomorrowFund was established. So far, income generated by the TomorrowFund has added over 200 contemporary works, across all media, to the collection.

In 2014-15 the Gallery purchased 116 works of art:

- 52 per cent (38 artists) works by Western Australian artists
- 34 per cent (25 artists) works by Australian artists
- 14 per cent (10 artists) works by International artists

A total of 289,413 people visited the Gallery during the year, compared with 354,216 the previous year, a decrease which can be attributed to the reduced exhibition program in comparison with the previous year.

Reimagining the gallery experience is the goal of AGWA's 2016 program launch. There are three new programs to be presented, *Reason for Being – C03* is a partnership between AGWA and contemporary dance company C03 - gallery

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<sup>93</sup> Art Gallery of WA Annual Report 2014-15 [http://www.artgallery.wa.gov.au/publications/documents/2014-15AGWAAAnnualReportinteractive\\_000.pdf](http://www.artgallery.wa.gov.au/publications/documents/2014-15AGWAAAnnualReportinteractive_000.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> Art Gallery of WA <http://www.artgallery.wa.gov.au/exhibitions/state-art-collection.asp>

visitors will experience a creative response to the collection and gallery architecture through dance and performance.

AGWA through a partnership with the Gallery's principal partner Wesfarmers, have opened two new micro galleries - 'Sky' and 'Garden' - that will show large-scale works from the Wesfarmers collection not normally on view to the public. In mid-2016, a new space called The Imagination Room will open for education, families, artist experiences and digital adventures.

AGWA is also part way through a significant six-year partnership with the Rio Tinto Community Fund on the *Desert River Sea* project focused on art of the Kimberley. The State Collection has representations of Kimberley Aboriginal artists from each of the four *Desert River Sea* project areas and the project represents a means of accessing these important works.

Though the existing strengths of the AGWA collection are many and diverse; and while the comprehensiveness of this list is commendable, a sense of prioritisation in acquisition targets is difficult to discern from its public documents. Through savvy acquisitions, the Gallery's curators have the opportunity to accentuate specific aspects of the existing collection, helping to shape a valuable, unique identity and make this fully accessible in live and digital forms.

Further, AGWA has an important opportunity to build on its work with the private collections sector and survey the breadth and the depth of these uniquely Western Australian collections and further co-develop policies, exhibition and infrastructure responses to ensure that these are as publicly accessible as possible.

The acquisition of work by living, contemporary Western Australian practitioners, with a particular focus on Aboriginal artists, could be the Gallery's primary focus. Such acquisitions would represent an investment in the future of Western Australian art, and could help to develop the national and international reputation of artists. It would also build confidence in local product, in turn stimulating the commercial art market.

Contemporary Western Australian art is arguably of greater relevance, both to Western Australian audiences as well as visitors to the State. Visiting audiences are often keen to view work with a distinctly Western Australian flavour and experience a deeper connection with Aboriginal culture. The excellent WA Focus exhibition program has demonstrated the value of engaging with artistic practices within the State, and could be effectively expanded to include a regular commissioning aspect. New contemporary Western Australian works could also be toured to AGWA's regional satellites, Bunbury and Geraldton, effectively broadening the reach and reputation of these artists across Western Australia.

Meaningful investment in Western Australian based practices will require a certain degree of 'boldness', as alluded to in the *Essence of AGWA*<sup>95</sup>. Rather than follow already successful interstate and international artists, the Gallery will be establishing reputations and championing local practitioners. The National Gallery of Victoria's *Melbourne Now* project is an interesting precedent in terms of supporting and celebrating a city's artists.

## Private, Corporate and Community Collections

In addition to the extensive State Art Collection, Western Australia is home to many nationally significant private, corporate and university collections:

- The Warburton Arts Project<sup>96</sup> is the largest collection of Aboriginal art in Australia held by Aboriginal people themselves and has toured internationally.
- The extensive and extremely significant Kerry Stokes collection is eclectic, featuring key strands including the early discovery and exploration of Australia and the French and Dutch voyages as well as works relating to the exploration of Antarctica, Indigenous art, contemporary and historical Australian art, French impressionists and modernists, rare books and his medieval art collection. Based in Perth and managed by seven staff, the collection is generous in its lending and acts almost like a public gallery in that regard.
- The Holmes à Court Collection,<sup>97</sup> started in the early 1960s and now consists of 4,000 registered art works. It is an important collection of Australian and Western Australian art, with a strong emphasis on Aboriginal works.
- FORM has undertaken a number of successful initiatives, including its *Ngurra Kuju Walyja - One Country One People - the Canning Stock Route Project*. It was exhibited at the National Museum of Australia, which acquired all 140 works produced, and became the most visited exhibition in the history of the Museum.
- The corporate sector in Western Australia also has significant holdings with collections by Wesfarmers and Bankwest.
- All major hospitals in Perth - Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, Princess Margaret Children's Hospital and St John of God Murdoch Hospital - have significant collections.
- Local governments across the State hold significant collections including the City of Fremantle which has 1,500 works.

