

Attachment C2

Draft Cultural Strategy 2025-2035



OUR COMMUNITIES, CULTURE, AND THE CREATIVE SECTOR





Our communities

When we talk about our city's culture, we need to first reflect on who we are as a city.

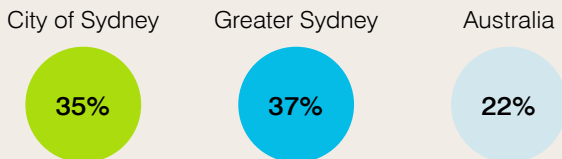
Our communities are young and culturally diverse. Half of us were born overseas and a third of us speak another language at home. And 56% of us are aged between 25 and 50, compared to 34% nationally.

Most people in our communities rent, 61% of us – double the national average. This means housing market pressures create a disproportionate impact on our communities and cultural life.

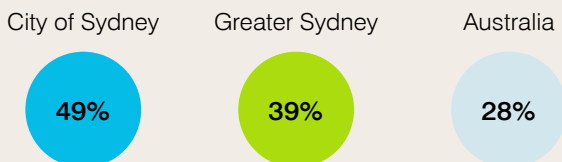
In our area 97% of people live in medium or high-density housing. We know the density of our communities presents social challenges, but it also offers opportunities to capitalise on our closeness.

