

Insights report

Ainslie and Gorman Centenary Renewal Project, Phase 1: Needs and Analysis & Mapping

Prepared for Arts Capital by Ellis Jones
31 May 2021



Interview quote

“There's nothing like it - we have arts all day every day at Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres.”

Resident organisation, April 2021



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About the project

Gorman Arts Centre and Ainslie Arts Centre are nearing their respective centenaries (2024 and 2027). There is now a rare opportunity to design comprehensive renovations, to shape a new vision and strategic plan, and to secure the next chapter in their histories.

Early 2021, Arts Capital engaged Ellis Jones to surface future pathways for its Arts Centres. To reposition the organisation for a new era of positive impact, benefitting the artist community and Canberrans more broadly.

This project includes coordinated research and strategy development activities for Arts Capital to capitalise on the right opportunities. Future direction for the Arts Centres will be based on a well-rounded understanding of their unique assets, audiences, and of the relevant market opportunities.

The project is being delivered in four stages:

1. Needs analysis and mapping (*we are here*)
2. Direction setting and planning
3. User and brand experience
4. Activation



Addressing opportunity

A confluence of four opportunities and challenges means that Arts Capital is now in a position to boldly reinvent its purpose, strategy, facilities, and operations.

1. An opportunity to leverage corporate re-invention, following a major governance change.

The potential created by the 2020 launch of Arts Capital, a new company limited by guarantee with new members and directors, includes:

- Independent, robust governance model can give greater confidence to government funders.
- New brand can shift perceptions away from a historically limited views of the organisation, centres and work.
- An entrepreneurial entity can grow and diversify revenue by servicing new clients and markets, and develop new offerings.
- Philanthropic giving emerges as a new source of revenue thanks to our charity status.
- New expertise, relationships and capacity offered by a larger number of qualified board members.

2. The challenge to re-invent the work post-COVID, not only to recover, adapt and innovate for organisation survival and success, but also to harness the role as a networked hub for the benefit of the arts sector and broader ACT community.

Against a backdrop of continued uncertainty, this offers:

- Licence and opportunity to learn from our crisis-management experience, to work differently, and to empower our staff in new ways.
- An opportunity to play a role in meeting the evolving needs of the arts sector through our programming, but also by exploring digital offerings or platforms that replicate, replace or expand the physical role played by our arts centres.

- A resetting of the funding relationship with the ACT Government, and specifically of our historic ratio of core funding to earned income.
- A significant challenge to restructure and rebuild sources of earned income.

3. An opportunity to comprehensively renovate the arts facilities, with commitments from the ACT Government to design and carry out major centenary renovations.

- Philip Leeson Architects has been engaged by artsACT to deliver centenary renovation plans for both arts centres in 2021, and our input into the design process is critical.
- \$8 million has been committed during the recent election campaign to fund the renovation of Gorman Arts Centre by 2024, and the Labor/Greens parliamentary agreement lists this as a key policy deliverable.
- There is now a chance to address the cost, risk and inefficiency associated with our dated facilities, and to enhance or reshape offerings to meet customer needs.

4. A new opportunity to secure long-term core funding through long-awaited arts funding reform in the ACT, which is due in the current term of the legislative assembly under the guidance of a new arts minister.

- Demonstrating purpose, value-creation strategies, and innovative potential, a new funding pitch can open the door to a substantial recalibration of funding.
- Renegotiating the Deed of Grant to operate Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres offers a chance to better match its market value and/or align funding with the value we create for the ACT Government.



Objectives & principles

To capitalise on opportunities, and to assist the ACT Government to maximise its investment for the benefit of the community, the coordinated research and strategy development project uses tailored methodologies to address multiple facets of our situation, consult stakeholders, and gather relevant data.

Research

- To gain key contextual insights into the market and policy contexts in which Arts Capital operates.
- To develop a greater understanding of user, visitor, stakeholder and community needs to inform building redevelopment, organisation and brand strategy, and programming.
- To benchmark our activities against comparable leading arts and cultural organisations.

Strategy development

- To engage key stakeholders including board, staff and residents, in the development of strategic and centenary renovation plans
- To develop and document a shared vision and associated place and brand identities.
- To generate and assess credible alternative strategies, and support board decision-making.
- To develop and document a new strategic plan, including in a public-facing format.

Implementation

- To review our visual identity in line with the findings from stages 1) and 2) above.
- To design and deliver a new website.

Further objectives related to implementation will be identified in the strategy development stage and will form part of the new strategic plan.

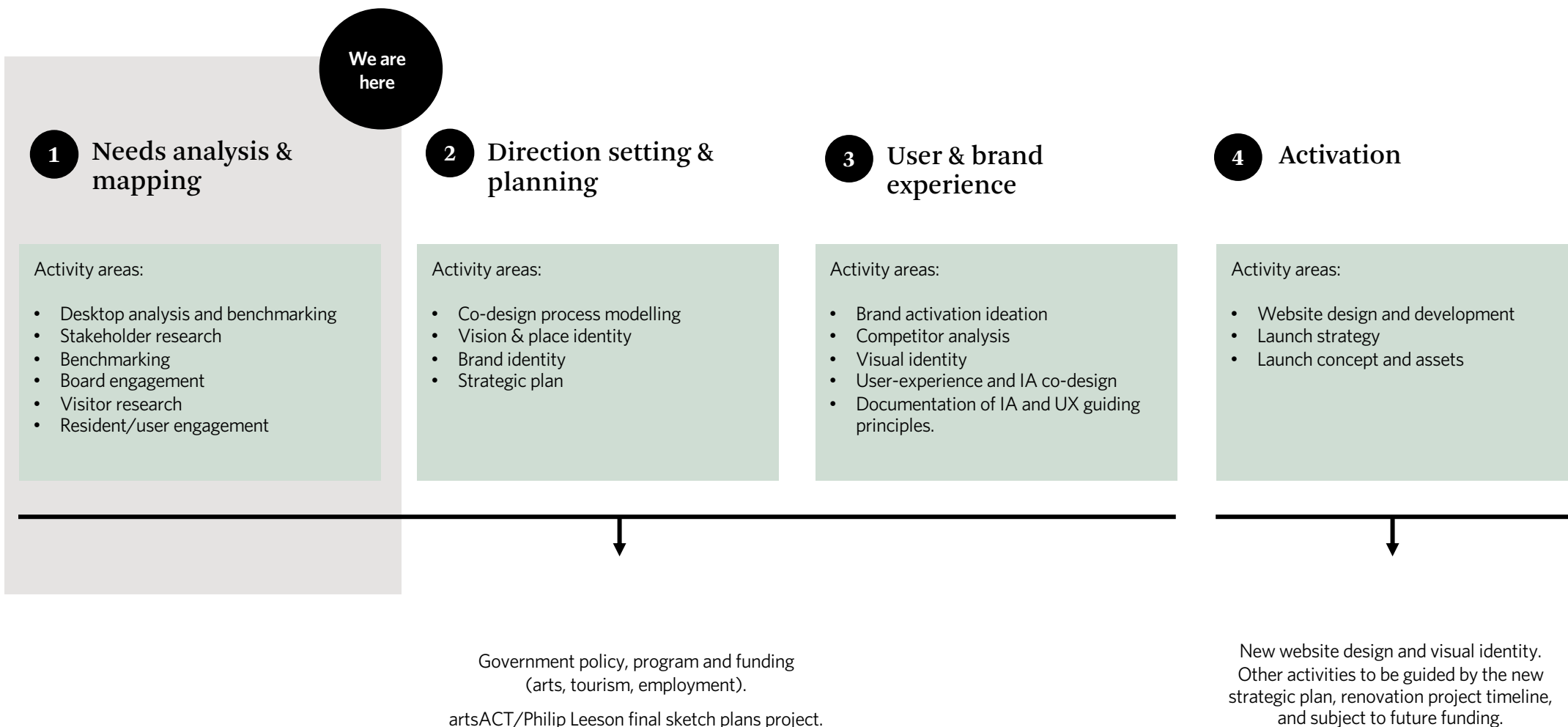
Overarching project principles

- Consideration of in-house vs. external resourcing of each project element to ensure best value for money and time throughout.
- Respectful engagement of stakeholders and partners in ways that strengthen long-term relationships of trust and mutual benefit.
- Respectful acknowledgement and engagement with First Nations Peoples.
- Access and inclusion as core principles in the design and delivery of research and stakeholder engagement.
- Mature acknowledgement of the shared risks and responsibilities between artsACT and Arts Capital: recognising the funding, facility and policy alignment needs of government; and the autonomy, financial viability and operating needs of Arts Capital.
- A holistic approach to planning that maximises the benefit of the arts hub business model, rather than dealing with each element in isolation.



Project map

The Ainslie and Gorman Centenary Renewal Planning project is being delivered in four stages. This report forms part of the *needs analysis & mapping* stage.



Research methodology

Insights surfaced in this report are based on comprehensive research activity including:

- A desktop analysis of 80+ documents
- A benchmarking analysis of 8 organisations
- 17 stakeholder interviews
- Surveys with 369 respondents

Desktop analysis

Reviewed 80+ documents to surface A+G's unique assets and identify arts sector opportunities / challenges.

- Annual reports
- Overview of programs
- Overview of venues / facilities
- Internal evaluation reports
- Business plans
- Internal studies
- Previous masterplans
- Government arts policies / strategies
- Other arts precincts strategies
- Site and suburb plans and insights

Benchmarking

Benchmarked A+G against 8 local and international arts and cultural organisations to surface opportunities (see Appendix II for full benchmarking study).

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

Stakeholder interviews

Interviewed 17 stakeholders to understand their needs, A+G's unique assets, the needs of the arts and cultural sector and how to align with government arts and urban renewal priorities. See p. 62 for list of interviewees.

Surveys

Surveyed 369 people to understand A+G's unique assets, the audience's needs, and opportunities and challenges (see Appendix I for survey results).

- Visitor survey completed by 302 respondents (of these, 156 came from an external respondent panel referred to as *Dynata Community Sample* and 146 came from Arts Capital's visitor database, referred to as *Arts Capital Sample*)
- Board and staff survey completed by 26 respondents
- Resident and user survey completed by 41 respondents

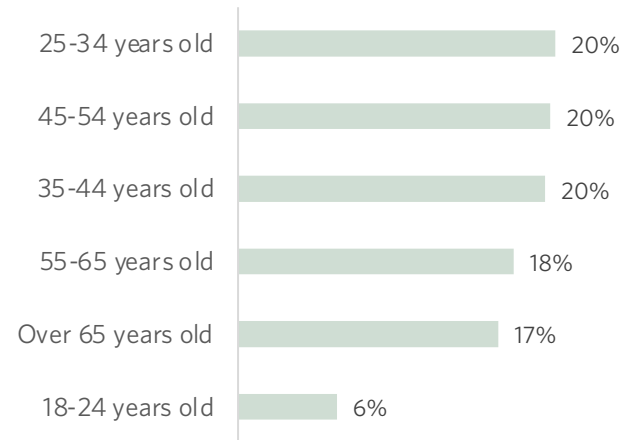


Respondent profile

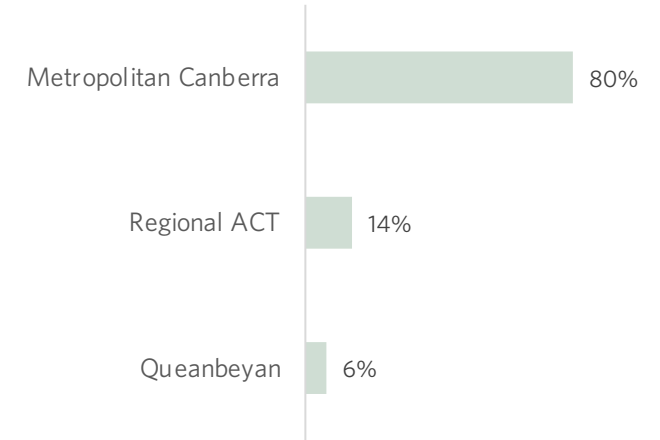
Arts Capital surveyed 302 visitors. The survey was in field between 13 April 2021 and 5 May 2021.

Visitor Survey

Age



Location



Gender

- Male: 37%
- Female: 61%
- Non-binary: 1%

67% of respondents care for children 18 years old or under.



Respondent profile

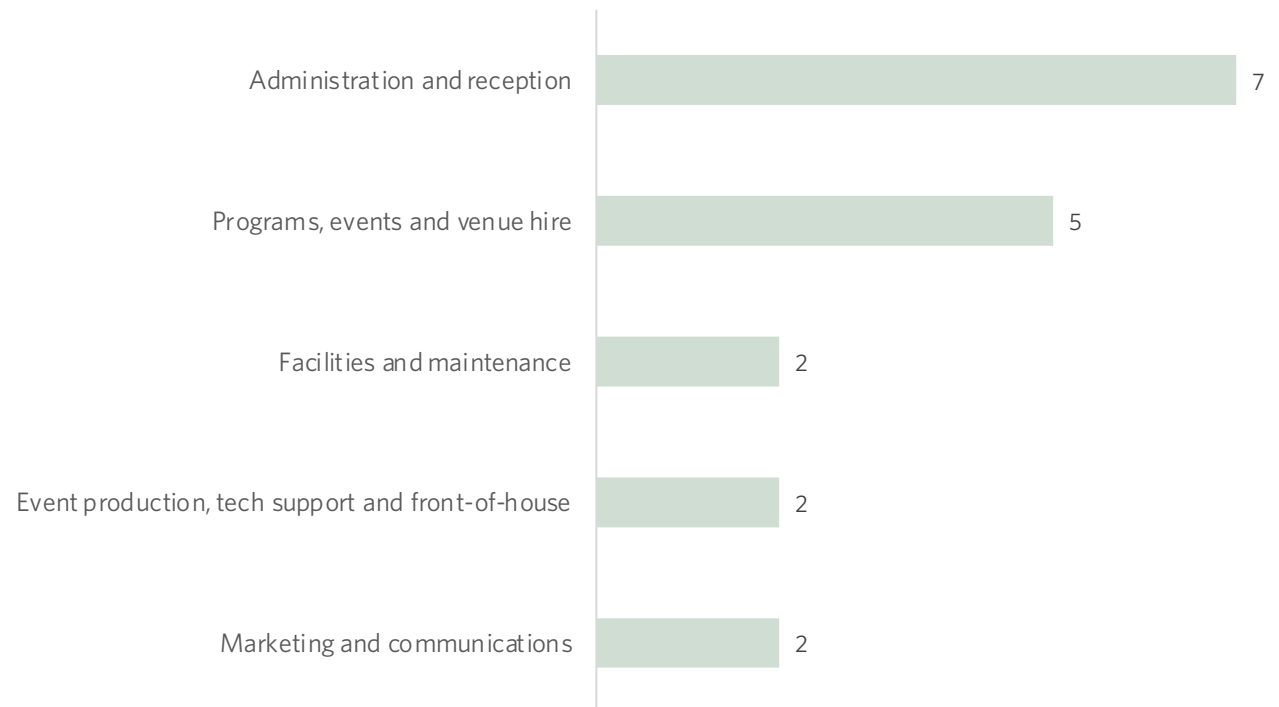
Board and Staff Survey

Arts Capital surveyed 26 board and staff members. The survey was in field between 28 April 2021 and 14 May 2021 and 54 individuals were invited to participate.

Board and staff members ratio

- 7 respondents were board members
- 19 respondents were staff members

Area of work (n=18)



Respondent profile

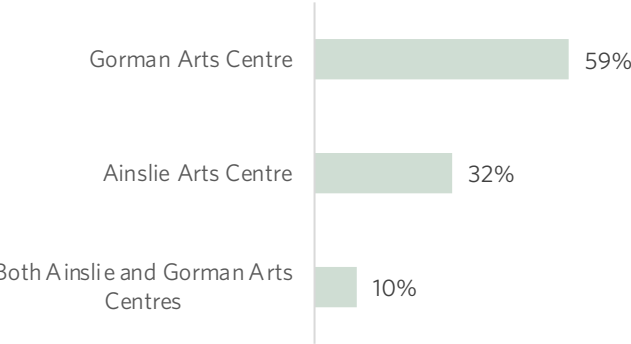
Resident and User Survey

Arts Capital surveyed 41 users and residents. The survey was in field between 4 May 2021 and 26 May 2021 and more than 270 individuals were invited to participate.