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<sup>95</sup> The Essence of AGWA [http://www.artgallery.wa.gov.au/about\\_us/documents/AGWAManifesto.pdf](http://www.artgallery.wa.gov.au/about_us/documents/AGWAManifesto.pdf)

<sup>96</sup> Warburton Arts Project <http://www.warburtonarts.com/english/index.html>

<sup>97</sup> Holmes à Court Collection [http://www.holmesacourtgallery.com.au/page/janet\\_holmes\\_court\\_collection.html](http://www.holmesacourtgallery.com.au/page/janet_holmes_court_collection.html)

- The Department of Culture and the Arts established an art collection in 1998 to showcase the diversity of Western Australian art. The DCA collection holds 146 artworks that are mostly located at the Department but also displayed in the Minister for Culture and the Arts office and other state venues.
- Within State Government, there are multiple agencies with significant collections which would benefit from a process of itemisation and an agreed acquisition policy and process to make these public.

## University-based collections

The universities of Western Australia have been major contributors to the vitality and sustainability of the visual arts in this State, investing each year in the purchase of artworks. As a group, the State's universities hold the most significant collections of work by many artists born in Western Australia or those who have lived here during their career.

### University of WA (UWA)

- The University of Western Australia Art Collection is committed to purchasing contemporary art and has a collection of 3,500 works, mostly by largely Western Australian artists.
- The Cruthers Collection of Women's Art is Australia's largest collection of women's art, featuring 600 works many by Western Australian artists.
- The Berndt Museum has 11,500 artworks and 35,000 photographs of work by Aboriginal artists from the western half of the continent. This collection is supported by photographs and sound recordings, as well as art and artefacts from Melanesia, Asia and South-East Asia.

### Curtin University

- The Curtin University Art Collection was established in 1968 and builds a collection of works by artists, designers and craft practitioners in Australia with an emphasis on Western Australian artists.
- The Herbert Mayer Collection of Carrolup Artwork is a unique collection of 122 artworks created by Aboriginal children of the Stolen Generations in the late 1940's at the Carrolup Native Settlement in Western Australia's Great Southern region.

### Edith Cowan University

- The Edith Cowan University Art Collection exhibits Australian and Western Australian artists through its three campuses and uses the collection as a teaching resource, for touring exhibitions and commissioning works.

### Murdoch University

- The Murdoch University Art Collection reflects the vitality and diversity of quality Western Australian and Australian visual arts practice. The collection's

mission is to 'enrich the teaching and learning experience of students and staff through integrating art into University life and to develop and maintain an art collection of National significance.'

### University of Notre Dame

- The University of Notre Dame has an extensive collection of work by Aboriginal artists with an emphasis on works from the Kimberley.

By chronicling the work of artists who have trained within the State's university system, the collections are also documenting the history of arts education in Western Australia.

## University Art Museums

The Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery (LWAG) at UWA and the John Curtin Gallery (JCG) at Curtin University are two of Australia's leading university art museums.

The LWAG and the JCG present an ongoing annual program of exhibitions, many of which feature the work of artists based in Western Australia or who have strong connections with Western Australia.

There is also the Spectrum Project Space at Edith Cowan University with a recent announcement that it has committed \$6M to build a new art gallery and art studios.

The university-based galleries in Western Australia have presented important survey exhibitions that have presented the work of locally based artists since the first university gallery was opened in the 1980s. The LWAG was the first purpose-built university art gallery in the country opening in 1990 with JCG being purpose-built and opened in 1998.

## Grey-Smith Institute for Creative Arts

The Grey-Smith Institute for Creative Arts (GSICA) has been established by post-secondary art institutions in Western Australia as a strategic partnership to strengthen and enhance the quality of professional education in the creative arts.

The founding institutions - UWA, Curtin University and Central TAFE and other providers of post-secondary creative arts education - have collaborated and will provide seed funding to progress the initiative. GSICA will provide project funding, artist-in-residencies, mentorships, scholarships and business development services. The GSICA is in the process of appointing a board of directors who will initiate the application to become a company.

