

# **A REPORT ON DESKTOP RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN INTO WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S SMALL-TO-MEDIUM ARTS SECTOR (S2M)**

Research undertaken by Barry Strickland on behalf of the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA  
August- September 2014



**THE CHAMBER  
OF ARTS AND CULTURE**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## PREFACE

The Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia is the State's peak advocacy body for the arts and cultural sector. Its mission is to promote and advocate, with a unified voice, the benefits of a vibrant arts and cultural sector to the wider community.

The Cultural Executives Group (CEG) is drawn from executives of all Arts Organisation members of the Chamber. The CEG offers arts organisation members a forum to identify key issues affecting the sector and develop initiatives to tackle the issues.

The Chamber's CEG established a small-to-medium sector (S2M) working party to inform the research project and development of a business case for the Chamber to utilise in a budget submission to state government.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Artrage Inc.
- AusDance WA
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- Fremantle Press
- Mundaring Arts Centre
- Museums Australia (WA)
- Performing Lines WA
- Perth Theatre Company
- Propel Youth Arts
- Spaced2
- Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
- Stages WA
- WA State Library Foundation
- WA Youth Jazz Orchestra

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# FOREWORD

In the months since this report was tabled, the federal and state funding landscapes have changed significantly. The recent federal budget announcement and the Australia Council's response have caused a considerable amount of concern among Western Australia's small-to-medium arts companies and organisations. The cancellation of the Australia Council's six-year funding plan as well as the next project-funding round will impact adversely on those organisations whose funding has not been quarantined.

There is no clarity around the Ministry's new National Programme for Excellence in the Arts although the key themes of endowments, international touring and strategic projects do not appear at face value to be conducive to funding applications from a significant proportion of the small-to-medium companies.

The response from the state funding body and the impact on its Organisation Investment Program is yet to be seen.

In the meantime, as detailed in this report, several things need to be acknowledged in relation to the small-to-medium arts sector in Western Australia:

- the sector engages with a large and diverse audience across a vast territory, and has a significant impact in the development of both practitioners and audiences across multiple disciplines;
- subsidy-wise, state government investment in the sector represents significant value for money;
- compared with other states and territories, the WA state government is a more generous supporter of the small-to-medium arts sector; and
- in terms of federal subsidy via the Australia Council, the WA small-to-medium sector receives less funding on a per capita basis than its counterparts in most other states and territories.

The WA small-to-medium arts sector needs to:

- work towards a greater number of intra- and inter-sector collaborations and partnerships and, where appropriate, consider mutually beneficial mergers/amalgamations;
- work towards solutions to the challenges presented by Western Australia's vast geography; and
- address the need for stronger career paths within the sector, including the need for more professional development opportunities, especially for the sector's managers.

**Barry Strickland, 29 May 2015**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Western Australia's small-to-medium (S2M) arts sector can, most pragmatically, be defined as encompassing those established groups, companies, organisations and institutions that regularly (through triennial and multi-year agreements) or intermittently (through annual, project and other grants) receive funds from the State of Western Australia through the Department for Culture and the Arts (DCA), but are not classified by DCA as being major arts/cultural entities.

This desktop research into the S2M arts sector was undertaken on behalf of the Chamber of Arts and Culture in August-September 2014, the primary objectives being to "inform a business case for a budget submission to State Treasury, and to provide information to WA's S2M sector around the issue of building resilience".

The primary research tool was a survey electronically distributed to the S2M arts sector organisations across Western Australia. In addition, on-line 'benchmarking' was undertaken into comparative support for the S2M arts sector on the part of other state and territory governments, as well as the federal government through the Australia Council for the Arts.

In regards to the latter, the desktop research suggests that in 2012-14:

- the State of Western Australia, through the Department of Culture and the Arts, was Australia's most generous funder of the S2M arts sector (TABLE 1); and
- 12 (or 31%) of Western Australia's state-funded S2M arts organisations were concurrently on multi-year funding agreements with the Australia Council – and this percentage was the lowest nationally (TABLE 2).

In regards to the survey of Western Australia's S2M arts sector, it was found that, in 2013, the sector comprised at least 45 formally established groups, companies, organisations and institutions state-wide.

Collectively, in 2013, these entities:

- employed (full-time, part-time, casual, contract, etc.) in the vicinity of 1,600 individual artists and arts workers;
- attracted over 8,000 members, over 360 board members, and over 1,300 volunteers;
- generated income in excess of \$61 million (with approximately \$11.5 million, or 20%, coming the State Government);
- spent in excess of \$61 million; and,
- had a collective net position of around \$6.5 million.

In 2013, at least:

- 25 S2M organisations had a gross income below \$1 million;
- 20 S2M organisations had a gross income in excess of \$1 million; and
- around 10 S2M organisations were in a trading deficit.

In 2013, the S2M sector:

- attracted over 1.2 million paid attendances/engagements;
- attracted over 0.6 million free attendances/engagements;
- attracted a State Government subsidy per attendance/engagement of approximately \$6.00;
- electronically engaged with hundreds of thousands of individuals through its extensive and varied telecommunications presence; and
- engaged with hundreds of thousands of individuals through the production and distribution of tangible products, such as works of art, books, CDs and DVDs.

In 2013, the S2M sector engaged in:

- at least 684 artistic partnerships (intra and inter-sector, and beyond);
- at least 306 financial (cash) partnerships;
- at least 261 operational (in-kind) partnerships;
- at least 98 media partnerships (print, broadcast, digital); and,
- at least 61 other forms of partnership (including academic research).

In 2014 some of the S2M arts sector's most dominant concerns are that:

- funding-wise, it remains the 'poor relative' within the broader WA arts and cultural sector, despite delivering the greatest audience outcomes and playing the essential nurturing and development role in the maintenance of a vibrant and innovative arts scene [Note: This perception is supported by the funding data];
- it is significantly challenged in its capacity to attract and maintain personnel with the requisite skills and experience, and that this is due to inadequate core capacity across the sector – and that this is occurring in an environment in which government expectations of the S2M sector are actually increasing;
- despite 'virtual' globalisation Western Australia's actual isolation (and the vastness of its territory) remains a real issue in reaching and engaging with audiences in a cost-effective manner;
- there is still a perception that WA lacks leaders and vision when it comes to the arts and cultural sector, and that (as a result) the S2M sector is particularly under-recognised and under-valued; and
- opportunities in attracting corporate and philanthropic support are limited by the amount of 'oxygen' being sucked out of the arena by the likes of the Big 4 performing arts companies and PIAF.

In 2014 a majority of organisations within the S2M sector believe that in order to enhance the sector's resilience there must be:

- increased intra- and inter-sector partnerships and collaborations; and that, more broadly,
- sector members must work more smartly together, sharing problems and working towards sector-wide solutions to existing and emerging challenges.

It is this researcher's opinion, based on the survey findings and comparing the funding of the WA S2M arts sector with that of other states and territories, as well as taking into account a range of other current and emerging evidence, that:

- compared with other states and territories, the WA government is 'per capita' supporting more S2M arts organisations on a triennial and/or multi-year basis, and doing so more generously;
- the Australia Council is arguably (and some would say certainly) under-recognising and under-funding WA's S2M arts sector, and is likely to further discriminate against our S2M organisations through its new six-year funding model;
- there is arguably a need for organisations within WA's S2M arts sector to more actively engage in conversations about how they can collectively provide more dynamic (and sustainable) outcomes for their constituents, including the contemplation of possible amalgamations and other measures; and
- there is arguably a need on the part of WA's corporate sector and private philanthropists to much more fully embrace the S2M sector – it is the 'bridge' between individual artists and the 'high end', and if the S2Ms are not appropriately championed, the future could be quite arid for the 'high end' organisations.

While not directly canvassed in this desktop research, it needs to be noted that Western Australia's arts and cultural scene has, unlike most other states and territories, two significant de facto arts funding agencies: Lotterywest and Healthway. Their respective ability to contribute to the arts and cultural sector depends on (a) revenue through the purchase of Lotterywest products and (b) revenue through the tobacco excise. For these avenues of funding to be maintained at current levels, Western Australians must continue to 'gamble' and also to buy tobacco products. If Healthway succeeds in creating a non-smoking Western Australia, then it will no longer have the capacity to support the arts and cultural sector.

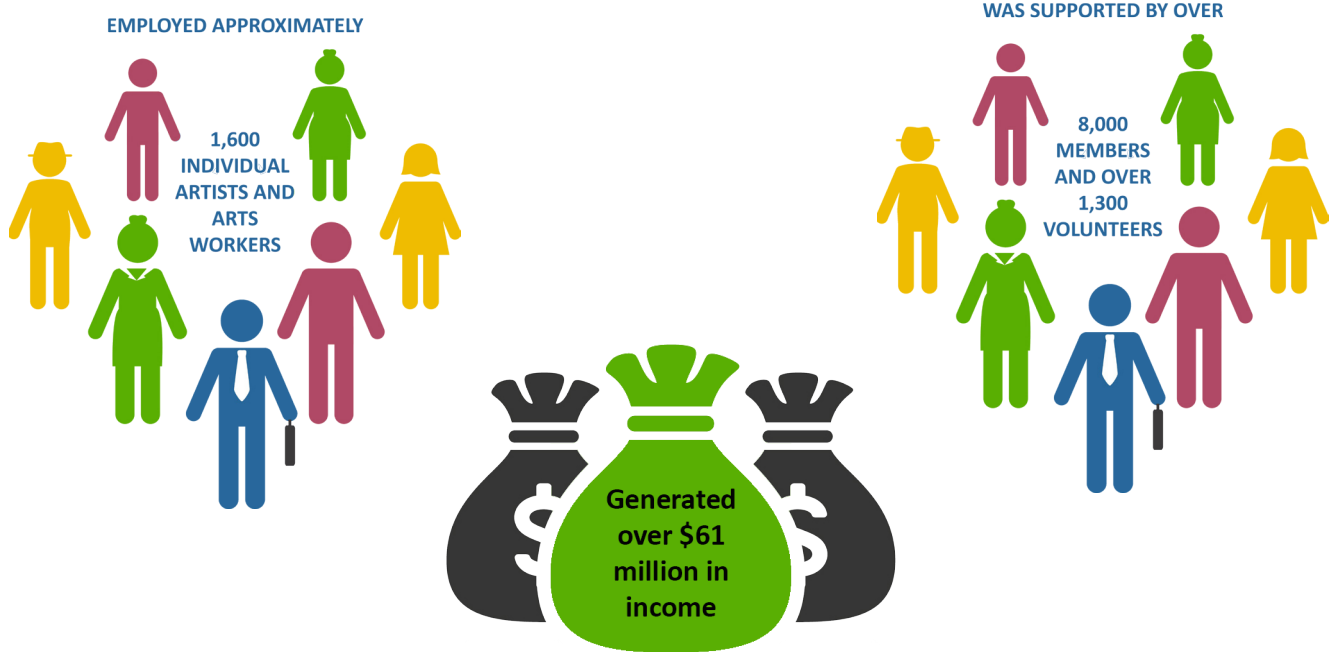
Given the current and emerging funding constraints, state and federally, it is a strong recommendation that representatives of WA's S2M arts sector get together to formally discuss issues raised in this report, and to agree a strategy for the sector's on-going viability in the face of current and emerging challenges, not all of which are financial.