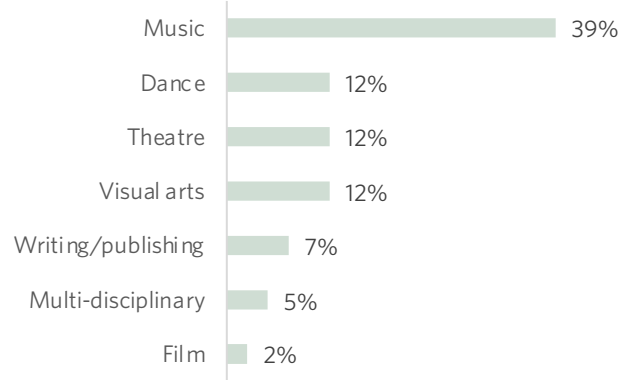
Relationship with the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres

Relationship	Percentage
I work in the Gorman Commons	2%
I hire one or more venues on an ad hoc basis	2%
I work for an external organisation that has partnered with Ainslie and Gorman on a project or activity	2%
I am an artist or creative who has made work or performed in a program at the centres	7%
I regularly hire one or more venues	10%
I am an individual studio resident	32%
I am a staff member, board member or volunteer of a resident organisation	44%

Where they are based



Primary arts and cultural focus



29 out of 41 users and residents run public-facing programs or activities at Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres, or host visitors at the arts centres.



Key insights

Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres (A+G) are relatively well accessed for local arts and cultural centres.

Just under 20% of Visitor Survey respondents (Dynata Community Sample) attended activities at either Ainslie or Gorman Arts Centre in the last 12 months. This is on par with a range of Canberran (as opposed to national) arts institutions including Belconnen Arts Centre (24%), Tuggeranong Arts Centre (17%) and the Street Theatre (13%).

Levels of participation in these activities were consistent across ages, regardless of child care responsibilities. Those living in metropolitan Canberra were more likely to have participated in activities than those in regional ACT. Those who have participated in activities at A+G are most likely to have attended live music performances, art exhibitions, theatre performances, markets, open days and workshops.

While high profile institutions are popular with Canberrans, there is an appetite for more grassroots arts experiences, such as the ones provided by Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres.

People like to experience the arts to have a good time, socialise and learn. There is a desire for places with a focus on both local community and the arts, elevating and supporting local arts and local arts practitioners. For arts and cultural institutions bringing vibrancy to the city and being places to go to when friends come to town to visit.

While A+G are well known among the creative community and art going public, there is mixed awareness of the range of activities and spaces at A+G and the role of Arts Capital in supporting the creative community.

Significant portions of the general public and visitors are unaware of the range of activities and opportunities afforded by A+G. The Gorman House Markets and Sage Restaurant are most popularly associated with A+G, despite the fact the former ceased operations in 2015.

Residents and users noted in interviews that they were unaware of most of the activities that happened on a day-to-day basis at A+G. Visitors often did not know how to find spaces within either centres.

A+G's heritage buildings, courtyards, central location, artistic community, programming, events and experiences, and the affordable, flexible spaces they provide, are highly valued.

Visitors and stakeholders agree that A+G's physical space and heritage buildings are a unique and valuable asset for Canberrans. For artists and creatives, A+G provides much needed affordable spaces for a variety of uses in a central location. Most find value in the sites' programming, events and experiences.

Art workers and creatives in particular value the support that Arts Capital provides to develop professionally through, for example, the Artist's Toolkit. They also appreciate the sense of community afforded by being surrounded by a diverse range of creative talent.



Key insights (continued)

Foundational improvements are required to create a safe, functional and accessible space.

A+G's ageing facilities no longer meet the foundational needs of many artists and creatives who use their spaces. Stakeholders, residents, users and staff all noted that investment is required in broadband and Wi-Fi, heating/cooling, lighting, wayfinding, and physical access to create welcoming, comfortable and safe spaces. Improvements to digital infrastructure are particularly important to attract and maintain its community of users, residents and tenants.

There is an opportunity to better connect Ainslie Arts Centre and Gorman Arts Centre to each other and to Civic to create an arts precinct.

The ACT Government has significant ambitions for the renewal of Canberra's Civic centre, which is within walking distance of both arts centres. There is an opportunity to leverage the interest and investment in key places – Garema Place, Haig Park, and Braddon – to create an inclusive arts precinct, connected in vision and objectives. This could help elevate the liveability and vibrancy of the whole area and cement its position as the artistic centre of Canberra.

There is an opportunity to strengthen diversity of users, residents and tenants within A+G.

Although the Arts Capital staff has a high level of cultural and gender diversity, there is a perception that cultural diversity, including First Nations engagement, is limited. Stakeholders feel that Arts Capital should consider proactively engaging with these communities to create a more inclusive and representative artistic community.

There is stakeholder interest in both multi-arts spaces and specific spaces for different art forms. There is no strong consensus on the post-renovation configuration of the Ainslie and Gorman facilities.

Stakeholders noted that there is a need in Canberra for rehearsal and performance spaces for specific art forms (e.g. dance hub, musical hub) as well as multi-arts facilities. While there are likely shared needs among these different creative communities. Exclusive use of spaces will need to be carefully thought through.

There is a need for a vibrant hub for professional artists and creatives in Canberra.

The general public and the creative community both highlighted the need for a vibrant creative hub. A+G have the foundational community of users, tenants and residents to fulfil this role. Those consulted noted that public events and workshops, networking or social activities for creatives and the development of spaces to linger and socialise (e.g. café) would help create a sense of vibrancy. The top thing that communities surveyed wanted A+G to focus on is public events and festivals (45%).

A coordinated approach to arts sector professional development, curation of creative output and funding is required.

Stakeholders consistently identified the need for greater leadership to help shape and support the creative community. A+G could play a leadership role in convening artists in order to foster collaboration, and strengthen and articulate a vision for Canberra arts and culture. There is strong support for Arts Capital to support the professional development of the creative sector including through the facilitation of cross-disciplinary innovation, joint funding and the promotion of the arts.



Key insights (continued)

There is an opportunity for progressive topics to be explored through arts and culture and to embrace digital possibilities.

The arts play an important role in the communication of social and environmental issues. They enable people to become aware and to engage. There is an opportunity for A+G to enable more people to engage with issues of our time through arts and culture.

Technology can also be used to create accessible and unique experiences. There is an opportunity to make more of Canberra's arts and culture available online and to mix art and technology in innovative ways to create novel ways of engagement.

Arts and cultural workers want "future-proofed" workplaces.

The covid-19 pandemic highlighted new demands for workplaces: to provide flexible, adaptable and digitally adept work environments. Workers are expecting seamless space and equipment hire systems and digital infrastructure. They want ecologically sustainable design with reduced environmental impact.

There is an opportunity for the Arts Capital team to work more collaboratively and transparently, under a shared vision.

Some stakeholders identified ways to improve Arts Capital operations. For example, team members could become clearer on the important roles they play in benefitting the arts community and helping A+G fulfill its mission. Skills and relationship building through shadowing or project-based opportunities could equip staff to generate ideas for the future of A+G and gain the multi-disciplinary skills to deliver them.



Interview quote

“Canberrans want arts to do more for the community - arts and culture have an opportunity to bring about positive change and joy. We are looking for a diversity of accessible experiences. Some familiar, some new.”

Program partner, May 2021



The Canberra arts sector



Interview quote

“I don't think that there is another space like Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres. It's unique in that it provides a hub for the arts community. You can't insert an atmosphere into a place. That's what it has that others don't, an artistic, welcoming feel to it.”

Regular hirer, April 2021



Summary of findings

1. Arts sector ecosystem

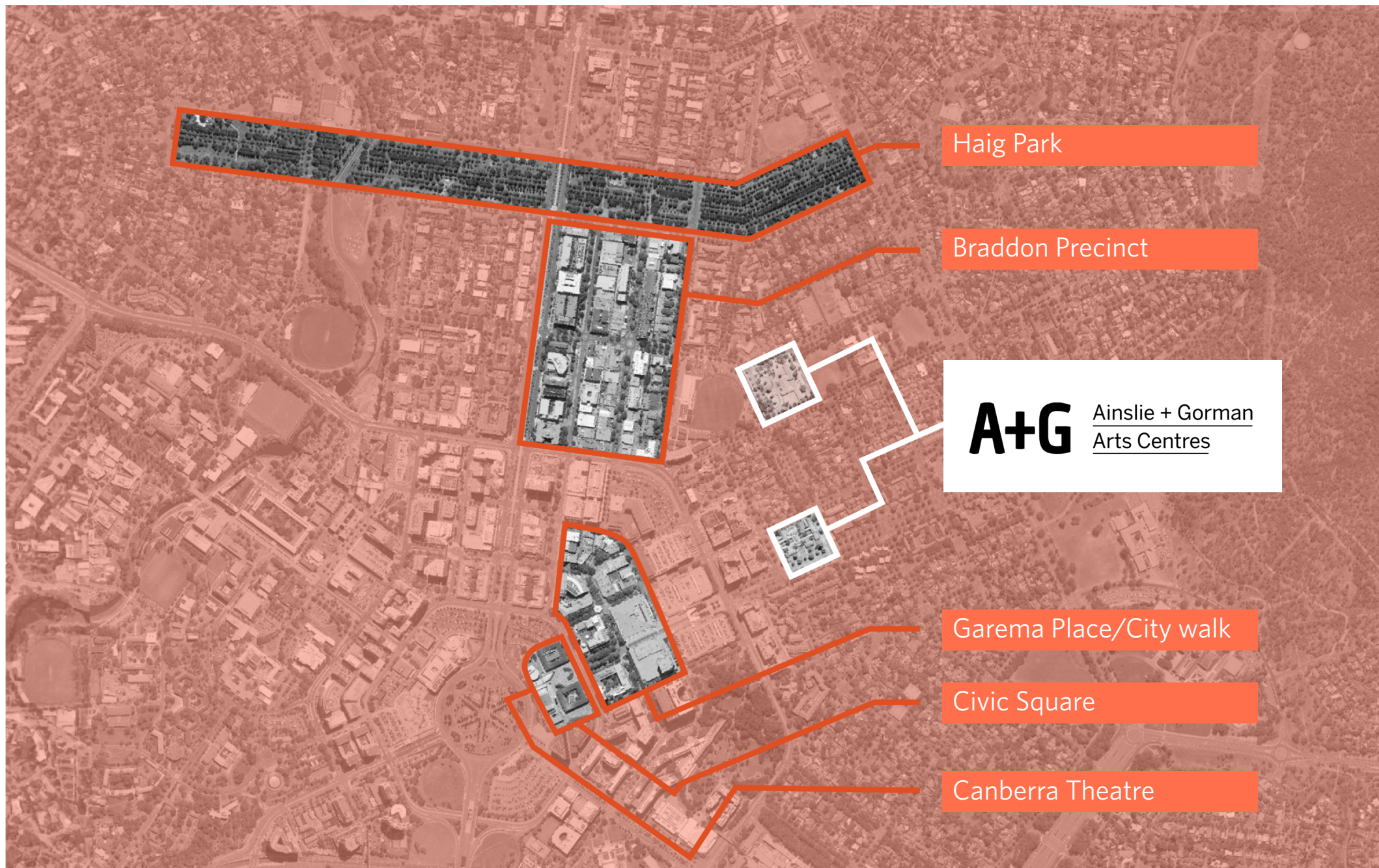
The ACT Government recognises the role of a vibrant arts and creative sector in enhancing liveability and is committed to developing Canberra into a nationally recognised artistic centre.

Organisational funding for the arts in the ACT is under review, pending a new funding plan. In the meantime, there is a perception among artists and organisations that funding is scarce and competitive.

ACT Government policy wants to see an arts sector which is accessible, innovative, collaborative and inclusive, and fosters connection and belonging. The ACT Government has significant ambitions for the renewal of Canberra's Civic centre, with an opportunity to create an inclusive arts precinct, connected in vision and objectives.

ACT Government Key Arts Organisation funding for the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres is relatively low compared to that of other arts organisations. To flourish, local arts organisations need to consider diverse and novel funding sources while seizing opportunities to align with government, urban development and placemaking priorities.





Haig Park

Braddon Precinct

A+G Ainslie + Gorman
Arts Centres

Garema Place/City walk

Civic Square

Canberra Theatre

ACT arts sector

Overview

Key organisations and institutions

Canberra is home to diverse artists and arts and cultural organisations, with the highest attendance rate at cultural venues and events in Australia (artsACT website, 2021). From more traditional, national arts and cultural institutions such as the National Museum of Australia, to emerging artists, festivals and local activations, such as the Haig Park experiments.

The main funding body for the arts in the ACT, artsACT, oversees a [number of facilities](#) dedicated to arts activity, including the Belconnen Arts Centre, The Street Theatre, Canberra glassworks, Tuggeranong Arts Centre. Kingston Arts Precinct (in development) is positioning itself as the next vibrant, high quality, diverse cutting-edge precinct. A creative destination for contemporary art, innovative design and heritage infrastructure, with facilities for visual arts, visiting artists, First Nation communities, retail, and outdoor events (artsACT website). Some of artsACT's [Key Arts Organisations](#) will relocate to this precinct.

Funding

Funding for the arts in the ACT is relatively low and competitive. Many stakeholders interviewed reported that it is difficult for artists to make a living from their art alone, often having to source complementary income. Historically, funding for the arts in the ACT has come from artsACT through the ACT Arts Fund and competitive funding rounds and some from the Australia Council for the Arts.

Funding by artsACT is likely to be reformed in the near future. This affects Key Arts Organisations such as Ainslie and Gorman

The ACT Government recognises the role of a vibrant arts and creative sector in enhancing liveability and is committed to developing Canberra into a nationally recognised artistic centre. The arts and culture ecosystem in the ACT involves a unique mix of high-profile institutions, local arts and cultural centres, and engaging activations. To flourish, local arts organisations need to consider diverse and novel funding sources while seizing the right opportunities to align with government priorities, urban development and placemaking opportunities.

Arts Centres as well as established A+G resident organisations and is likely to create opportunities for emerging and growing arts organisations. Looking to the future, other funding sources should be considered. This includes partnerships, business sponsorship and in-kind support, philanthropy, individual giving, non-arts government funding, crowdfunding, interest-free micro loans and impact investment.

Recent plans and policy direction

The following plans and policies should be considered when shaping the future of A+G. Of note is that the ACT Government is seeking to develop and promote a creative industries approach in partnership with the sector.

2015 ACT Arts Policy

The latest ACT arts policy wants to see Canberra become a vibrant artistic centre, diverse and dynamic, valued locally, nationally and globally. Its ambitions for the arts include:

- **Accessibility** – art is accessible regardless of culture, age, gender, ability, location and scale of arts practice.
- **Innovation** – the sector fosters innovation, emerging artforms, and the development of ideas.
- **Capacity building and collaboration** – capacity and practices are improved through information, training, networking, resource development, collaboration and partnerships.
- **Recognition** – Canberra art and artists are recognised on the local, national and global stage.
- **Attractive places** – arts and culture improve Canberra's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit.
- **First Nations** – First Nations artists, organisations and community are engaged with, and develop skills. Encourage

relationships, advocate for, and acknowledge, the important cultural role of First Nations people.

City Renewal Authority

The ACT Government, led by the City Renewal Authority has significant plans to revitalise Canberra's CBD – Civic. This includes the renewal of:

- Civic Square and the Canberra Theatre Centre to create a vibrant arts and cultural scene.
- Braddon to facilitate economic and community development.
- Garema Place as part of the reimagination of Civic.
- Haig Park to offer a cultural and passive recreation experience for locals and visitors.

The Urban Art Strategy 2020-2025 guides the types of urban art experiences that will support and celebrate the renewal program.