In interviews with commercial galleries, it was reported that there has been a decrease in the number of active private and corporate collections in Perth in recent years. This perceived decline has been exacerbated with a decline in the acquisitions of municipal and State agency acquisitions as government expenditure tightens. The Commonwealth art leasing program, Artbank, had a Perth based

consultant up until the position ceased in 2014. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of WA art works being purchased for the Artbank collection.

The extent to which this lull may turn into a crisis is not known; however, what is clear is that this State is home to an incredibly diverse and rich series of collections that together represent a snapshot of our history and contemporary life that is unique to the Western Australian identity.

Improving access to this Western Australian asset becomes an important policy issue for the community. Curatorial leadership, public/private partnerships, improved physical gallery infrastructure and travelling exhibition programs that showcase these great state assets, will serve to stimulate interest in Western Australia, arrest the declining arts market and enhance the civic pride in the State.

The extent of the importance of these public and private collections cannot be overstated and are one of Western Australia's greatest hidden cultural assets. The State's visual arts collections are arguably ill served by current capital city infrastructure and economic value to the community.

# 7. Infrastructure

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## Key Points

- The vitality of the visual arts sector is dependent on artists and organisations having long-term access to robust cultural infrastructure
- It is difficult for visual artists to secure suitable spaces for their arts practice without financial assistance
- There is a backlog of urgent capital requirements for many Aboriginal art centres, the resolution of which will help secure their sustainability
- There is a lack of physical gallery infrastructure throughout the State to store and exhibit State Collections or to receive significant touring visual arts exhibitions
- Proposed future developments at the Sunset Heritage precinct, Perth Cultural Centre, Midland Railway Workshops and East Perth Power Station may offer opportunities for major public-private infrastructure partnerships

The vitality of the visual arts sector is dependent on artists and organisations having long-term access to robust cultural infrastructure - people, technology and buildings. It is recognised that these elements are all essential for arts production, professional development and sector growth.

Physical infrastructure (including technology) is particularly important for the visual arts sector as it provides practical spaces for artists to network with peers, develop concepts, make, build their business and sell works. Buildings and public spaces also provide a recognisable place for the public to engage with the visual arts and on occasions purchase works that will also assist in providing income for artists and further sustaining the sector's growth.

Visual artists need spaces for:

- Cultural production (studios and workshops)
- Events and exhibitions (galleries and public spaces)
- Teaching and training (workshops)
- Sales (online shops, retail and galleries)
- Administration (office)
- Storage
- Residences for them and their families

Buildings that can accommodate some or all of these kinds of uses are rare and usually require significant funding to repurpose and adapt to meet government legislation, the Building Code of Australia, *Disabilities Services Act 1993*, and other relevant Australian standards.

## State Government support for Visual Arts Infrastructure

DCA's Cultural Infrastructure Directions policy assists the State Government to coordinate and make decisions on what is essential to effectively deliver arts and culture in Western Australia.<sup>98</sup>

DCA provides infrastructure for the visual arts sector through the management and provision of three State-owned properties - Newcastle Street, Old Customs House and King Street Arts Centre. These properties are provided to arts organisations through peppercorn leases. The organisations in turn manage the subsidised studios, workshop areas and gallery spaces for use by individual artists and groups.

DCA also provides core organisational funding to Fremantle Arts Centre, PICA and the Perth Centre for Photography, which operate from government and privately owned properties through negotiated nominal rents. These organisations also provide offices, workshop, and exhibition spaces within their venues to visual artists.

Although DCA has provided buildings to organisations and artists for a number of years, and it is an efficient model for the State Government, there are a number of challenges, including difficulties in negotiating the ongoing funding and maintenance responsibilities of the buildings, securing the right kind of fit-for-purpose assets and managing State assets in the most effective way.

More stable accommodation for organisations in buildings not in full control of the Minister for Culture and the Arts is an important policy goal for the sector. Newcastle Street and the PICA building are in the management control of other State agencies and were provided to DCA in the absence of a strategic framework. They are heritage properties that have additional requirements for their maintenance and use. Upgrades that have been identified to make the buildings more suitable for their current use will not progress until investment and long-term tenure is determined. This uncertainty increases risks associated with leasing the facilities and use by the organisations that need to plan their business around access to affordable spaces.

