

Comparative analysis



Sector benchmarking

- **Abbotsford Convent**
- **Artscape**
- **Belco Arts**
- **Carriageworks**
- **Cockpit Arts**
- **Collingwood Yards**
- **Evergreen Brick Works**
- **Kambri**

This benchmarking analysis provides insights about other sites, cultural institutions and arts centres that are of similar relevance and structure nationally and internationally.

Research methodology

This desktop research looked at all available information on the Internet, as it related to the specific site. This included:

- Official websites of the location
- Tourism websites
- Government websites and reports
- Media articles
- Social media
- Annual reports

It is important to note that there are constraints to desktop research. We have aimed to create a complete picture for each of the sites however, available information and data varied considerably.

Place	Presence	People	Potential	Prerequisites	Pulse (vibe)
Assets, ownership, purpose and mission	Brand awareness	Number of people, kinds of people, socio-economic information	The perceived and realised potential of the space	Are the basic expectations of visitors met?	The energy as expressed through cultural vibrancy, activities, etc.
Who owns the space/ site/centre?	How well is the site known?	Number of annual visitors (to the space).	Does the space have a sense of momentum?	What basic facilities are provided to visitors?	What activations, events and programs occur at the space?
What assets does it have?	Who is the site well-known among?	Demographics of visitors.	Are people using it as it is intended? Is there room for this to change or grow?	What basic facilities are provided to cultural/ commercial users? (if discernible)	Are they well received, attended and enjoyed?
What is/are its purpose/s?	Digital presence (measured by ‘check-ins’, social media etc)	Population of the region and city.	How is the space staying viable and relevant in the short and long term?	Is the space safe?	Demographics of visitors relevant to events and programming.
What are its uses?	What do people ‘know’ it for?	Annual visitation to city/ region.		What is the hospitality offering?	At what times and frequency do activities occur?
What place does it have relevant to other competing/ similar places locally?	What do people say about the space - positive and negative?	How do people use the space?			
Broadly define the architectural setting.					

Key insights

—Strengths

Place Heritage-listed buildings re-appropriated and adapted sensitively to a contemporary context.

Presence Already well recognised as a premier arts institution.

People Growing number of visitors and the diversity of demographics and programming is reflective of the engagement with local communities.

Potential Flexibility provided by the small size of the organisation while being well respected will position Arts Capital as a leader in the creative arts space as Canberra grows as an arts and cultural destination.

Prerequisites The hospitality offering, while small, is well known with the wider community and elevates the reputation of the precinct.

Pulse Community-focused, lively and inclusive.

—Opportunities

Place There is an opportunity for more exploration and celebration of history of the local area and buildings. As well as potential to work with communities when planning new developments / uses of site.

Presence An opportunity to forge deeper partnerships with a wider range of arts festivals to develop more diverse programming. Extending partnerships and having a greater presence with the wider community of arts practitioners will shape the artistic environment of Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres.

People Greater diversity of tenants in demographic as well as creative practice would encourage greater diversity in visitors.

Potential There is potential for further development of digital engagement. Bringing digital experiences to line with the expectations of a premier arts institution.

Prerequisites There is an opportunity to extend hospitality to provide a more varied offering, that may be more appealing to a wider spectrum of visitors. As well as increasing accessibility and safety for tenants.

Pulse Deepening engagement with local communities is an opportunity to ensure the precinct always feels lively and exciting.

Abbotsford Convent

—Melbourne

Abbotsford Convent is home to a vibrant creative community, wellbeing practitioners, galleries, cafes, a radio station, a school, and an abundance of green open space. Spread over 16 acres, the Convent is Australia’s largest multi-arts precinct. Renowned for its rich history, its striking built and natural landscapes, and the remarkable community-led campaign to preserve it from commercial development, the site was enshrined on Australia’s National Heritage List in 2017. Today, this nationally and internationally unique precinct is managed by the Abbotsford Convent Foundation, a not-for-profit, social enterprise.

Visitor numbers	1,000,000+ in 2018/19.
Funding model	Social enterprise: majority of income earned rent, car parking and venue hire, other from partnerships and donations.

Place

The key assets that the Convent has are heritage buildings that hold significance in the local community, whether for their history or architecture, re-appropriated and adapted for a new context. Multi-use outdoor spaces are open and free to the general public during the day.

