

# Sector & Practitioner Research

Southern Highlands Creative Industries  
June 2022



JERIKYE WILLIAMS AND MICHAEL SIMIC PERFORM AT HIGHLANDS FM 100% HOME GROWN IN BOWRAL,  
*June 2022*

Image © Brian Rapsey | Rhapsody Pictures

# Acknowledgements

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GANGURANG CORROBBOREE: Berrima, June 2022  
Image © Peter Campbell

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For information contact  
Wingecarribee Shire Council  
mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au  
Ph 02 4868 0888

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PAUL DAVIS CERAMICS, STURT GALLERY,  
*April 2022*



# Glossary

Southern Highlands Creative Industries Cluster (CiCSH)	A group of arts-based organisations and creative practitioners focused on identifying and supporting opportunities for the local creative industries sector. This is a loose affiliation currently operating under the auspice of Business Southern Highlands.
Business Southern Highlands (BSH)	Formerly the Southern Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Working Group	Representative CiCSH participants managing the project with the consultant.
Conroy Report	The initial report entitled Valuing arts & culture in the Southern Highlands undertaken by Susan Conroy.
Creative Industries in the Southern Highlands – Directory (the project)	The broad term for both the research and foundation work done to create the directory as a combined piece of work.
Directory	A searchable online rolodex of the names of individuals, companies, organisations, venues and other supportive mechanisms operating to aid in the practice and delivery of creative endeavours within the Southern Highlands.
Creative practitioners and/or Creative community	The collective name chosen for the individuals, organisations and businesses involved in the production, offering and/or sale of creativity within the Southern Highlands.
Southern Highlands	The Wingecaribbee Shire local government area (LGA).
Respondents	The name given to the people who responded to the survey in either Part A or B or both.
Listers	The name given to the people who actively filled in a directory profile as part of the survey and/or signified their support for the directory but are yet to complete their profile.



CERAMICS: Susan Buret  
Southern Highlands PopUp  
Project, June 2022

# Executive Summary

Everyone says the Highlands is 'full of creatives' and we have some resident artists of national and international renown. This Sector & Practitioner Research project set out to discover just how deep and wide the pool of creatives is. Unsurprisingly there is clear evidence of untapped potential to generate production and connection between creatives and reveal the strength of the sector to national and global markets.

This project builds on an earlier report *Valuing arts & culture in the Southern Highlands* (Susan Conroy, 2020) which articulates the significance of nurturing a creative ecosystem; and delivers on one of three Recommendations from that report– 'to document and quantify the sectors and size of the creative industries within the Highlands and to identify strategies and opportunities to support and grow the sector for a sustainable and liveable community'

To source data, a survey was created with two parts. The first part to form the basis of a Directory of creative practitioners and the second to source localised demographic data, record lived experience of the challenges of working here and to get some idea of what is needed to sustain and further develop creative practice in the Southern Highlands.

**Part A, The Directory** – resulted in a 'virtual rolodex' which is to be available online with capacity to update and grow in size. The responses to date indicate that:

- » Creative practitioners engage in an extensive range of practices from arts therapist to historian; graphic designer to puppeteer
- » The greatest number are involved in fine arts such as painters or print-makers, the least in body artworks including makeup artists and tattooists
- » There is a strong cohort of practitioners working in administrative and business fields, supporting creative enterprises through marketing and management functions
- » Social media is well-utilised by a majority of respondents and a number of information networks are available to practitioners wishing to promote their business
- » Creative practitioners are willing to share knowledge, resources and skills with others and identify that supports such as training, information and peer networking are primary needs in their practice
- » Access to physical space for performance, exhibitions, rehearsals and networking functions is also identified as of high importance

**Part B, Research** survey responses indicate that:

- » A majority of creatives in the area are aged between 55-59 years of age.
- » Highlands' creatives are practicing well into their mature years. A large group of emerging or hobbyist practitioners (around 30%) includes a majority of mature aged creatives. While earnings are not necessarily highly lucrative for all, the strong GST registration and ABN take-up indicate a healthy environment for earning.
- » A majority of respondents (around 64+%) defined themselves as 'professionally established', with over 30% of respondents registered for GST and 75% with an ABN.
- » In general, creative practice in the Highlands provides some income, with the majority of creatives earning from their practice or related fields such as teaching.
- » Just under 30% of respondents gained their entire income from their creative practice and just over 14% receive from \$75,000 to \$120,000 in earnings per annum.
- » A small percentage (around 8+%) of indigenous creatives, LGBTQIA+ identified individuals and creatives with a disability, responded to the survey.
- » Challenges for creative practices include lack of contact with direct markets, either in larger cities or internationally, as well as the lack of availability of jobs in the region, for those wishing to work in organisations or larger practices.

- » The paucity of local venues also hinders the development of larger audiences and markets, as well as employment and volunteer opportunities. The latter are the stepping stones for many in the cultural arena.
- » Lack of networking opportunities with other creatives, lack of collaborative opportunities and lack of representation to funders, business and the wider community, were seen as hindering creative business development and creative inspiration.
- » The survey highlighted the role of creative companies in the Highlands, although it is considered that further research is needed to capture more data. Of the 16 responses from companies, a quarter generated up to \$2m in revenue, under half had a turnover of between \$50k to \$200k and the remainder – around 30% – generated less than \$50k per annum. Cross tabulation is required to indicate staff levels and the type of business that are linked to levels of income, however, the broad data provided in the research indicates that individual creative businesses can flourish in the region.

## In Conclusion

A key need for creative practitioners, whether individuals or groups, is the opportunity to learn from each other, to interact and develop opportunities as an identifiable group.

The survey and research points to the need for a stronger network to support creative practitioners, working towards common advocacy, collaborative programs, more effective group marketing, opportunities to learn skills from each other and cooperatively raise the profile of creative practice in the region.

# Recommendations

## 1 Increase visibility of the creative sector

- 1.1 **Foster connection and communication.** Ideally, this would be included in the work undertaken by Council's arts worker and opportunities to work collaboratively with existing and related networks such as Southern Tablelands Arts (STA) and Business Southern Highlands (BSH) should be investigated.

For instance, Information on funding opportunities were cited as a need and organisations such as STA would already gather and disseminate this information, as do various state-based organisations.

- 1.2 **Promote, maintain and grow the Directory.** This will assist in generating work between and for local creatives, enabling contact between practitioners and clients, and attracting work to the region
- 1.3 **Develop professional forums and networks.** This will facilitate creative practitioners presenting skills, products and services to potential clients – 'speed dating' events and similar – in cooperation with business and commercial networks

## 2 Provide opportunities for skills and training

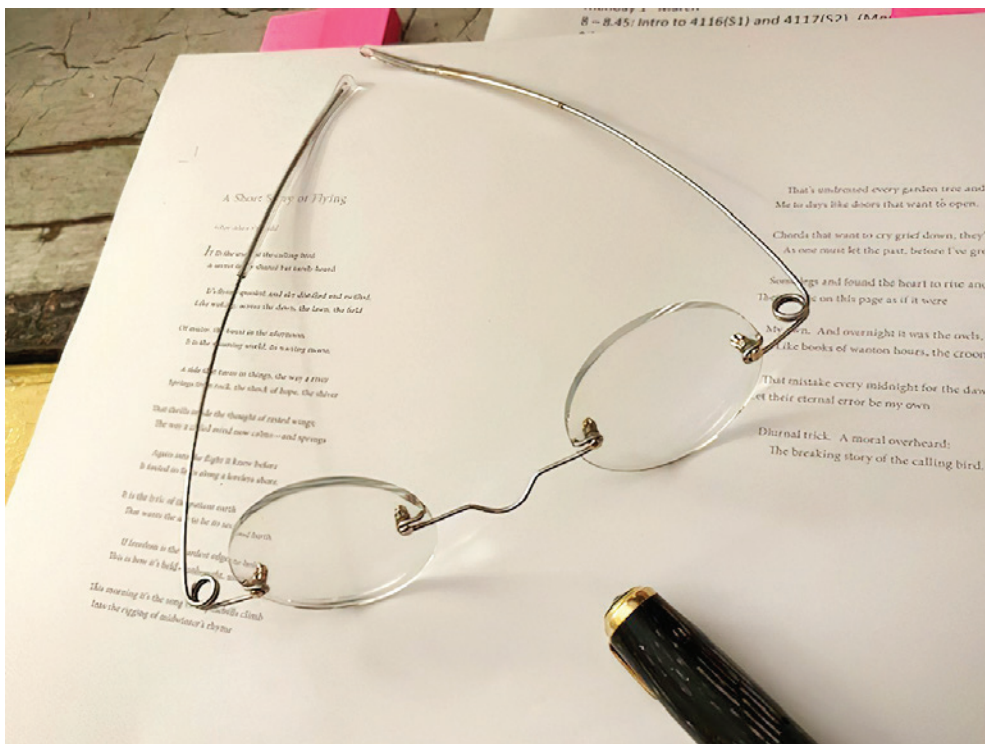
- 2.1 **Organise information forums.** Access presenters with specialised information and skills, such as marketing and digital skills development. Involve specialised local practitioners.
- 2.2 **Identify and promote funded support programs.** Connect with local business advisors and skills and training services
- 2.3 **Encourage membership and engagement with professional peak bodies.** Build professional status and access agency resources.