Being in the Perth Cultural Centre, AGWA and PICA have an opportunity to optimise their buildings and the external spaces for the benefit of the sector and the community. However, it is difficult to respond to challenges within this space - including the need for a more efficient energy solution, underutilised spaces used for

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<sup>98</sup> DCA Culture Infrastructure Directions  
<http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Developing%20Arts%20and%20Culture/Cultural%20Infrastructure/Cultural%20Infrastructure%20Directions.pdf>

storage and creating a common curatorial approach using visual arts to activate the Cultural Centre - when the major cultural assets and titles are not vested in the Minister for Culture and the Arts.

## Studio Practice in WA

As noted in previous chapters, it is difficult for visual artists to sustain themselves financially.

Having a studio/place to work is a fundamental and practical necessity for a visual artist. The need for studio space continues throughout the career of the artist and the entire visual arts ecology rests on this central premise that artists need space to develop their work and practice. A progressive studio development policy can also assist in activating places, repurposing heritage buildings at relatively low cost and, in certain circumstances, providing a range of direct retail and exhibition opportunities without the need for expensive fixed infrastructure.

Despite considerable demand for studio accommodation, the City of Perth estimates that 'approximately 200 studios in and close to Perth have ceased to exist over the last 20 years and that the majority of these spaces have not been replaced.'<sup>99</sup>

While over this time artists have built studios within their homes due to issue of tenure security and affordability, this is not always possible and should not be relied upon as a solution.

The number of agencies and private entities providing studios for artists has grown in recent years. Artsource and FORM provide affordable studios to artists. Artsource provides long-term affordable studios to artists as a core operation, and currently manages seven buildings in Perth which accommodate 80 artist studios. Since 1986, it has provided tenure of up to five years to over 200 professional artists and arts organisations. Its headquarters, which is also home to the majority of its studios, is located within the Old Customs House building in Fremantle.

FORM has been proactive in developing practice studios for Aboriginal artists in South Hedland and more recently at the Goods Shed in Claremont following a number of years of providing extensive opportunities for a range of creatives at the Midland Railway workshops.

There are a number of groups who are providing support to artists through new place making initiatives that mix studio provision with accessing materials, workspaces and retail opportunities encouraged by local demand and progressive local authorities. Some examples of these include:

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<sup>99</sup> Artsource Studio Report <http://www.artsource.net.au/Member-Services/Studios/Artists%E2%80%99-Studio-Report>

- PS Art Space in Fremantle is a privately owned and restored heritage listed building housing a contemporary gallery and the largest independent artist studios in the State. The organisation operates the venue without government funding and supports its operations through the lease of 36 studio spaces, a cafe and venue hire.
- MANY 6160 and Success Basement Galleries occupy more than 3000 square metres in the old Myer building in Fremantle. Success is the largest artist-run space in the country and provides both exhibition and studio spaces.
- Paper Mountain provides 25 studios, well suited to designers and jewellery makers, along with an exhibition space in William Street, Perth.
- Vancouver Art Centre in Albany provides three studio spaces for short-term artists-in-residence projects.
- Maker + Co in the centre of Bunbury 'is a creative space dedicated to merging retail and studio space into one working environment'.

While these new opportunities continue to develop, there still are issues that are barriers to this potential growth.

A study undertaken by Hassell and Pracsys in 2010 for the City of Perth<sup>100</sup> examined the financial and practical feasibility of activating the upper floors in existing buildings within the City of Perth. The research identified issues affecting the use of upper floors, such as the economy and market fluctuations, restrictions with existing legislation and policy, building regulations, rates and outgoings for owners and tenants, heritage or conservation requirements and difficulties for building use changes. All these elements pose additional challenges and costs for artists and organisations to secure and use available spaces.

The latest Office Market Report released by the Property Council of Australia in August 2015, stated that, "the office vacancy rate for the Perth CBD was 16.6 per cent in July 2015, up from 14.8 per cent in January 2015". In comparison, the average capital city vacancy rate at this time across Australia was 10.7 per cent. The report also found that the vacancy rates varied "according to building quality, from 9.5 per cent for premium-grade to 21.5 per cent for B-grade buildings".<sup>101</sup> Jo Lenzo from the Property Council of Australia stated that, "in this period the pressure will build on owners and operators of older buildings in Perth to consider investment in refurbishment to retain and attract new tenants, or possibly consider alternative uses for the buildings..."