In anticipation of such a gathering, it is this researcher's opinion that Western Australia's S2M arts sector should be encouraging the state government (through DCA) to create:

- a professional development fund specifically designed to enhance the 'skill sets' of the sector's managers and administrators, as well as those serving on boards of management; and
- a 'partnerships and collaborations' fund to support particular special initiatives, either intra- or inter-sector.

Finally, it should be noted that this was a study of modest scale, undertaken by an individual researcher within a tight time-frame and with a purely 'desktop' brief.

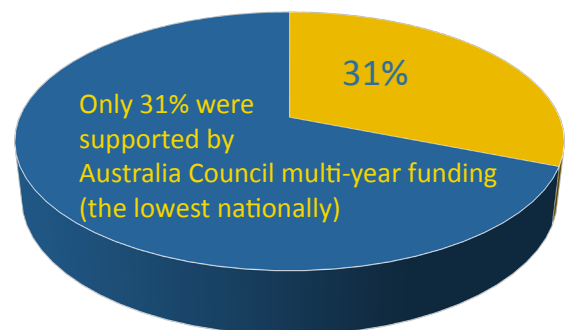
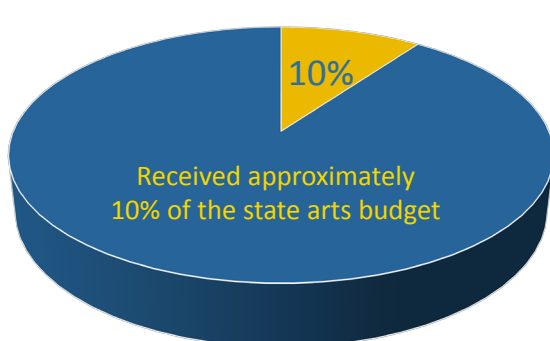
In 2013 the Western Australian S2M arts sector comprised at least 45 formally established groups, companies, organisations and institutions that ...



... engaged in ...



... while financially ...



# 1. INTRODUCTION

This is a report on the desktop research undertaken into Western Australia's small-to-medium (S2M) arts sector in August-September 2014. The researcher was Barry Strickland on behalf of the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA and its S2M arts sector working party.

The primary research tool was a survey instrument (see Appendix A) electronically distributed to:

- organisations within the S2M arts sector that are on triennial or multi-year funding agreements with the Western Australian Department for Culture and the Arts (DCA) ; and
- organisations within the S2M arts sector not on triennial or multi-year funding agreements with DCA, but periodically in receipt of DCA project and other funds.

44 out of the 50 S2M organisations identified as falling within the above two categories completed the survey. Two organisations declared their operations not relevant to the period being surveyed (this being the 2013 calendar year), one having wound-up operations, and the other having morphed into a new entity. Where available, data from the four other organisations not completing the survey was taken from their on-line annual reports. Removing the two organisations declaring themselves to be 'ineligible', the response rate to the survey was 92%.

This 92% response rate provides a relatively high degree of confidence in the numerical data.

## THE BRIEF

The Chamber's overall objective in commissioning the research was to "inform a business case for a budget submission to Treasury, and to provide information to the S2M sector around building resilience".

More specifically, the desk top and related S2M arts sector research was to:

- define the sector and identify its size and key characteristics;
- identify the sector's 'ecologies' in terms of its ever-evolving partnerships and collaborations;
- identify benchmarks for the sector in terms of building resilience/sustainability;
- identify the sector's public 'value' against its public 'investment';
- identify the sector's 'key challenges, risks, and impacts';
- identify the sector's alignment with current government policy; and
- identify a shared sector-wide vision.

## 2. THE S2M ARTS SECTOR IN AUSTRALIA

Australia-wide the S2M arts sector occupies the significant middle ground between individual arts practitioners operating independently and the ‘high end’ of the professional arts and cultural landscape.

Every state and territory government has an arts funding authority that provides triennial and/or multi-year funding for organisations within their respective S2M arts sectors, although Tasmania will only be doing so from 2015.

### DEFINING THE SECTOR

Essentially, the S2M arts sector comprises entities that have been formally established, with each being devoted to the development and promotion of one or more disciplines within the arts and cultural sector. Broadly, it encompasses:

- wide-ranging advocacy and service organisations (including ones with grant-providing programs);
- wide-ranging producing and presenting organisations;
- wide-ranging collecting, curating and exhibiting organisations.

These S2M arts sector entities variously provide the likes of:

- a range of ‘bridges’ for individual arts practitioners to journey from aspiration/training to professional practice within their respective fields;
- a platform for the presentation of new and emerging work;
- a relatively ‘safe’ and ‘affordable’ environment for experimentation and non-traditional collaborations; and
- significant community reach/access across socio-economic, demographic and geographic boundaries.

Of course, the S2M sector is much more than the above. Generally, it can be viewed as the primary ‘public activator’ of Australia’s arts and cultural life. It embraces and engages local artists, and markets and celebrates their work. Without the sector, there would be no significant bridge between individual artists and the ‘high end’ of the arts and cultural spectrum. The S2M arts sector is, essentially, the all-important occupier of the middle ground where most of the action (including innovation and experimentation) happens.

The following table shows the number of S2M arts organisation supported by each state and territory government on a triennial or multi-year basis, as well as the total annual investment each state/territory provides.

Table 1

Multi-year funding of the S2M arts sector per state/territory			
Figures are variously for the 2012-13 or 2013-14 financial years			
NOTE: The figures presented in some instances are broadly accurate rather than 'actuals'. The data was taken from the official web sites and the most recent annual reports of the various funding bodies.			
State /Funding source	No. of <b>S2M</b> orgs supported on a multi- year basis in 2012-13 or 2013-14	Total investment in multi-year funded <b>S2M</b> organisations in 2012-13 or 2013/14	Average investment per multi-year <b>S2M</b> organisation in 2012-13 or 2013-14
New South Wales (Arts NSW)	61*	\$10,598,000	\$173,737
Victoria (Arts Victoria)	78*	\$9,083,900	\$116,460
Queensland (Arts Queensland)	35	\$7,064,731	\$201,849
South Australia (Arts SA)	18*	\$2,988,060	\$166,003
Tasmania	No current multi-year funded S2M orgs. A new multi-year program will be in place from 2015. Currently all S2Ms are annually funded	N/A	N/A
Australian Capital Territory (Arts ACT)	11	\$1,130,500	\$102,772
Northern Territory (Arts NT)	22	\$3,258,930	\$148,133
<b>Western Australia (DCA)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$10,851,832</b>	<b>\$278,252</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>\$44,975,953</b>	<b>\$170,363</b>
<p>*NSW's reporting is complex and difficult to interpret – treat these figures with some caution. It should be noted, however, that the overwhelming bulk of its annual investment goes towards its major cultural institutions and performing arts companies, most of which have national status.</p> <p>**Victoria also funds 10 Leading Organisations at around \$17 million annually. This is in addition to its joint funding with the Australia Council of its MPA (Major Performing Arts Companies).</p> <p>*** SA also funds a small number of S2M organisations on an annual basis</p>			

Major conclusion to be drawn from the above funding data:

- Western Australia's S2M arts sector organisations, it would appear, are more generously funded than those in other states and territories.

There are likely to be a number of Western Australian S2M arts organisations surprised by the relative generosity of the State Government (via DCA) towards the sector.

There is also likely to be a greater number of Western Australian S2M arts organisations not particularly surprised by the information in the table below, showing the number of S2M organisations across all genres that are federally funded through the Australia Council for the Arts (as of 2013):

**TABLE 2**

Number of S2M organisations supported on a multi-year basis by the Australia Council in 2013									
This data was taken from the Australia Council website.									
The percentages in the bottom row have been calculated by the researcher utilising data presented in Table 1.									
	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	TOTAL
Chamber music	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Cross-artform	-	6	2	2	2	-	3	1	16
Dance		2	1	2	2	1	5	-	13
Orchestras	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Other music	-	5	-	2	-	-	3	2	12
Publishing	1	1	1	2	1	-	3	1	10
Service	1	7	2	3	1	1	5	1	21
Theatre	-	8	-	3	4	1	10	3	29
Visual arts	2	7	2	6	6	2	8	4	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>141</b>
% of total S2Ms in each state that are also funded by OzCo	45%	59%	41%	57%	94%	n/a	47%	31%	

From a Western Australian perspective, table 2 tells an all-too- familiar story. In 2013, only 12 (or 31%) of WA’s state-funded S2M triennial or multi-year organisations have multi-year status with the Australia Council (as Key Organisations or Key Emerging Organisations).

So much of what happens within the WA arts and cultural scene remains “out of sight, out of mind” when it comes to the Sydney-based Australia Council, and its peer review panels that are dominated by east coast-based representatives, most of whom never journey to Western Australia to see first-hand the work being produced here. The question here is: Are Western Australia’s S2M arts organisations being short-changed on the assessment of their ‘quality’, ‘reach’ and ‘impact’?

The lack of adequate levels of Australia Council support for WA’s S2M sector extends to all other aspects of Western Australia’s arts and cultural scene.

In the 2012-13 financial year, the Australia Council distributed \$174.8 million in funds across its entire portfolio. Western Australia received \$12.9 million of this funding. As the following table illustrates, on a per capita basis, there are three ‘poor relations’ in the national carve-up of arts funds: Western Australia, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. Western Australia received \$2.60 less per capita from the Australia Council than the national average. This has been pretty much a constant figure over the past decade.