### 3 Ongoing research

- 3.1 **Creative Practice** – to understand specific aspects of creative practice in the area and to better understand needs and development challenges – through surveys and qualitative research. Pro bono research would be one avenue, through Business schools or local companies.
- 3.2 **Economic Research** on the financial and social impacts of creative practice and organisations is of key future importance to the long-term viability of creative enterprises in the area. A long-term goal would be to partner with large organisations and government bodies to undertake impact research.
- 3.3 **Audit of spaces and places.** Record available for creative use throughout the region – whether government or privately owned; including outdoor spaces, suitable sheds and industrial areas.
- 3.4 **Identify gaps in the market.** To support entrepreneurial creatives including identifying marketing and business support from sources outside the region

### 4 Resource the CiCSH

Developing Cultural Tourism in the Southern Highlands is the final (and huge) recommendation requiring action from the first report. This second report identifies a further four actions with 10 sub-actions. Realising the potential for growth in this sector will continue to be constrained unless coordination and research resources become available.



MARKING UP PROOFS,  
Mark Tredinnick's new anthology of poetry, A Beginner's Guide

# Background

In 2020, a report was commissioned to consider the value of arts, culture and heritage across the Southern Highlands. Valuing arts & culture in the Southern Highlands (the Conroy report), made three recommendations:

- 1 Establish a representative group for the industry
- 2 Develop Cultural Tourism opportunities
- 3 Document and quantify the sectors and size of the creative industries

As per the first Recommendation, the Creative Industries Cluster Southern Highlands (CiCSH) was established. Having made the decision not to incorporate, Business Southern Highlands stepped up to auspice the group and apply for funding; and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed. The CiCSH commissioned a further research report, this project, as per the third Recommendation. (Results will inform progress on the second Recommendation).

Both reports have been funded by Wingecarribee Shire Council's Community Assistance Scheme (2020 and 2021) supported by the SHAC, Southern Highlands Chamber of Commerce (now Business Southern Highlands) and the Southern Highlands Foundation.

**The aim of this project is to increase the visibility, connectivity and economic capabilities of the Southern Highlands creative industries now, and in the future; generating work between and for local creatives and attracting work to the region.**

In 2021 a project was initiated to deliver on the third recommendation of the Conroy report by:

- 1 Defining and developing the foundation for creative talent (Part A – Directory)
- 2 Sourcing information on the local creative ecosystem (Part B – Research)

Led by creatives for the benefit of creatives, the CiCSH focused on identifying and supporting opportunities for the local sector by exploring ways to:

- » Increase the visibility of local creatives – including individuals, organisations, venues and/or collectives. This includes fostering greater connection between all levels of the creative sector in the Southern Highlands
- » Encourage contact between creatives in the Southern Highlands – as well as providing potential clients and customers the ability to find local creative services and products
- » Enhance the economic capabilities and opportunities - by understanding the potential of creative practice locally, and as an export domestically and internationally
- » Provide a reliable baseline representation of our local creative ecosystem - including collecting of demographic data, identifying barriers, as well as collating some financial and professional qualification information
- » Nurture future growth - by better understanding the creative practitioners, places and resources needed and at our disposal.

The outcome can be seen in the further qualification of the current state of creative practice in the Southern Highlands. It also collected data from local creatives that acts as the foundation stage for a dedicated talent directory for the region.



# Methodology

## A Survey in two parts

### Part A - Directory

The Directory acts as a virtual Rolodex for creative practitioners. It encourages contact between creatives in the region while providing potential clients and customers the ability to find local creative services and products. The survey's Part A forms the foundation of the future Creative Industries Cluster Southern Highlands (CiCSH) as the talent directory.

### Part B - Research

The Research provides information for this report about the local creative ecosystem. This includes the collecting of demographic data, identifying barriers, as well as collating some financial and professional qualification information. Part B results are reflected in the further pages of this report.

Data collection was facilitated via:

- » Creating a Survey
- » Supplying Working Group members and project supporters with copy to promote the project and encourage participation in the survey.
- » Promotion, including but not limited to personal and professional networks via email, social media and blog
- » Having a profile in key social media groups and forums including most Southern Highlands Facebook pages and groups, Creatives on the Coast, and the Freelance Jungle.
- » Utilising Wingecarribee Council website and local news for news updates

The design of the survey included key aspects such as:

- » Developing Part A for ease of import into any future online directory. This included mirroring the future architecture of the directory listings and prompting respondents to supply appropriate photo and biography material for presentation. In this, the survey was seeding the idea of visibility and ownership over a place on the directory from the start of the project
- » Choosing a format that was compatible between the reporting from the survey through to importing data into the future directory. By choosing CSV formats and thinking about user experience architecture within the survey, this reduces labour and double handling once the directory is built
- » Utilising Part B to further investigate how and where creatives in the Southern Highlands felt challenged or unsupported to identify practical forms of assistance. This included asking participants to identify potential future partners and resources.

84 people completed questions relating to the Directory. 76 answered 'Yes- I would love a free listing on the directory' but did not go on to complete the relevant questions. 86 respondents completed Part B. 37 dropped out of the survey.

By utilising the survey as a means for testing the uptake, structure and future potential of a directory within the region, the Directory project can begin with both confidence in the structure and intent, and a readymade audience.

# Part A

## Directory

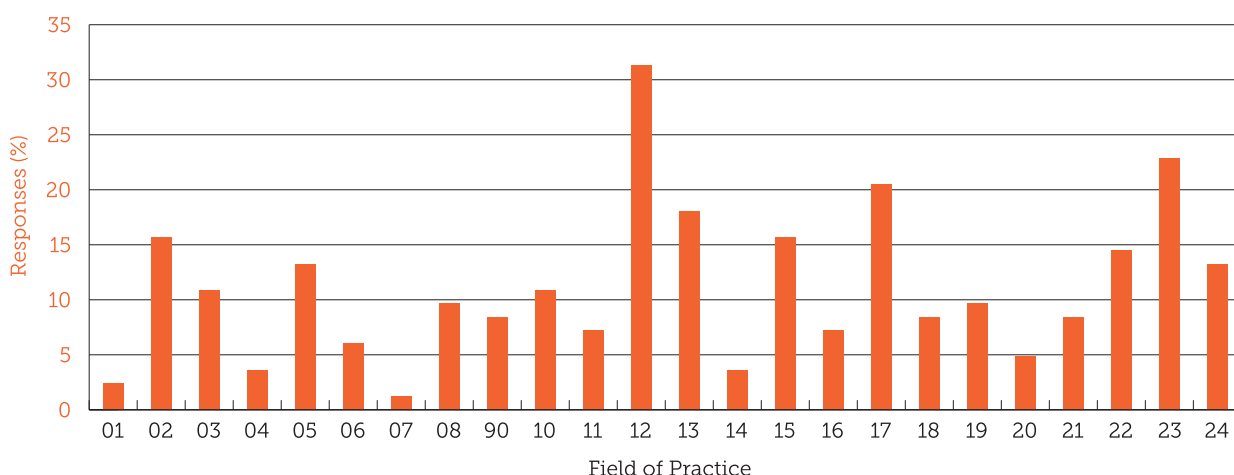
Part A is the foundation of the future Directory that aims to highlight the Southern Highlands as a vibrant creative centre with an equally vibrant online talent marketplace. By bringing people together with the talent, resources and collaborators they need, The Directory serves to reduce the barriers to facilitate creative excellence in the region.

Questions 1 and 2 were required to register for the survey and are not part of the Directory or Research report.

Questions 3 to 8 serve as a collection mechanism for a basic 'rolodex' type Directory.