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<sup>100</sup> Forgotten Spaces - Upper Floor Activation in Perth, Report for the City of Perth, August 2010

<http://www.perth.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Forgotten%20Spaces%20-%20Upper%20Floor%20Activation%20in%20Perth.pdf>

<sup>101</sup> Property Council of Australia, Office Market Report

[http://www.propertycouncil.com.au/Web/EventsServices/ResearchData/Office\\_Market\\_Report/Web/Events\\_Services/Research\\_Services/Office\\_market\\_report.aspx](http://www.propertycouncil.com.au/Web/EventsServices/ResearchData/Office_Market_Report/Web/Events_Services/Research_Services/Office_market_report.aspx)

A review of the barriers to development of potential visual arts spaces as part of a broad State Planning Policy for the arts may be timely. In many respects, it is difficult to create or adapt spaces for the visual arts, even when a project has significant support.

In 2008, Artsource was granted a 10 year peppercorn lease to establish artist studios in the City of Perth owned Gasworks Building on Wellington Street, Perth. There was cross-government support for the project and DCA provided funding towards the planning stage. A report commissioned to understand what was required to update the aged warehouse identified that \$2.5 million was required to re-purpose the building. The lease agreement consequently fell through and no work was undertaken on the building, which remains empty.<sup>102</sup>

Given the current vacancy rate across Perth's CBD, and perhaps also in regional areas, there may well be a number of properties that have potential to be adapted for visual arts purposes. The details of these opportunities and associated costs are best examined at a local level, however the State has a role in ensuring that the regulatory environment does not prohibit development and supporting developments where there is a demonstrable need.

## Aboriginal Art Centres

As discussed earlier, the contribution of Aboriginal art to the visual arts ecology in the State is significant. The production of Aboriginal art in country and particularly in more remote areas brings its own challenges in establishing, developing and building new or improved physical infrastructure either for enhancing the cultural and commercial potential of the Centres or to sustain their vital function within their communities.

In 2010, DCA with the then Federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, and the WA Departments of Planning and Indigenous Affairs, undertook a statewide survey of the capital needs of Aboriginal art centres.

Twenty art centres responded with a range of fixed and portable infrastructure needs ranging from workshops space, accommodation facilities, climate control, exhibition areas, retail infrastructure, studios, storage facilities and communal work areas.

Over time, some of these issues have been addressed through a combination of accessing funding through Royalties for Regions, Regional Development

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<sup>102</sup> Property Council of Australia:  
[http://www.propertycouncil.com.au/Web/Content/News/WA/2015/Perth\\_Office\\_vacancy\\_rate\\_continues\\_climb.aspx?WebsiteKey=148a29fb-5ee5-48af-954b-a02c118dc5fd%20](http://www.propertycouncil.com.au/Web/Content/News/WA/2015/Perth_Office_vacancy_rate_continues_climb.aspx?WebsiteKey=148a29fb-5ee5-48af-954b-a02c118dc5fd%20)

Commissions, Lotterywest, private/corporate support and Commonwealth grants. Recent completed projects include:

- Extensions to Waringarri's facility including the gallery in Kununurra
- Rebuild of Warmun Arts Centre following a devastating flood
- New art centre for Yarliyil
- New facility in Newman for Martumili
- New facility for Spinifex Hill artists in South Hedland, developed with the support of FORM

The newly announced Future Focus program by DCA will also assist in addressing some smaller scale capital issues, however there are still major issues particularly related to accommodation, studios and exhibition/retail areas that require a coordinated approach from State and Federal government in the context of supporting the capital needs of Aboriginal art centres.

## Regional Visual Arts Infrastructure

Public, private and community galleries in regional WA deliver inspiring visual arts experiences to residents and visitors alike. They achieve this by providing programs that engage the community; displaying works from their own collections and from local artists and providing the infrastructure to host touring exhibitions which connect intrastate and national product.

"Australia is crisscrossed with a robust network of regional and public galleries. Regional galleries often provide well supported opportunities for artists as well as access to new audiences" ...regional centres are sometimes overlooked for their ability to extend the base for contemporary art and to enable artists significant developmental opportunities".<sup>103</sup>

This statement is pertinent to the Western Australian environment and regional galleries will be essential if the important collections of State are to be accessed equitably in regional areas. However, with the exception of Bunbury and Geraldton galleries, the current gallery infrastructure (including technical capacity) is not of a standard to house, secure and display works of significance or appropriate for national tours.

While Art on the Move effectively manages visual arts touring, its capacity to tour high-quality exhibitions is curtailed by a lack of suitable local infrastructure.