Language

Speak a language other than English

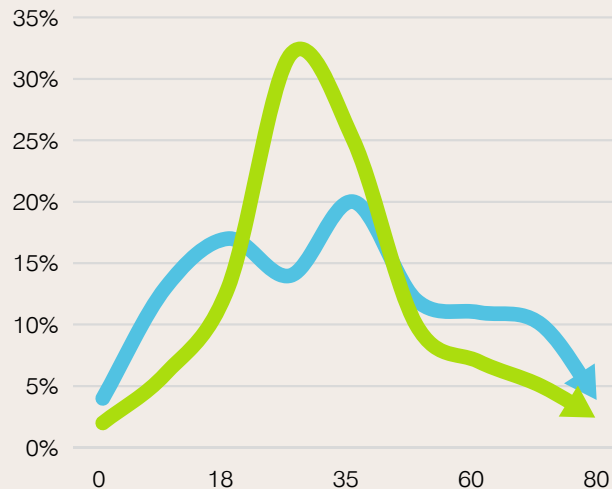


Born overseas



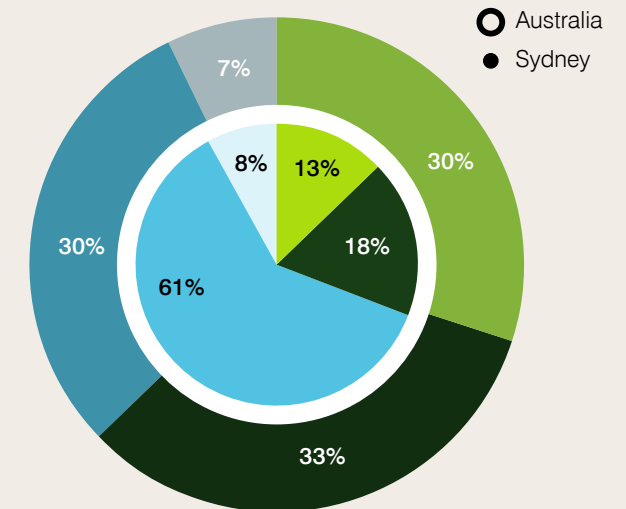
Age, by % of population

→ Sydney → Australia



Housing type

Own outright Mortgage Renting Other



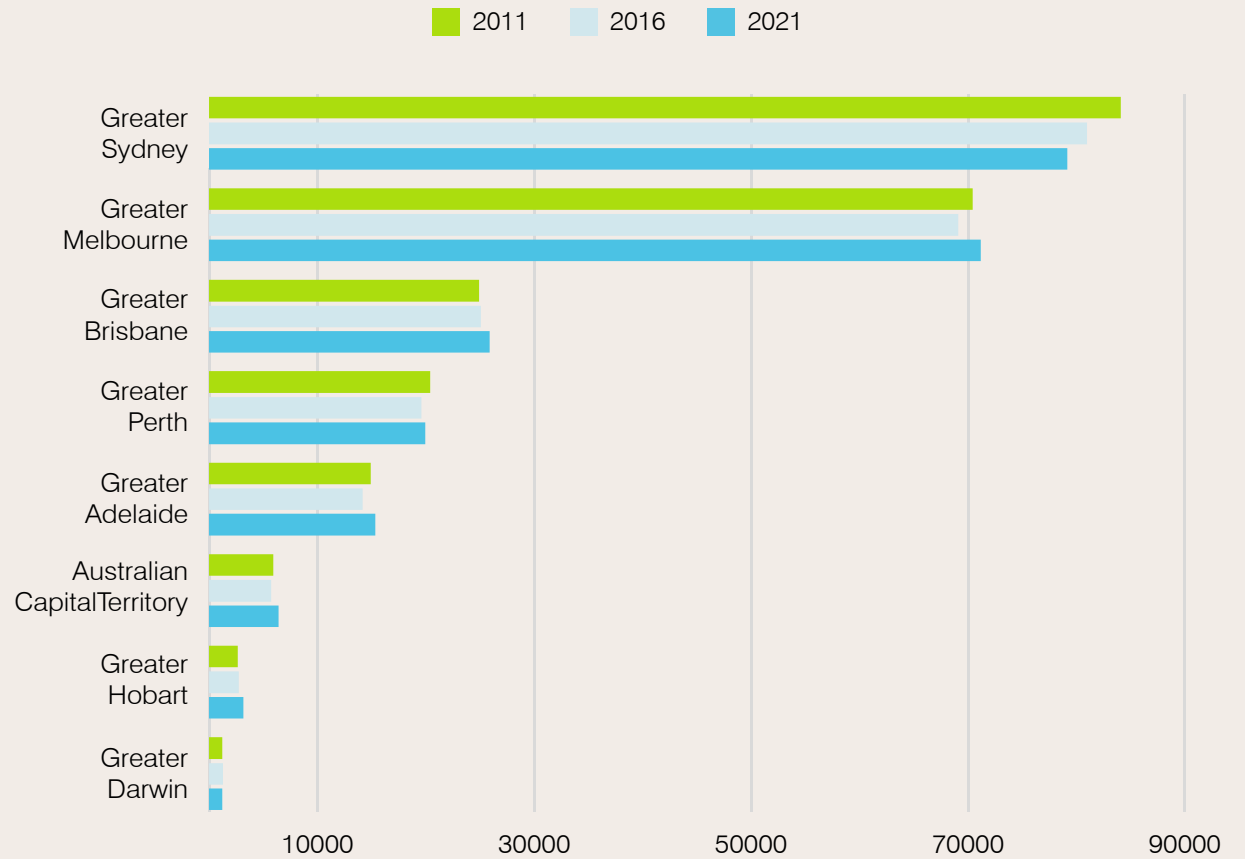
Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics



Our creative workforce

There are more creative workers in Sydney than anywhere else in Australia, they are essential to our economy and way of life, but they are at risk.

Cultural and creative industries change over time by state

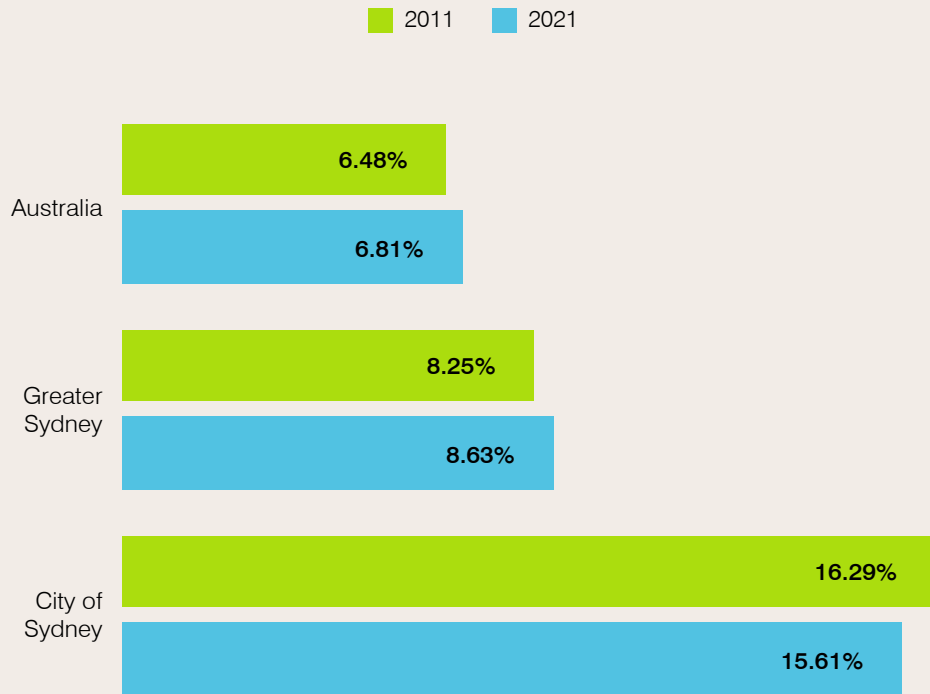


Greater Sydney still has the largest creative workforce in the country, but it is retracting.