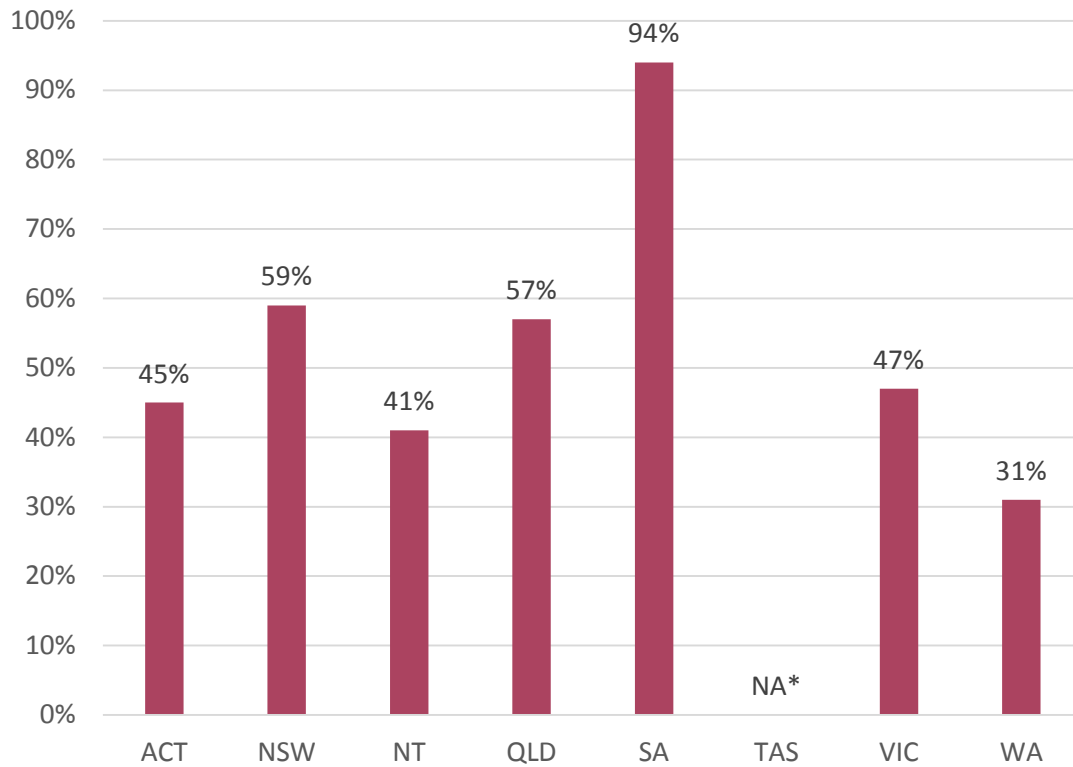
TABLE 3

<b>2012-13 Australia Council funding to states and territories on a per capita basis</b>				
The 2012-13 funding data was taken from the Australia Council’s annual report. The population estimates come from the ABS. The per capita dollar figures have been calculated by the researcher				
State/Territory	2012-13 Australia Council funding	Population (estimates)	Australia Council investment per capita	Ranking
NSW	\$58,600,000	7,500,600	\$7.80	4
VICTORIA	\$39,500,000	5,821,300	\$6.80	5
QUEENSLAND	\$15,900,000	4,708,500	\$3.40	7
SA	\$13,400,000	1,682,600	\$7.90	3
<b>WA</b>	<b>\$12,900,000</b>	<b>2,565,600</b>	<b>\$5.00</b>	<b>6</b>
TASMANIA	\$8,200,000	514,700	\$16.00	1
NT	\$2,600,000	243,700	\$10.60	2
ACT	\$1,300,000	385,600	\$3.40	7
	\$174,000,000	23,425,700	\$7.60 average	

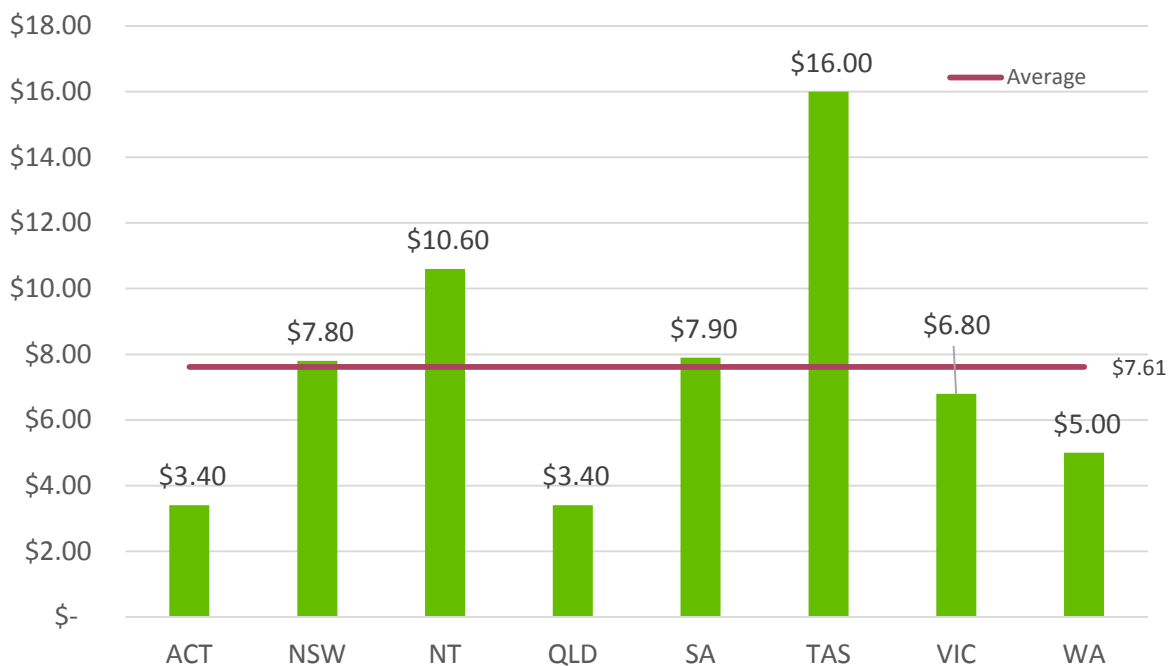
It needs to be noted, of course, that the Australia Council ‘priority funds’ organisations that demonstrate “national leadership in artistic vibrancy and sector development” and, for Western Australian organisations, this becomes a problematic criterion when not only are they largely “out of sight, out of mind” but they’re also competing with non-WA organisations that have historically been perceived (rightly or wrongly) as being at the ‘vanguard’ of the national scene.

It would appear that what’s been happening in Western Australia is that the state government has itself been largely addressing the funding gap arising from the relative lack of recognition of WA’s S2M arts sector on the part of the Australia Council. The result is that the WA government funds its S2M arts organisations at a significantly higher level than other states and territories. The question arising is: How long is it prepared to keep doing so?

**Percentage of State funded S2M organisations supported by the Australia Council with multi-year funding (2013)**



**Australia Council Funding to States and Territories Per Capita (2012 -2013)**



## 3. THE S2M ARTS SECTOR IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### 3.1 Overview of the sector and its status

The S2M arts sector in Western Australia has a broad geographic reach, crosses socio-economic divides, and embraces multiculturalism (although the latter has been somewhat muted by the recent closure of Kulcha). However, it has very particular delivery challenges due to the fact that Western Australia is not only a vast territory but also one of the world's most geographically isolated.

As already noted, the S2M arts sector can be best defined as that exceptionally diverse middle ground between individual arts practitioners and the 'high end' of the cultural spectrum. In WA's case, the 'high end' is predominantly occupied by the collecting and exhibiting institutions, the four 'flagship' performing arts companies, and the Perth International Arts Festival.

Historically, Western Australia's S2M arts sector has largely developed in 'glorious isolation' from the rest of Australia. Essentially, most organisations have grown out of the efforts of like-minded individuals who have decided that their personal passions have legitimacy as a public good. The major growth in the sector dates from the 1980s when successive state governments began to accept that they had an opportunity to enhance the arts and cultural lives of their citizens – and that by doing so, they might be applauded and garner a few more 'swinging' votes come election time.

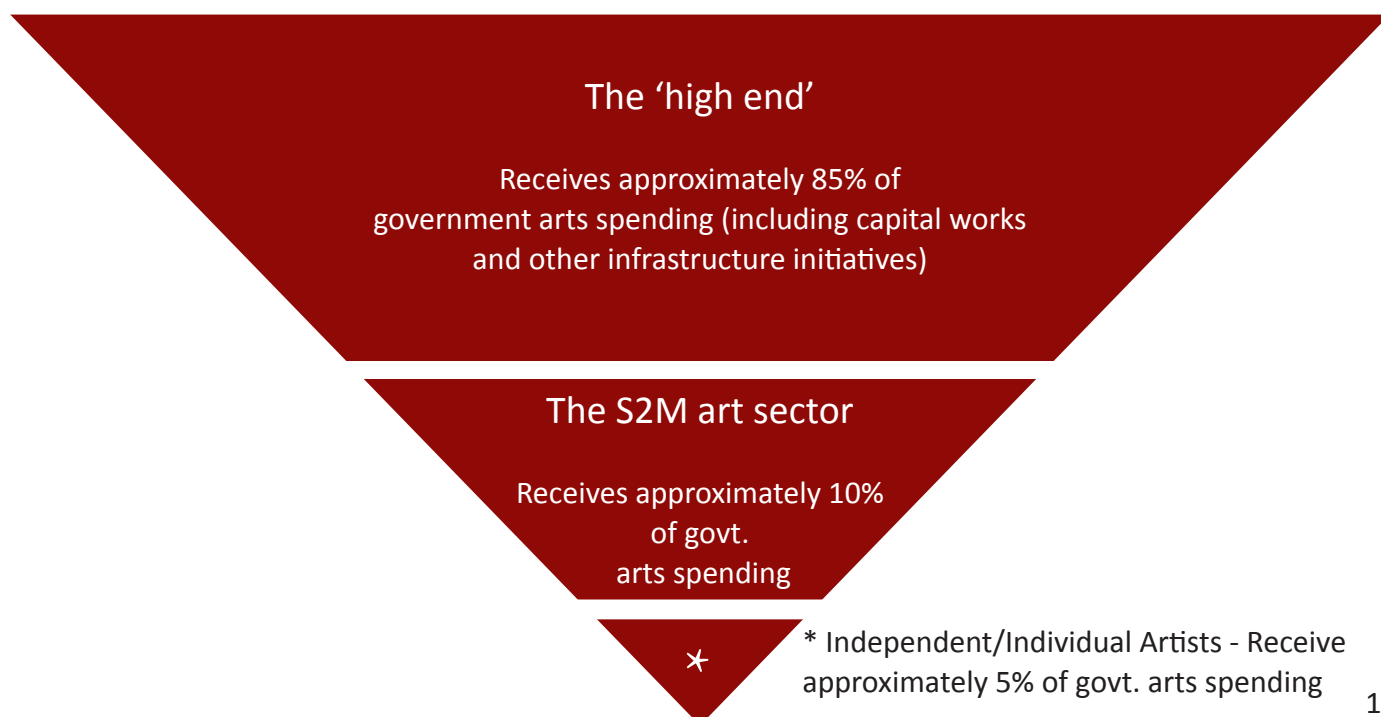
Today, the S2M arts sector really counts state-wide. It actively participates in the national and international arenas, and has a good number of notable achievements to its credit.