### Who are the creators

**Question 6:** What best describes your creative fields of practice? Pick all that apply. (See Key to Creators).



### Key to Creators

- 01** ACCESSIBILITY – Access and inclusion advisors, Audio describers, AUSLAN interpreters, Interpreters - languages, Sensitivity readers, Translators etc
- 02** ADVERTISING AND MARKETING – Advertising specialists, Influencers, Marketing specialists, Public relations, etc
- 03** ARTS THERAPY – Art, drama, music, writing, etc
- 04** ARTIST MANAGEMENT – Agents, Art Dealers, Bookers, Casting Directors, Managers, Music producers, Tour managers, etc
- 05** ARTS ADMINISTRATION – Policy and administration, Management, Development officer / coordinator, Marketing and communications, Programming officer / coordinator, Strategists and planners, Peak bodies and associations etc
- 06** AUDIO WORKS (excluding music) – DJs, Jingle writers, Podcast producers, Radio presenters, Sound engineers- live performance, Sound engineers - studio, Voice over artists, etc
- 07** BODY ARTWORKS – Artist's model, Makeup artist, Piercing and alteration works, Special FX makeup artistry, Tattoo artists, etc
- 08** DIGITAL AND MULTIMEDIA – Animators, App designers, Concept artists, Digital illustrators, Game designers, 3d modellers, etc
- 09** FASHION AND TEXTILES – Costumers and dressmakers, Embroiders / knitters, Fashion designers, Fibre artist, Leather workers, Milners, Pattern makers, Quilter / rugger / linen worker or designer, Shoemakers, etc
- 10** FESTIVALS AND EVENTS – Crew, Founders, Logistics, Managers and Coordinators, Producers, Tour managers, etc
- 11** FILM AND TELEVISION – Camera operator, Crew, Director of Photography (DOP), Directors, Editors, Gaffa, Lighting, Location scouts, Producers, Production management, Sound recorder / mixer, SFX, etc
- 12** FINE ARTS – Drawing / sketch, Painter, Air brush or spray paint artist, Cartoonist, Caricature artist, Commercial artist, Print maker / screen printer, Courtroom artist, Art conservationist, Stained glass window worker
- 13** GRAPHIC DESIGN – Creative director, Sign writer, Desktop publishing / magazine design, Typographer, Packaging designer, Web design, Advertising designer, Book / eBook designer, Stationery designer, Graphic facilitator, General graphic design, Large format designer, Album cover / book cover design etc

- 14 ILLUSTRATORS – Architectural illustrator, Book illustrator, Technical illustrator - including textbook, diagrammatic works etc Storyboard illustrator, Illustrator - mixed, Comic book and/or graphic novel artist etc

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- 15 MUSIC AND AUDIO – Band musician, Choir, Composer, Cover band musician, Electronic music maker, Film scorer, Music teacher, Orchestral performer, Professional performance musician - e.g., backing band, theatre band etc, Rapper, Session musician, Singer / songwriter etc

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- 16 MUSIC TECHNICAL SERVICES – Guitar and instrument techs, Instrument repairs and setup, Luthier etc

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- 17 PERFORMANCE – Acrobat and circus performers, Actors, Choreographers, Comedians, Dancers, Jugglers, Presenters / MCs, Puppetry, Speakers, Stunt designers & workers etc

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- 18 PHOTOGRAPHY – Drone photographer, Editor, Events and/or live performance photographer, Family photographer, General photographer, Interiors photographer, Pet photographer, Photojournalist, Portrait photographer, Product photographer, Retoucher / colour grader, Stylist, Underwater photographer, Wedding photographer etc

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- 19 SPATIAL DESIGN/ DISPLAY-BASED WORK – Architects, Colour consultants, Curators, Designers / planners / surveyors, Floral arrangers, Gallery owner / assistant, Interior designers, Landscape architects, Landscape artists, Placemaking etc

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- 20 THEATRE AND EVENTS – Artistic directors, Directors, Dramaturgy, Education and workshops, Lighting design, Mixing, Producers, Production manager, Prop making, Script writers, Sound design, Stage management etc

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- 21 URBAN ART – Crew, Furniture design, Installations, Mural or street art, Sculpture etc

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- 22 VENUES AND SPACES – E.g., art galleries, art studios, office space or co-working, recording studios, rehearsal spaces, pop-up shops etc

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- 23 WRITING AND ANALYSIS – Arts journalism, Authors, Bloggers, Critics, Curriculum writers, Historians, Journalists, Poets, Script writers etc

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- 24 3D PRODUCT ARTIST – Exhibition designer, Food designer/ stylist, Found artist, Glass artist, Industrial designer, Jewellery designer and/or maker, Mock-up artist, Model maker, Potter / ceramic artist, Prop designer / props creator, Toy designer / kite designer, Visual merchandiser / window display designer, Weaver, Wood turner / carver etc

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- 25 OTHER (please specify)

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According to these responses, creatives of the Southern Highlands are the quintessential Multipotentialite<sup>1</sup>. They are well versed in a multitude of creative practices, often spreading their energy across various creative pursuits and aspects of creative business.

From high end businesses with strong turnover and employed headcount through to individual hobbyists who create without remuneration, the Southern Highlands spans a wide variety of people unified by one goal – to create.

There are some 83 different fields of creative practice present within the Southern Highlands.

Visual forms of creative practice are popular. Fine arts make up almost a third (31.33%) with almost a quarter (22.89%) working as 3D product artists, and photography nominated by one in five (20.48%).

Nationally popular choices, Music (15.66%) and Writing and Analysis (14.46%), also figure strongly within the region. Arts therapy (10.84%) and Festivals and Events (10.84%) demonstrate the span of creative practice.

Respondents also demonstrate strong skills in supporting roles. This includes Advertising and Marketing (15.66%), Arts Administration (13.25%) and Venue and Space supply (8.43%)

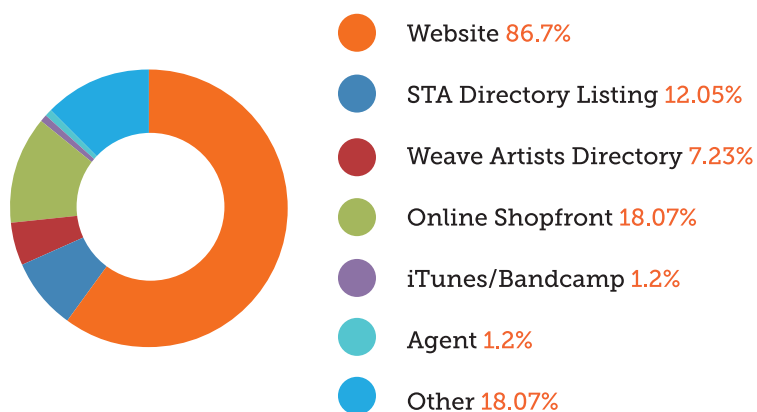
### Notes on 'Other' response

*The 'Other' category was included to ensure that all creative practitioners felt represented. It should be noted that the answers given were either already catered to by existing categories and/or represented responses that were outside the classification of arts (E.g., agriculture). This demonstrates the categories provided cater well to the respondents and region generally.*

<sup>1</sup> Multipotentialite: A multipotentialite is someone with many interests and creative pursuits. They have no 'one true calling' the way specialist do. The three superpowers of the multipotentialite are Idea Synthesis, Rapid learning and Adaptability. Ref: Emilie Wapnick Ted Talks

## The use of online properties

**Question 7:** Where can we find you on the web? Please include the full URL.



Responses reveal that the majority of Southern Highlands creatives connect online and have their own websites (86.75%). There is familiarity with Shopfronts (18.7%) and directory formats via Southern Tablelands Arts Directory (12.05%) and Weave Artists Directory (7.23%). The Directory is positioned well to fill in the gap created for those who do not have or regularly manage their online profile. It also serves as a great introduction to the power of online promotion to those who have been reluctant to investigate it in the past.

### Notes on 'Other' response

One response was for Redbubble, another form of shopfront website. IMDB film makers database, professional networks LinkedIn and Australian Screen Editors website were listed; highlighting the benefit of professional networks and associations with visibility. Social media platforms Instagram and Vimeo were also featured.

The inclusion of LinkedIn is likely to further the aim to create professional connections. Including other high volume, relevant social media platforms and professional networks may prove advantageous however, further investigation would be required.

Local bodies also play a role. Three listings pointed to local establishments in the St Jude's Music Association, Bowral Art Gallery and a local artist's collective, Artists of the Round Yard. This highlights potential for furthering efforts to capture local groups and associations in the future.

One response was a mobile number. Five of the other responses were N/A or equivalent (6%).



ROBYN KINSELLA  
Southern Highlands Artist



## Social media adoption

**Question 8:** What are your social media profiles? Please enter entire URL.

Visual platform Instagram attracted the most usage at 63.86% with Facebook Pages close behind on 62.55%. Using the 2020 Yellow Social Media Report as a benchmark, "Sixty-three per cent of Australian SMBs use social media channels to engage in two-way communication with customers and contacts". This is on par with usage of creatives and creative business owners for Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook Page	62.65%
Facebook Group	6.02%
Twitter	8.43%
LinkedIn	24.10%
Instagram	63.86%
YouTube	8.43%
TikTok	4.82%
Bandcamp	0.00%
Soundcloud	1.20%
None of the above	7.23%
Other	4.82%
Other	3.61%

### Notes on 'Other' response:

Three of the seven responses meet the criteria for social media in prominent photo sharing site, Flickr and visual pinboard social media, Pinterest, and readers social network, GoodReads. This further highlights the potential necessity for inclusion of popular social media platforms not surveyed as a future Directory option. Or at a minimum, continuing the process of providing 'Other' categories within the Directory as a catch-all.

A Further response was a listing on local business network, the Fold.

The other three responses were 'not yet', and 'NA' catered for by existing response None of the above. And a website URL, which was catered for already with Question 7.