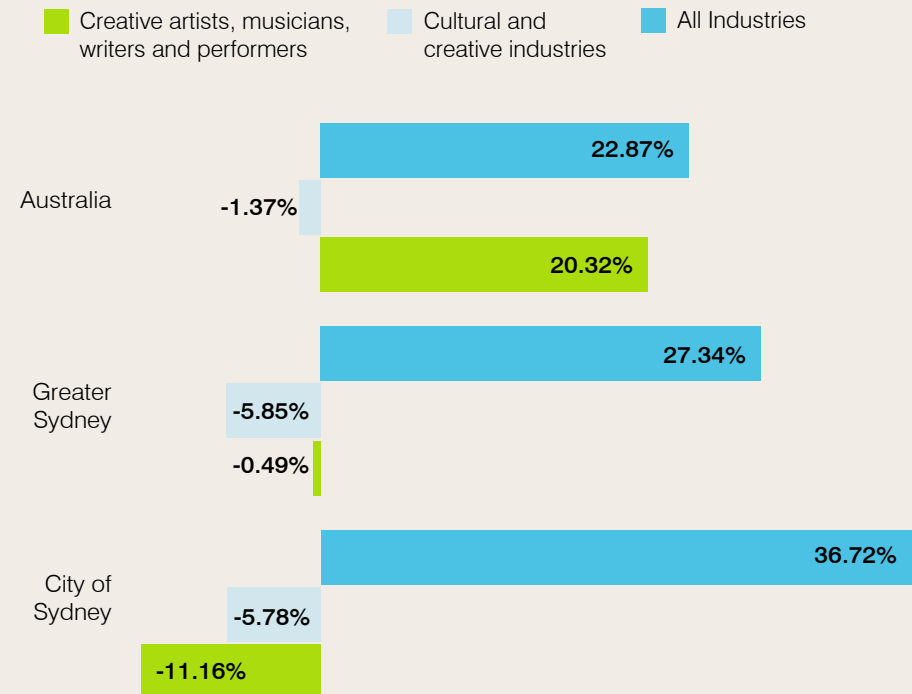
Data source: Australian Census 2011, 2016 and 2021



Cultural and creative occupations as a % of the whole workforce



% Change 2011 to 2021 employment by industry



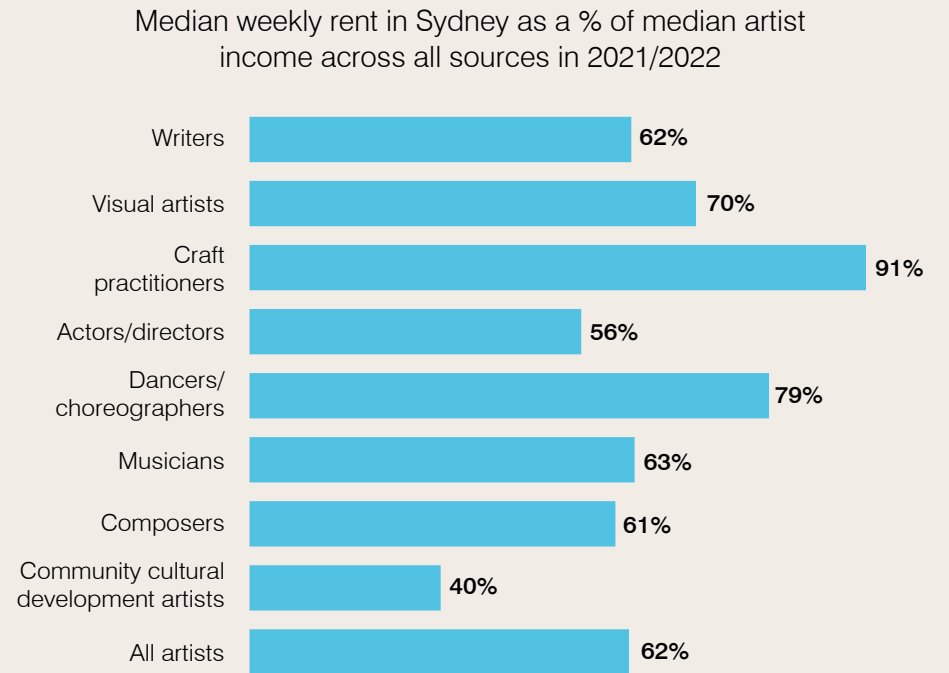
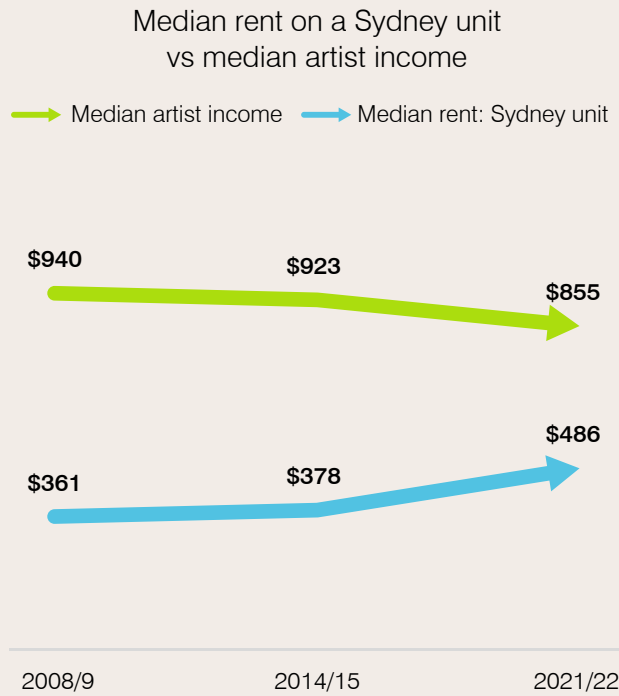
The proportion of cultural workers relative to the overall workforce is particularly high in Sydney. This is why the cultural industries are so important to our local area, and our productivity.