ACT Wellbeing Framework

The ACT Wellbeing Framework outlines social progress indicators, which will guide future policy decisions and government initiatives. Framework indicators directly related to arts and culture include:

- **Social connection** – connection with family, friends and community, measured through engagement in arts and culture events, meetings or activities.
- **Identity and belonging** – arts and culture provides the ability to connect people with ideas, emotions and stories.



Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres

Overview

Managed by Arts Capital, the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres have, for a long time, contributed to the vitality of the arts in the ACT. They play a key role in the Canberran arts ecosystem, providing affordable studio, rehearsal and performance spaces for artists, and contributing to community participation and upskilling in the arts, in a centrally-located, beautiful heritage environment.

Space

The Ainslie and Gorman sites include 5,700m² of heritage-listed floor space in 8 buildings on extensive grounds (artsACT Briefing Paper, 2016).

In 2019, the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres hosted more than 100,000 visitors, with 3,362 audience members and 168 performances and events (A+G Annual Report, 2019). They are known for their contemporary arts programming and partnerships with local groups with a community focus.

Residents and users

As creative hubs, Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres host 12 resident organisations, 24 resident studio artists, 7 organisations at the Gorman Commons co-working space, additional spaces for hire by art workers and creatives, and the fine dining Sage Restaurant.

Programming

The Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres run programs for the artistic community and Canberrans. This includes mentoring, professional development and support programs (e.g. Artist Toolkit, residencies), as well as a range of arts and cultural programs and events from artistic performances to workshops, conferences and weddings. Some projects are also delivered to benefit the broader community (e.g. Haig Park Experiments), often in partnership with external parties.

Programming aims to be socially progressive and inclusive – with efforts to engage the LGBTQI+ community, people with disability and First Nations art workers and creatives.

Funding

About 80% of Arts Capital's income is earned revenue from venue hire, sub-licences, co-working fees, events, grants and sponsorships. 20% is Key Arts Organisation income from the ACT government (via artsACT). Income from artsACT is low compared to funding received by competing arts organisations.

Location

The Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres are centrally located in Braddon and Ainslie, ACT.

The population of Braddon is especially young, with a median age of 29, culturally diverse, with 34% of its population born overseas (ABS, 2016) progressive, and transient. The area offers attractive retail and dining experiences and is a destination for Canberrans and ACT tourists. Braddon counts a high proportion of students working in hospitality, especially from north east and south Asia, contributing to local diversity. Couples and singles with no children are a growing demographic. Microfamilies, white collar professionals and creative entrepreneurs are projected to become growing segments of the Braddon population (Braddon Place Plan, 2018).

The median age of residents at Ainslie is 41 years old, older than that of Braddon. Ainslie's population is relatively culturally diverse, with 1 in 5 people born overseas. Located within walking distance of the Canberra City, the suburb houses many attractions such as bush trails of Mount Ainslie, early 20th century architecture and a vibrant local shopping centre. Notably, 24.6% of the population works in central government administration, compared to the Australian average of 1.2% (ABS, 2016).



Summary of findings

2. Participation in the arts sector

People from a broad range of demographics engage regularly in arts and cultural activities within the ACT.

Apart from regional residents who are far less likely to participate in the arts sector, participation is consistent across age groups and genders. Those who take children to activities or drop them off are most engaged – they were most likely to have attended arts and cultural activities in the last 12 months either by themselves or with children.

While high profile institutions are popular with Canberrans, there is an appetite for more grassroots arts experiences, such as the ones provided by Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres.

People like to experience the arts to have a good time, socialise and learn. There is a desire for places with a focus on both local community and the arts, elevating and supporting local art and local arts practitioners. People want arts and cultural institutions to bring vibrancy to the city, while being places to go to when friends come to town to visit.

One of the main barriers to participation in arts and culture in Canberra is awareness of activities.

Lack of public awareness is something that could be partly addressed by Arts Capital with more frequent website and social media updates and media outreach for major events and programming features.



Participation in the arts sector

Overview

Who participates in the arts?

74% of those who completed the Visitor Survey participated in arts and cultural activities in the past 12 months either by themselves, with friends or with their children – this figure is likely to have been affected by COVID-19 restrictions due to A+G venues shut-downs of up to three months in 2020.

Females are more likely than males to have participated in these activities (80% vs 64%). Participation rates were fairly consistent among respondents of different ages. Metropolitan respondents (86%) were far more likely than those from regional areas (57%) to have participated in arts and cultural activities.

Of those who attended activities, 20% attended with their children, while 6% dropped children in their care at these activities.

People who make efforts to engage children in arts and creative activities are very likely to also attend similar activities by themselves or with friends - 55% of those surveyed who attended arts activities with kids also went to arts activities by themselves or with friends. Only 17% of those who went to arts and cultural activities by themselves or with friends, also took their children to these activities. This suggests that those who engage their children in the arts, are very likely to be interested in the arts themselves. There may be an opportunity to further engage this group when they attend activities with children or drop them off.

Canberra residents are among the most culturally engaged of any city in Australia. The 2017 National Arts Participation Study found that 100% of ACT residents engage with the arts, with 78% attending live events. Dance, visual arts and music are the most attended events.

Where do people go?

Canberra's national art and cultural institutions are the most visited, together with libraries and movie theatres. The most visited institutions in the last 12 months outside of movies and local libraries were:

- Australian War Memorial (54%)
- National Gallery of Australia (49%)
- National Museum of Australia (44%)
- Canberra Theatre (42%)
- National Library of Australia (40%)

About a third of Visitor Survey respondents (Dynata Community Sample) had visited a range of localised arts centres or organisations including local libraries (44%), Australian National University (42%) and Canberra Museum (38%).

How often do people attend?

Outside of classes, most attend art and cultural activities monthly. About 40% of survey respondents noted that they attended movies, art and cultural exhibitions, concerts, historical exhibitions and art and craft markets on a monthly basis. This suggests that ACT residents have a strong desire to engage regularly in arts and cultural activities.

What are their motivations for participating in arts and culture?

Communities engage in arts and cultural activities for their own personal enjoyment (82%), to support the arts (62%)

and to learn more about the arts (61%). More than half also engage in these activities as a way to socialise (51%) and 42% are interested in learning new skills. Women (67%) are more likely than men (47%) to engage in these activities as a way of supporting the arts.

What are the main barriers to participation in arts and culture?

The Visitor Survey found three main barriers to participation:

- Timing of activities (47%)
- Awareness of activities (46%)
- Cost of activities (46%)

This reflects feedback in stakeholder interviews that a lack of awareness of activities is a strong barrier to participation. A handful of respondents also noted that COVID-19 had made it difficult to engage in arts and cultural activities.

What are the gaps in the market?

24% of the community surveyed said that there are gaps in Canberra arts and cultural offerings. Key activities that respondents want to see more of are a greater variety and number of:

- Art exhibitions and classes (32%)
- Music festivals (26%)
- Theatre shows (21%)

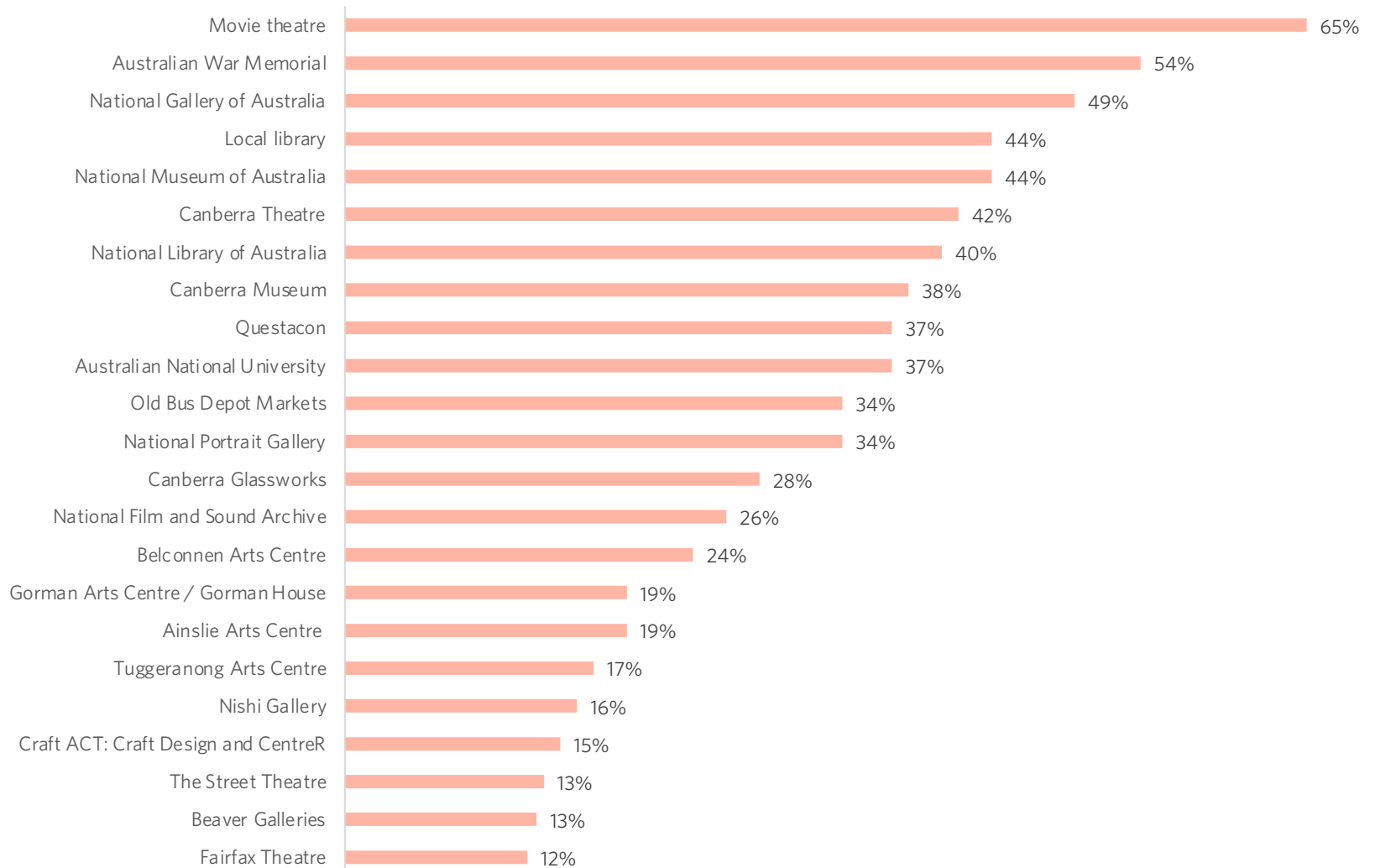


Where do people go?

Canberra's national art and cultural institutions are the most visited, together with movie theatres and local libraries.

Visitor Survey Q5A
Dynata Community Sample

Percentage of respondents who visited arts and cultural locations in the last 12 months (n=156)

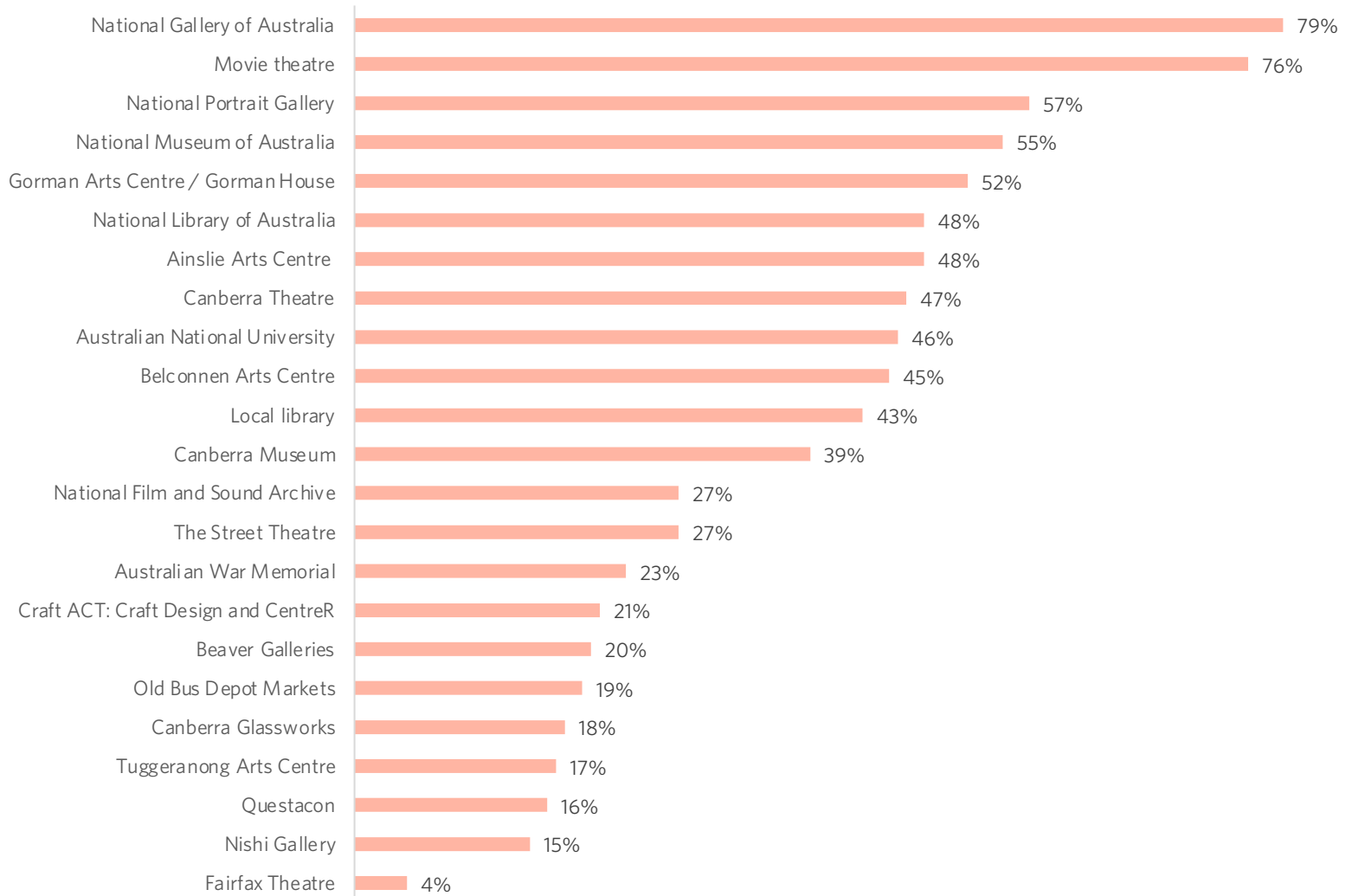


Where do people go?

Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres audiences rank both centres high, along with Australia's national institutions and movie theatres.

Visitor Survey Q5A
Arts Capital Sample

Percentage of respondents who visited arts and cultural locations in the last 12 months (n=135)

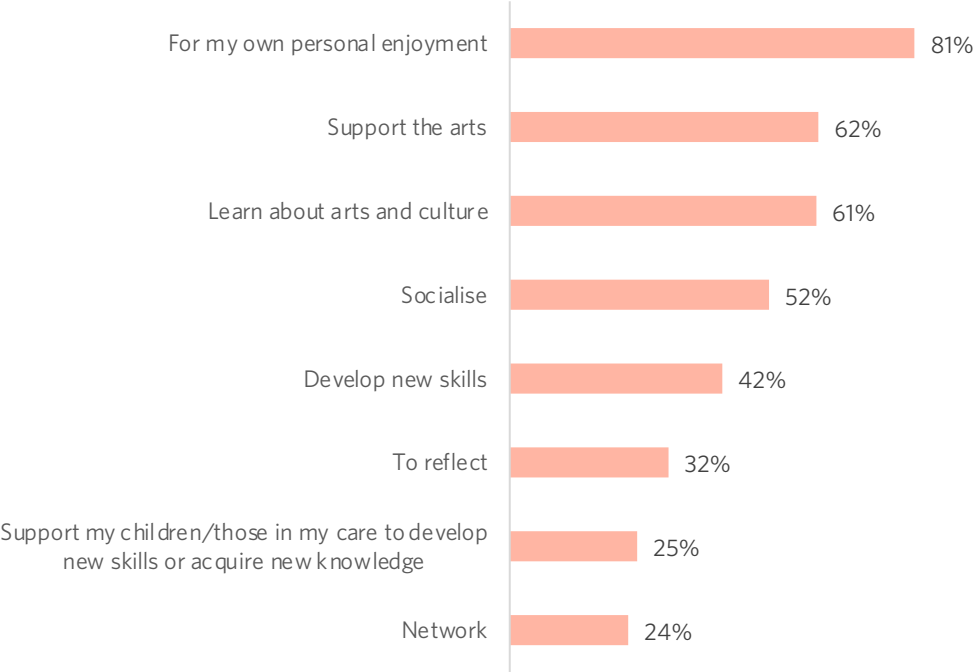


What are the main motivations and barriers to participation in arts and culture?