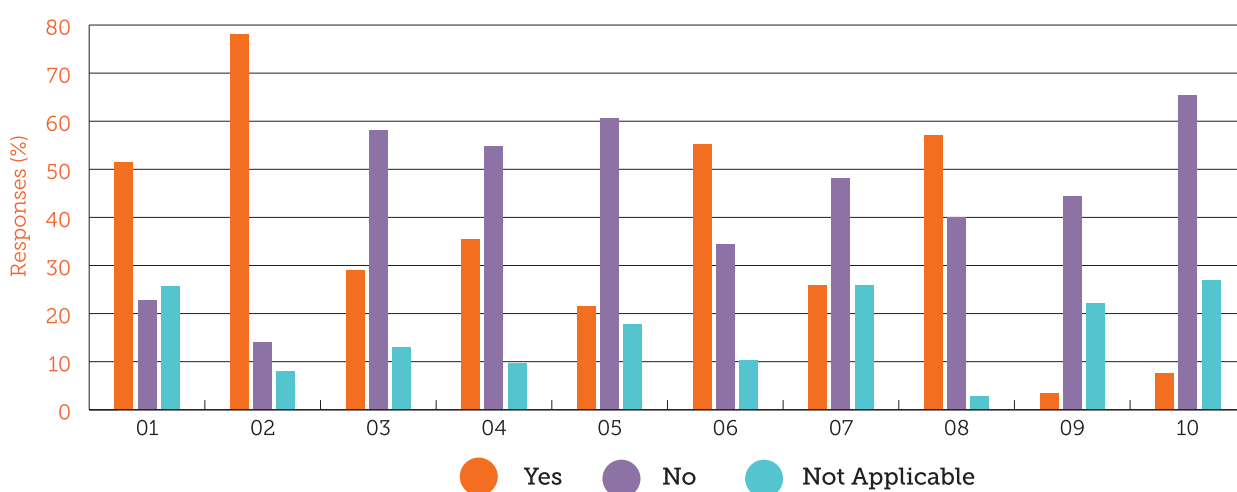
BOWRAL AUTUMN MUSIC FESTIVAL, PROGRAM COVER, March 2022

## What can creators offer?

**Question 9:** The Creative Industries Directory Southern Highlands is about identifying what you need as well as what you can offer to others in the region. Which of the following applies to you?

### Key to creator's Offers and Needs

01	Experience in arts administration	06	Introduction to local networks and forums
02	Workshops and classes on my chosen field	07	Advice in securing funding and grants
03	Space available to share with creatives	08	Expertise in marketing, promotions or PR
04	Equipment and tools available to borrow from or lend to creatives	09	Assistance and support in establishing freelance business
05	Paid space for gallery, coworking, making etc	10	Gallery, rehearsal and performance spaces



The Southern Highlands creative scene offers shareable and transferrable skills as demonstrated in these results. The majority (78%) can offer workshops in their chosen field. Workshops can create opportunities for locals and visitors to get to know the creative practitioners within the area. An opportunity exists to link hospitality and events with practitioners that offer creative workshops. This would in turn create connectivity between the two sectors and aid in highlighting the Southern Highlands as a creative destination to tourists and potential new residents alike.

It also means that the Southern Highlands can translate some of that ability to teach into teaching others to do the same. Learning the art of educating others in itself is a marketable and transferrable skill.

Expertise in marketing and PR (57.14%) is an immediately beneficial skill that could be taught and transferred across the region. Indeed, many respondents outlined their struggle with marketing promotion directly through what they need as well as indirectly via conversations about earning, customers and visibility.

Experience in arts administration (54.1%) also explains how many creative practitioners may not be able to make money outside of covering the cost of their creative practice yet manage full time and part time employment. Arts administration is a solid foundation skill for upskilling into business practices that require organisation and analytical skill such as cashflow management, project management and day-to-day business management. It also lends itself well to areas such as reporting, CV and application writing; all skills that aid in the sourcing of and application for funding.

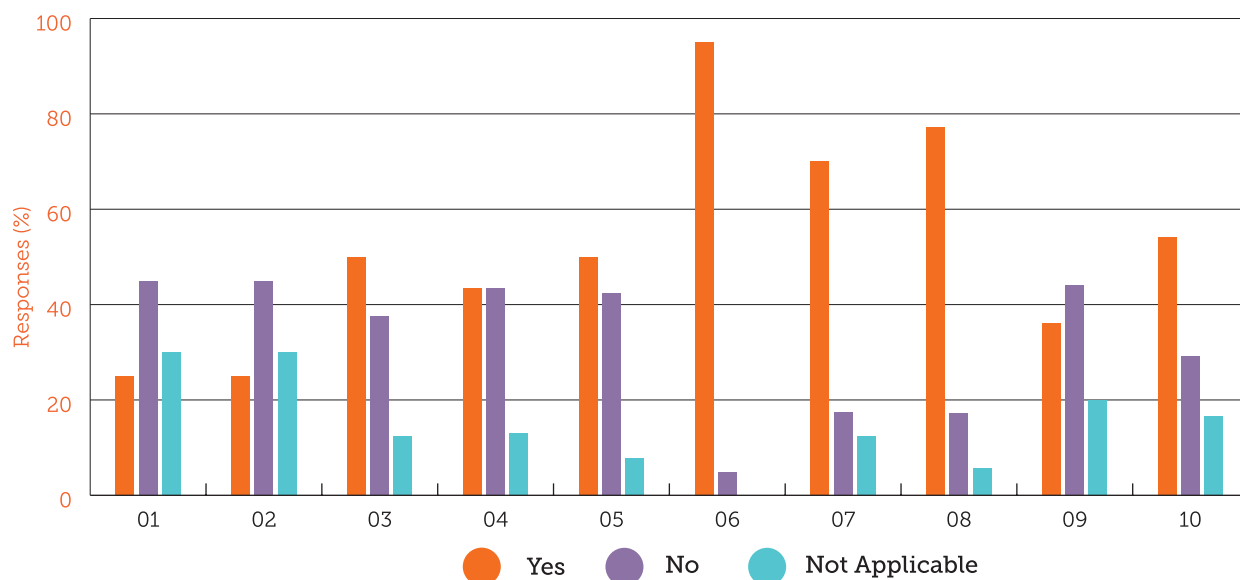
Introductions to other creatives (55.17%) within the region also feature.

This is further proof that visibility via the directory, together with highlighting creative practitioners within the region of their own strengths, skills and experience, can create the opportunity to grow the knowledge alongside the opportunities for creatives within the region.

## What do creators need?

In addition to a question seeking information on what creatives had to offer, was the contrasting question of where they might need support.

**Question 9:** The Creative Industries Directory Southern Highlands is about identifying what you need as well as what you can offer to others in the region. Which of the following applies to you?



Understanding funding and funding sources was a popular request with the responding audience (70%), expressing a desire to learn more about funding opportunities and how to take advantage of them.

Interestingly, marketing support and advice ranks as a significant need (77.14%), which opens up further potential for locals to help locals via the Directory. As evidenced by respondents that work in marketing (15.66%), and a significant proportion (57.14%) offering their extensive experience and assistance within this area in previous sections.

When it comes to creative practice, space is definitely a key issue in the Southern Highlands. The need for shared spaces (50%) outstrips what is on offer (29%). Cost is not necessarily a barrier. Paid spaces such as galleries, exhibition and maker spaces are sought by half of respondents. Only a fifth (21.43%) can offer such spaces. The worst crisis is felt in gallery, rehearsal and performance spaces with over half of respondents (54.17%) needing space and less than 10% (7.69%) in a position to offer space.

### Notes on 'Other' response

*Respondents were given the opportunity to make further offers in support of fellow creatives. Most demonstrated a focus on transferrable skills and assisting other less seasoned creatives to benefit.*



## Professional Associations

Thirty-nine respondents listed professional memberships they are members of, the most being NAVA. Of those 39 respondents, the professional membership spans 50 different organisations. Participation with professional associations is at International, National and Local level.