Presence

Known to those in the know. Known to different audiences and groups of people for different needs. The Convent is a well recognised arts institution, with plans to grow new and existing partnerships to ensure sustained commissioning into the future.

People

Growing number of visitors and the diversity of demographic, along with diversity in programming due to the perceived cultural significance of the site. Greater diversity of tenants in demographic as well as creative practice would encourage greater diversity in visitors.

Potential

The 'agile' nature of the Convent allows it to be flexible and adaptive to a changing arts landscape, and disruptions to programming. There is potential for further digital engagement with internal and external communities. Further exploring the opportunities for bridging 'in real life' IRL and 'online' URL brand activation.

Prerequisites

The hospitality offerings, while small, are accessible and varied providing options for different types of visitors. There is an opportunity to increase accessibility across the precinct for people living with disability.

Pulse (vibe)

The Convent is community-focused and inclusive, with energetic physical and digital presence.



Artscape —Toronto

Artscape is made up of a group of not-for-profit organisations with a mission to make space for creativity and transform communities. They engage in social enterprise in several fields: real estate development; property management; performance and event services; consulting and knowledge exchange; artistic programming and community animation; and creative entrepreneurship development. Over more than 30 years, Artscape has evolved from a Toronto-based affordable artist studio provider to a global leader in creative placemaking, a practice that leverages arts and culture as a catalyst for community and urban development.

Visitor numbers	6,560+ tenants, members, owners and clients. 720,000+ involved in programs and events annually.
Funding model	Precincts funded by government grants and donations. Donations to the Toronto Artscape Foundation (a registered charity) fund ongoing projects and programs.

Place

Artscape manages a portfolio of unique cultural facilities, from community cultural hubs to collections of live/work studios, spread around Toronto. With a community focus, Artscape projects are rooted in creative placemaking; building vibrant, sustainable, prosperous and inclusive communities. Artscape provides a broad range of spaces, programs and resources to help their artist communities thrive, including learning and professional development and artist residencies.

Presence

Well known throughout the city, Artscape’s communities have a strong presence in downtown Toronto.

People

With a portfolio of properties that include affordable housing, artist studios, performance and event spaces, Artscape has a diverse audience. As of the beginning of 2020, there were more than 2,500 people living or working at an Artscape space, and more than 750,000 people in attendance at events and programs hosted at Artscape properties per year.

Potential

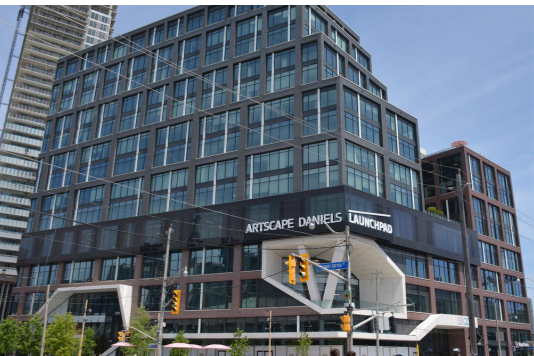
The growing appetite for community building and placemaking, especially in under-served communities, will provide ongoing opportunities for Artscape to develop continuing partnerships and continue to develop new properties to meet community needs.

Prerequisites

With each precinct being different, there are varied facilities across the Artscape portfolio. Each space has been developed with community in mind to be inclusive - creating safe spaces that are accessible to all types of people.

Pulse (vibe)

Active in the arts community, pre-pandemic there were frequent events, performances and other programs that were well attended. There is an appetite and hope to return to a level of activity once restrictions are lifted.



Belco Arts —Canberra

Belconnen Arts Centre opened in 2009 as a community-driven arts organisation. Connecting to the Canberra community through a range of arts practices; dance, music, visual art and theatre. With plans to grow and transform the centre to include a new theatre, galleries, company offices and rehearsal studios, Belco Arts is quickly becoming a true multi-arts hub. Located on the banks of Lake Ginninderra, Belco Arts is purpose built as a cultural centre and was designed to connect and engage the local Belconnen community.

Visitor numbers	Small events throughout the year attract loyal following.
Funding model	Primarily funded by grants and activity on site. Government investment helped to build the 2020 expansion.

Place

Located in the heart of Belconnen, north west of central Canberra, Belco Arts was designed and constructed as a purpose-built venue for creative arts. Situated right on the edge of Lake Ginninderra, the local geography has informed programming of some events.