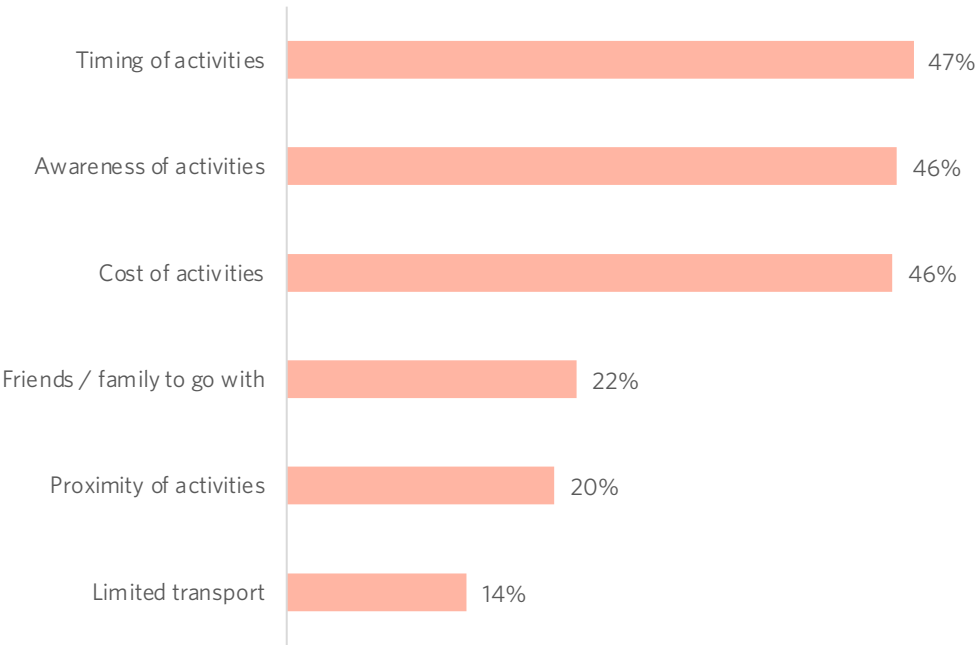
Visitor Survey, Q7 & 8

Communities engage in arts and cultural activities for their own personal enjoyment, to support the arts, and to learn more about the arts. More than half also engage in these activities as a way to socialise. Main barriers to participation include timing of activities, awareness and cost.

Main motivations for engaging in arts and cultural activities (n = 224)



Factors preventing participants from engaging in arts and cultural activities (n = 302)



Interview quote

“I have a lot of friends who try hard to contribute to the Canberra arts scene but they're not given the support they need ... Canberra is harder than other places to sustain yourself as an artist. But they're the ones who make Canberra a great place to live so we can't lose them.”

Regular hirer, April 2021



Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres



Summary of findings

3. Awareness, perception and engagement with A+G

Beacon of arts and culture.

Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres are well respected arts institutions. They provide central spaces for Canberra's creative community to gather, connect and teach. While the two arts centres are similar in some ways, they are commonly perceived as having separate identities.

Their rich history is deeply appreciated by residents, users and visitors.

The heritage buildings and beautiful courtyards have unique character and are cherished by the community, residents and users of A+G.

Creatives and arts workers appreciate the accessible location, accessibility and support from Arts Capital staff.

A+G provide invaluable support to Canberran artists - affordable places to practice, a community of talent, and supportive frameworks for professional development.

Much of what happens on site is unknown to the wider public and even to those who work and visit.

There are opportunities to promote more effectively the role of A+G in developing and supporting Canberran arts and culture, and the activity that happens on site. This will encourage broader support from the community for arts and culture through program participation, precinct activation and campaigns.



Awareness, perception and engagement with A+G

Is the community aware of A+G?

Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres are relatively well visited - 37% and 39% of Visitor Survey respondents (and 19% of the Dynata Community Sample) who had been to arts and cultural activities in the last 12 months had been to Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres respectively.

However, there is mixed awareness about A+G, including in relation to their facilities, activities and name. 65% of those who had attended arts and cultural activities at A+G in the last 12 months and 40% of those who had not, knew that Gorman House had been renamed Gorman Arts Centre.

What does the community associate most with A+G?

The top associations that visitors have with A+G include initiatives open to the wide public (Gorman House Markets, Sage Restaurant), and associations with the artist community (artist studios).

Those who have not heard of A+G, think that the centres provide dining options (55%), performing arts classes for adults (54%) children and young adults (53%), artists residency programs (54%) and markets (52%).

Is A+G well respected?

A+G is well respected among Canberra's art and creative community.

- Stakeholders interviewed were generally very positive about A+G's operations, community and spaces, although

While the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres are well known among the creative community and art going public, there is mixed awareness of the range of activities and spaces.

- spaces should be retrofitted to better meet their needs.
- 85% of survey respondents would recommend A+G, 14% are unsure.

Visitor Survey respondents would be most likely to recommend A+G for its community activities (53%) and space (31%). Only 15% said they would recommend the centres as a means to arts participation.

How does the community engage with A+G?

Gorman Arts Centre is slightly more visited than Ainslie Arts Centre. Of those that have attended A+G, a slightly higher portion had been to Gorman Arts Centre (79%) compared to Ainslie Arts Centre (66%).

Those who have engaged in activities at A+G are most likely to have attended music performances, art exhibitions and theatre as well as the Gorman House Markets, consistent with National Arts Participation Centre Study.

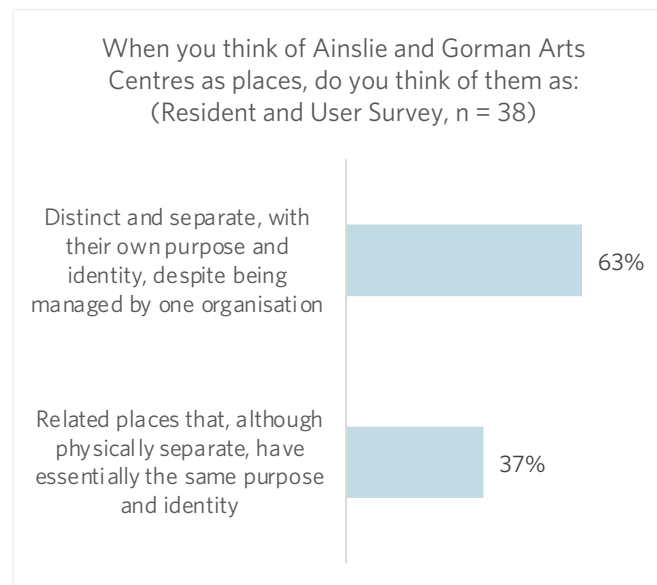
Engagement in various activities at A+G is broadly consistent across demographics. Notably, those aged 25-34 years old and 35-44 years old are much more likely to have attended activities at Gorman Arts Centres (40% and 31%) than Ainslie Arts Centre (27% and 19%) in the last 24 months. This may reflect different programming and activities in the two centres.

Respondents attended activities in broadly the same proportions, with and without children.

How do stakeholders perceive the arts centres identities?

While resident and users surveyed find commonality in the buildings' history and heritage and their artist-focused approach, the two centres are primarily seen as different.

While Ainslie Arts Centre is seen as community-oriented and commonly associated with music-based programs and performances, Gorman Arts Centre is more commonly associated with visual arts and thought of as a residence hub allowing the practice, creation and presentation of art.

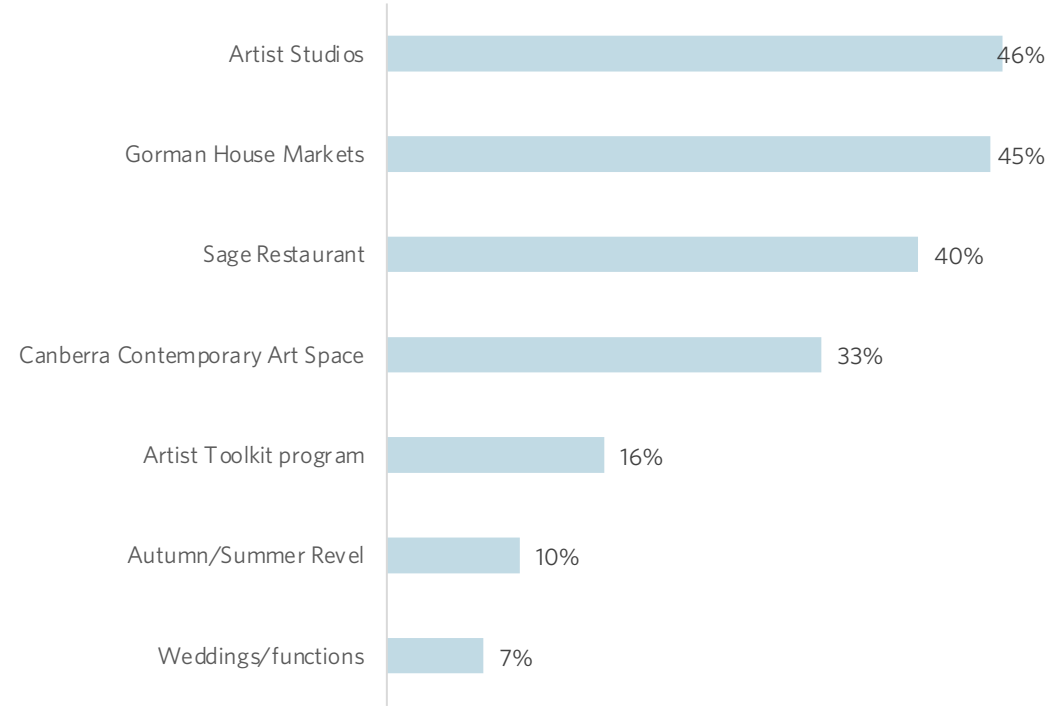


What does the community associate most with A+G?

Visitor Survey Q13 & 23

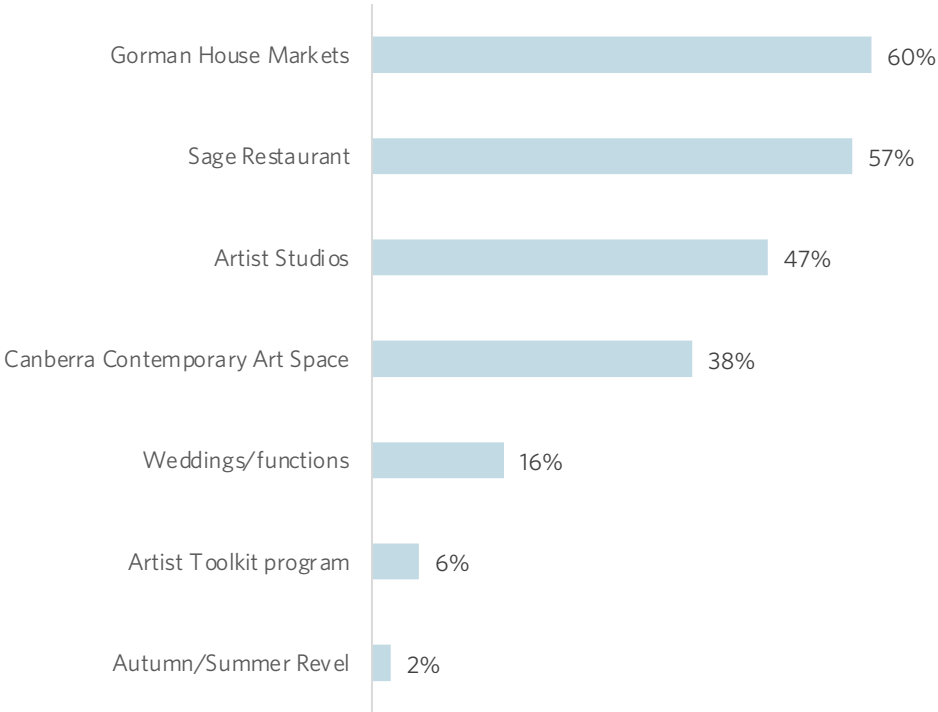
Top associations include initiatives open to the public (former Gorman House Markets, Sage Restaurant), and associations with the artist community (artist studios).

Associations made with A+G among people who have been in the last 12 months (n = 110)



Other associations include: QL2 dance, dance performances, choir, music lessons, Canberra Youth Centre and venues for hiring.

Associations made with A+G among people who have not been in the last 12 months (n = 89)



Other associations include: social and arts gatherings, ACT Writers, QL2 dance, concerts at Ainslie, drama class, music program, Luminescence Children’s Choir, Quantum Leap program, and dance studios.

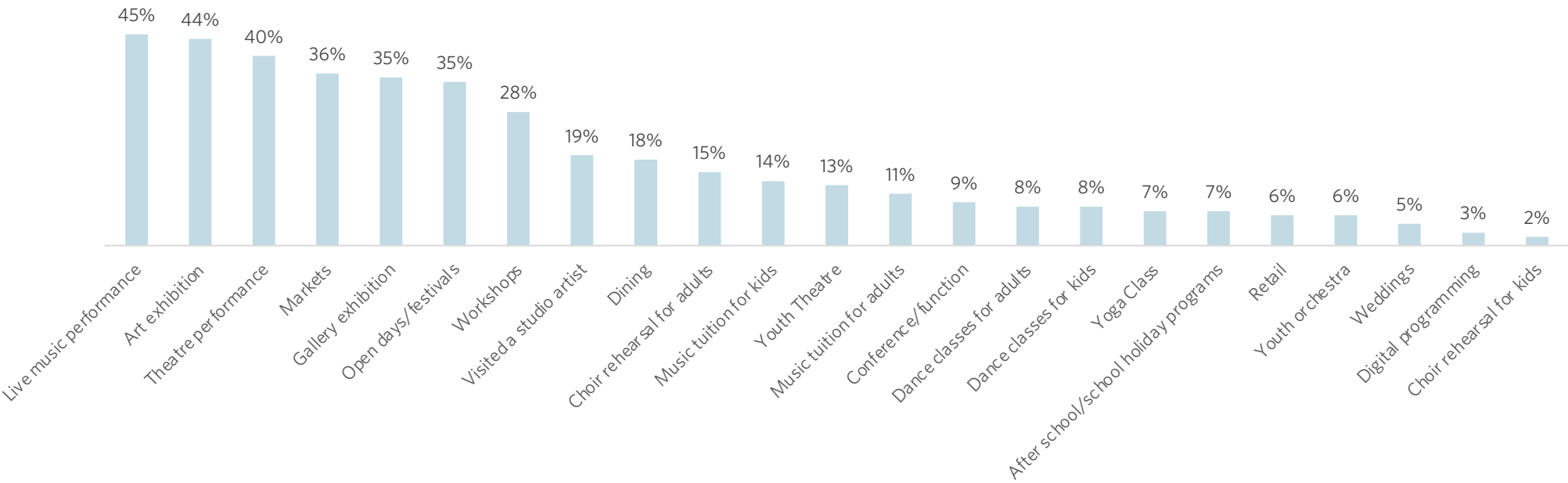


How does the community engage with A+G?

Visitor Survey, Q16

Those who have engaged in activities at the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres are most likely to have attended music performances, art exhibitions and theatre as well as the Gorman House Markets.

Activities that people attended at A+G in their lifetime (n = 110)
(based on participants who have been to the centres in the last 12 months)



How well is A+G meeting the needs of residents and users?