ASSOCIATION	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	ASSOCIATION	NUMBER OF MEMBERS
<i>Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts</i>	1	<i>Glass Arts Society USA</i>	1
<i>AASW</i>	1	<i>Holistic Health Associates Int</i>	1
<i>Adventure Travel Trade Association</i>	1	<i>International Association of Therapists</i>	1
<i>Artists of the Round Yard Inc.</i>	2	<i>International Meditation Teachers and Therapists Association</i>	1
<i>Arts Hub</i>	1	<i>National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)</i>	6
<i>Ausdance NSW</i>	2	<i>New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA)</i>	1
<i>Australian Ceramics Association</i>	2	<i>NSW Knitters Guild</i>	1
<i>Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)</i>	2	<i>Older Women's Network</i>	1
<i>Australian Marketing Institute</i>	1	<i>Pastel Society of Australia</i>	1
<i>Australian Music Centre</i>	1	<i>PoetsArtists</i>	1
<i>Australian Passive House Association (APHA)</i>	1	<i>Portrait Artists Australia</i>	1
<i>Australian Performing Rights Association</i>	2	<i>Psychologists and Counsellors Federation Australia (PACFA)</i>	1
<i>Australian Screen Editors Guild</i>	1	<i>Quilt NSW</i>	1
<i>Australian Screen Sound Guild</i>	1	<i>Regional Arts NSW</i>	2
<i>Australian Society for Performing Arts Health (ASPAH)</i>	1	<i>Romance Writers Australia</i>	1
<i>Australian Society of Travel Writers</i>	1	<i>Romantic Novelists Association</i>	1
<i>Bowral and District Art Society (BDAS) /Bowral Art Gallery</i>	4	<i>Rotary International</i>	1
<i>Building Designers Assoc of Australia (BDAA)</i>	1	<i>Royal Society of New South Wales</i>	1
<i>Business NSW</i>	1	<i>Screenworks</i>	1
<i>Chief Executive Women</i>	1	<i>Society for Experiential Design</i>	2
<i>Contemporary Glass Society UK</i>	1	<i>Southern Highlands Printmakers</i>	2
<i>Craft ACT</i>	2	<i>Studio Woodworkers Australia</i>	1
<i>Creative Space Southern Highlands</i>	1	<i>UK Outdoor Writers &amp; Photographers Guild</i>	1
<i>Design Institute of Australia</i>	3	<i>Total</i>	67
<i>Formerly AIPP (Aust. Institute of Professional Photography)</i>	1		

This concludes presentation and analysis of Questions 6 to 11.

At Question 12, respondents were given the option of providing a headshot or logo for use on the Directory. Seventy-three (73) respondents took advantage of this opportunity.

Question 13 was used as a demarcation point between the Directory-related questions of Part A and the start of Part B research. Approximately one third of respondents departed the survey at this point.



## Summary and Recommendations – Part A

Recognising the multi-talented nature of creatives through acknowledging wide-ranging careers and skills helps cement that a maturation of career and diversification are normal, practical and supported approaches in the Southern Highlands. Moving away from the high achiever, one single craft model, the Directory welcomes the Master Generalist and the skills they can provide.

Utilising existing websites that have a profile to help broaden the offering such as including the STA and Weave directories helps raise up similar activities within the region and further the networks available to creative practitioners. In asking for extra spokes as opposed to recreating the wheel, the Directory expands the opportunities for creatives through increasing the visibility.

Further investigation into the popularity of online networks and social media may be warranted. There is also potential for Southern Highlands creatives to benefit from becoming more engaged and better enabled with social media. This is especially important as the Yellow Report highlights Australian Small Businesses use social media to promote the business (33%), create awareness and exposure (28%), connect and interact with their consumer base (19%) and generate sales (17%).

Learning is incredibly important to the confidence and upskilling of the creatives in the Southern Highlands. It would be advantageous to activate a series of workshops and seminars to help creative practitioners and companies explore their funding options and introduce the Grant Funding Finder which Council has invested in for community benefit - <https://rdasi.grantguru.com.au/>

Spaces to rehearse, display work and to enjoy work generally are also a vital part of growing the Southern Highlands in the eyes of its creative practitioners. The difficulty currently is that NSW rental and housing prices are at an all-time high, and the impact on commercial real estate. Utilising other suitable venues across hospitality may help alleviate real estate-based pressures on the creative industries while providing opportunity for both sectors to benefit.

To help uncover potential spaces, the Directory could be built with capability to list them under a separate category. This will help improve the visibility of what is available so that it can be better utilised. Another potential side effect of the listing of spaces may be the ability to demonstrate the gaps within the creative marketplace and the potential to large-scale and micro entrepreneurs seeking out space-based opportunities within the gallery, rehearsal, coworking, maker and related space fields.

Professional memberships matter. There is potential here to further foster export markets and relationships by increasing exposure to professional memberships that already exist. Or potentially build a localised model for the region as a way of encouraging businesses outside creative production to invest in the industry through space provision.

## Recommendations

There are significant opportunities for creative practitioners to help each other overcome problems, create solutions, and share financial opportunities. The siloed nature of creative practice often sees people repeating the same challenges, mistakes and facing shared problems without knowing where to turn. By breaking down the barriers such as visibility and a lack of network, the Directory creates opportunity through transparency. Within that transparency can come a unified approach to facing challenges, mentoring within experience with common mistakes, and normalising advocacy for creativity within the region.

The following elements would make a significant impact to the experience of current creative practitioners within the region:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| » funding opportunities  | » the need for marketing support                                 |
| » access to spaces for performance, rehearsal and display of works | » raising the digital savvy of the average creative practitioner |

With articulation of the challenges comes the ability to seek the solutions required.



LILY CUMMINS  
I Woke To See The World Go Wild  
*Mixed Media*



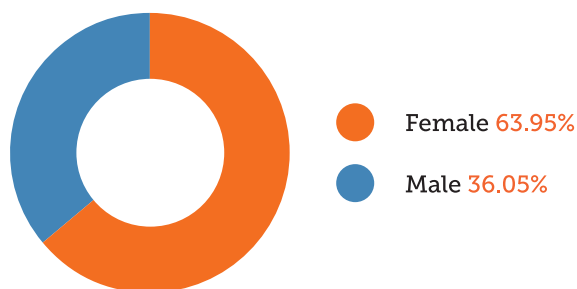
SHJazzInc! –  
MOTHER'S DAY, CELEBRATION:  
Bowral, May 2022  
*Images © Peter Campbell*

# Part B

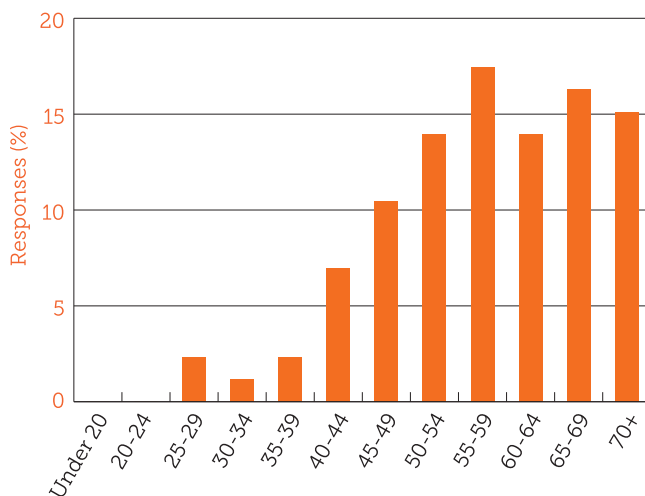
## Research

Part B was created to delve deeper into the demographic and economic characteristics of the creative industry sector in the Southern Highlands. Challenges faced by creative practitioners was a strong focus of Part B. By understanding the creative community and the challenges faced, the potential to service that community and reduce barriers to entry increases.

### Gender



### Age

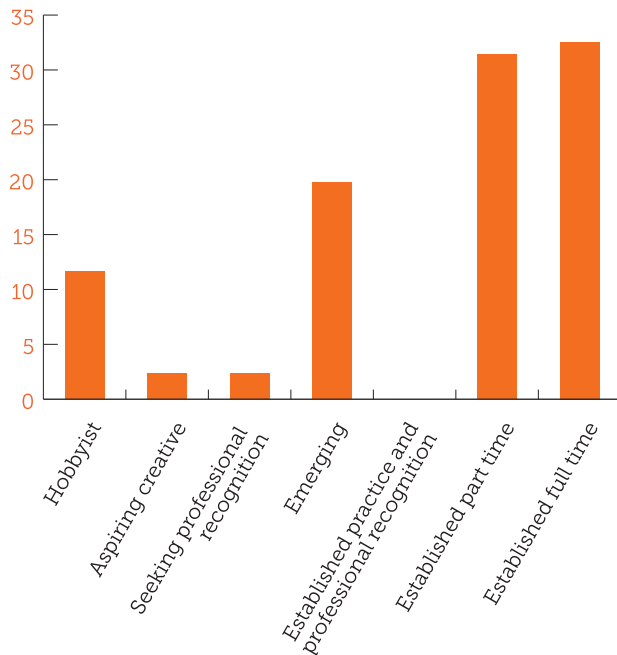


The majority of respondents are aged 55 to 59. No representation under the age of 25 was recorded. Some of this can be explained by the Southern Highlands featuring as a more mature demographic than the state average, with an average age of 47 compared to a median age of 38 for the rest of New South Wales.

The area is known for a smaller percentage of people aged in their 20s and 30s as well as a higher percentage of those 65 and above. However, it would be beneficial to engage more with creatives at the earlier stages of life within the region. Especially if the existing self-identified creatives wish to mentor and grow capability within younger local talent.