### 3.2 S2M sector's positioning within the broader arts and cultural scene

Ecology is "the study of the relationships between living organisms and their environment". The 'ecology' of the Western Australian arts and cultural sector can, arguably, be best represented in terms of its funding. An inverted pyramid best represents the relationship between the 'high end', the S2M sector, and independent/individual artists.

#### THE FUNDING ECOLOGY OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR

*This representation has been created by the researcher*



If we were to attempt to map the ecology of the intra- and inter-relationships between the three sectors, it's almost certain that we'd end up with an outrageously complex diagram that is difficult to read and provides minimal insight. However, based on a range of indicators, it is the opinion of the researcher that such a diagram might reveal that:

- there are significant intra-relationships within the 'high end', and that this sector is also engaging quite extensively with elite independent artists;
- there are significant intra-relationships within the S2M sector, a few significant inter- relationships with the 'high end', and many relationships with emerging artists within the independent sector.

What follows is some very general data relating to the make-up of WA's 'high end' and S2M arts sectors.

## The 'high end'

The vast bulk of the Western Australian government's budgetary allocation to culture and the arts goes towards supporting the following 'high end' entities shown in the table below.

<b>The 'high end' of the WA Arts and Culture Scene</b>		
<b>TABLE 4</b> Figures presented here come from the latest available annual reports of each entity		
<b>ENTITY / REVENUE FROM STATE GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>PRIMARY ROLE</b>
Art Gallery of Western Australia \$14,641,000 (2013-14)	Statutory authority	Collecting, preserving and exhibiting arts works
State Library of Western Australia \$31,593,000 (2012-13)	Statutory authority	Collecting, preserving and providing public access to literary and other texts
Western Australian Museum \$27,531,000 (2013-14)	Statutory authority	Collecting, preserving and exhibiting items of cultural significance
Perth Theatre Trust \$10,577,000 (2012-13)	Statutory authority	Managing and programming state- owned performing arts venues
ScreenWest \$10,846,000 (2013 -14)	Incorporated association, primarily funded by regulation through Lotterywest (Lotteries Commission Act 1990)	Policy development and funding for screen arts
State Records Office \$2,937,000	A division of DCA	Preservation of and access to state records
West Australian Symphony Orchestra \$2,082,295 (2013-14)	Major Performing Arts (MPA) Company, co-funded by DCA and the Australia Council	Production and presentation of classical music
West Australian Ballet \$2,294,848 (2013-14)	Major Performing Arts (MPA) Company, co-funded by DCA and the Australia Council	Production and presentation of ballet
West Australian Opera \$1,854,718 (2012-13)	Major Performing Arts (MPA) Company, co-funded by DCA and the Australia Council	Production and presentation of opera
Black Swan State Theatre Company \$1,385,479 (2013-14)	Major Performing Arts (MPA) Company, co-funded by DCA and the Australia Council	Production and presentation of theatre
Perth International Arts Festival \$7,600,000 (2013)	A division of the University of WA, primarily funded by regulation through Lotterywest (Lotteries Commission Act 1990)	Production and presentation of an annual multi-arts festival

In 2013-14, the four 'flagship' or Major Performing Arts (MPA) companies received \$7,617,340 in state government funds through the Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA). PIAF received \$7.6 million towards its 2013 festival from Lotterywest.

## The S2M Sector

In 2013-14, the 39 organisations within the S2M arts sector shared \$10,851,832 in operational funds from DCA. 20 were funded by triennial agreements, and 19 on multi-year agreements. Another, the Film and Television Institute, received its funding through ScreenWest.

TABLE 5

<b>WA'S Triennial &amp; Multi-Year funded S2M arts organisations</b>		
The list of organisations comes from the DCA website		
*Organisations that also receive multi-year Australia Council funding		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Funding status</b>	<b>Category</b>
Art On The Move*	Triennial	Visual Arts
Artsource	Triennial	Visual Arts
FORM*	Triennial	Visual Arts
International Arts Space Kellerberrin (IASKA)*	Multi-year	Visual Arts
Ausdance WA (as part of national body)*	Triennial	Performing Arts
Barking Gecko Theatre Company*	Triennial	Performing Arts
Buzz Dance Theatre Limited	Triennial	Performing Arts
Musica Viva Australia WA (as part of national body)*	Multi-year	Performing Arts
Performing Arts Centre Society Inc (Blue Room)*	Triennial	Performing Arts
Perth Theatre Company	Triennial	Performing Arts
Southern Edge Arts Inc.	Multi-year	Performing Arts
Spare Parts Puppet Theatre	Triennial	Performing Arts
Stages (WA Playwrights Consortium)	Multi-year	Performing Arts
STEPS, Youth Dance Company	Multi-year	Performing Arts
STRUT Dance*	Triennial	Performing Arts
Tura Events Co Ltd*	Multi-year	Performing Arts
WA Music Industry Association Inc	Triennial	Performing Arts
WA Youth Jazz Orchestra*	Multi-year	Performing Arts
WA Youth Music Company	Triennial	Performing Arts
WA Youth Theatre Company	Multi-year	Performing Arts
Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre*	Triennial	Performing Arts
Australian Writers' Guild (WA)	Multi-year	Literary arts
Children's Book Council of Australia (WA)	Multi-year	Literary arts
Fremantle Press	Triennial	Literary arts
Magabala Books Aboriginal Corporation*	Triennial	Literary arts
The Literature Centre	Multi-year	Literary arts
Writing WA	Multi-year	Literary arts
Community Arts Network WA Inc*	Triennial	Multi-arts
Country Arts (WA) Inc	Triennial	Multi-arts
DADAA (WA) Inc*	Multi-year	Multi-arts
Fremantle Arts Centre (FAC)	Triennial	Multi-arts
Goolarri Media Enterprises Pty Ltd	Multi-year	Multi-arts
Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre	Multi-year	Multi-arts
Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA)*	Triennial	Multi-arts
Propel Youth Arts	Multi-year	Multi-arts
Artrage Inc (Fringe World)	Triennial	Multi-arts (festival)
Awesome Arts Australia	Multi-year	Multi-arts (festival)
Museums Australia WA	Multi-year	Community Collections
Royal Historical Society WA	Multi-year	Community Collections
Film and Television Institute (FTI) – Screenwest funded	Triennial	Screen Arts

## Individual / Independent Artists

From DCA's annual reporting, it is difficult to quantify what funds are actually going directly to individual/independent artists. There are a number of funds dedicated to individuals (including professional development fellowships and travel grants) but in the broader scheme of things, the funds attached to these programs are minuscule.

## 4. THE SURVEY FINDINGS

As noted in the introduction, 50 S2M arts organisations were invited to participate in the survey, including all of the organisations that are in receipt of triennial or multi-year funding from DCA or ScreenWest. Two organisations chose to exclude themselves from the survey due to changes in their status, while another three did not respond. Data for one of these organisations was taken from its on-line 2013 annual report.

Removing the two organisations declaring themselves to be 'ineligible', the response rate to the survey was 92%.

### 4.1 About the organisations participating in the survey

#### Age of organisations

Of the 45 S2M arts organisations captured by the survey (see Appendix B), a majority (60%) were formally established in the 1980s and 1990s:

Founded pre-1970	4
Founded in 1970s	8
Founded in 1980s	13
Founded in 1990s	14
Founded in 2000s	5
Founded in the 2010s	1

With most existing S2M organisations having their origins in the 1980s and '90s, the sector is quite mature, with relatively few organisations being less than a decade old. It's worth noting that a number of once highly influential organisations that were established in the 1980s or '90s have recently 'shut up shop', most significantly Deckchair Theatre and KULCHA. A number of other organisations established during this period are today 'under duress'.

#### People

In 2013, collectively, the 45 reporting organisations had:

- 195 full-time employees (average per organisation: 4)
- 249 part-time employees (5.5)
- 1,209 casual employees and/or personnel on short-term contracts (26)
- 1,389 volunteers (31)
- 368 elected or appointed board members (8)
- 8,529 members (190)

From this data, we can broadly extrapolate that the average S2M arts organisation in Western Australia in 2013 had 4 full-time employees, 5.5 part-time employees, engaged 26 casual or contract personnel, attracted 31 volunteers, 190 members, and had 8 board of management members. This is a profile that indicates a sector that is advancing its cause with relatively modest resources.

## Income and Expenditure

In 2013, collectively, these 45 organisations:

- generated total income of \$61,344,615
- received \$11,780,344 (20%) of their total income from the State Government through DCA
- expended \$61,394,096
- had an accumulated net position of \$6,662,603

Of the 45 organisations:

- 25 reported gross income of less than \$1,000,000 (the lowest income was \$45,618)
- 20 reported gross income in excess of \$1,000,000 (the highest was \$9,169,700)

From this data, we can broadly extrapolate that the average S2M arts organisation in Western Australia in 2013 generated income of \$1,363,213 and expended \$1,364,313, and had an accumulated net position of \$148,057, with \$261,785 of total income coming from DCA.

## Audience

In 2013, collectively, these 45 organisations:

- attracted over 1,228,757 paid attendances and/or other engagements
- attracted over 636,626 free attendances and/or other engagements

When you divide the total number of attendances/engagements (1,865,383) into the total amount invested in these 45 organisations by the State Government through the Department of Culture and the Arts (\$11,780,344), you have a per capita subsidy per attendance/engagement of \$6.31.

The per capita subsidy figure is actually a SIGNIFICANT INDICATOR of the relative value that funders place on particular sectors of endeavour, whether these funders are governments, commercial enterprises or private donors.

Western Australia's S2M arts sector receives a relatively modest per capita subsidy from DCA compared with those of the 'flagship' MPA arts companies that are co-funded with the Australia Council. From reviewing 2013 annual reports, the four 'flagship' MPA companies collectively received from DCA an average per capita per attendance subsidy of approximately \$32. That's a \$32 state government subsidy for every person who attends a live performance by a 'flagship' company. When you factor in the Australia Council's investment, this subsidy is significantly increased. No actual overall figure is presented here due to some ambiguities in the way funding has been reported across the four companies, as well as by DCA and the Australia Council.