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<sup>103</sup> Australia Council. Talking Points – A snapshot of contemporary visual arts 2013-14  
[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/au2000\\_talkingpoints\\_final\\_13\\_-\\_543256d38f5f6.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/au2000_talkingpoints_final_13_-_543256d38f5f6.pdf)

The nationally significant work in the regions of Spaced, FORM and the Aboriginal art centres, for example, would provide ample content to sustain regional touring product if there were improved facilities.

There is then, a need to maintain the current touring circuits but also to develop new ones that connect to national touring circuits and offer the opportunity for curation of high quality exhibitions of the State's collections. In addition to improved infrastructure, there will also be a need to provide access to professional development.

The public and community galleries in regional Western Australia face a unique set of challenges:

- The vast geography and uneven demographics of the State
- Variable support for regional services from the State Government
- Financial limits of State and local governments to support existing services and infrastructure
- Lack of alignment of services and infrastructure with State and local government policy and planning
- Unlike New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, Western Australia lacks a regional or public gallery association to help identify opportunities that could progress the sector

The role of State Government in supporting public and community galleries varies across and within regions. There is the shared operation of the Geraldton Regional Gallery and a funding contribution to the Bunbury Regional Art Galleries, funding for Art on the Move to provide professional development and touring exhibitions of contemporary art across the state and Artsource to act as the peak membership body for artists in WA.

There is no dedicated State capital investment fund for cultural facilities, which has contributed to the limited number of purpose-built visual arts facilities in regional Western Australia. Most are repurposed and many are heritage buildings such as the Vancouver Arts Centre in Albany (once a regional hospital), the Cannery Arts Centre in Esperance (previously the Esperance Fish Cannery) and the Bunbury Regional Art Galleries (a former convent school). Such development has tended to respond to local circumstances and availability of property as opposed to a coordinated strategy linked to the provision of content.

Those public and community galleries that do exist in regional Western Australia operate under a variety of operational structures ranging from local government owned and operated, with some State Government funding, to not-for-profit organisations funded through a combination of State and local government and Aboriginal art centres that are community owned and funded primarily by the Commonwealth.

This relative lack of infrastructure for exhibitions is mirrored in the lack of studio and workshop facilities noted earlier. The 2014 *Artist's Studio Provision - A new vision for Western Australia* noted:

"Despite the obvious differences in relation to working in regional and remote areas, similar challenges to those mentioned by city artists were faced by artists working in country areas. The issues of affordability, location and necessity for a space that allows for dedication to art practice remained paramount. Over 38 per cent of artists surveyed worked on their kitchen table, veranda or a similar space at home. Regional challenges included accessibility to suitably large spaces; a lack of studio complexes to bring artists together; and limited opportunities to exhibit work in appropriate spaces"<sup>104</sup>

The issue is becoming more urgent for the sector. In its 2016-17 pre-budget submission, the Chamber of Culture and the Arts WA acknowledged that: "It is important to recognise the key role of local government in the provision, maintenance and support of local arts and culture infrastructure, and that a limitation for many touring exhibitions is the lack of suitable facilities which meet the appropriate level of security and environmental conditions"

The submission called for a commitment to "map the facilities improvement required for regional gallery spaces to meet appropriate security and environment controls required for high quality touring exhibitions"<sup>105</sup> as a precursor for a similar package of support provided to the performing arts sector through the State Government's Creative Regions package.

Such a package, together with policy to ensure that the existing Aboriginal art centre galleries are equipped to take touring exhibitions and broaden their influence in the ecology, could resolve a number of issues the sector faces.

## Role of Artists and Visual Art Infrastructure in Place Making

Government and government authorities such as the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority and local governments in Margaret River, Geraldton, Bunbury, Fremantle and Victoria Park, have identified in their business and community planning a desire to attract and retain artists in their local communities. Given this, there is potential for visual arts infrastructure, and the artists situated within, to play a significant role in place making approaches for urban renewal and community development within these areas. Likewise, opportunities exist for visual arts infrastructure to be planned for

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<sup>104</sup> Artsource Studio Report <http://www.artsource.net.au/Member-Services/Studios/Artists%E2%80%99-Studio-Report>

<sup>105</sup> The Chamber of Arts and Culture WA Pre-Budget Submission 2016-17  
<https://www.cacwa.org.au/documents/item/416>

within the planning of new hotel, office and public precinct developments and revitalisation projects across Perth and regional cities.