Our overall workforce has grown, but the core cultural professions (artists, writers, musicians and performers) have declined significantly. Sydney is the only capital city in Australia to experience a decline in its artist population in the past 5 years.

Data source: Australian Census 2011 and 2021 (by place of work)



We know that the cost of renting in Sydney is having an impact on sustaining creative careers here. The average weekly rent in Sydney is equivalent to 62% of the average income of artists.



Data source: Creative Australian and Core Logic



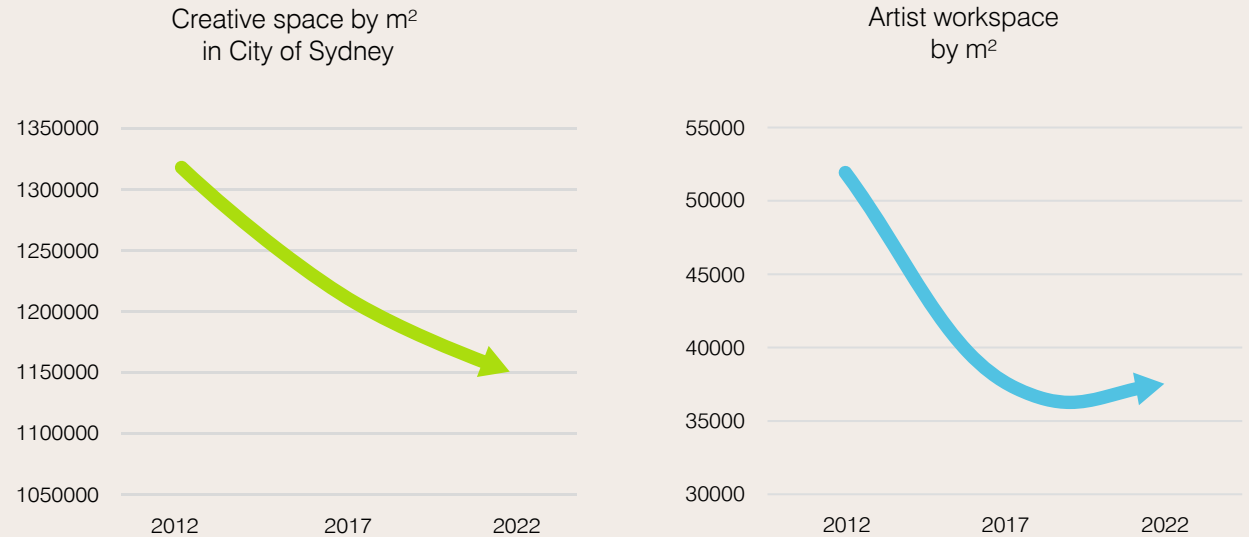
Our cultural infrastructure

The right infrastructure is essential to creating culture.

The creative industries have very specific spatial needs and they occupy the kinds of spaces that are becoming less common in urbanised global cities. Spaces like warehouses, studios and rehearsal rooms, where there is space to make mess and noise.

Our city has seen a dramatic reduction in creative workspace as much of the building stock previously occupied by light industry has been rezoned and redeveloped for housing.

In 2012 creative industries occupied nearly 8.5% of all the commercial floor space in the City of Sydney area. In 2022 creative industries made up less than 7% of our floor space. In real terms, that is a decline of 172,970m². Of that lost space, the studios and workspaces occupied by core creatives (artists, writers, musicians and performers) has reduced by more than 14,300m².