## Partnerships / Collaborations

In 2013, collectively, these 45 organisations engaged in:

- 684 artistic partnerships
- 306 financial (cash) partnerships
- 261 operational (in-kind) partnerships
- 98 media partnerships
- 61 other forms of partnership

From this data, we can broadly extrapolate that the average S2M arts organisation in Western Australia in 2013 entered into 15 artistic, 7 financial, 6 operational and 2 media partnerships.

This partnership data partly serves to indicate the ecology of the S2M arts sector. If you were to map the 1,410 partnerships/collaborations reported by the sector in 2013, you would have a complex series of connecting lines within and extending beyond the sector.

### 4.2 Sector challenges

The final section of the survey was titled **BEYOND 2013** and asked respondents to freely address four open-ended questions.

Firstly, they were asked to identify what they believed to be **the key challenges facing WA's S2M arts sector**.

Collectively, the respondents nominated well over 60 key challenges. These challenges have been grouped and placed into a number of broad categories:

#### FUNDING / FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (GOVERNMENT-RELATED) – 50 NOMINATIONS

- Financial sustainability pressures / lack of surety and security / inadequate base funding x 23
- The arts are not valued as a central pillar within government/society x 5
- Lack of indexation on core funding – funding base actually going backwards x 4
- Limited range of available government funding sources – local, state and federal x 3
- Inflexible DCA grant application system/time lines x 3
- Lack of Australia Council support x 2
- Need for longer-term funding cycles for established organisations x 2
- More limited funding opportunities for non-performing arts organisations x 2
- Increasing expectations on part of government for non-arts outcomes x 2
- Lack of local government commitment to supporting arts organisations x 1
- Agencies such as Healthway need to be more flexible/realistic in 'outcome' expectations x 1
- Cuts in funding streams from non-arts government departments (e.g., Education, Health) x 1
- Funding inequity between metro and regional arts organisations x 1

The key message here is that S2M sector organisations believe they are the 'poor relatives' of the WA arts and cultural sector, despite collectively delivering the greatest outcomes and playing the essential nurturing and development role that is essential to a vibrant and innovative arts scene.

## HUMAN / ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY – 39 nominations

- Inability to retain personnel due to stress, poor wages, limited career paths, etc x 14
- Capacity to address the increasing reporting/compliance demands of the funding bodies x 9
- Lack of suitable/affordable office/rehearsal/performance spaces x 4
- Limited professional development opportunities x 3
- Lack of adequate administrative resources (human and other) x 3
- Lack of training and professional development for arts managers x 3
- Lack of opportunities for artists to transition beyond the S2M sector x 1
- Increased expectations from funders/sponsors x 1
- Arts management courses not keeping pace with the changing skill sets now required x 1

The key message here is that the S2m sector is significantly challenged in attracting and maintaining personnel with the requisite skill and experience sets, and that this is due to inadequate core capacity across the sector – and that this is occurring in an environment in which government expectations are increasing.

## MARKETING / TOURING / GLOBALISATION / DIGITAL PLATFORMS – 28 nominations

- Challenge of attracting/maintaining audience in a crowded multi-platform marketplace x 7
- WA's perceived geography and psychological isolation / low national visibility of WA arts x 4
- High cost of regional touring x 3
- Limited touring opportunities nationally and internationally x 2
- Lack of opportunities for the S2M sector to being showcased in PIAF x 2
- Maintenance of quality / excellence x 2
- Keeping ticket prices affordable in the face of rising production costs x 2
- Need to develop and financially exploit digital platforms x 2
- Lack of cultural tourism initiatives x 1
- High cost of marketing x 1
- High cost of IT and new technologies x 1
- Growing disparity between the way different generations engage with the arts x1

The key message here is that, despite 'virtual' globalisation, Western Australia's actual isolation (and the vastness of its territory) remains a real issue in reaching and engaging with audiences in a cost-effective manner.

## VISION/LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE – 15 nominations

- Lack of sector leadership / lack of sector champions x 6
- Lack of vision / clearly articulated arts and cultural policy x 5
- Lack of adequate governance capability at board level x 4

The key message here is that there is still a perception that WA lacks leaders and vision when it comes to the arts and cultural sector, and that the S2M sector is particularly under-recognised and under-valued.

## FUNDING / FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (NON-GOVERNMENT RELATED) – 11 nominations

- Limited sponsorship opportunities for S2M sector within competitive marketplace x 4
- Big 4 ‘flagship’ companies attracting big corporate \$s – S2M arts largely ignored x 3
- Lack of a genuinely active and engaged West Australian philanthropic sector x 4

The key message here is that the S2M arts sector believes that its opportunities in attracting corporate and philanthropic support is limited by the amount of ‘oxygen’ being sucked out of the arena by the likes of the Big 4 performing arts companies.

## COLLABORATION AND PARTNERING – 4 nominations

- Lack of connectedness between S2M organisations resulting in missed partnering opportunities x 2
- Too much inter-sector competition for finite funds x 1
- Poor scheduling within the performing arts resulting in feast or famine for audiences x 1

Interestingly, this issue didn’t feature strongly in ‘challenges’ but it is very prominent in the ways the sector could become more resilient.

## INDEPENDENT ARTISTS – 4 nominations

- Lack of infrastructure and funding programs to support independent artists x 3
- Lack of independent producers to service and nurture independent artists x 1

Here we have an issue that is almost ‘between the cracks’. We have in the S2M sector a number of organisations servicing the needs of independent artists, with some organisations utilising devolved DCA funding in doing so. However, the individual/independent artists are being increasingly marginalised at both state and federal funding levels.

### 4.3 Sector resilience

Secondly, in the **BEYOND 2013** section, respondents were asked to identify how they felt WA’s S2M arts sector could become more resilient in an uncertain world.

Collectively, the respondents suggested over 50 ways for making the S2M sector more resilient, as listed below:

- Increased partnerships and collaborations x 12
- Work smarter together / share, problem solve and plan together x 11
- Greater professional development / training opportunities x 9
- Longer funding contracts – e.g., 5-year instead of 3-year cycles x 6
- Better training/information/induction for board members x 6
- Capacity (esp. financial) to retain skilled and highly-valued personnel x 6
- Broaden audience and stakeholder mix x 3
- Need DCA staff to champion the sector, not police it x 3
- Government funding to be indexed x 3
- Greater appreciation of the capacity of the arts to transform and enrich the public realm x 3
- Develop strategies to encourage greater corporate and philanthropic support x 3

- Greater capital works expenditure to ensure adequate infrastructure x 3
- Merge like-minded organisations x 2
- Enhanced IT capabilities x 2
- A broad-based on-going advocacy campaign x 2
- Only support orgs demonstrating a dynamic role/impact in WA's cultural ecology x 2
- Eliminate under-performing S2M organisations x 2
- Undertake more overtly commercial activities x 2
- Define the sector in terms of impact/reach/worth and fund accordingly x 2
- Funding for 'big ideas' – moving beyond 'survival' mode x 2
- Need to 're-frame' the sector's relationship with government x 2
- Promote social innovation and explore new ways of meeting community needs x 2
- Work towards outcome-based funding, with service delivery designed accordingly x 2
- Enlist sector champions to actively lobby local, state and federal governments x 1
- Need to 'shore up' the sector's reserves x 1
- Greater sector ownership of operational premises (i.e., real estate assets) x 1
- Better understanding of professional 'best practice', including benchmarks, etc. x 1
- Government investment in activating unused spaces for creative pursuits x 1
- Government guarantees of recurrent funding x 1
- Longer lead-times on multi-year/triennial funding decisions x 1
- Utilising lessons from 'corporate history' to plan more effectively x 1
- Strengthen the sector-wide ecology, broadening the base beyond the 'majors' x 1
- Establish a group/agency capable of advocating on behalf of worthy but threatened orgs x 1
- A greater entrepreneurial ethos to underpin the entire sector x 1
- Provide entertainment services based on demonstrated demand x 1
- Greater focus on touring product to broaden audience base x 1
- More active direct engagement with the K-12 education sector x 1
- Identify and develop sector leaders who can powerfully advocate on behalf of the sector x 1
- Encourage greater mentoring by the 'high end' companies/institutions of the S2M sector x 1
- Build genuine partnerships between government and not-for-profit organisations x 1
- Lotterywest to insist that PIAF programs more local work from the S2M sector x 1

As indicated above, the most frequently cited means of ensuring greater resilience within the S2M sector are:

- Increased partnerships and collaborations x 12
- Work smarter together / share, problem solve and plan together x 11

Clearly, partnerships/collaborations can and do occur between two or more organisations within the sector. The 'work smarter together' is a bigger sector-wide imperative, and as a broad strategy it has the most obvious legitimacy in terms of potentially achieving greater sector resilience.

How can the sector 'work smarter together'? And to what end?

## 4.4 Sector investment

Thirdly, respondents were asked to identify their top three priority areas for increased sector funding.

Collectively, the respondents indicated the following as priorities:

- Increased core funding for S2M organisations, including full annual indexation x 19
- Greater investment in S2M-specific administration, rehearsal and performance facilities x 13
- Greater audience development / access/marketing initiatives x 10
- Greater funding for professional development programs, including business skills x 9
- Greater funding for the delivery of regional programs x 7
- Greater funding for the development of new/original work x 7
- Greater rental subsidies for arts facilities, including by LGAs x 5
- A flexible DCA fund dedicated to supporting 'alternative' / 'big idea' initiatives x 4
- Collaboration & partnership initiatives, including marketing and other economies of scale x 4
- Greater support for independent artists x 4
- Greater development for performing arts producers, visual arts curators, literary editors x 3
- Greater funding for early career and emerging artists x 3
- Greater S2m sector ownership of their 'real estate', providing greater financial surety x 3
- Greater access to the global arts scene in terms of practices and collaborations, etc. x 2
- Extension of matching funding schemes aligned to success in attracting corporate funds x 2
- Greater IT support, including on-line distribution channels x 2
- Greater funds to preserve heritage and other significant collections through digitalisation x 2
- Greater outcome-based investment in Aboriginal cultural development and well-being x 2
- Greater funding for organisations demonstrating 'high performance' x 1
- More devolved artform-specific funding to organisation best placed to distribute it x 1
- Greater funding for national and international touring x 1
- On-going funds to celebrate WA's cultural diversity and richness x 1
- Greater funds to preserve WA's built heritage and to promote the state's history x 1
- Mobile staging for regional touring x 1
- Guaranteed funding for new WA Museum with enhanced access x 1
- Funding for leadership/champion development x 1
- Commitment to the development of a S2M sector 10-year vision/policy/plan x 1
- Investment in paid internships x 1

There are no surprises here, with greater core funding being nominated by 19 respondents, followed by infrastructure needs (13), more funds for audience development/marketing (10), more funds for professional development (9), regional touring (7) and the development of new work (7).