Presence

Well known and connected in the community, Belco Arts focuses on engaging creatives and students in the local area. The significant investment from the ACT Government will help to grow the influence and presence of Belco Arts in larger circles.

People

The diversity of programming is inclusive of all different types of people, capturing a wide audience. From programs for school-aged children, to residencies of multi-generational artist collectives, the size of audiences fluctuates throughout the year.

Potential

The expansion of Belco Arts opened mid-2020, and extended programming in these new spaces is increasing over 2021. Partnerships with existing festivals and arts companies will increase awareness of the space and reputation.

Prerequisites

Recognised in 2012, 2013 and 2015 with the Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards for their commitment to welcome and support people with disability in the community. The building has been designed to be fully accessible for people using wheelchairs and mobility aids. Hearing loops are available in much of the buildings. Located in central Belconnen, the Centre is easily accessible by car, bicycle and public transport.

Pulse (vibe)

A local institution, Belco Arts is friendly and inclusive with arts and culture programming that is community-driven.



Carriageworks

—Sydney

Carriageworks is a multi-arts centre commissioning Australian and international artists to make monumental new work that intersects with contemporary ideas. Originally built between 1880 and 1889 as a railway workshop employing thousands of people and helping to shape the development of Sydney. It was one of the first places to employ Aboriginal people on an equal basis. In 2007, the site was redeveloped as a cultural precinct.

Visitor numbers	Prior to 2020, 400,000+ visitors each year, farmers market attracted more than 5,000 visitors every weekend.
Funding model	Managed by the NSW Government, funding from government grants, donations and earned income.

Place

Managed by Carriageworks Ltd, and supported by the New South Wales Government, Carriageworks is a multi-arts urban cultural precinct that showcases contemporary and performing arts, as well as being available for hire for filming, festivals, fairs and exhibitions. Located in the Redfern neighbourhood of Sydney, it includes the heritage-listed Eveleigh Railway Workshop buildings.

Presence

The largest centre of its kind in Australia, it was developed in the early 2000s to be a cultural and arts precinct and has played a significant role in the creative community since. Following a period of financial loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Carriageworks was saved from liquidation and reopened in the second half of 2020 with reduced programming.

People

The varied and multi-disciplinary program has attracted over 400,000 and up to 1 million visitors per year. The farmers’ market regularly attracts about 5,000 visitors each weekend.