Resident and User Survey, Q23

The needs of residents and users are generally well met by A+G. They feel respected, treated with integrity and well informed by staff. Improvements could be made to better meet their physical comfort needs, allow them to showcase their work and deliver public programs, and for better wayfinding.



Summary of findings

4. What is valued about A+G?

The community of creatives that work and use the space is a hallmark of A+G.

Residents, users and the broader community value the diverse community of art workers and creatives at the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres. This is despite the fact that there is limited awareness of the art workers and creatives who use the space.

The unique heritage and courtyards are also strongly appreciated.

The historical nature of the buildings and the beautiful courtyards are unique assets in a relatively newly built city. Stakeholders and visitors highlighted this as key features of the sites.

Affordability and central location are key selling points for art workers and creatives to call Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres home.

Many stakeholders noted that the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres were very affordable when compared to similar spaces. This keeps many users, residents and tenants in the arts centres despite concerns about the digital infrastructure and ageing facilities.



What is valued about A+G?

What do communities value?

85% of Visitor Survey respondents would recommend the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres. They most value the community of artists and creatives, the variety of artists and communities, and the heritage building and grounds.

Community of artists and creatives	62%
Variety of activities and programs	51%
Heritage of buildings and grounds	46%
Community of users	45%
Green spaces	41%
Diversity of spaces	35%
Quality of creative programming	33%
Quality of spaces	29%

What do communities want to see prioritised?

Communities want A+G to curate and host more public events and festivals (45%), strengthen the variety of programming and artists (36%), and improve the quality of creative (31%) and social (29%) spaces. 27% also felt that A+G should invest in building the capacity of artists and creatives.

What do art workers and creative professionals value?

Residents and users interviewed and surveyed strongly prioritised affordability (91%) and location, being part of a community of creatives (76%), and the support provided to that community. They enjoy the beautiful building heritage and want to see the gardens preserved (70%). They also valued having access to flexible places allowing them to perform different duties (e.g. meetings, rehearsals) (67%). This is somewhat consistent with Board and Staff Survey

The community of creatives that work in and use the space is a hallmark of the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres. The unique heritage is also strongly appreciated, along with the affordability and central location for art workers and creatives.

respondents who value the creative community, heritage and green spaces, support (from staff and training for practitioners), and programming, events and experiences.

Looking to the future, values that the board, staff, residents and users would like to see prioritised include creativity, affordability, social inclusion, and community participation. The board and staff would also strongly like to see environmental sustainability being prioritised, while residents and users prioritise learning and collaboration.

Affordability

Residents and users strongly value the affordability of the studios, venues, and offices.

Inner-city location

They feel fortunate to be able to work in an inner-city location.

Community of art workers and creatives

Residents and users appreciate feeling part of a diverse creative community at A+G.

- Common spaces (e.g. kitchen) encourage interaction.
- Many appreciate social events organised and being invited to board and staff events.
- While many would appreciate more collaboration opportunities, not many put in the efforts.

Support for the creative community

Residents and users appreciate the support that A+G provides to creative workers and to arts and cultural organisations, who might otherwise struggle to pursue their careers in Canberra.

- A+G provides the creative community a place to work and helps improve work security.
- Residents and users value professional development programs such as the Artist Toolkit, and opportunities to advocate together for change in the arts and culture sector.
- Residency programs are a great way to connect with new creatives, gain perspective, and access needed resources.

Heritage and atmosphere

Residents and users treasure the heritage of the buildings and the courtyards.

- The history of the buildings is unique, Canberra is “starved” of historical buildings.
- The grounds are beautiful and relaxing, a break from the city.
- Young people, especially, see A+G as a quaint, endearing and hip place to be.

Flexible / hireable spaces

Residents and users appreciate that a variety of spaces are available for diverse uses, such as workshops and meetings. They also appreciate having basic work equipment such as printers and lockers.

Support from staff and administration

Residents and users feel generally positive about their relationship with administration and the staff.

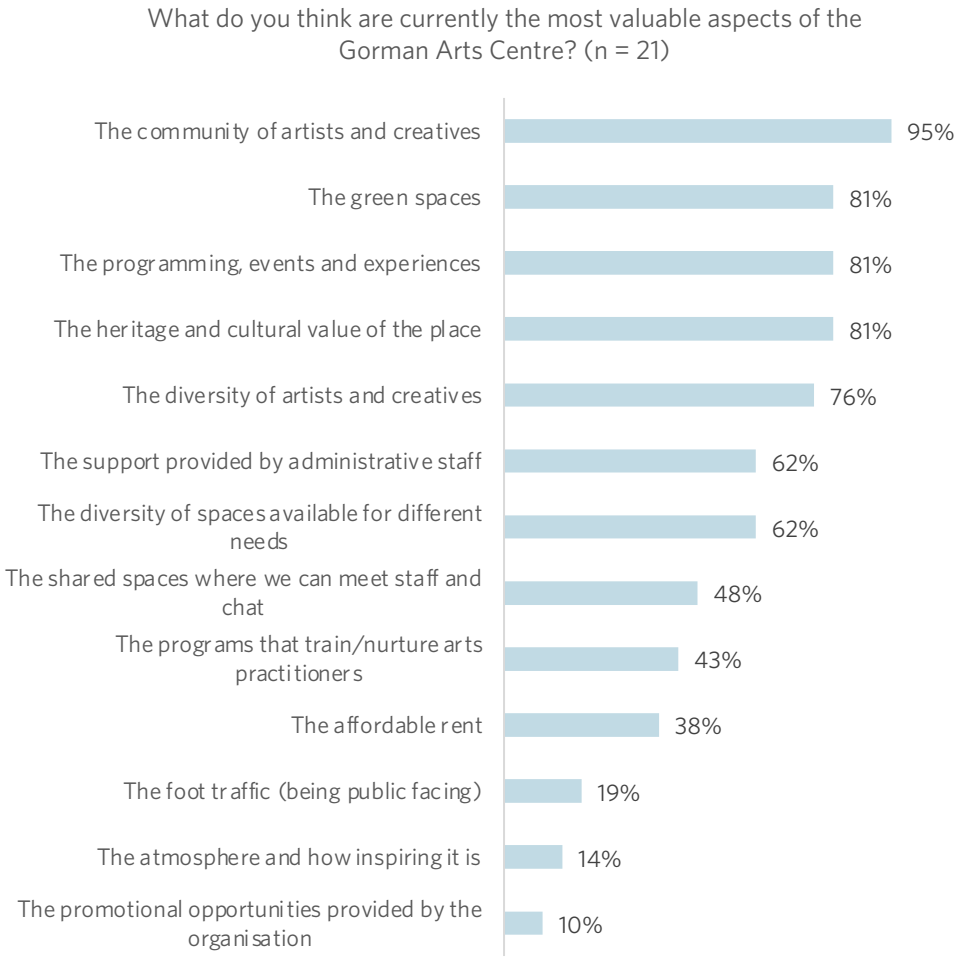
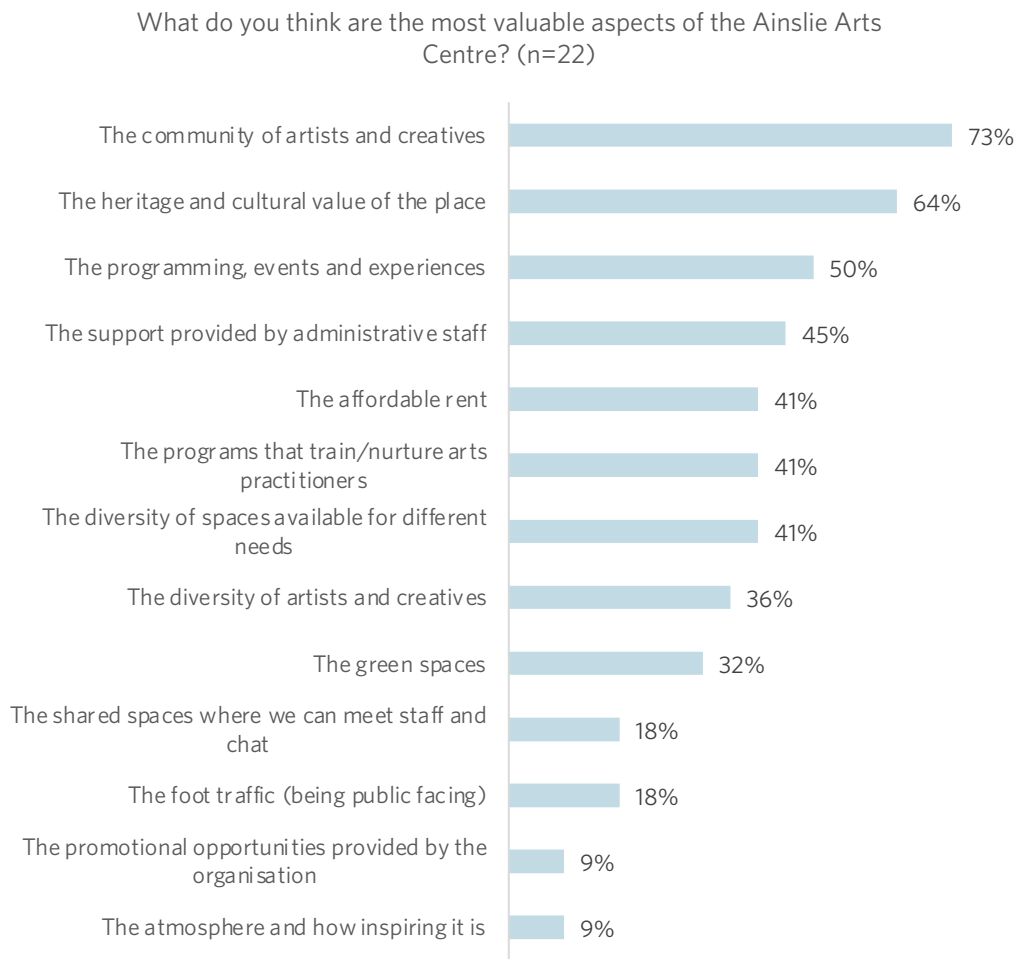
- The administration and staff are very accommodating and always willing to help.
- They love the arts and it comes across.



What is valued about the arts centres?

Board and staff most value the community of artists and creatives at A+G, the unique heritage, programming, and support provided to artists (including affordability of venues).

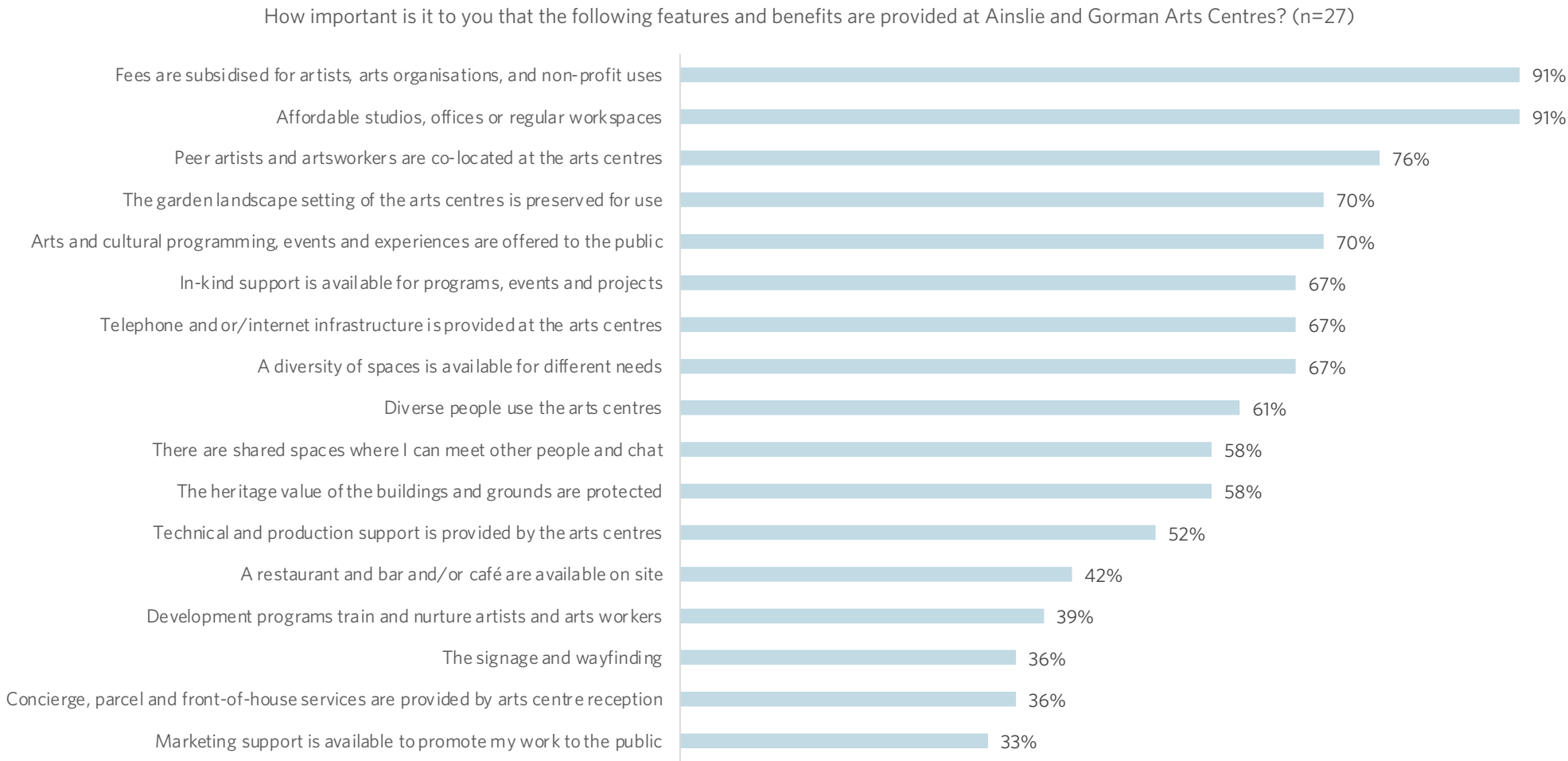
Board and Staff Survey Q3 & 8



What do art workers and creative professionals value?

Resident and User Survey Q10

Residents and users strongly prioritise affordability and financial support. They value being part of a community of creatives as well as the arts and cultural programming offered to the public. They want to preserve the garden landscape, have good phone/Internet access and a diversity of spaces for different needs.

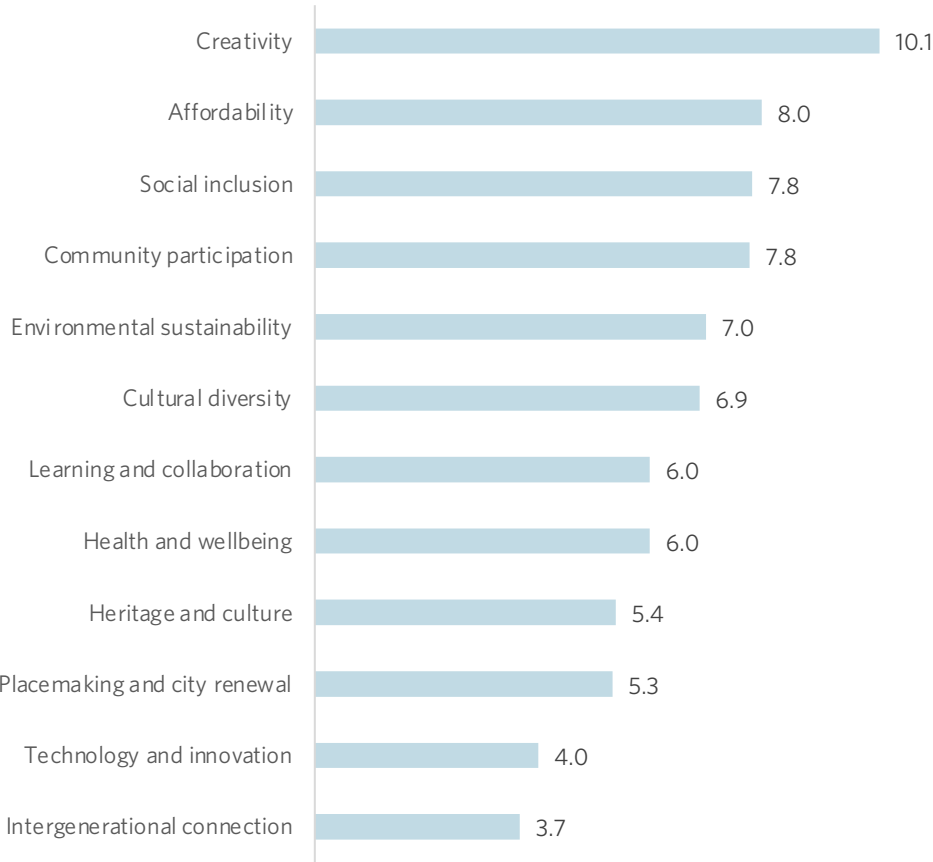


What do art workers and creative professionals value?