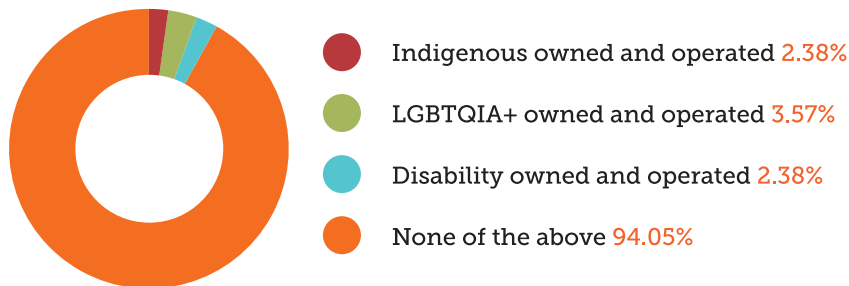
## Status of Practice



Creatives were asked to consider their practice on a spectrum from Hobbyist to Establishment full time. Almost a third of creative practitioners report as full time (32.56%), or part time (31.4%).

Almost one in five defined their creative practice as emerging. Traditionally, most creative practitioners age out of emerging programs and opportunities across a wide variety of creative fields.

## Diversity



Members of diverse groups make up 8.33% of respondents. These respondents define themselves as LGBTQIA+ (3.5%), disabled (2.38%) and/or Indigenous (2.38%). This is roughly on par with the region itself and slightly below all state averages.





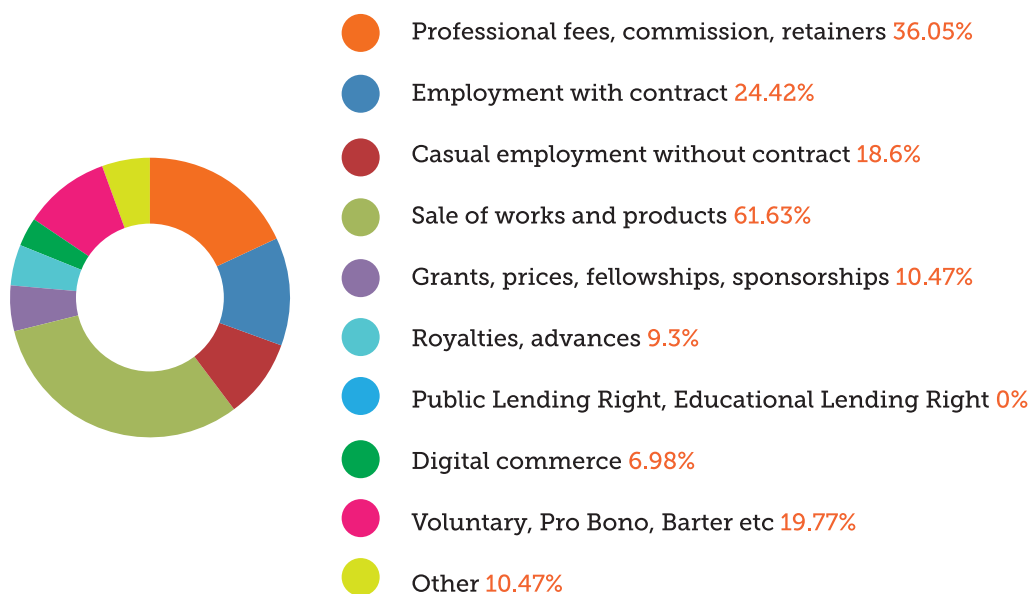
## Income Generation



The vast majority of respondents produce income from their creative practice (88.37%) with only 11.63% stating their creativity does not generate income at all.

The largest group identify as established full time (32.56%) and for established part time (31.4%). While 27.9% find creativity funds their life and lifestyle, almost a third (32.56%) say their creativity pays its own way.

## Sources of creative income



Where there is money to be made, the majority (61.63%) make it directly from the sale of works. A further 36.05% make their money from professional fees, retainers and commissions. Many also derive income from workshops and other forms of teaching (78% plus miscellaneous commentary).

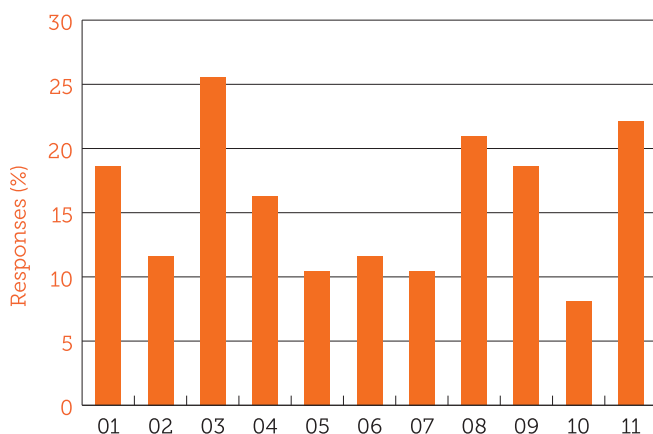
### Notes on 'Other' response

*These responses are included in full.*

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| » Teaching  | » None                              |
| » Students pay term fees  | » Teaching                          |
| » There is no lapidary organisation in the Southern Highlands. Nearest is in Goulburn | » In studio teaching                |
| » Prizes  | » Freelance author, self-publishing |
|   | » Occasional Workshops              |

## Challenges to conducting creative practice

**Question 20:** What are the main challenges to conducting your creative practice in the Southern Highlands (tick all that apply)



### Key to answer choices

- 01 None of the above
- 02 I have to leave the area for work as there are few local opportunities
- 03 The local market is too small
- 04 NBN and internet access quality
- 05 Ultra-high-level digital upload and download capability
- 06 Lack of local training and professional development
- 07 Sourcing contractors and collaborators
- 08 Accessing local, national and international marketplaces
- 09 A lack of local mentoring and support
- 10 Cost of living e.g., housing
- 11 Other (please specify)

A significant portion of respondents claim the local market is too small (25.58%) with many leaving the area to pursue work opportunities (11.63%). Accessing local, national and international marketplaces also proves difficult (20.93%).

Strengthening existing networks through the Directory will also help those facing difficulties with sourcing contractors and collaborators (10.47%). It may also help reduce the impact of a lack of local training and professional development opportunities (11.63%) and local mentoring and support (18.6%) through the previously identified willingness to offer skills.

### Notes on 'Other' response

*Access to venues again featured as a problem for many creatives. Further investigation and discussion are warranted where real estate and the accessibility to it is concerned. Through designating not only virtual but physical meeting places for creativity to thrive, the Southern Highlands has the opportunity to grow the connectivity between creatives as they congregate to practice, display, sell and share their works.*

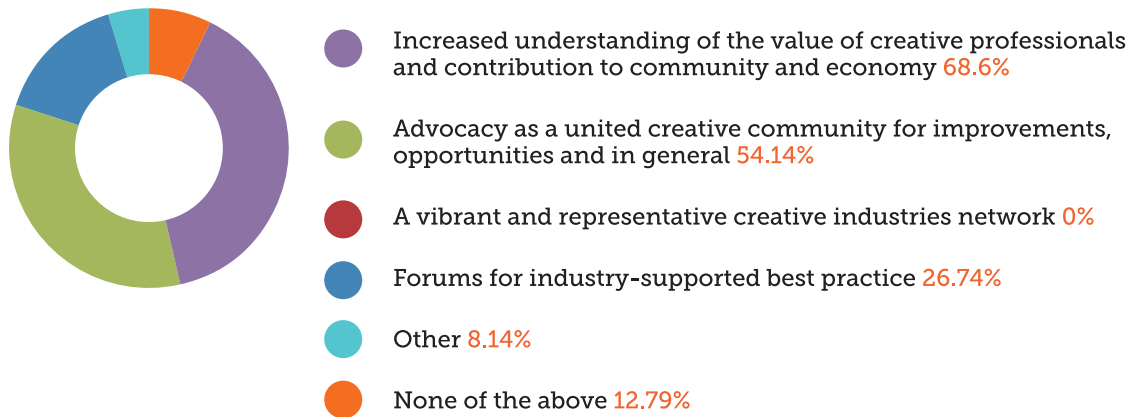
*Along with venue-related issues, a lack of supportive local organisations and the business side of being a creative in the Southern Highlands appears to create challenges. Age, disability and a lack of community are also factors. So too is the impact of challenges due to extreme weather and the global pandemic.*

*These answers are included in full.*

- » Lack of suitable performance venues
- » Age has diluted my enthusiasm!
- » Physical disability Chronic Pain
- » Finding a potential rehearsal space.
- » The ability to self promotion my goods and products
- » New Business venture so not sure of my challenges yet.
- » Gaining new members
- » Cost of commercial retail venues
- » No organisation in southern highlands
- » Lack of opportunity for networking and support
- » Lack of commitment from WSC
- » Cost of getting gallery passed by council
- » Platform for sales, perhaps a virtual creative sales outlet could be created for Wingecarribee
- » Cancellation of workshops due to covid
- » After years of running a big multi-million-dollar business, working as a creative is infinitely harder to get started and recognised.
- » Cost of commercial premises
- » I don't know where to start
- » Transport and freight costs
- » Currently working full time and time poor

## Benefits to creative practice

**Question 21:** My creative practice would benefit from:



Question 21 sought to articulate the benefits of creative practice. Southern Highlands creative practitioners are eager to learn more about their businesses. They believe their creative practice would benefit from increased understanding of the value of creative professionals and contribution to community and economy (68.6%) and want to experience a united and advocacy focussed creative community (58.14%).