Research shows that securing places for artists long-term within a location allows them to actively engage in and contribute to the community and economy in which they are located. A study in 2006 into art centres in America found that creative spaces, “contributed to neighbourhood and community development by raising cultural awareness and helping communities use art to solve problems, connect residents to each other, and express identity and pride. Many have contributed to the commercial vitality of their immediate surroundings by investing in historic or new buildings, bringing artists and audiences to the neighbourhood day and night, encouraging restaurant and service startups and façade improvements... [some] have become important anchor tenants on main street an attracted visitors from a much larger region” .<sup>106</sup>

The broad conflation of artists and their infrastructure needs, along with government and private sector desire to activate places, represents an opportunity to address a number of policy issues within precinct development models.

In April 2014 the State Government approved the creation of the Sunset Heritage Precinct (SHP) as an A class Reserve for arts, cultural, community and ancillary commercial use.<sup>107</sup> In 2015 upgrade works commenced on the site and it is anticipated that a tenancy strategy will be presented to Cabinet for consideration in 2016. The strategy is intended to provide opportunity for the site it to become a haven for arts practice, exhibition and public events as well as community and social enterprise. The Sunset Transformation Strategy is designed to introduce and develop conservation works, tenancies and public use over a 15 year timeframe.

In recognition of the contribution that artists make to the diversity, richness and activation of urban environs, major cities around the world are revising their planning strategies to provide below market cost accommodation to artists to live and work in the city. New York City Council announced in 2015 that the city’s affordable housing agenda will be broadened to incorporate construction of 1,500 live-work spaces for artists by 2024. Incorporating affordable artist live-work spaces and creative industries areas into state and city planning agendas and guidelines would produce opportunities for private developments to augment state initiatives.

The Perth Cultural Centre and Midland Railway Workshops already have considerable advantages for a visual art strategy to be developed for each precinct whilst the sale of the East Perth Power Station has fuelled speculation in the media

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<sup>106</sup> Markusen, A, and Johnson, A. (2006). Artists’ Centres: Evolution and Impact on Career, Neighbourhoods and Economies. <http://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.advantagelabs.com/files/publications/B2006-5.pdf>

<sup>107</sup>Department of Finance, Dalkeith Sale Sunset Hospital

[https://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/News/Building\\_Management\\_and\\_Works/Dalkeith\\_sale\\_progresses\\_Sunset\\_heritage\\_precinct.aspx](https://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/News/Building_Management_and_Works/Dalkeith_sale_progresses_Sunset_heritage_precinct.aspx)

that Kerry Stokes is interested in purchasing it to potentially showcase the Stokes Collection.

These developments suggest that the sector has reason to be optimistic over the next decade as the public visibility of the contribution of the visual arts becomes more apparent.

What this suggests is that there is therefore a need for DCA and AGWA to work closely with the visual arts sector, across government agencies, other industries, and the private sector to plan and deliver future development and provision of cultural infrastructure for the State.

Providing leadership through partnerships, policy and strategic projects could have a positive effect on the visual arts sector and improve the acknowledgement and public value of the visual arts in WA.

## 8. Public Art

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### Key points

- The State Government's Percent for Art Scheme has invested \$47 million on 574 art projects since it began in 1989
- In addition to this, other Government agencies, local authorities and the private sector have developed similar initiatives modelled on the Percent for Art Scheme
- Trends in public art are moving to greater public engagement and temporary projects
- DCA is committed to mapping current expenditure, procurement methodologies, objectives, evaluation systems and outcomes by the State Government on Public Art with a view to establishing best practice guidelines

Public Art has undergone something of an international renaissance in the past several decades. This has been in part due to a broad acceptance of the positive role art can play in community life and the diversification of art practice, including incorporation of new technology that lends itself to display in the public arena.

The State Government has a strong history in investing in public art through programs such as the Percent for Art Scheme (the Scheme), one of the longest running schemes of its type in Australia. Managed by the Departments of Culture and the Arts and Finance's Building, Management and Works, the Scheme aims to improve the quality of the built environment and value of public facilities; and create new professional opportunities for artists.

The Scheme achieves these benefits through a percentage allocation (up to one per cent) of the estimated total cost of a State-funded capital or major infrastructure project for public art. Since it began, over \$47 million has been expended across 574 projects<sup>108</sup>. However, the State Government's investment in public art is in fact much higher than this figure, with other government agencies such as Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, Public Transport Authority, Main Roads and Office of Strategic Projects also managing public art programs that reflect the guidelines and processes of the Scheme.