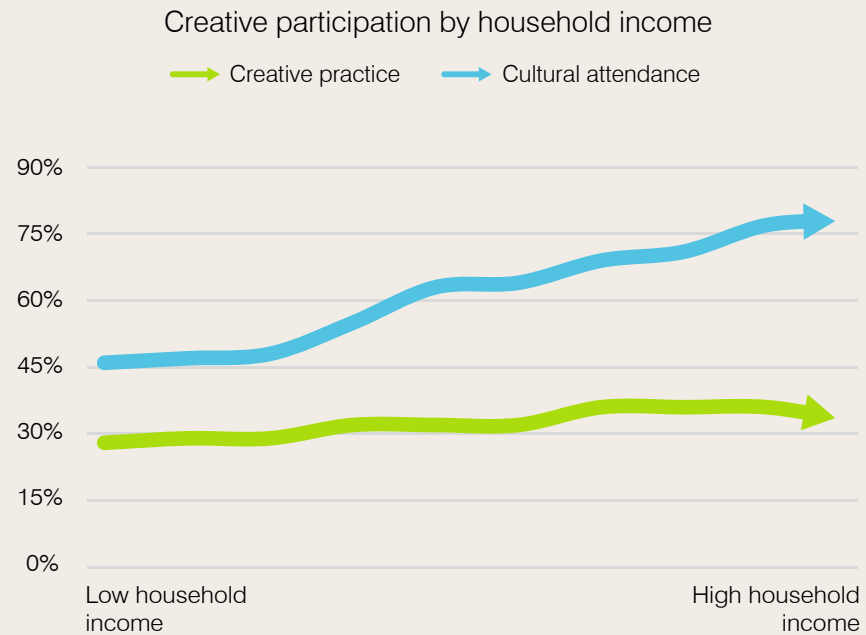
Data source: Floorspace and Employment Survey, City of Sydney



Our cultural participation

Sydney's cultural life is fast becoming a story of 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

Our research shows that roughly one third of us participate in a creative practice, regardless of our income bracket. But if we have a higher household income we are far more likely to attend cultural activities. It seems the increasing cost of producing events and cultural activities, that in turn increases ticket prices, is shaping our city's audiences along socio-economic lines.



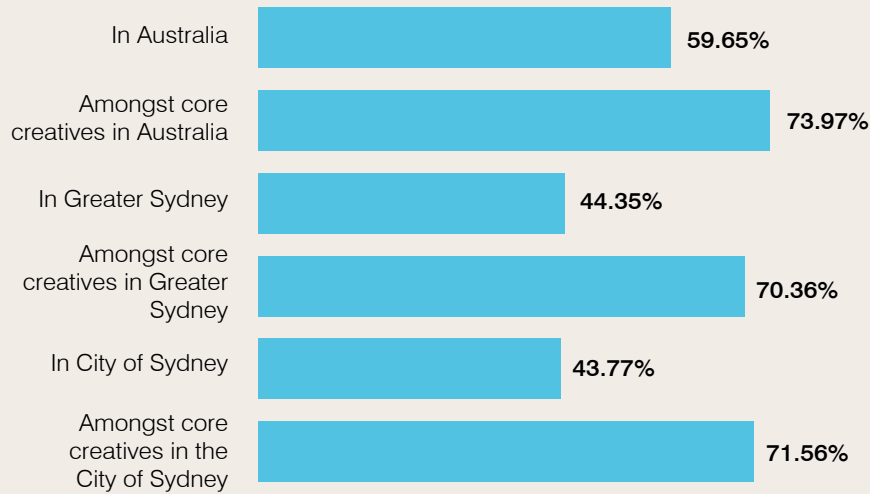
Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (cultural activities)



When we look at who is making our city's cultural products, we can see that cultural professions favour a narrow demographic. While people who identify with 'British, Irish or Australian' ancestry make up 44% of our population, they represent 70% of the people working in the core creative industries. It is not surprising then,

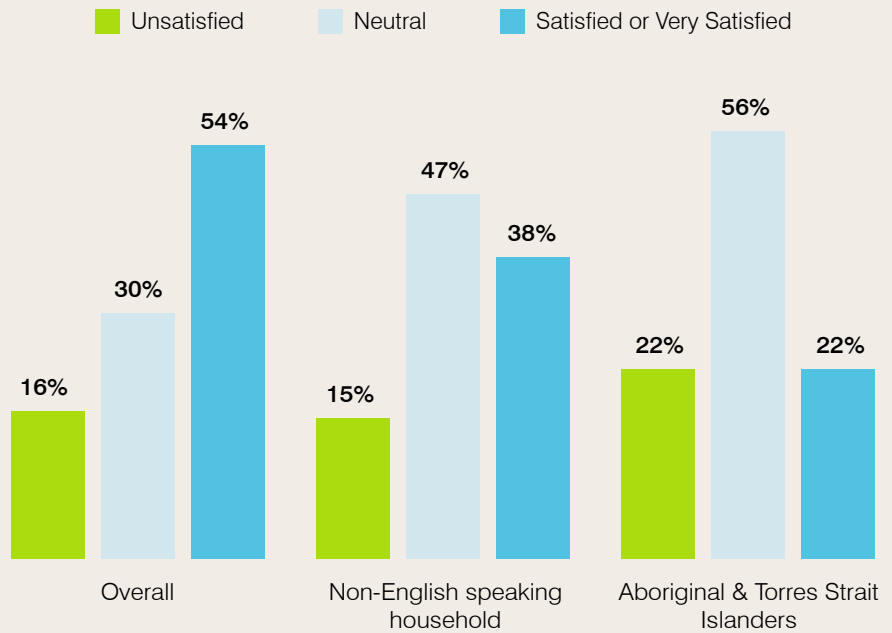
when we ask our communities if they're satisfied with opportunities to engage with arts and cultural events, non-English speakers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples register much lower rates of satisfaction with Sydney's cultural offerings.