## 4.5 Sector vision

Finally, respondents were asked to state their vision for WA's S2M arts sector.

Many of the submitted 'vision' statements were quite artform specific. Here is a selection of some of the more generic statements:

*"A strong, supportive, healthy sector which fosters artists and arts-workers alike; which is valued and recognised not just for its contribution to artistic excellence, but also to the culture, health, and economy of WA and its community; and which has been sufficiently nurtured so that it is resilient and increasingly independent."*

*"A sector that is delivering exceptional value to the people of Western Australia through strong leadership and outstanding performance . . ."*

*"A healthy, diverse ecology where independent artists move freely through the performing arts sector across the State as appropriate to the needs of their practice at the time; where local funded organisations lead the way in making outstanding new work and reaching out to connect to new audiences; where the people of WA embrace the arts, taking risks as well as enjoying favourite styles of work all year round (not just during Fringe); where our venues have strong brand identities and program local work alongside the best Australian and International S2M made work; where West Australian artists are paid appropriately, make great work and take it to the world."*

*"Diverse, interesting, artistically innovative with a commitment to the community that builds future audiences while simultaneously building the international reputation of Western Australia for supporting, innovative and experimental arts programs."*

*"A sector that provides equal access and engagement for all WA residents to quality arts experiences, regardless of race, religion, income or whether they live in metropolitan, regional or remote areas."*

*"Well-funded, vital, flexible, adaptable, changing, connected, enjoyable, supportive, collaborative, ambitious"*

*"Myriad organisations creating a vibrant and thriving arts and culture atmosphere that fosters strong community; builds empathy and social support; encourages an increased understanding of each other; promotes the celebration of life and cultural differences; and gives people the chance to connect. A strong arts sector can be the gentle voice that brings about the most profound and positive social change."*

*"A vibrant, integrated and cooperative arts and culture environment working collaboratively to deliver quality experiences across the state."*

*"A S2M sector that spends less time wringing its hands in survival mode and more time developing, creating and delivering amazing arts experiences for the WA community. The culture of scarcity, survival mode and envy of others is only going to lead to more of the same. We need to effectively articulate the value of our work and genuinely respect the work and achievements of our peers in the S2M sector and in doing so become a cohesive group."*

“A sector that is vibrant, resilient, well funded and valued. A sector that is a hot house of innovation, employment and artistic development and best practice cultural development programs. A sector that has clear pathways articulated with the majors and provides many levels of opportunity for emerging arts workers and practitioners. A sector that is able to leverage significant corporate partners due to working collaboratively with each other and is supported by the big end of town. A sector that nurtures talent rather than burns it out. A sector that has innovation as its hallmark, with failure considered part of the process not a reason to defund.”

*“Confident, brash, supported by politicians, recognised for its special status as the leading edge of arts practice.”*

“A S2M sector that is well-resourced, effective and innovative; that is brave in supporting innovation and supportive in accepting failure; and contributes to the broader community by ensuring practitioners are career empowered, internationally capable, and celebrated at home.”

As these vision statements clearly indicate, there is much common ground within the S2M arts sector in terms of identity and aspiration. Wordsmithing vision statements is a somewhat thankless task because inevitably the passion and the nuance falls victim to the imperative for the statement to be all things to all people.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, it needs to be noted that the organisations responding to the S2M arts sector survey do not represent the entire sector in Western Australia. However they do represent a very significant proportion of it.

### 5.1 Sector definition

Western Australia's small-to-medium (S2M) arts sector can, most pragmatically, be defined as encompassing those established groups, companies, organisations and institutions that regularly (through triennial and multi-year agreements) and/or intermittently (through project and other grants) receive funds from the State of Western Australia through the Department for Culture and the Arts (DCA), but are not classified by DCA as being major arts/cultural entities.

The S2M descriptor, however, is something of a misnomer as the sector includes several organisations that regularly turn over more than \$3 million annually. One has earned income (through ticket sales) that currently exceeds that of each of the four MPA companies.

### 5.2 Sector dimensions

In terms of the broad parameters of the above sector definition, a number of statements can be made in relation to the dimensions of the S2M arts sector in Western Australia based on the survey findings.

#### PEOPLE

The S2M sector comprises at least 45 formally established groups, companies, organisations and institutions state-wide and collectively they:

- employ (full-time, part-time, casual, contract, etc) in the vicinity of 1,600 individual artists and arts workers
- attract over 8,000 members, over 360 board members, and over 1,300 volunteers

#### MONEY

- the S2M sector is currently generating income in excess of \$61 million annually (with approximately \$11.5 million, or 20%, coming from the State Government)
- currently, around 25 S2M organisations have a gross income below \$1 million
- currently, around 20 S2M organisations have a gross income in excess of \$1 million
- the S2M sector is currently expending in excess of \$61 million annually
- the S2M sector currently has a collective net position of around \$6.5 million
- currently, fewer than 10 S2M organisations are in a trading deficit

#### REACH (AUDIENCE)

- the S2M sector attracted over 1.2 million paid attendances/engagements in 2013
- the S2M sector attracted over 0.6 million free attendances/engagements in 2013
- the State Government subsidy per attendance/engagement was approximately \$6 in 2013
- the S2M sector electronically engages with hundreds of thousands of individuals annually through its extensive and varied telecommunications presence. Indeed, for some service organisations within the sector, their primary engagement is through on-line and related services. An example of an organisation with a high electronic profile is writingWA

- the S2M sector engages with hundreds of thousands of individuals annually through the production and distribution of tangible products, such as works of art, books, CDs and DVDs
- the S2M sector informally engages with hundreds of thousands of individuals annually through its various contributions to the life and variety of the public realm. Remove this contribution and our public realm would be less rich.

### 5.3 Sector 'ecologies'

The 'ecology' of the S2M sector encompasses partnerships and collaborations, both within and beyond the sector.

In 2013, the S2M sector was engaging in:

- at least 684 artistic partnerships (intra and inter-sector, and beyond)
- at least 306 financial (cash) partnerships
- at least 261 operational (in-kind) partnerships
- at least 98 media partnerships (print, broadcast, digital)
- at least 61 other forms of partnership (including academic research)

These figures suggest that the S2M sector is 'ecologically' very active, and this reflects an acknowledged imperative within the sector that, in order to survive, it must diversify its creative impulses, its income sources, and its audience. This is a message that has been promoted by DCA in its on-going funding negotiations with the sector in recent years.

### 5.4 Sector 'benchmarking' (funding)

From a funding perspective, the evidence suggests that Western Australia's S2M arts sector is currently more generously funded by its state government than are the comparable sectors in the other states and territories (see table in Section 2).

Currently, however, apart from Queensland and the ACT, the S2M sectors in all other states and territories are much more generously funded by the federal government (via the "arm's length" Australia Council) than is Western Australia's S2M sector.

It could possibly be argued that the WA government is investing more highly in its S2M art sector due to a demonstrable lack of support for the sector from the Australia Council. There is, however, no 'policy' statement to suggest this is the case.

The relative inequity in Australia Council funding for the Western Australian arts and cultural sector is historical. Bluntly, it can be categorically stated that WA has never received funding from the Australia Council in accordance with either its population or its contribution to the Australian economy.

You can almost hear the ghosts of past Australia Council personnel arguing that this is because, historically, the Western Australian arts and cultural sector has not exhibited sufficient quality and influence to justify significant investment from the national arts funding body. Or that, historically, the Australia Council has not received the volume of applications from Western Australia in accordance with its contribution, percentage-wise, to the national population.

Can the reality of Western Australia's relationship with the Australia Council (headquartered in Sydney, NSW) be legitimately characterised by either or both of the following observations?

- WA's geographic isolation has made the Australia Council's concept of genuine fair and balanced 'peer panel assessment' virtually unworkable. Yes, you can watch a hand-held video recording of a performance from WA, but does this represent the experience of being there as an audience member? Given that most peer panelists live and operate within the eastern seaboard of Australia, and can relatively cheaply journey between Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra, is there any surprise in the fact that currently only around 12 of WA's S2M organisations are on multi-year funding agreements with the Australia Council?
- When you look at the S2M arts organisations from NSW and Victoria that are on the Australia Council's multi-year funding list, you see a great many organisations that in terms of quality, reach and impact are, arguably, not performing nearly as well as a number of WA organisations that are not on multi-year contracts with the Australia Council. Why are these organisations perceived as being worthy of Australia Council support? Is it a case that their state governments won't fund them to the level they believe they deserve, and that the Australia Council is shoring up the difference?

The above questions are entirely legitimate. We're talking here about equity in the distribution of public funds.

Ideally, it would be desirable for perceived inequities in the distribution of Australia Council funds to be formally explored, and for any necessary remedial action to be undertaken as a matter of utmost priority.

## 5.5 Sector 'value' against investment

It is clear that in terms of per capita subsidy per attendance, the WA S2M arts sector provides its products and services at a much lower average subsidy than the MPA companies, PIAF, and the collecting and exhibiting institutions. In 2013, the state subsidy per attendance/engagement within the S2M arts sector was around \$6 per head.

No one can deny that the costs associated in producing and presenting work on the part of the MPA companies, PIAF, and the collecting and exhibiting institutions, can be very high indeed. In some cases, in terms of the per capita subsidy per attendance, the government's contribution can be in excess of a hundred dollars per attendance. But we can't afford to bemoan this investment at the 'high end' of the arts and cultural sector. Ecology-wise, all sectors need to be valued and supported in accordance with their respective operational costs and contributions to an ever-evolving arts and cultural scene.

The question arising for the current state government, and its opposition, is one of whether votes can be attracted through the articulation of an unambiguous arts and cultural policy that demonstrates a positive link between government investment and societal value.

## 5.6 Sector challenges

As indicated in Section 4, the Western Australian S2M arts sector sees its greatest single challenge as being inadequate base-level government funding.

The sector wants the state government to accept that its current base-level funding is inadequate in terms of establishing and sustaining the societal values and outcomes that the government expects in return for its investment in the sector.

We know from research into the funding by other state governments and territories that the WA government is today arguably the most generous in terms of its funding for the S2M sector.

We also know that, arguably, Western Australia's S2M sector receives a comparatively 'raw deal' from the Australia Council.