Potential

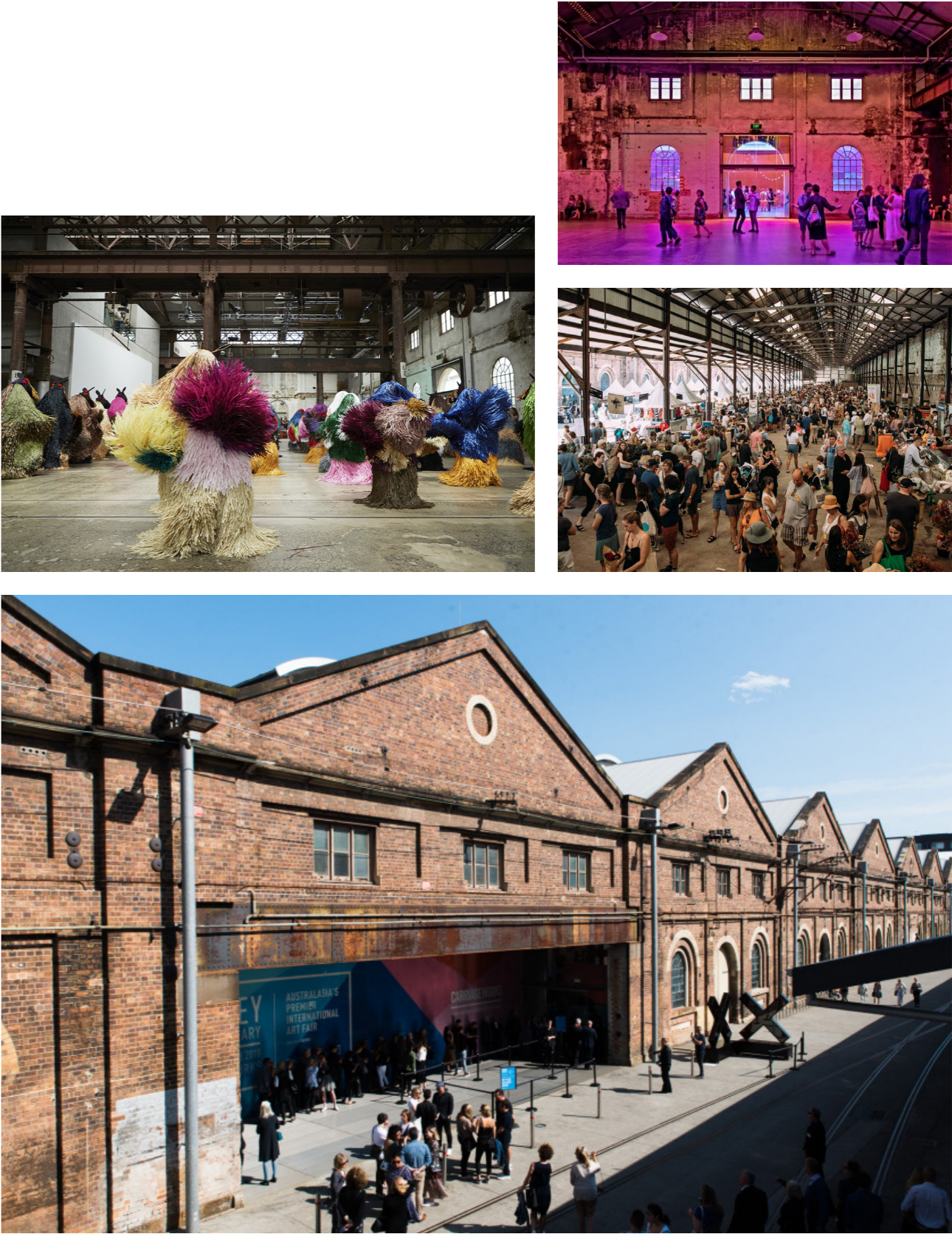
Well used and loved, the potential for growth is hampered by the lack of funding. Maintaining world-class programming in an heritage-listed venue has become a challenge.

Prerequisites

Multiple venues provide varied experiences to visitors, with catering on site for major events. Located in central Sydney, it is close and easily accessible by public transport. On-site cafe provides seasonal food and coffee. The precinct is wheelchair accessible.

Pulse (vibe)

The program of commissioned Australian and international artists is the main draw-card, including Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, exhibitions and performances from major contemporary artists, and as a venue for city-wide events such as Vivid Sydney.



Cockpit Arts

—London

Cockpit Arts is a social enterprise, with studios for over 140 independent craftspeople over two locations in London. The Cockpit Arts Incubator program provides business support and studio space for makers to develop and grow successful practices, with coaches and mentors, peer-to-peer support and options for financial support. Open to the public twice yearly, visitors have an opportunity to meet and buy directly from makers.

Visitor numbers	3,000+ per year (estimate).
Funding model	Social enterprise: 80% of income earned (studio rent), 20% from partnerships and donations.

Place

In two locations in London; Deptford and Holborn, which was originally an eighteenth century cockerel fighting arena. When it was established in 1986, Cockpit Arts was a small community of only a few creatives. Growing to 170 businesses in the years since, the organisation is now well established as a pioneering creative incubator.

Presence

Known to a known audience - those interested and engaged with the craft industry - in London, with a moderate social media following. As a social enterprise, it is known and respected for being pioneering in creating opportunities for craftspeople to develop careers.

People

A snapshot of the demographics of creatives working at Cockpit Arts last year showed a greater diversity in gender and ethnicity than craft practice UK-wide. Open Studios events attract a wide range of people from the local areas, as well as other areas of London.

Potential

There is potential for Cockpit Arts to further create opportunities for craftspeople who might not otherwise have space or means to have studio space elsewhere. Initiatives like the apprenticeship programme will help young people with finding and establishing careers.

Prerequisites

As a workplace, there is infrastructure suitable for the number of people working closely together. There are no permanent hospitality outlets on site, temporary food and beverage offerings are brought in for events.

Pulse (vibe)

Experimental and innovative, there is always something new being created at Cockpit Arts.