% Identifying as Anglo-Australian and Irish by area and core creative industry



Data source: Australian Census 2021

Satisfaction with arts and cultural events by demographic



Data source: Residential Wellbeing Survey, City of Sydney

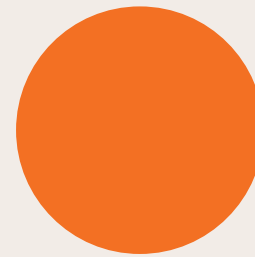


CHALLENGES AND INSIGHTS



What we're learning from other cities

As Australia's global city, there's a lot we can learn from the experience of other global cities. We're connected to global insights through our membership of the World Cities Culture Forum, Music Cities Network and Resilient Cities Network. These global trends we've noted are relevant to the cultural life of our city.





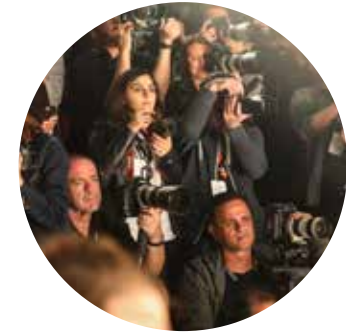
Culture as a tool for addressing inequality and historical injustice.

Amplified by the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for truth telling, cities worldwide are contemplating how to address monuments to reveal hidden histories of genocide, slavery and racism, and to install new public artworks to acknowledge injustice.



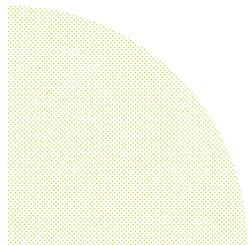
Culture at risk: safeguarding creative spaces.

The loss of cultural infrastructure is a common theme across global cities. Policymakers are looking at how to safeguard creative and community spaces before they're lost to redevelopment. Increasingly, trusts are being established to purchase and protect music venues, artist studios and other creative spaces.



Supporting the creative workforce: freelancers, microbusinesses and income support for artists.

Acknowledging that many creative workers operate on their own and outside of the organisations, institutions and festivals that receive public funds, many cities are looking at ways to direct subsidies to freelancers and for-profit microbusinesses. In San Francisco and Ireland they're trialling universal basic income for artists.





Technology is expanding both the opportunities and the ethics of creativity.

New technologies and artificial intelligence offer exciting possibilities for creative industries, but also raise concerns about intellectual property theft and automation of creative jobs. While cities look to harness the potential of emerging technologies to increase access and innovation, policymakers are turning their minds to the legal and ethical frameworks needed to manage such swift progress.



Culture leading the rise of the night-time economy.

There are now 100 'night mayors' and night ambassadors working in governments globally. Increasingly, cities are looking to culture to unlock vibrancy, business diversity and community safety at night, as the 24-hour city grows as a policy portfolio.