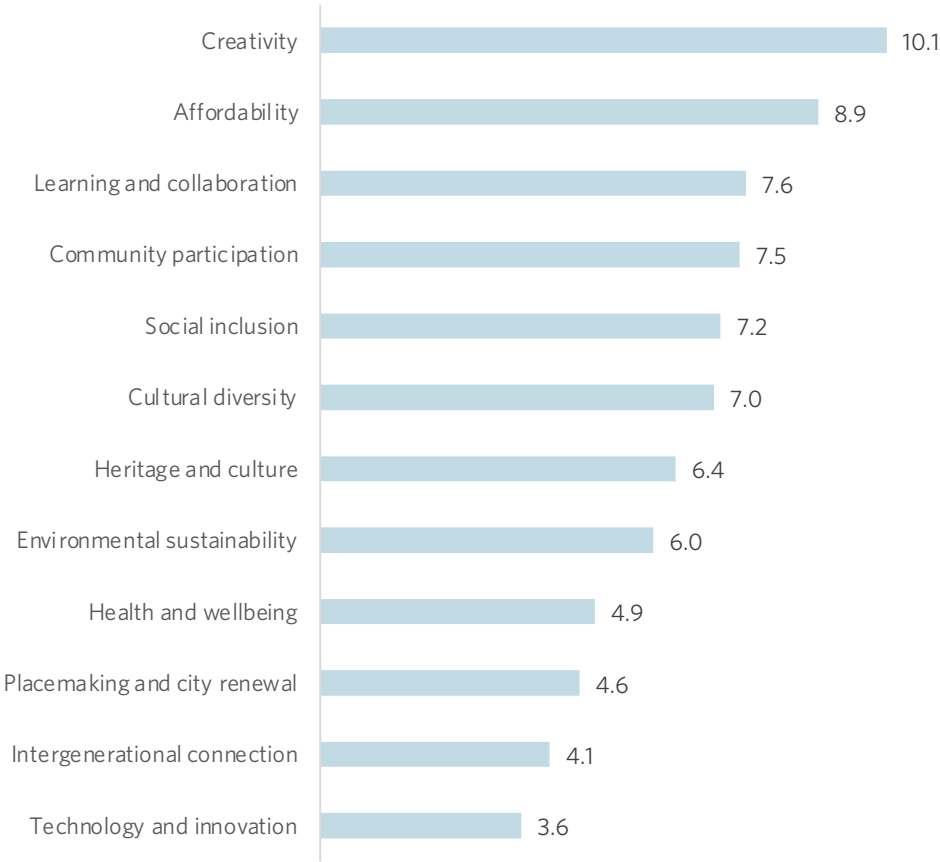
Board and staff survey Q15
Resident and user survey Q9

Looking to the future, board, staff and residents are generally closely aligned in their view of the values that A+G should prioritise, with 5 of the top 6 priorities shared. Priorities include creativity, affordability, social inclusion, and community participation. The board and staff also prioritise environmental sustainability, while residents and users prioritise learning and collaboration.

What are the values you would like to see Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres prioritise? (Board and Staff Survey, n=18)



What are the values you would like to see Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres prioritise? (Resident and User Survey, n = 33)



Summary of findings

5. How can we improve the overall experience?

Physical improvements are required to both Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres to create safe, functional and accessible venues.

There is widespread agreement that renovations and upgrades are required to improve digital connectivity, heating/cooling, lighting, wayfinding and disability access to create welcoming, comfortable and safe spaces. Despite the significant investment in broadband connectivity made by A+G, gaps remain in coverage. There is a perception that improvements to digital connectivity need to be made to ensure that day-to-day operational needs are met.

Invest in creating a more vibrant space.

Visitors, residents and tenants want to be part of a more lively community and place. This could be built through regular social events for creatives and art workers as well as through the creation of informal social spaces for lingering and connecting. The public would like to see more public events and spaces (e.g. café, shops and open studios). Improved wayfinding and event listing would also help visitors and users know what is happening on site and encourage exploration.



How can we improve the overall experience?

While heritage, courtyards, and access to diverse spaces for different needs are appreciated, there is widespread agreement that investment is required to create welcoming, comfortable, sociable, and safe spaces and to meet day-to-day operational needs.

What are good spaces for alone time and interaction?

People enjoy being able to spend time by themselves and with others at A+G, in the courtyards especially. Residents and users also enjoy their studios for alone time. The Ainslie Reception Hall, Main Hall, Function Room and central foyer as well as the Gorman Main Hall and office areas were also mentioned as spaces for interaction.

- The courtyards have potential to become better communal spaces for relaxation and artwork display.
- Some places are good to "run into people" but "too large to accommodate comfortable sharing experiences".
- There is potential for better communal spaces such as a café, canteen or better kitchen.

How can we better meet the needs of occupants?

While residents and users enjoy the heritage, courtyards, and being able to access diverse spaces for different needs, they had recommendations for improving the practicality, comfort and performance of facilities. This included improvements to:

- Bathrooms and footpaths (e.g. to meet disability needs)
- Soundproofing
- Technology (e.g. Wi-Fi, TVs instead of projectors)
- Parking
- Windows
- Heating and cooling
- Safety (e.g. lighting at night)
- Wayfinding
- Storage space
- Secure bike racks

- One main reception
- Efficient venue booking service
- Green energy

Several users and residents surveyed recommended that a large, multifunctional performance space be provided. Other venue suggestions included:

- Space acoustically designed for chamber music and chamber singing
- Proper backstage areas
- Recording studios
- Performance-appropriate pianos
- Larger dance studio space
- Another theatre
- Renaming venues to reflect First Nations heritage
- Communal creative space / workshop space

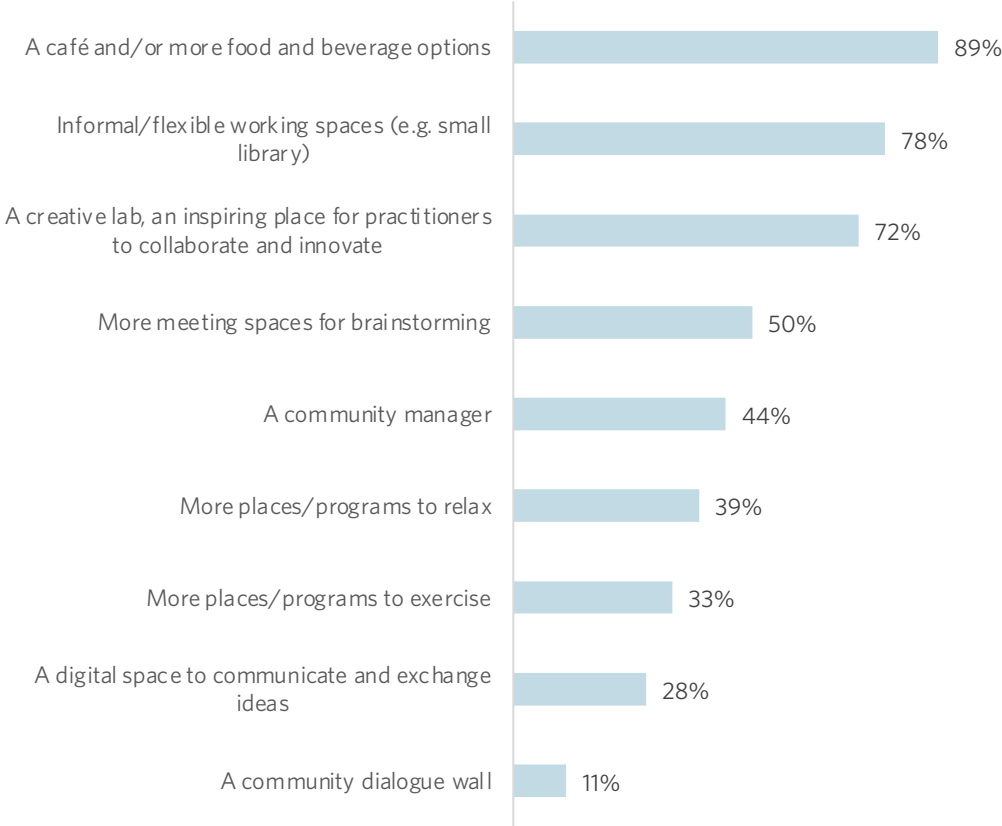


How can we provide for more social encounters and collaboration?

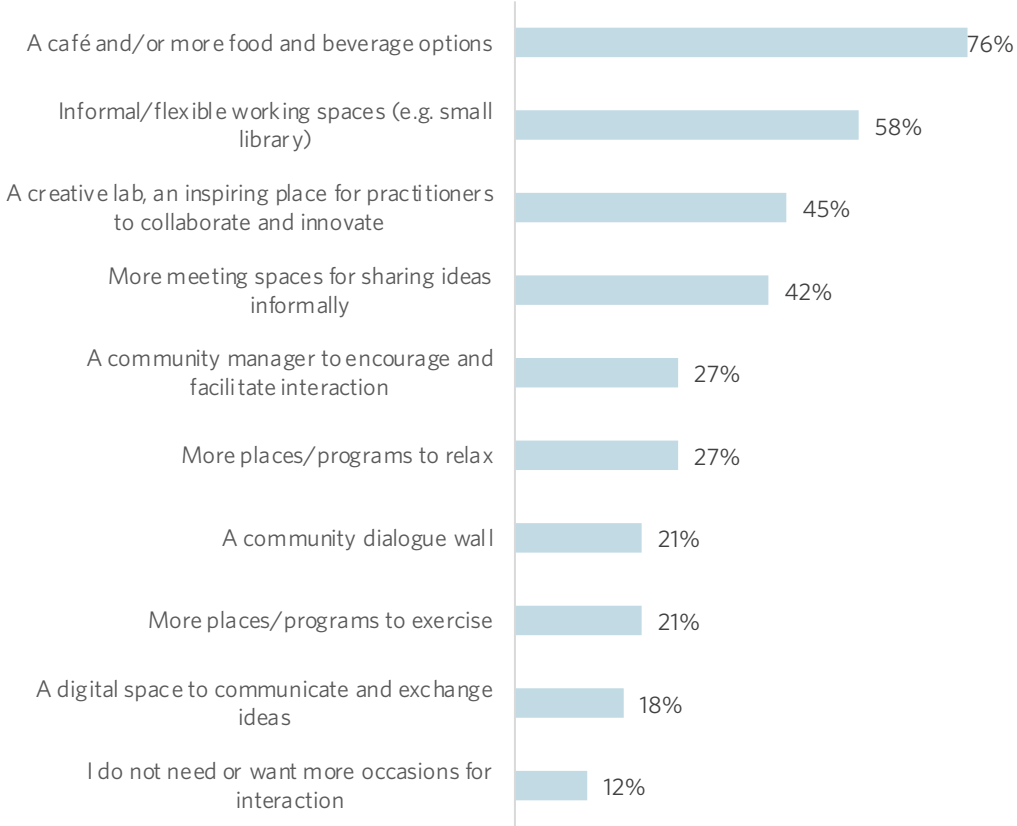
Board and Staff Survey Q15
Resident and User Survey Q25

Board, staff and residents are generally closely aligned in their view of how A+G could best provide for social encounters and collaboration in the future, with the same top 5 recommendations. Most would enjoy a café or more food and beverage options. They also expressed interest for informal / flexible work spaces, a creative lab, and more meeting spaces.

If Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres could provide more occasions for social encounters and collaboration, what do you think they should be?
(Board and Staff Survey, n = 18)



If Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres could provide more occasions for social encounters and collaboration, what would you like them to be?
(Resident and User Survey, n = 33)



Interview quote

“The heritage, the mix of privately and publicly funded artists. There's a huge range of different types of people. I find that very fascinating. The location is also unique, the inner city vibe, this place is hip.”

Resident organisation, April 2021



Interview quote

“The office space is the best thing for us. It’s also great to be in proximity to other organisations, the location in Canberra is great, the building is lovely, accessible, affordable.”

Gorman Commons organisation, April 2021



Creative sector needs, opportunities and challenges



Interview quote

“I really think Canberra needs to invest in professional arts. There are not enough opportunities for professionals to really make their mark - so they leave town. Canberra needs to invest in lifting up a flagship ensemble, bring people to Canberra. We have the audience. But we're really scraping by - I think that's a real problem.”

Gorman Commons organisation, April 2021



Summary of findings

6. Key needs of the creative sector

A coordinated approach to professional development, funding and artistic output.

Many who use A+G are solo artists or work in a SME. They need support to coordinate input into funding, programming and development as well as cross-sector and cross-discipline innovation and collaboration.

Inclusive participation opportunities.

Stakeholders noted that people of different abilities and cultural backgrounds are not well represented among users and visitors to A+G and among the creative community broadly. There is a need to proactively engage this audience to ensure that creative outputs reflect the communities that they are made for and with. There is also a need to enable more people to experience arts and culture.

Flexible multi-use facilities that cater to the digital world.

It is clear that A+G serves a diverse range of creatives and art workers, all with different space and technical needs. A+G needs to ensure that it continues to retain flexible, multi-use facilities to meet these needs while serving the needs of major users with artform-specific requirements and developing better-designed digital infrastructure and services.

Public events that bring community onto the site.

Both the general public and residents and users of A+G feel that the centres would benefit from having a greater number of visitors. The creative community wants a more vibrant and active community of users and visitors and the general community wants increased access to public exhibitions and festivals. This is despite, on average, hosting two public events per week, and more than 200,000 visitors across the centres each year, suggesting that the format, timing, frequency and promotion of events and activations may need to be reviewed to increase visibility and perceived vibrancy.



Summary of findings

6. Key needs of the creative sector (continued)

Needs highlighted map well to existing 2015 ACT Arts Policy.

This policy prioritises accessibility, innovation, capacity building and participation, recognition for Canberra artists and inclusion of First Nations.



Creative needs

Professional development and skills building

Even if creatives and art workers excel in their arts practice, it can be exceptionally hard to receive enough income and to have secure careers. There is a need to equip them to be more sustainable in the long-term.

- Programs such as the “Artist Toolkit” should continue to evolve to harness opportunities as part of a changing funding ecosystem.
- Marketing training and how to use art to meet social needs could be one focus of skills building.
- Support could be given to artists to market their work nationally and internationally.
- There is an interest in the digitalisation of arts, which could be a focus of a workshop or training session.

Cross-sector innovation and collaboration

Residents and users noted that more innovation could be fostered in arts and culture by bringing together different disciplines. A+G could play a leadership role in convening artists to foster collaboration.

- Use art to heighten appreciation and understanding of the environment, First Nations, urban design and science.
- Technology - make the arts more accessible by providing enjoyable experiences online and offline.
- Community - create cohesive community experiences through art events (e.g. gigs, exhibitions, projections).

There are opportunities for the sector to build skills, foster innovation, better promote arts and cultural activities and to continue to provide and improve flexible, affordable places to work. The sector could also be more inclusive of diverse cultural backgrounds, ages and abilities, enabling more people to experience the arts.

- Partner with external organisations to put together events bringing the city to life.

Inclusive participation in the arts

Residents and users think arts and culture should be more inclusive of cultural backgrounds, ages and abilities. They would also like to enable more people to experience the arts.