### Notes on 'Other' response

*The majority of benefits sought by creatives within the Other section are met by the existence of the Directory. This includes contact with others doing the same type of work, a Directory outlining services for people such as myself who previously ran a large agency in Sydney and has relocated here with high skills to offer regional enterprises, questions as to whether other residents are interested in particular offerings and skills, and the availability of Business Advice for Admin, Council, Legal and other non-creative aspects of creating a business.*

*Venues and spaces also featured with affordable studio space and a purpose-built theatrical performance space that could accommodate touring shows included.*

*Finally, council assisted schemes for artists to create legitimate galleries inspired by 'the arts trail' was also suggested.*



STUDIO GLASS:  
Studio OneFive, Mittagong

## ABN Registration

**Question 22:** Do you have an ABN?



Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) don't have an ABN, relegating them to hobbyist status in the eyes of the law.

## GST Registration

**Question 23:** Are you registered for GST?



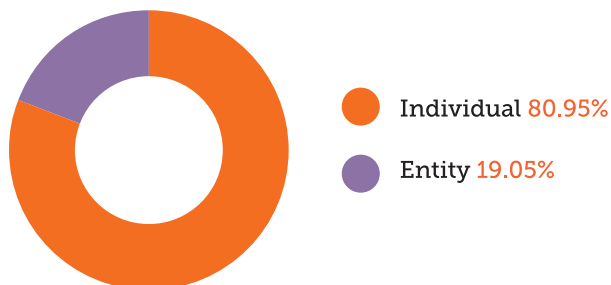
69.77% of creative practitioners operate without GST registration, meaning they fail to reach the \$75,000 a year income threshold.

## Survey Followups

**Question 24:** We will be interviewing a select number of participants in the survey to obtain further insights. Would you consent to being contacted for a short interview?

## Individual or Entity?

**Question 25:** The next few questions relate to earning and turnover as either an individual/salaried worker or entity (i.e., company, partnership)



To gain as rounded a perspective as possible on earning potential, the Survey allowed for both Individual and Company based income responses. The first of which asked the respondent to identify their status as Individual or Entity.

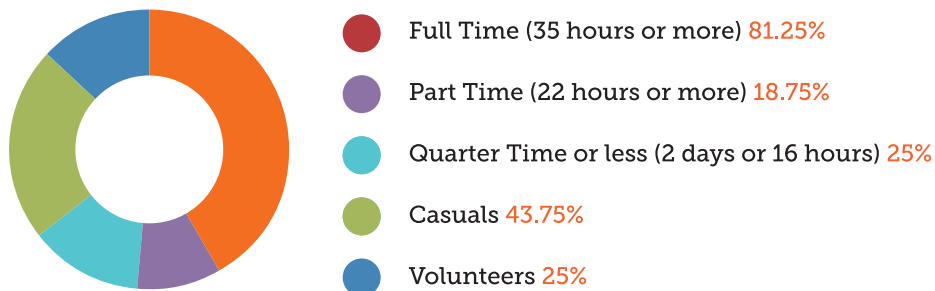


BRIAN RAPSEY,  
*Cinematographer, Photographer, Editor*  
*Rhapsody Pictures*



## Staffing Levels

**Question 26:** Please provide an indication of your staffing levels? Please provide numbers.



Staffing levels were considered an indicator of business capacity. The sixteen respondents who identify as a company employ seven people and give seven volunteers opportunities.

A reliance on volunteer participation is not unusual in the arts sector. This is reflected in policies such as the valid exclusion for arts companies to operate with unpaid interns. Or the general qualifications for what is involved in volunteerism differing from other sectors.

According to the 2020 advocacy for the arts during the pandemic by the Australia Institute, 'the arts and entertainment sector contributes \$14.7 billion per year in value added (GDP). Arts and entertainment employs 193,600 Australians. For every million dollars in turnover, arts and entertainment produce nine jobs while the construction industry only produces around 1 job.'

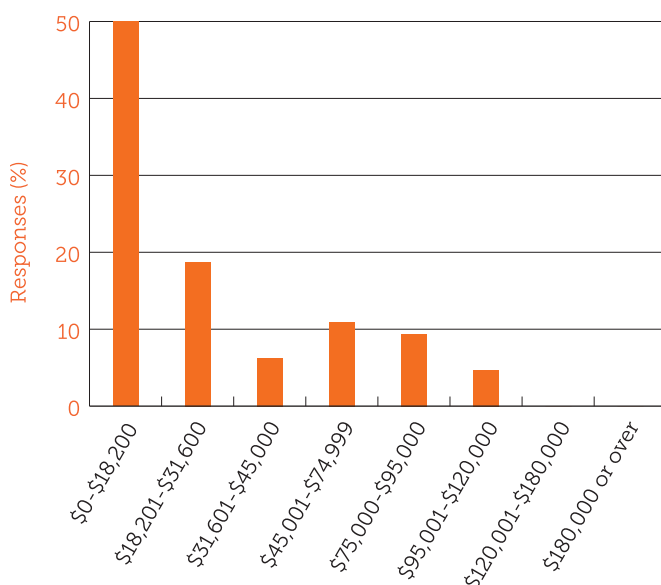
With proper community comes collaboration and with collaboration comes the opportunity pool talent and resources to produce products from the arts and entertainment sector locally.



LAND ABOUNDS:  
Ngununggula Regional Gallery, Bowral

## Income – Individual

**Question 27:** As an individual/salaried worker in creative industries, what is your salary range?

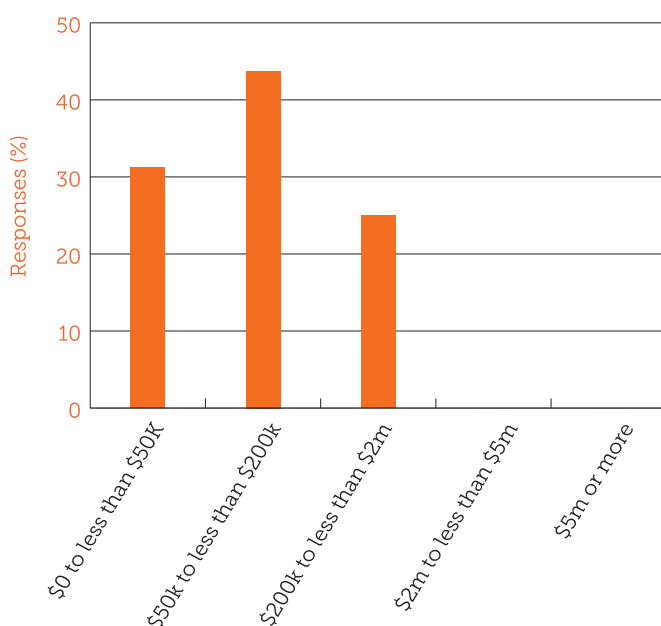


As stated previously, the vast majority of creative practitioners are generating income within the Southern Highlands.

However, wages are below the state average. Half of survey respondents make less than \$18,200 a year from their creative practice. A further 18% make less than \$31,000 a year.

## Income – Entity

**Question 27:** If responding as a business, what is your annual turnover?



Part of the focus for the project was to gain a better understanding about the creative-based companies that live and operate within the Southern Highlands.

Approximately 30% of respondents identifying as an entity make less than \$50K a year while 25% of them make Between \$200K and \$2M.

Notably, medium to large scale organisations and individuals with strong turnover do exist within the Southern Highlands. Engaging with these companies and individuals outside the research process to discuss their barriers and successes may help inform smaller operators within the region.

To sum up findings on indicators of business capacity, there may be a few factors influencing the economic data collected for both individuals and companies.

Firstly, there is a much lower registration of arts companies within the survey than there are within the region itself. The sample size may not be reflective of the wider business-based creative community.

Secondly, the nature of business questions within surveys is that the data collected is often from those who are experiencing a lull or difficulty. Many flourishing companies (unless particularly invested in being heard) will not disclose financial information or make the time for surveys. Companies seeking help will

engage. This can skew data to make it look as though the economic situation of a field or region is performing worse than they are in actuality.

Finally, no part of the survey acknowledged the pandemic, loss of destination tourism, or the impact of the pandemic on the Australian arts scene. As such, the research was charted in an unprecedented time of national downturn within the arts sector, with arts and entertainment related industries have seen the largest pandemic shutdowns, **with just 47% to 65% of businesses operating.**

More investigation is required and will be facilitated through improved networking and engagement.

## Summary and Recommendations – Part B

The Southern Highlands creative is predominately female, older than their urban creative counterparts and are seasoned in their outlook and approach to creativity. The majority are producing income from their creativity and interested in both sharing and growing their skills even further.

Creatives are successfully selling their services or products as a primary source of income. This can only be increased by further investment in appropriate shopfronts and enabling them digitally.