Collingwood Yards —Melbourne

Collingwood Yards is a new home for artists and independent arts organisations working across music, visual arts, performance, digital media, creative industries and beyond. Situated across the former Collingwood Technical School campus, Collingwood Yards spans over 6500sqm—populated by over 50 separate tenancies including 17 artist studios, a radio station, a performance space and a large public courtyard.

Visitor numbers	Numbers have been growing since first opening in early March.
Funding model	Private, non-profit model. Earned income (tenancies and activities on-site) and support from partners. Some government funding from Creative Victoria.

Place

The site consists of three buildings and a leafy central courtyard and is located in one of Australia’s most diverse, rapidly transforming and dense inner city neighbourhoods. Opening in stages throughout 2021, Collingwood Yards intends to create a thriving hub of artists and arts organisations.

Presence

Since opening in March 2021, the precinct has become relatively known within the Melbourne creative community. The site is in the heart of Collingwood, and is a well-known building for those who live and work in the local area. Wide-spread publicity celebrating the opening of Collingwood Yards helped to create and build presence for a wider audience.

People

A varied mix of tenants and artist residencies create a diverse community of creatives. The surrounding area attracts a diverse range of people and visitors reflect this: visiting with knowledge and curiosity of the newly opened space. Locals are enjoying the public central courtyard.

Potential

As a newly opened precinct, there is great potential for Collingwood Yards to become an integral part of Melbourne’s creative community as the audience grows. Wider recognition will attract more high-profile tenants and larger partnership and funding opportunities.

Prerequisites

Universal access was a key priority when developing the precinct, with ongoing accessibility upgrades to ensure everyone can visit and enjoy the space.

Pulse (vibe)

The newness of Collingwood Yards has created an exciting buzz around the area and among the local community. As the precinct continues to open up and new tenants move in, there is an opportunity for the reputation of Collingwood Yards to be cemented as a place for the community to thrive.



Evergreen Brick Works

—Toronto

Evergreen is an incubator that explores sustainable practices that enable flourishing cities of the future. Set in a collection of heritage buildings, it welcomes visitors year-round to public markets, conferences and events, outdoor activities and public art. Operating as a social enterprise, profit generated is used to fund projects across Canada - engaging in creating and sustaining healthy urban environments in schools, public spaces, housing developments and transit systems.

Visitor numbers	500,000+ per year
Funding model	Social enterprise: 51% of income earned (studio rent), 49% from partnerships and donations.

Place

The Brick Works is a collection of deteriorating heritage buildings transformed into a showcase of green design and an award-winning public space. It is in the heart of Toronto’s ravine system, north-east of the city centre.

Presence

Well known in the local area for public markets and education programs, including the Children’s Garden. Larger events such as conferences, celebrations and symposiums are also popular at Evergreen.

People

The Brick Works welcomes over 500,000 visitors a year, with a varied demographic depending on the event - public markets, conferences or school programs and camps.

Potential

In the current world, there is an opportunity for Evergreen to solidify its position as a leader in the thinking of resilient smart cities. Ensuring sustainability and inclusion will become more and more important as cities recover post-pandemic.

Prerequisites

Open for a wide-range of events and programs, The Brick Works is well equipped with amenities. There is a permanent cafe on site, as well as other hospitality offerings during market days.

Pulse (vibe)

Community-focused, with a commitment to sustainability, The Brick Works is a lively and energetic precinct.



Kambri

—Canberra

Kambri at ANU is a precinct hub of the Australian National University, providing a welcoming space for the greater Canberra community to gather, and weave together education, community and culture. The Kambri cultural precinct offers an educational, physical, creative and social experience in a village setting. In time, this contemporary community space hopes to bring the spirit of placemaking and gathering to the ANU.

Visitor numbers	20,000+ (estimate) people use Kambri every year.
Funding model	As part of the ANU facilities, funded by the university.

Place

Opening in early 2019, Kambri comprises a series of multi-use spaces that have become the heart of ANU. Used as a space for students to study, socialise and gather as well as for the wider community to enjoy events at the new cultural and arts venues. A combination of new buildings and refreshed spaces work together to create a combined public domain.

Presence

Well known and celebrated within the university community, and the local Acton neighbourhood. Their strong ties to the local area are reflected in the gifting of the name ‘Kambri’ by elders from the ACT’s four Indigenous communities.