- There could be First Nation representation on the Arts Capital board. Yarning circles could be facilitated - sessions for the First Nation artist community to exchange, and for the greater community to listen to.
- Culturally diverse art workers could be engaged in creation and teaching, bringing a more diverse audience to the A+G.
- Programs and infrastructure should be made more accessible to people with disability and the elderly.

Promotion of arts and cultural activities

The Visitor Survey shows that most people find about arts and cultural events through social media (63%), word-of-mouth (55%) and email lists (47%). The younger the people are, the more likely they are to find information through social media. Older people are more likely to find it through email lists.

Residents and users mentioned that even though the art scene in Canberra is vibrant, many only hear of arts and

cultural activities after they have happened. There is a need to better promote these activities and generate excitement.

Creatives would like more support to promote their ideas and work online and in the broader media.

- There could be improved promotion of organisations on site and online. A digital board on site could promote organisations and activities.
- A+G’s website should be regularly updated with programming.
- Activity should be more visible from the street level.

Affordable, flexible and long-term spaces to work

Art workers and creatives have different needs when it comes to facilities. They enjoy both quiet spaces to do their work and feeling like something is happening around them. They need spaces of different sizes / with different equipment to accommodate their needs. They would also enjoy having more secure tenancies – a place to call home for the long-term.

- Glass doors for offices could provide a sense of the outside world while working quietly.
- Shared spaces are needed to conduct meetings, workshops, etc.
- Regular hirers are in need of spaces to safely store equipment.

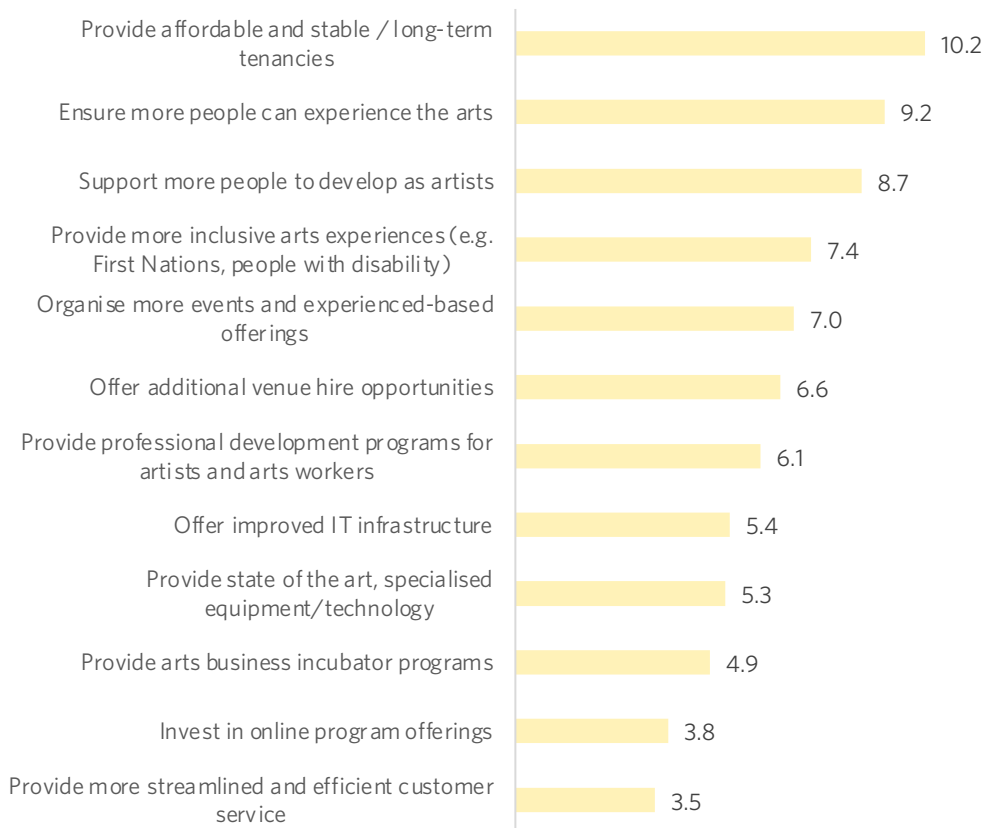


What do residents, users, board and staff members want to see prioritised?

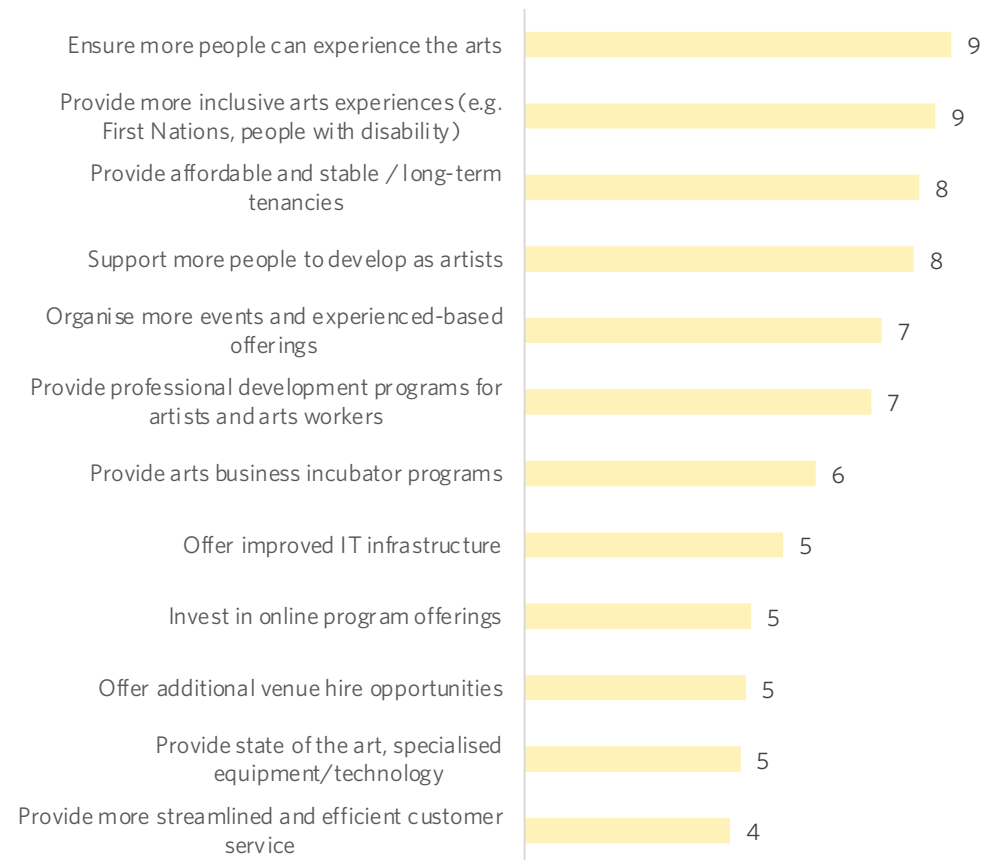
Resident and User Survey, Q21
Board and Staff Survey, Q17

Residents, users, board and staff members identified the most important needs of the arts sector as: enabling more people to experience the arts and to develop as artists; more inclusive arts experiences; affordable, long-term tenancies; and more events and experience-based offerings.

What could Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres do to better meet your needs and the needs of others in your sector?
(Resident and User Survey, n=33)



What could Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres do to better meet the needs of the arts sector? (Board and Staff Survey, n=18)



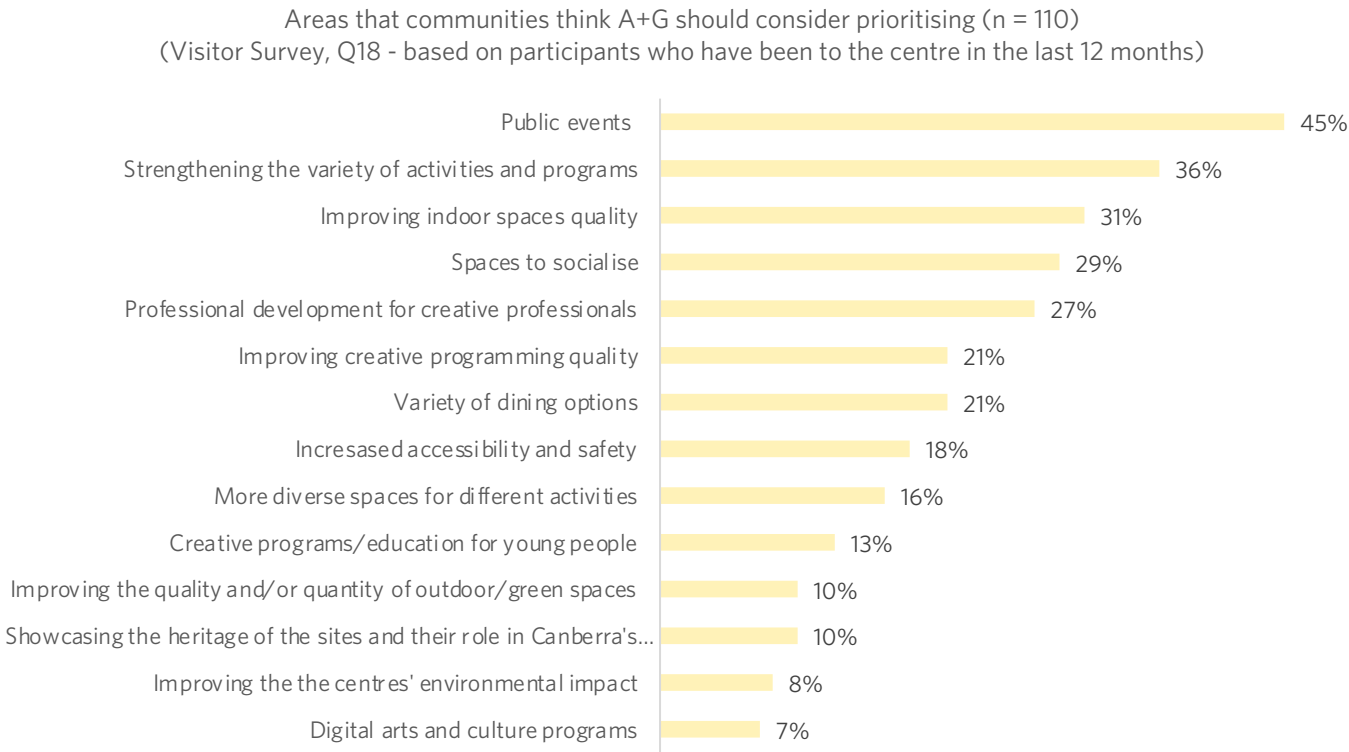
Community needs

For 24% of survey respondents, there are arts and cultural activities that they would like to engage in but are unable to. In particular, communities want to see a mix of public events and artistic classes.

The art going public have mixed views on what they want A+G to deliver.

Visitors who had been to A+G in the last 12 months would like the centres to prioritise public events and to strengthen the variety of artistic programming. The top five areas that they want Arts Capital to focus on are:

- Public events
- Strengthening the variety of programming
- Improving indoor spaces
- Spaces to socialise
- Professional development for creatives



Summary of findings

7. Key challenges and opportunities

Challenges and opportunities were identified for the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres. They are further detailed on the following pages.

Challenges include:

- Funding
- Competition
- Diverging needs for performance and rehearsal spaces
- Informal community use
- Safety
- Practicality of heritage facilities
- Diversity and accessibility
- Identity
- Offering affordable spaces while maintaining a high standard

Opportunities include:

- A cohesive sense of place and identity
- A vibrant place for community
- Good performance and rehearsal spaces
- Inclusive arts and places
- Supporting art workers and creatives
- The future of work
- A progressive agenda



Challenges

Challenges surfaced through the research

Arts and cultural organisations / workers challenges

Funding for artists and arts organisations

The current funding context presents significant challenges. Arts Capital's key customers are under resourced and facing uncertainty. At the same time, the arts centres are unable to meet artists' needs, and public demand, as well as they might due to funding constraints. In the ACT, it is difficult for art workers and creatives to maintain a full-time career in the arts. There is a need to better equip them to sustain their careers.

Competition

While a lot of art workers and creatives value collaboration as a means to innovation, there is also a sense of competition, as they are competing for funding. There is a need for leadership driving collaborative activity and making it easy to collaborate.

Diverging needs for performance and rehearsal spaces

Several major residents want rehearsal and performance facilities and equipment to be improved to better meet their needs (dance, music, theatre). The question is whether A+G can deliver upgrades that will meet the needs of every major tenant and whether these spaces should be exclusive or shared by organisations. There is a sense that residents may be competing for space and equipment upgrades. A+G will need to consider whether exclusive use of spaces and equipment enables the centres to meet their objectives effectively, satisfy the strong community demand for public-facing events, and balance the needs of multiple stakeholders.

Several challenges were identified for the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres, relating to arts and cultural organisations and workers, the site itself, and future trends. These can be addressed through careful strategic planning.

Site challenges

Informal community use

The current spaces and programming do not easily allow for informal community use of the site.

Safety

Residents and users sometimes feel unsafe at A+G. Lack of lighting infrastructure and lack of presence on site (e.g. other users, staff and security personnel) can make them feel unsafe at night.

Practicality of heritage facilities

While appreciated for their character, the heritage buildings pose substantial barriers to workers, mainly due to safety and comfort issues (e.g. heating and cooling). Heritage needs to be preserved but buildings need to be practical for work, rehearsals and performances.

Diversity and accessibility

While efforts have been put in place to make A+G more accessible to people of all ages, ability, gender and ethnicity, more could be done to attract diversity. Facilities do not always meet the needs of people with disability. There is also a general perception that participants in resident programs, and the resident population generally, is lacking in cultural and linguistic diversity. More parking might also be needed if more people are to stay on site for informal visits and activities.

Identity

Many residents and users see Ainslie and Gorman as separate in their identity and purpose. Arts Capital needs to consider whether to bring them together under a common vision and identity or whether there is value in differentiation and separate branding.

Offering affordable spaces while maintaining a high standard

A main point of difference of A+G is that it is able to provide affordable places for art workers and creatives. The question is whether it can maintain affordability and provide high standard facilities, programming and events in the current funding context.

Future trends challenges

Emergency resilience

Emergencies, such as pandemics and climate events are all future possibilities affecting sustainability, which should be considered in planning for infrastructure.

Post-COVID work environment

Flexible work arrangements and growing online activity (e.g. virtual meetings and events) are likely to remain trends for future ways of working. More hot desking arrangements, flexible hireable spaces, improved digital infrastructure and private pods for calls and virtual events are all likely to be in demand.



Opportunities

Opportunities and initial ideas for activation

A cohesive sense of place and identity

There is an opportunity to create a common sense of identity for the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres; a collective campus for the arts.

United through the digital and physical

A strong overarching brand could be reflected in digital and physical assets. Physical art landmarks between the two sites could create a sense of continuation and connect the centres with Braddon and Civic in an inner-city cultural arc.

History

History (and heritage) are key differentiators for A+G. While reflected through heritage conservation, it could be further acknowledged through communications and activations.

A vibrant place for community

There is an opportunity for A+G to become an inner-city campus, both for art workers and creative professionals to call home, and for the broader community to enjoy at all times. Where everyone can feel inspired and experience the arts.

Pop-up food / coffee

A temporary food / café installation could be placed on site, leading visitors to stay, linger and mingle after dropping kids off, create more occasions for informal interaction between residents and users, and attracting passersby. If successful, the pop-up could establish a permanent residence at A+G.

Hang-out space for young creatives

Opportunities were identified for Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres, including initial ideas for initiatives that could be implemented. These will be further discussed and further refined in later project stages.

Many young people attend music, dance and theatre activities at A+G. There could be a space at A+G dedicated to them, so they can spend time together before and after activities and access resources to develop their creativity: a meeting space outside of school, where they belong. The space could be flexible and booked for other purposes by residents and users.

Low-key performances and events

Several residents, users and partners noted that Canberra needed more low-key performances (as opposed to formal, high-end ones). There is an opportunity for A+G to host comfortable and intimate performances for the community to enjoy. From cushion concerts to dance-offs, where people can grab a drink, relax and chat.