We also suspect that the state government, in its funding, may have been (possibly un- or subconsciously) compensating for the less-than- adequate federal funding of WA's S2M arts sector.

Where do we go from here? Is this an opportunity for state governments (of whatever colour) to accept that Western Australia's artists and arts organisations are at a distinct disadvantage within the national funding scene due to their relative physical isolation? We've been trying to deny that this is the case ever since the invention of the Internet and the World Wide Web but, in truth, virtual connections are no substitute for "real time, real place, real people" experiences. And it's here that we continue to be at a disadvantage when it comes to having the worth of Western Australia's arts and cultural product fairly assessed within the national arena.

## 5.7 Sector alignment with government policy (state and federal)

'Creating Value' is currently the policy imperative articulated by the state government through DCA and it "articulates the principles, outcomes and strategies that will guide the activities of the DCA for the next five years". Due to 'expire' this year (2014), it encompasses two major principles: creativity and engagement. However, there appears to have been no published updates on the advances in this policy's implementation since 2011.

The S2M arts sector is fundamentally aligned with government policy in that it variously identifies, develops and promotes artistic talent, and provides accessible avenues for public engagement.

There is a perception, articulated in a number of responses to the BEYOND 2013 questions in the survey (that are strictly confidential), that the state government wants to own the achievements of the S2M sector but is not so keen on acknowledging the inadequate core funding the sector receives.

**"A culturally ambitious nation"** is the title of the Australia Council's recently released Strategic Plan 2014-2019. It has four key goals:

- Goal One: Australian arts are without borders
- Goal Two: Australia is known for its great art and artists
- Goal Three: The arts enrich daily life for all
- Goal Four: Australians cherish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture

The Plan states:

*The Council's Strategic Plan articulates our leadership role in building a vibrant arts ecology by fostering excellence and increasing national and international engagement with Australian art and artists.*

*We will continue to fund excellent art across all art forms. We will adapt the way we invest in the arts to increase our impact and become more open and reflective of evolving arts practice. We will change our funding programs so that artists can apply for the funding they need, without having to fit their practice into art form categories. We will make longer term funding available to arts organisations to give them the security to plan ahead.*

*Six-year funding will be available for arts organisations of significant regional, national or international standing. Organisations must demonstrate artistic achievement and ambition with a compelling six year strategic vision. Funding for successful organisations will commence in 2016.*

The Australia Council's move to providing six-year funding opportunities for a select number of key organisations will be a real game changer and, logically, a six-year cycle also needs to be offered by DCA to those WA organisations that are successful in achieving this status with the Australia Council.

However, will the number of organisations achieving six-year funding status with the Australia Council, given its budget constraints, be far fewer than the number currently on three-year agreements (140+)? And given that the organisations currently on three-year contracts are going to have to demonstrate that they are **“of significant regional, national or international standing”** in order to gain six-year funding, how many S2M organisations will be deemed to be not of sufficient standing?

The Australia Council states that “organisations and individuals will also have the opportunity to apply for project funding for up to three years” and that:

*We are currently developing the assessment criteria for six year funding. These will be published before the grant round opens in January [2015]. The broad themes will cover:*

- *Artistic merit*
- *Organisational capacity*
- *Contribution to strategic goals of the Australia Council*

This very much appears to be a recipe for actually funding fewer Key Organisations, while providing the successful applicants with greater funding security.

In the meantime, other state governments have been entering into longer-term funding agreements with select organisations, including NSW and Victoria.

## 5.8 Sector vision

This desktop study can't hope to produce a vision for the S2M arts sector. This is up to the sector itself. However, in canvassing sector visions in the BEYOND 2013 section of the survey, the responses would suggest that a vision statement the entire sector can willingly share is entirely possible.

## 5.9 Sector funding

As indicated by the S2M survey results, this is the 'big one'.

And it's even bigger with the Australia Council's recent announcement of its six-year funding cycle for select key organisations that meet its yet-to-be-announced criteria. This announcement came after the survey involved with this research was conducted.

The six-year funding status within the S2M sector will be nationally 'competed for' in 2015, pitting every S2M arts organisation in Australia against all others – and the 'winners' are likely to become a select group akin to the MPA companies. In essence, this is likely to be sector rationalisation on the part of the Australia Council by placing what will undoubtedly be 'high hurdles' in front of the S2M sector, and it is likely to eliminate a whole host of organisations currently on three-year funding arrangements.

This has major implications for the S2M arts sector Australia-wide, and will be an issue for every state government and territory to thrash of with the Australia Council.

In the meantime, on a per capita basis, the Western Australia government is currently not only funding more organisations within the S2M arts sector, but funding them at a higher level than is the case on the part of governments in the four other mainland states. These figures are very much an approximation, but it would appear that:

- WA funds one S2M arts organisation per every 65,000 citizens
- Victoria funds one S2M arts organisation per every 75,000 citizens
- SA funds one S2M arts organisation per every 93,000 citizens
- NSW funds one S2M arts organisation per every 123,000 citizens
- Queensland funds one S2M arts organisation per every 135,000 citizens

From the above, we know that the relative generosity of the WA state government towards the S2M arts sector is countered by the relative lack of generosity on the part of the federal government through the Australia Council.

The WA government should be congratulated on its funding of the S2M arts sector, but also reminded that, while comparatively generous, it is currently perceived as not being sufficient to sustain the sector in accordance with the expectations the government has for the sector across multiple social outcome areas, including education, health, law and order.

The WA government should also be reminded that federally the WA S2M arts sector continues to be under-supported, and that this relative lack of support continues more broadly across the entire WA arts and cultural sector. And, there is the potential for the WA S2M arts sector to be further 'short- changed' through the new six-year funding program for selected Key Organisations. How many of the 12 WA S2M organisations currently funded on three-year contracts will ultimately succeed in attracting six-year funding?

The message to Canberra by WA's elected state and federal parliamentarians should be that "it is not acceptable for Western Australia's arts and cultural scene to be continually under-valued through the funding decisions of the Australia Council for the Arts" – or some such comparable message.

In the meantime, given what is emerging within the new federal funding regime, it could be argued that a mutually-agreed pre-emptive rationalisation should occur within Western Australia's S2M arts sector, resulting in fewer organisations with a stronger claim to six-year funding status with the Australia Council.

This has already very recently happened within the youth dance sector, by way of example, with the amalgamation of Buzz and STEPS to form a single youth-focused contemporary dance company.

What further opportunities do we have to draw like-minded, 'common interest' organisations together, either under existing structures or new umbrellas? Ultimately, every S2M organisation has a responsibility to question its *raison d'être* and whether its 'reason for being' is just as valid now as it was when the organisation came into being.

It is this researcher's opinion, based on the survey findings and comparing the funding of the WA S2M arts sector with that of other states and territories, as well as taking into account a range of other current and emerging evidence, that:

- compared with other states and territories, the WA government is 'per capita' supporting more S2M arts organisations on a triennial and/or multi-year basis, and doing so more generously;
- the Australia Council is arguably (and some would say certainly) under-recognising and under-funding WA's S2M arts sector, and is likely to further discriminate against our S2M organisations through its new six-year funding model;
- there is arguably a need for organisations within WA's S2M arts sector to more actively engage in conversations about how they can collectively provide more dynamic (and sustainable) outcomes for their constituents, including the contemplation of possible amalgamations and other measures; and,
- there is arguably a need on the part of WA's corporate sector and private philanthropists to much more fully embrace the S2M sector – it is the 'bridge' between individual artists and the 'high end', and if the S2Ms are not appropriately championed, the future could be quite arid for the 'high end' organisations.

While not directly canvassed in this desktop research, it needs to be noted that Western Australia's arts and cultural scene has, unlike most other states and territories, two significant de facto arts funding agencies: Lotterywest and Healthway. Their respective ability to contribute to the arts and cultural sector depends on (a) revenue through the purchase of Lotterywest products and (b) revenue through the tobacco excise. For these avenues of funding to be maintained at current levels, Western Australians must continue to 'gamble' and also to buy tobacco products. If Healthway succeeds in creating a non-smoking Western Australia, then it will no longer have the capacity to support the arts and cultural sector.

Given the current and emerging funding constraints, state and federally, it is a strong recommendation that representatives of WA's S2M arts sector get together to formally discuss issues raised in this report, and to agree a strategy for the sector's on-going viability in the face of current and emerging challenges, not all of which are financial.

In anticipation of such a gathering, it is this researcher's opinion that Western Australia's S2M arts sector should be encouraging the state government (through DCA) to create:

- a professional development fund specifically designed to enhance the 'skill sets' of the sector's managers and administrators, as well as those serving on boards of management; and,
- a 'partnerships and collaborations' fund to support particular special initiatives, either intra- or inter-sector.

Finally, it should be noted that this was a study of modest scale, undertaken by an individual researcher within a tight timeframe and with a purely 'desktop' brief. And, it should also be noted that a number of questions raised in the survey instrument have not been reported upon. This is simply because the data received was insufficient to produce a 'reportable' conclusion.

# APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

IN CONFIDENCE

## SURVEY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S SMALL-TO-MEDIUM (S2M) ARTS SECTOR

CONDUCTED AUGUST 2014

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### PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THIS SURVEY . . .

The purpose of this survey is to obtain an accurate snapshot of Western Australia's S2M arts sector in calendar year 2013.

This data will inform a submission to State Treasury by the Chamber of Arts and Culture.

For the purposes of this survey, we are defining WA's S2M arts sector as those established groups, companies, organisations and institutions that regularly and/or intermittently receive funds through the Department for Culture and the Arts (DCA), but are NOT classified as a being a major arts/cultural entity.

The information, data and opinions you provide in this survey will remain STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and will be anonymously collated, interpreted and reported.

Through this survey of officially recognised entities within the S2M arts sector, we hope to quantify such vital statistics as:

- the TOTAL INCOME of the S2M sector in 2013 (and the percentage of TOTAL INCOME that came from the State Government through DCA)
- the TOTAL EXPENDITURE of the S2M sector in 2013
- the overall NET POSITION of the S2M sector in 2013
- the reach/impact of the S2M sector in 2013

TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY, please directly enter your responses within the columns and spaces provided within this Word document. Save the document as S2M Survey followed by the name or abbreviation of your organisation, e.g., S2M Survey – Mad Fish Circus.

Kindly complete and return to [bstrickl@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bstrickl@bigpond.net.au) by no later than FRIDAY 15 AUGUST.

Many thanks!