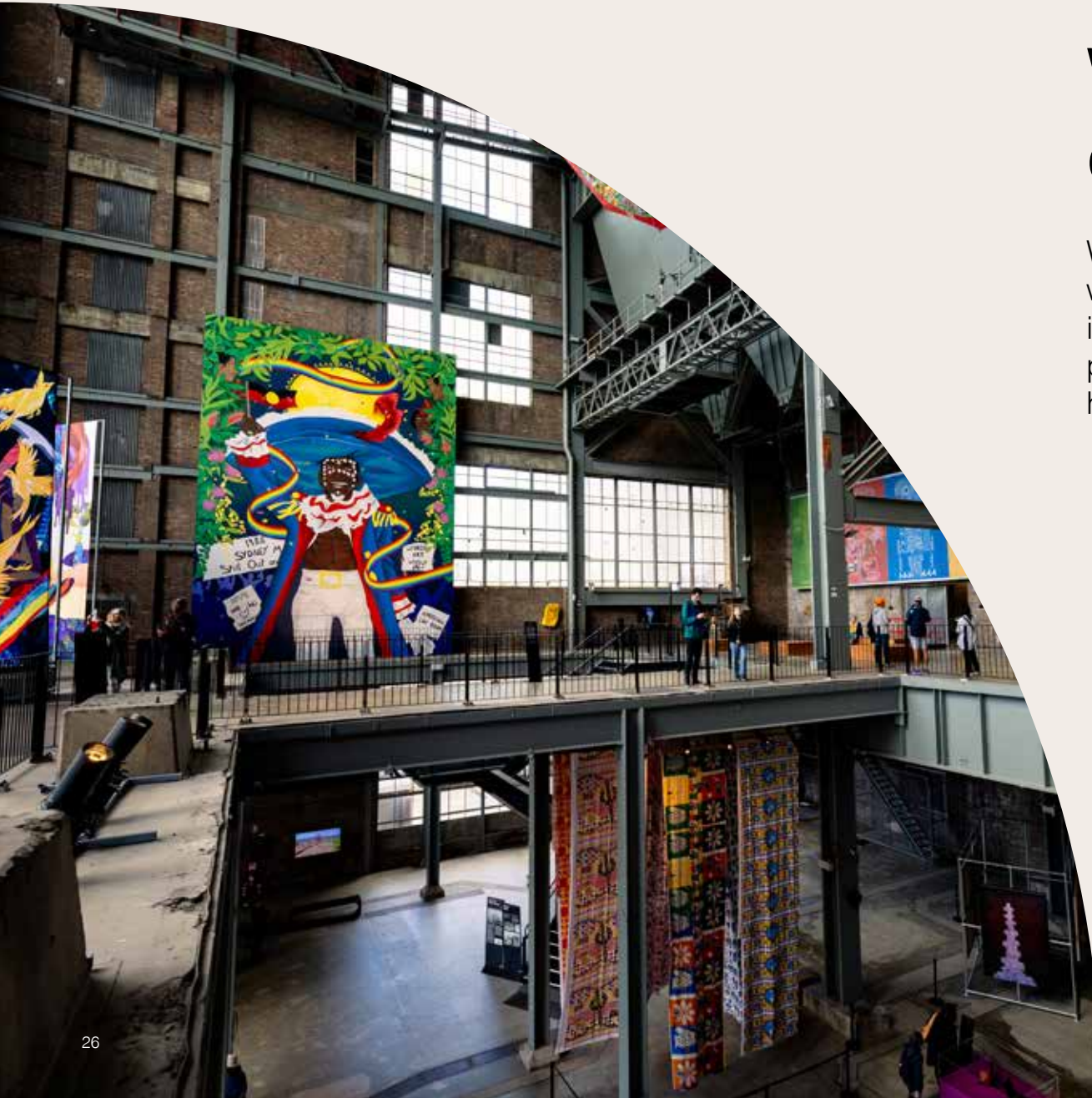
Culture fosters hope, resilience, and wellbeing.

In uncertain times and in the context of conflict, climate crisis, disaster recovery and financial pressures, cities are turning to culture to foster hope, resilience and wellbeing. Extended access to cultural institutions, creative participation, and cultural programs help people connect with positive ideas and each other. In many cities, 'social prescribing' is an emerging practice where trips to museums and galleries and attending live music are prescribed by doctors and subsidised under health care plans.



Culture, climate change and the global development agenda.

Climate change is the greatest shared challenge of our times, making the work of artists and cultural institutions something that is dominated by explorations of human impact, adaptation and pathways towards coping with climate change. Cities are leveraging the discourse generated by culture to manage change, build resilience and pursue global climate targets and commitments. Indeed, the World Cities Culture Forum is advocating for a UN sustainable development goal for culture.



What we heard from our creative sector

We've developed this strategy in consultation with the creative sector of Sydney and we are in a continuous conversation with our advisory panels. These are the main challenges that we heard the sector is facing.