People

Primarily a university space, the demographic of people at Kambri on a day-to-day basis are students and faculty. Events attracting the wider community are primarily attended by Canberra residents, and those connected to the university.

Potential

Due to location, facilities and interest, there is good potential for Kambri to grow into a premier arts and cultural hub for Canberra. The varied spaces allow for adaptation as community needs change, and the student population grows.

Prerequisites

As a university space, amenities are congruent with ANU standards. A purpose-built retail and hospitality space offers varied food and drink options for visitors and students. Temporary and semi-permanent infrastructure allows for flexibility of the use of the outdoor spaces and gives Kambri options for configuration depending on need.

Pulse (vibe)

Described as a ‘bustling’ place, Kambri is adaptable and changing depending on time of day and what types of events are on at any given time. The diversity of the people who use the precinct contribute to a lively atmosphere.



Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres

—By comparison

Visitor numbers	200,000+ (estimate) yearly	Place	People	Prerequisites
Funding model	Earned income, project grants, program-specific support, artsACT funding	<p>The key assets that Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres have in common with similar precincts are heritage buildings that hold significance in the local community whether for their history or architecture, re-appropriated and adapted for a new context.</p> <p>Evergreen Brick Works engages the local community when renovating or re-opening buildings as part of their collection to ensure that the space is sensitively treated, and will be appropriate to the needs of the community. The Abbotsford Convent has made a commitment to preserving and acknowledging the history of their buildings and the site, even if it may be uncomfortable for some visitors.</p> <p>Celebrating and exploring the history of the site and buildings, and collaborating with local communities when planning for future building works will help to foster community investment in place.</p>	<p>All precincts surveyed have variation in the type and demographic of people according to what events are programmed, and the time of year.</p> <p>Tenants and people using co-working spaces such as Artscape share a common purpose and are regularly involved in events and programming, allowing for organic community growth and attracting of other tenants with similar ethos.</p> <p>Offering business development or mentorship programs for emerging arts practitioners could allow Ainslie and Gorman to diversify their tenants, and allow tenants to innovate in their practice. This in turn would attract a more diverse audience - in both demographic and arts practice.</p>	<p>The future of Ainslie and Gorman is in infrastructure that allows for accessible programming. As well as being wheelchair accessible, offering support for those who are vision impaired or hearing impaired.</p> <p>Belco Arts has a focus on accessibility, allowing for the wider community to be able to enjoy the full programming. As well as every space being wheelchair and mobility aid accessible, hearing loops in many of the gallery and theatre spaces allow for hearing access.</p> <p>Drawing inspiration from Evergreen Brick Works, there could be an opportunity for Arts Capital to expand hospitality offerings on an ad-hoc basis, creating temporary opportunities for small food businesses to connect with the local communities.</p>
		Presence	Potential	Pulse (vibe)
		<p>Known to those in the know. Known to different audiences and groups of people for different needs. Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres are known to the local community for their contemporary arts programming and partnerships with local groups with a community focus.</p> <p>Precincts such as Carriageworks and Kambri have distinct offerings for distinct audiences; such as the farmer's market and fashion festival at Carriageworks. Bringing different groups on site who may not be aware of all the activities or programming that occurs there builds community.</p> <p>Diversifying programming and forging deeper partnerships with a wider range of arts festivals and institutions would increase the presence of Ainslie and Gorman with a broader audience.</p>	<p>Abbotsford Convent uses its dynamic spaces to be able to be flexible and adaptable depending on the needs of the audience and community.</p> <p>There is potential for growth for better brand recognition by creating opportunities for the local communities to have 'ownership' and activate the brand. The digital space is an opportunity to showcase and celebrate what Ainslie and Gorman is, and build brand awareness.</p>	<p>Community-focused, inclusive, experimental and innovative. Ensuring that there is always something happening on site, with frequently changing exhibitions, ad-hoc shows and displays of tenant work.</p> <p>Cockpits Arts are experimental and innovative precincts. Artisans and craftspeople open their studio twice yearly to allow visitors to be part of the making process and interact with the makers. There is always something new being created, and engaging experiences are fostered.</p> <p>For Ainslie and Gorman, the opportunity to present as an innovative, collaborative and welcoming space lies in activations that are community focused and engaging the tenant community in activating and maintaining the precinct for visitors.</p>