Barry Strickland  
(on behalf of the Chamber of Arts and Culture and the S2M Arts Sector Working Group)

E-mail: [bstrickl@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bstrickl@bigpond.net.au) / Mobile: 0420 498 904

SECTION A: YOUR ORGANISATION

	Enter responses in this column
Name of your company, organisation, institution, group	
Your name	
Your position	
In what year did your company, organisation, institution or group come into being?	
Is your company, organisation, institution or group a member of the Chamber of Art and Culture?	
<p>Your principal area(s) of arts and cultural activity</p> <p>(Please remove all those options in the right-hand column that are NOT applicable. And if none of these descriptors apply, please enter a descriptor that does.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performing arts</li> <li>▪ Visual arts</li> <li>▪ Literary arts</li> <li>▪ Screen arts</li> <li>▪ Collecting and exhibiting</li> <li>▪ Multi-artform (including festivals)</li> <li>▪ Single artform service/funding provider</li> <li>▪ Multi-artform service/funding provider</li> </ul>
Your number of <b>full-time</b> employees (2013)	
Your number of <b>part-time</b> employees (2013)	
Your number of <b>contracted</b> personnel (2013)	
Your number of <b>volunteers</b> (2013)	
Your number of <b>board members</b> (2013)	
If membership based, how many <b>members</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual members:</li> <li>▪ Non-individual:</li> <li>▪ TOTAL MEMBERS:</li> </ul>

## SECTION B: YOUR 2013 INCOME, EXPENDITURE & NET POSITION

### Question 1

In the 2013 calendar year, what was your organisation's . . .

	2013 \$s – as per your Annual Report
a) Gross income	
b) Total expenditure	
c) Accumulated net position	

If you can also provide the figures for the **2012 calendar year**, this will be appreciated . . .

	2012 \$s – as per your Annual Report
a) Gross income	
b) Total expenditure	
c) Accumulated net position	

### Question 2

In the **2013 calendar year** . . .

- How much of your GROSS INCOME came from the WA State Government through the Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA)? **[Enter \$ here]**
- What is this amount as a % of your GROSS INCOME? **[Enter % here]**

### Question 3

Clearly, the income mix for organisations in the S2M arts sector is more complex than ever before. If you are in a position to provide a complete percentage breakdown of your gross 2013 income, this would be much appreciated. If not, please leave the table below entirely blank.

State Government arts funding (DCA)	%
Federal Government arts funding (Australia Council)	%
Local Government arts funding	%
State Government non-arts departments/agencies	%
Federal Government non-arts departments/agencies	%
Local Government non-arts funding	%
Ticket and other earned income	%
Membership fees	%
Rental of premises	%
Sponsorship	%
Philanthropy (including Foundations)	%
Other	%
	100%

## SECTION C: YOUR 'REACH' IN 2013

### **Question 1: 2013 Audience size**

What was the **TOTAL ATTENDANCE** for all of the 'public arena' activities your organisation produced and/or presented and/or facilitated/funded in 2013?

<b>ATTENDANCE / PARTICIPATION CATEGORY</b>	<b>Attendance numbers*</b>	
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Estimated</b>
Ticketed live performances		
Non-ticketed live performances (including free outdoor events)		
Ticketed pre-recorded performances (including music, video, film, etc)		
Non-ticketed pre-recorded performances (including music, video, film, etc)		
Ticketed exhibitions		
Non-ticketed exhibitions		
Ticketed seminars, lectures, readings, workshops, special events, etc		
Non-ticketed seminars, lectures, readings, workshops, special events, etc		
<b>OTHER (not listed above – please state. Add extra rows if needed)</b>		
<b>TOTAL ACTUAL / TOTAL ESTIMATED</b>		
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>		

\*Where an **ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION** category is applicable, only complete one column – Actual OR Estimated.

### **Question 2: 2013 Audience location**

Overall and approximately, where was **MOST** of your **AUDIENCE** located for the 2013 'public arena' activities your organisation produced and/or presented and/or facilitated/funded? Place an 'X' in the most appropriate column for each category.

<b>AUDIENCE CATEGORY</b>	<b>AUDIENCE LOCATION (place an 'X' in the most appropriate column)</b>		
	<b>Mostly Perth Metro</b>	<b>Mostly WA regional</b>	<b>Mostly outside of WA, including overseas</b>
Ticketed live performances			
Non-ticketed live performances (including free outdoor events)			
Ticketed pre-recorded performances (including music, video, film, etc)			
Non-ticketed pre-recorded performances (including music, video, film, etc)			
Ticketed exhibitions			
Non-ticketed exhibitions			
Ticketed seminars, lectures, readings, workshops, special events, etc			
Non-ticketed seminars, lectures, readings, workshops, special events, etc			
<b>OTHER (not listed above – please state. Add extra rows if needed)</b>			

### **Question 3: 2013 Audience gender**

Overall and approximately, was the **AUDIENCE** for the 2013 'public arena' activities produced and/or presented and/or facilitated/funded by your organisation . . .

	Place an 'X' next to your response
Mostly female (more than 50%)	
Mostly male (more than 50%)	
Roughly an equal mix	
Not possible to say due to lack of data	

### **Question 4: 2013 Audience age**

Overall and approximately, was the **AUDIENCE** for the 2013 'public arena' activities produced and/or presented and/or facilitated/funded by your organisation . . .

	Place an 'X' next to your response
Mostly under 14 (more than 50%)	
Mostly under 21 (more than 50%)	
Mostly under 35 (more than 50%)	
Mostly over 35 (more than 50%)	
Mostly over 55 (more than 50%)	
Not possible to say due to lack of data	

### **Question 5: 2013 Collaborations and partnerships**

In 2013, approximately how many mutually beneficial **collaborations and partnerships** (artistic, financial, operational, media, etc) did you enter into with other entities in order to deliver your program of activities?

	Enter number of key collaborations / partnerships
Artistic	
Financial (cash)	
Operational (in-kind)	
Media	
Other (please indicate)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

## SECTION D: YOUR MEASUREMENT OF 'QUALITY' IN 2013

As you may know, the Department of Culture and the Arts will soon be officially rolling-out its Public Value Measurement Framework which is “a new theoretical framework and means of collecting evidence of the full value of government expenditure on the arts, based on what is valued by the public and the arts sector. It links measurement to policy.”

Essentially, the framework is designed to more rigorously measure the quality, reach and impact of the artistic work being put into the public arena by government-funded arts organisations in order to build a better evidence base of the full value of the arts to the community, and to assist it in making the case for further investment in the arts.

DCA has commissioned the development of a mobile data capture tool to enable real time, inexpensive collection and aggregation of feedback from artists, their peers and audiences on the expectations and quality of their artistic experience. The system will enable organisations to analyse and compare these responses across their program and alongside existing audience, box office and financial data.

### **Question 1:**

In 2013, did you have a formal mechanism or mechanisms to measure the **artistic quality** of your work and/ or your **organisational performance** from . . .

	Yes / No	If yes, what mechanism(s)
Your industry peers		
Your audience / participants		
Your partners / stakeholders		
The general public		
Other (please indicate)		

### **Question 2:**

From the description above of DCA's 'mobile data capture tool', is this a 'quality measurement/feedback' mechanism, depending on cost, that your organisation would be keen to adopt?

	Place an 'X' next to your response
Yes	
No	
Would need to learn more about in order to say	

## SECTION E: BEYOND 2013

### **Question 1: Sector challenges**

What do you feel are the key challenges facing WA's S2M arts sector?

ENTER UP TO 200 WORDS HERE:

### **Question 2: Sector resilience**

How do you feel WA's S2M arts sector can become more 'resilient' in an uncertain world?

ENTER UP TO 200 WORDS HERE:

### **Question 3: Sector investment**

If the State Government was to increase its investment in the S2M sector, what would be your **top three priority areas** for increased funding?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **Question 4: Sector vision**

What, ultimately, is your VISION for WA's S2M arts sector?

ENTER UP TO 100 WORDS HERE:

***END OF SURVEY***

***HUGE THANKS FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.***

***YOUR RESPONSES WILL, AS EARLIER STATED, REMAIN STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL A N D WILL BE ANONYMOUSLY COLLATED, INTERPRETED AND REPORTED.***

## APPENDIX B: ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE S2M ARTS SECTOR SURVEY

Organisation	Category
Artsource	Visual Arts
FORM	Visual Arts
International Arts Space Kellerberrin (IASKA)	Visual Arts
Australian Dance Council	Performing Arts
Barking Gecko Theatre Company	Performing Arts (Young people)
Buzz Dance Theatre Limited	Performing Arts (Young people)
Folkworld Inc (Fairbridge Festival)	Performing Arts (Festival)
Mandurah Performing Arts inc	Performing Arts
Musica Viva Australia (WA)	Performing Arts (Young people)
Performing Arts Centre Society Inc (Blue Room)	Performing Arts
Performing Lines WA	Performing Arts
Perth Jazz Society	Performing Arts
Perth Symphony Orchestra	Performing Arts
Perth Theatre Company	Performing Arts
Spare Parts Puppet Theatre	Performing Arts (Young people)
Stages (WA Playwrights Consortium)	Performing Arts
STEPS, Youth Dance Company	Performing Arts (Young people)
STRUT Dance	Performing Arts
WA Music Industry Association Inc	Performing Arts
WA Youth Jazz Orchestra	Performing Arts (Young people)
WA Youth Music Company	Performing Arts (Young people)
WA Youth Theatre Company	Performing Arts (Young people)
Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre	Performing Arts (Indigenous)
Australian Writers' Guild (WA)	Literary arts
Children's Book Council of Australia (WA)	Literary arts (Young people)
Fremantle Press	Literary arts
Magabala Books Aboriginal Corporation	Literary arts (Indigenous)
State Library of WA Foundation	Literary arts
The Literature Centre	Literary arts (Young people)
Writing WA	Literary arts
Community Arts Network WA Inc	Multi-arts (Metro / Regional)
Country Arts (WA) Inc	Multi-arts (Regional)
DADAA (WA) Inc	Multi-arts (Disability)
Fremantle Arts Centre	Multi-arts
Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre	Multi-arts (Indigenous)
Mundaring Arts Centre	Multi-arts
Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA)	Multi-arts
pvi collective	Multi-arts
Propel Youth Arts	Multi-arts (Youth)
Artrage Inc (Fringe World)	Multi-arts (Festival)
Awesome Arts Australia	Multi-arts (Festival /Young people)
Museums Australia WA	Community Collections
Royal Historical Society WA	Community Collections
Film and Television Institute (FTI)	Screen Arts
Art On The Move (didn't complete survey but 2013 annual report data utilised)	Visual Arts (touring)