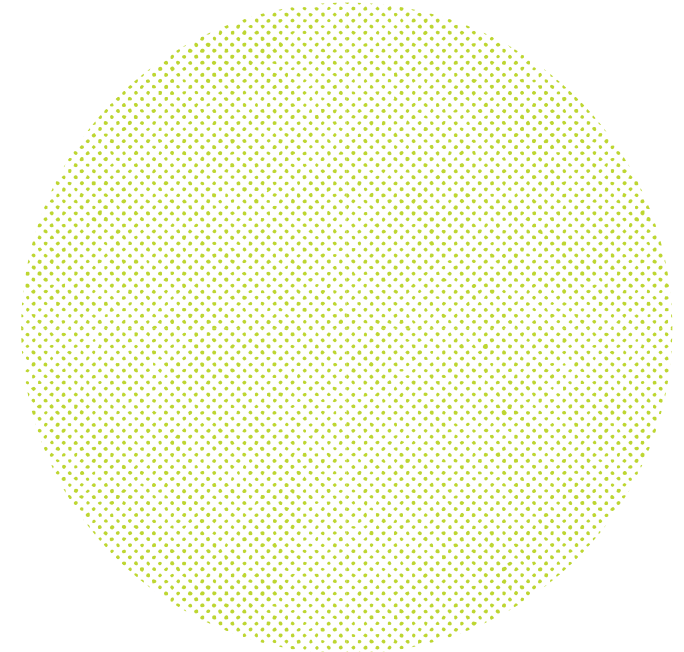
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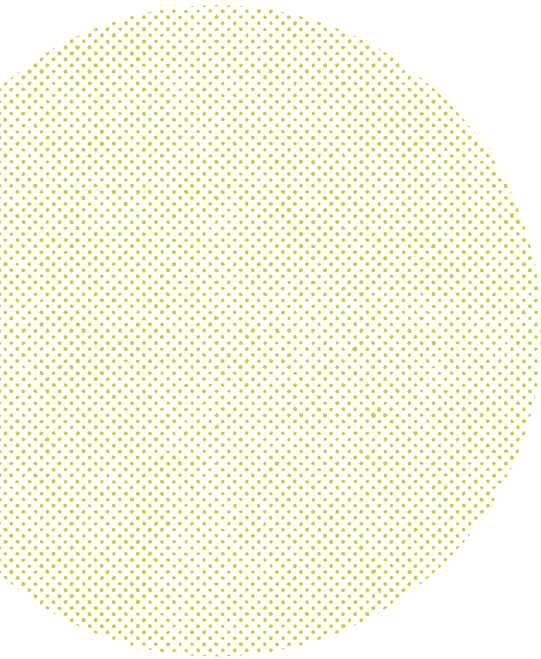
Costs of compliance continue to be a barrier to operating creative spaces and producing events.

For many years, we've worked towards getting the balance right between ensuring safety, protecting amenity and providing the right environment for culture to flourish. But compliance costs continue to make many creative endeavours unsustainable. There are still no zero-cost approval pathways for small scale pop-up events, and the costs associated with applying for approvals often outstrip the projected proceeds of smaller events and cultural activities.

We heard that across all levels of government, a culture of 'risk elimination' is not being matched with resources for risk management. Cultural producers are

expected to meet increasing user-pays police and security requirements, and safety measures like hostile vehicle mitigation, with no added funding or resources. Those operators whose business models can't absorb these costs are simply 'out of the game', further reducing our event offerings to either very big, or very small. For those looking to open a new creative space, the startup costs associated with meeting contemporary accessibility and safety standards are prohibitive, especially in the types of older and underused building stock most often on offer to creative enterprise.





2

Unaffordable housing supply is displacing creative workers.

The data from the 2021 Census was clear, artists are leaving Sydney. Our consultation highlighted that housing costs are the main reason artists are leaving. By 2023 all of Australia was grappling with a rental market crisis with extremely low availability at record high prices. While there are efforts at a federal and state level to increase housing supply, our consultation suggests that it will be too late for Sydney's artists if we do not act urgently with cost of living and rent relief.

3

Investment is mostly focused on presentation, not production.

There have been some exceptional updates and additions made to Sydney's cultural infrastructure. While feedback suggests these are well received, we're also hearing that the bulk of the investment is in major institutions and it has almost exclusively focused on places to present and consume culture, not the kinds of creative spaces where culture is made.

We know these productive spaces are most at risk in a commercial property market that is pricing-out creative operators. Likewise, cultural funding programs tend to still favour a trickle-down approach to subsidising the price-point where culture is consumed, rather than invest in its development and production. We heard that all levels of cultural funding are overly focused on outcomes and audience. Not enough attention is being given to sustaining everyday participation in a creative practice, which is not just essential for health and wellbeing, everyday practice is vital to achieving artistic innovation.

4

Diversity and inclusion is improving but it is slow progress.

Efforts to increase the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people with disability in our cultural life are slowly achieving results. The sector reports a maturing and authenticity in the engagement and representation of First Nations people, and that resources to support artists with disability to make and participate in culture have improved. There continues to be logistical barriers to more deeply involving linguistic diversity in our cultural offerings and a financial imperative that favours broadest possible audience appeal. However, the intention to transform our cultural identity to more accurately reflect the diversity of our communities is enthusiastically shared and more work is needed in this area.

5

City of Sydney knowledge is a valued resource that enhances our investments.

Many recipients of our grants and tenants in City of Sydney-owned properties spoke positively of an unexpected value-add with our support – access to our knowledge. From bespoke assistance with a planning approval or one-on-one advice about managing events in public spaces, to referrals with our historians and archives, or the curatorial expertise and networks within our organisation, the sector is clear – we are a valuable partner in producing culture. They invited us to reflect on the creative capital within our organisation and consider how access to our expert staff could be improved and formalised as an additional investment.