A number of local governments, such as the Cities of Vincent<sup>109</sup>, Fremantle, Subiaco, Greater Geraldton and Albany (amongst others), have also committed to per cent

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<sup>108</sup> Western Australian State Government Per cent for Art Scheme 2014-15 Year in Review [http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Developing%20Arts%20and%20Culture/Spaces%20and%20Places/Public\\_Art/Documents/Percent\\_for\\_Art\\_Scheme\\_2014-15\\_Year\\_in\\_Review.pdf](http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Developing%20Arts%20and%20Culture/Spaces%20and%20Places/Public_Art/Documents/Percent_for_Art_Scheme_2014-15_Year_in_Review.pdf)

<sup>109</sup> City of Vincent, Percent for Public Art Policy - Policy No. 3.5.13 [http://www.vincent.wa.gov.au/files/7b6241e5-e529-4dd1-9554-9ed200b52e4a/Percent\\_for\\_Public\\_Art\\_-\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Developers.pdf](http://www.vincent.wa.gov.au/files/7b6241e5-e529-4dd1-9554-9ed200b52e4a/Percent_for_Public_Art_-_Guidelines_for_Developers.pdf)

for art policies. Local Government policies follow the objectives and many of the same procedures of the Scheme; however it is usually private developers rather than the local government that fund public art. A number of commercial developers that have worked under these policies have realised the benefits of the inclusion of public art and have since made public art part of their usual building development process.

The diversity of organisations and agencies commissioning artwork has resulted in a diverse range of projects and budgets. In particular, the smaller commissions have allowed emerging artists to be involved in public art. A number of emerging artists have also collaborated with more experienced public artists who informally act in a mentoring role. This has also particularly occurred between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists in regional centres.

The State Government has been active in other programs supporting public art such as 'Situatē'<sup>110</sup>, an initiative which saw the installation of a major free-standing sculpture 'Grow Your Own' by James Angus. Another program was the Non-Permanent and Ephemeral Public Art Project<sup>111</sup> that emphasised a more experimental approach to art in the public realm. Mural art, often referred to as urban art, is another major strand of public art that has become popular in recent years. It has been heavily promoted by organisations such as FORM through its PUBLIC program and is popular in local government community arts programs.

Arguably, the future of public art rests in a much more direct engagement with the public. In an interview with Huck Magazine, Claire Doherty, author of Public Art (Now) identified that 'perhaps the most fundamental change in public art has been the increasing involvement of the public as active participants, often through an astute use of social media. In contrast the fleeting enjoyment of a mass spectacle, many artworks now invite the public to be more than consumers, involving them in the making of a work, or giving chances for their responses to become a part of the work. The result is a greater chance for artworks to resonate with us more deeply and to change the way in which we see and act in the world'.<sup>112</sup>

This positive view of the role of the public offers a meaningful way for funders - private or public - to invest in art in public spaces in the knowledge that the public will support the concept, if not the individual pieces of art. This allows for greater flexibility in supporting and delivering public art from ongoing activation to temporary installations, that arise not from pre-planned design and build processes,

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<sup>110</sup> DCA. situatē - International Arts Competition <http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/DevelopingArtsandCulture/spaces-and-places/public-art/situatē-international-arts-competition/the-jury/>

<sup>111</sup> DCA & MRA. Perth Cultural Centre Non-permanent & Ephemeral Public Art Project <http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Developing%20Arts%20and%20Culture/Spaces%20and%20Places/Ephemeral%20art/NonPermanent%20and%20Ephemeral%20Art%20Catalogue%20Web.pdf>

<sup>112</sup> Huck Magazine. What's the future for public art? <http://www.huckmagazine.com/art-and-culture/art-2/whats-future-public-art/>

but more organically grown from commissioners and artists being more open to the possibilities of arts in the environment.

For this to happen there does need to be a better understanding of what public art can achieve for the individual and the community and more opportunities such as FORM's PUBLIC, to test the boundaries of public acceptance and stimulate both debate and opportunity.

In 2016, DCA will be undertaking a review of public art to map current expenditure, procurement methodologies, objectives, evaluation systems and outcomes by the State Government on public art with a view to establishing best-practice guidelines based on national and international benchmarks. This work will act as catalyst for broadening the consideration of what is public art and open up new ways of commissioning work and making space available for artists to experiment within the public realm.

# Conclusion

This discussion paper has provided an overview of key elements and issues facing the visual arts sector in WA. Feedback received on the issues presented in this paper and others raised by the sector through the Visual Arts Sector review survey will be considered by DCA in policy development to support the sustainability and future direction of the visual arts.

For more information and updates, visit the [DCA Research Hub](#) or contact [research@dca.wa.gov.au](mailto:research@dca.wa.gov.au)