Opening the space

Architecturally, the space could open up more to the community; to easily invite people in.

Partnerships

Partnerships with a range of arts festivals and institutions to create events in and outside of A+G could develop a larger audience and broaden impact.

Good performance and rehearsal spaces

There is an opportunity for A+G to provide state-of-the-art but also affordable performance and rehearsal spaces for residents and users. For arts and culture to be expressed in the best way it can.

Revamped performance and rehearsal facilities for dance, music,

and theatre

With major resident and user organisations in dance, music and theatre, there is an opportunity to renovate performance and rehearsal facilities to fully meet their needs. These could be used flexibly by different organisations. This could include, for example, facilities for the broader community to engage, such as a dedicated studio for local bands to practice.

A dedicated dance hub at Gorman Arts Centre

QL2 Dance expressed the desire for a dance hub at Gorman Arts Centre, occupying the majority of the space, with the ambition of establishing a purpose built dance facility in the ACT.

Inclusive arts and places

More could be done to attract a diversity of tenants and visitors at A+G. To make the Centres more inclusive of people with disability, diverse cultural backgrounds and First Nations backgrounds, as well as acknowledging the Aboriginal history of the site and region. Hosting events that celebrate, and help us learn about, different cultures.

People with disability

This could include infrastructure changes (wheelchair accessible, mobility aids, hearing loops in galleries and performance spaces) and being inclusive through programming. Worth noting is that Arts Capital has drafted a comprehensive disability inclusion action plan (DIAP) in partnership with resident organisations, funded by disability ACT and with accessible arts NSW. Implementing the DIAP should be prioritised.



Opportunities

(Continued).

Inclusive arts and places (continued)

Cultural diversity

This could include organisations with culturally diverse leadership or focus hosting activities on site. Or producing cutting-edge art that reflects on multiculturalism or refugee rights. Arts Capital could also invest in better understanding its visitor profile and set appropriate diversity targets.

First Nations

This includes better acknowledging the history of the site and collaborating closely with members of the local First Nations community to develop programming and to incorporate Traditional knowledge into existing programs.

Women, children and families more broadly

This includes making facilities safer for people, particularly at night-time (e.g. lighting, staff). This also includes providing opportunities for parents of children attending activities at A+G to stay on site, experience, participate and contribute to the arts themselves.

Supporting art workers and creatives

There is an opportunity to better support art workers and creatives through promotional and skills building programs, and to lead them to engage in collaborative projects.

Mixed-use exhibition / market space

A mixed-use exhibition / market space could be put in place for visual artists and craft-makers to exhibit and sell their work. A venue that could be easily retrofitted to facilitate low-key concerts, private events and temporary projects.

Café / shop championing art workers and creatives

A meeting space (a café perhaps) where art workers and the broader community can go to work, study, find inspiration, and mingle with others. Where art workers can exhibit and sell their art and products. The place could be transformed into an event space to run professional development programs for creatives, supporting emerging talent.

Networking hub

With its wide network, there is an opportunity for A+G to provide networking opportunities and open them up to various sectors to foster cross-sector collaboration and innovation, as well as opportunities to connect with funding bodies. This could be events and perhaps an online platform for creatives to connect.

Promotion

Promotion and marketing of A+G could focus both on the Arts Centres and on the art workers and creatives who use the spaces. This not only includes a revamped website, and traditional marketing activities; it could also include making inspiring talks and performances available online to grow awareness of A+G and its community and bring more people to the sites.

The future of work

There is an opportunity for A+G to better adapt to the new work needs of the creative community. To allow for a stable, but flexible work alternative for creative professionals.

Flexible spaces and equipment

With the rise of flexible work arrangements, many may want

social impact, research, communications, digital, identity, design studio.

to work from home but also appreciate access to hireable spaces where they can be with a community, and use specialised equipment. This includes hot desking arrangements and bigger hireable spaces (e.g. for meetings). Importantly, digital infrastructure needs to be improved to allow for virtual meetings and other online activity. Private pods for calls and virtual events could be considered.

Safety and emergencies

Emergencies, such as pandemics and climate events are likely in the future. Future-proofing can ensure activity continues comfortably and safely. This can include digital infrastructure allowing arts to be practiced and attended at home or on site (e.g. filming equipment, and venues equipped to meet physical distancing and ventilation requirements). This can also include more ecologically sustainable design that reduces energy, water and other resource use and waste, and with better heating and cooling, diminishing impact on the environment and increasing resilience to climate events such as heat waves.

Collaboration and exchange

There is an opportunity for the Arts Capital team to work more collaboratively under a shared vision and shared goals, for each team member to have a role in meeting these goals, and to be included in relevant conversations. Staff could be given the opportunity to shadow other teams or participate in projects (e.g. Haig Park Experiments) where they gain skills and a broader understanding of the sector. This would equip staff to generate ideas for the future of A+G and gain the multi-disciplinary skills to deliver them. The strategic plan currently being developed, following governance change in 2020, is the opportunity to develop a shared vision and goals.



Opportunities

(Continued).

A progressive agenda

The arts play an important role in the communication of important social issues, such as migration, First Nations history or environmental sustainability. There is an opportunity for A+G to enable more people to experience the arts and engage with the issues of our time. Technology and the arts can also come together to create accessible and unique experiences. This could include making experiences easily accessible online and creating innovative and interactive arts experiences through the use of technology.



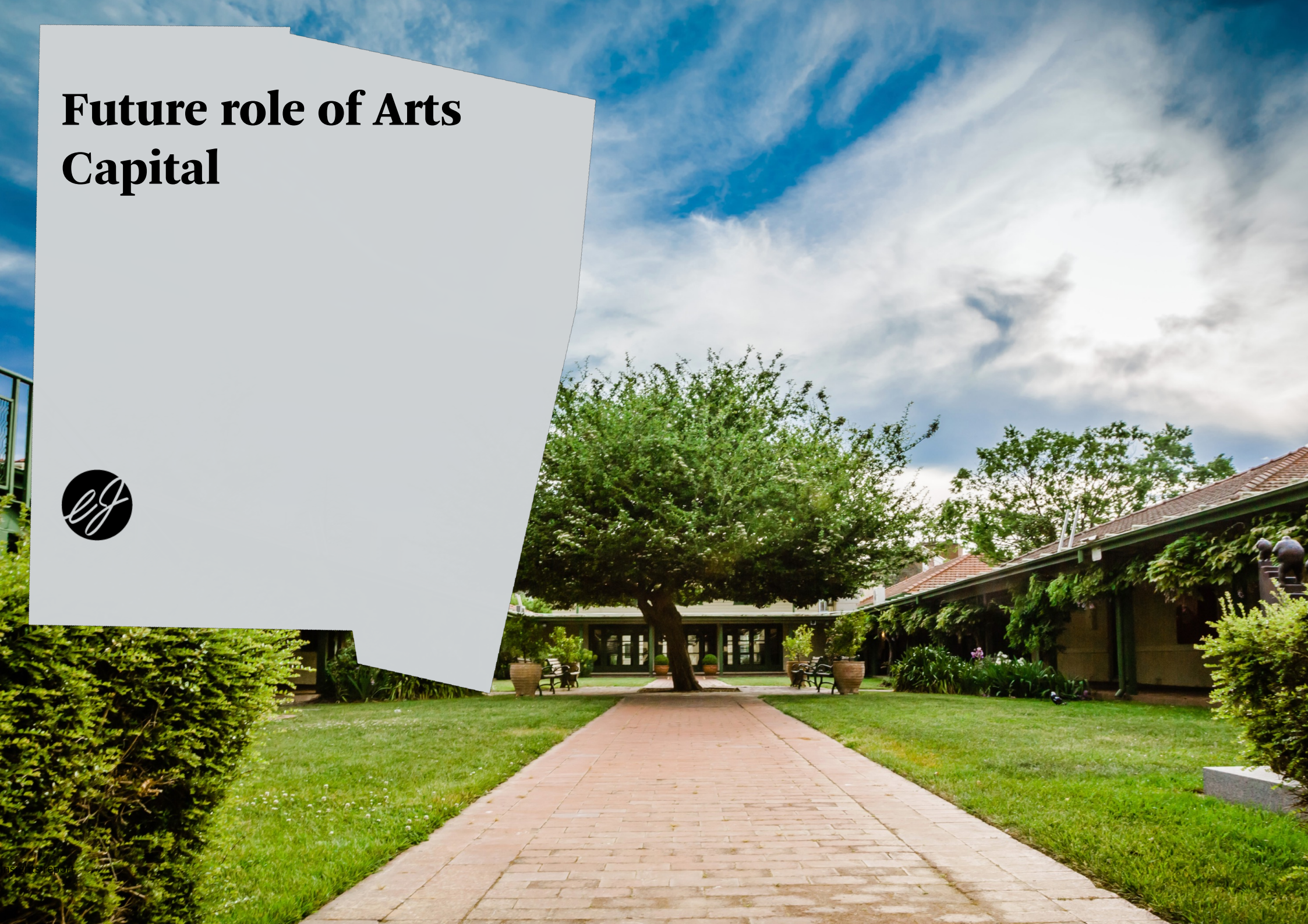
Interview quote

“I am a fan of having more collaboration, and so is artsACT. So the more collaboration, the better. I think Arts Capital could be a great independent facilitator of arts sector collaborative meetings/engagement. I'd highly encourage them to do that.”

Resident organisation, April 2021



Future role of Arts Capital



Future role

Arts Capital needs to carefully consider and balance the mixed views about its future role and direction.

Strategic planning should consider how it can best leverage the assets that have been identified through this research (location, affordability, community, heritage buildings, programming) to address the opportunities mapped. In particular, there is an opportunity for Arts Capital to play a leadership role in convening artists in order to foster collaboration, and strengthen/articulate a vision for Canberra arts and culture.

In doing so, Arts Capital can position Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres as central to the renewal of Canberra's Civic centre and the creation of a vibrant, liveable inner city.



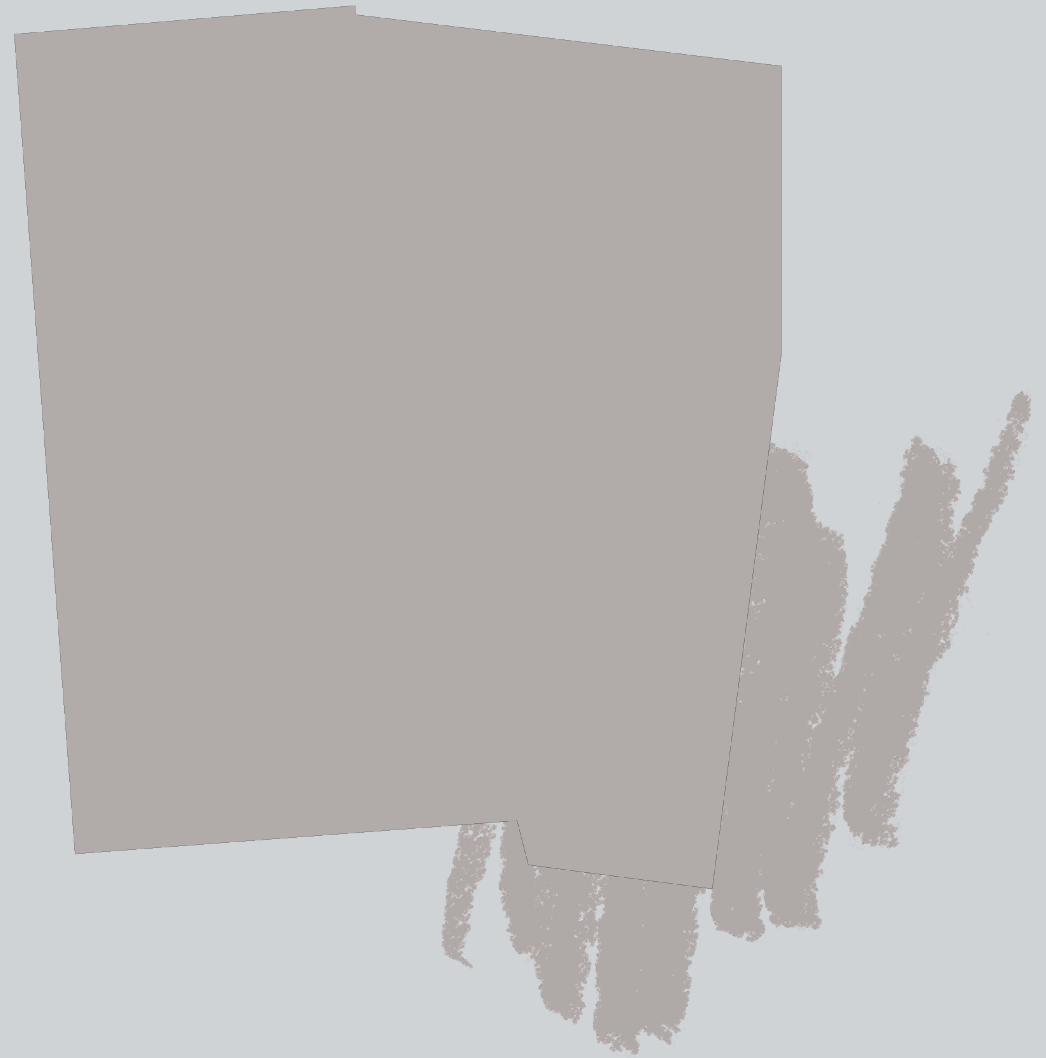
Interview quote

“Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres are the only places with the ambition to drive the industry forward. Ainslie is really undervalued by the community - it's an amazing space with great potential.”

Resident organisation, April 2021



Appendix and further information on methodology



Appendix I, II & III

The findings of this report are augmented by other research and workshopping activities including survey graphs, a benchmarking analysis and a board and staff workshop.

Appendix I includes graphs for each non open-ended question, for the following surveys:

1. Visitor Survey
2. Resident and User Survey
3. Board and Staff Survey

Appendix II is a benchmarking analysis, which provides insights about other sites, cultural institutions and arts centres that are of similar relevance and structure nationally and internationally. This analysis informed recommendations in this report.

Appendix 3 includes findings from the Board and Staff Workshop, which took place at Ainslie Arts Centre on 13 May 2021.

These documents have been provided separately to this report.



Stakeholder interviews

This report was informed by 17 stakeholder interviews. Interviewees included a mix of resident organisations, regular hirers, project partners, and government stakeholders.

Name	Organisation	Position	Relationship to Arts Capital
AJ America	Luminescence Chamber Singers	Artistic Director	Ainslie Arts Centre resident organisation
Alanna King	Philip Leeson Architects	Associate Director	Architect commissioned by artsACT to prepare final sketch plans for renovations
Amélie Langevin	QI2 Dance	General Manager	Gorman Arts Centre resident organisation
Bronwen Jones	City Renewal Authority	Architect/Urbanist	ACT Government; project client (Haig Park Experiments)
Cathy Hope	University of Canberra	Assistant professor, Communications	Programming partner (numerous projects)
Devi Telfer		Artist; Kurna Narrungga woman	Former visiting artist
Ellen Henshall	Mixtape Chorus	President	Regular venue hirer and program partner
Ham Darroch		Artist	Gorman Arts Centre studio resident
Lauren Honcope	Ausdance ACT	President	Gorman Arts Centre resident organisation
Lee Caldwell	Meridian	Manager, community engagement	Programming partner (numerous projects)
Luke Rogers	Canberra Youth Theatre	Artistic Director	Gorman Arts Centre resident organisation
Meg Wilson	ACT Writers Centre	CEO	Departing resident organisation, Gorman Arts Centre
Penny Hardy	Design Community	Designer	Gorman Commons resident
Peter Thomson	Music for Canberra	CEO (outgoing)	Music for Canberra
Phoebe Porter		Contemporary Jeweller	Gorman Arts Centre studio resident
Rasa Daukus	Music Classes Canberra	Music educator	Ainslie Arts Centre regular hirer
Sam Tyler	artsACT	Executive Branch Manager	ACT Government arts policy, infrastructure and funding body representative