The Southern Highlands creatives have self-identified one of their greatest barriers to success will be solved by increased visibility supplied by the Directory.

Investment in local industry could have a profound effect on the livelihoods of Southern Highlands creatives by removing the necessity to seek work outside the region. Other programs in addition to the Directory have the potential to promote previously undiscovered audiences and reduce the cost of seeking education and creative community elsewhere.

There is room for improvement where living wages are concerned. This is reflected not only in the recorded earnings of individuals and their companies, but also through GST registration and ABN uptake. By growing skills to help creatives market, manage and develop more work, increasing both the level of money earned and the level of people employed.

## Furthering the Directory work

Opportunity to investigate the ideas and approaches of the Southern Highlands creative community exists through direct contact. In fact, the majority of respondents (72%) are eager to share more of their insights through further interviews for qualitative data collection via question 24.

Most of the respondents (77.78%) demonstrate eagerness for the Directory. Notably, 76 respondents said yes and didn't go any further with their registration. This is likely due to the requirement of a profile and photo as part of the registration process or perhaps barriers with the survey format itself. It is recommended the respondents who did not complete their listing are followed up during the soft launch phase of the Directory to ensure competition.



MYEE CLOHESSY:  
Director,  
Bowral Autumn Music Festival

# Addendum

## Common barriers the Part A Directory design aimed to avoid

<b>Low engagement in the early stages of launch leading to a reluctance to register by future participants.</b>	<p>Encourage registration prior to the development of the directory. This allows the respondents the opportunity to give their information – and indicate their interest – without the pressure of a more formalised directory setting.</p> <p>Use these early entries to encourage others to add their voice. By giving live examples in future training and marketing collateral, it gives the creative practitioner or organisation examples to follow. This includes those that registered their interest but did not enter their details at the time.</p>
<b>Categorising creative practitioners in such a way that excludes and divides its members.</b>	<p>Extensive work was done during the early stages of the Project to qualify the expanse of creative practitioners as well as their supporting players. This included making space for venues, those who aid in administrative and marketing capacities and more. These options have been tested by seeing not only the uptake of the categories available, but also through reading any OTHER entries to see if interest areas are missed.</p> <p>In this way, the Directory avoids excluding interesting parties by not offering their category. It also reduces the need for manual input in future through providing a structure that reflects the creatives and their supports well.</p> <p>This approach has the potential to reinvigorate members of the public who have felt excluded from creative practice previously by valuing their contribution as an important part of the behind-the-scenes within successful creative practice</p>
<b>‘The category of one’ issue – no structure is given, and search is rendered useless as user and searcher have no common ground to share. This is common in circumstances where users can ‘self-identify’ their unique creative practice with such a level of detail that no searcher can ever match it. This often leads to a poor user experience. The lister never receives contact as they are not shown in any search. And those using the search can’t find who they are looking for.</b>	<p>Striking a balance between how a creative views themselves and how a potential searcher may describe them is key to a positive experience on a directory. Instead of relying on user generated categories, the decision was made to test categories at the survey level to cater to as many creative practitioners as possible.</p> <p>This structure can then be used within Ultimate Member and/or similar WordPress compatible directory plugins to help a person looking for a creative find multiple options to choose from.</p> <p>The structure chosen also identifies potential for education when using the directory i.e., viewing it as more than how a creative self-describes, as well as weeding out early entries that have no place on a directory of this kind.</p> <p>This opens the door for creating documentation to support staff help both listers and searchers make the most out of their directory experience by having longer exposure to the desired structure.</p>
<b>Creating a singular focus on the people who produce creative work, alienating those who support creativity through other areas such as administration, marketing, venue hire and funding. If creatives can only search for other creatives, their other needs remain unmet.</b>	<p>As the focus is on creating visibility and economic opportunity, the Directory is designed to support the creatives with a wide variety of their needs. By making support mechanisms visible from the start, some of the common barriers creative practitioners face are eliminated. This in turn increases its usefulness and overall likelihood of being used. All while normalising the seeking of assistance in areas such as administration, marketing, venue hire and funding as part and parcel of the creative process.</p>



<b>Not testing the user experience of the directory against the needs of the audience it serves.</b>	Part A serves as a user test as to see what proposed sections of the directory prove useful with the majority of respondents. This includes utilising Other in response and question format to ensure all options are captured.
<b>Increasing risk of mistakes in profiles through manual data entry.</b>	By using a set structure on the survey, the data collected can import into any CSV compatible directory plug-in, cutting out the necessity to re-enter data.
<b>Not catering for the dual nature of the creative practitioner – or their involvement in creative organisations, businesses, projects, and volunteerism.</b>	<p>By providing the creative individual the opportunity to answer as themselves with many creative hats, as well as the organisations and groups they run, and creative business owners, the Directory has a greater opportunity to identify all those who participate in creative practice and how that benefits not only them personally, but other creatives within the region.</p> <p>Knowing who these figures are and building relationships with them at the early stages gives us greater opportunity to shape the future with their input, expertise and interest.</p>
<b>Not understanding the span of creative practitioners within a given area. Whether that be by level of economic maturity or breadth of arts-related practice.</b>	A directory that allows individuals, businesses, hobbyists and leading creative names to sit side-by-side is an exercise in inspiration and levelling up. The aim is to remove barriers and bring creatives of all kinds together to learn, grow and collaborate. This is why the directory gave the ability for organisations and individuals to register, regardless of their economic contribution, maturity of practice or breadth of practice.



BIOSIS: David Ball – Hillview Sculpture Biennial 2018  
Image © Ashley Mackevicius

By utilising the survey as a means for testing the uptake, structure and future potential of a directory within the region, the Directory project can begin with both confidence in the structure and intent, and a readymade audience

### **The directory management strategy**

At this stage, the technology for the directory has not been committed to. Here are the following recommendations with that in mind.

#### **Grow the online literacy of the Southern Highlands**

Artists in the Southern Highlands need to learn how to diversify their income and get online to remain competitive – only 6% are involved in digital commerce, well below the average for those running creative businesses. Getting the creative businesses and practitioners in the region more accustomed to online offerings increases their chances of succeeding with broadening their market reach.

If creatives do not wish to travel for work and export is to be a part of the mix, it is recommended that the 14% of respondents who lack a web presence are encouraged to take full advantage of using their profile (Southern Highlands Arts and/or Weave) and use it in lieu of their own website. This can be done through profile refresh events, case studies from creatives within the region that benefit from a strong online presence sharing their story and other educational offerings that prove the validity of spending time online.

This should also be sold as a benefit for those who rely on social media. Social media is great. However, it is subject to changes in features and policies that can directly impact a creative's ability to share, promote and sell their work. Many of these platforms also come with little to no protection for the creative against major feature or technology changes, banning content or even removal from the platforms itself.

It's highly recommended that workshops geared towards helping creatives in the region to grow their digital literacy and skills are implemented as part and parcel of normalising the directory as a useful tool in the creative arsenal. One where they can feel confident in the safety of the website as well as the longevity of the directory within the region.



MUSIC @ MENTAL, 2022  
Image © Hamish Tamé



### **Align with existing arts websites**

Using existing creative websites and fostering relationships with pre-existing directories will help normalise the Directory on launch. That way, it is possible to combine rather than split audiences. It may also help create a one-stop-shop style vibe for creatives and creative businesses alike. This in turn would make the long-term management of the website easier as all roads lead to the one place.

Also make sure that existing directories within the region are treated as community over competition. Each directory gives the creative and creative business one more place to gather. It supplies one more opportunity for a sale, a friendship and visibility. And it's a way of leading by example to creatives concerned about sharing the limelight with their commercial or artistic competitors in one space.

Fostering good relations between these directories is paramount in gaining the volume required to make for a solid user experience.

### **Choose technology wisely**

It is highly recommended that customisation and a reliance on a third party to provide updates to individual creative profiles should be avoided at all costs. Custom builds can seem attractive but quickly pose problems with compatibility and cost in a rapidly updating tech world.

Creatives and creative businesses are often fluid and dynamic. This means what they offer, how they operate, and general access can change dramatically. Nothing kills an online directory website quicker than out-of-date or irrelevant information. Allowing people to update their own profiles via a login to reduces bottlenecks and missed opportunities through last minute requests for updates going unanswered. It can also allay user fears about technology and increase their own participation in future endeavours. Using Ultimate Member (or similar out-of-the-box directory) on WordPress means this level of ownership over a profile is within the hands of the lister.

Out-of-the-box plugins also integrate across a wide variety of other plugins and offerings, including updated versions of the core WordPress content management system (CMS). Expensive rebuilds are avoided by using standard plugins that can easily export data and import it to new websites as they are updated. That means the Directory can be transferred easily and efficiently to any new website. And that means greater longevity, a continuation of service and support via the plugin builder under a much smaller annual fee, and greater compatibility with future core WordPress updates.

### **Aim for member autonomy**

Many out-of-the-box plugins allow for communication between members, the displaying of photos and work, and include features such as social media profiles for more promotion. Make use of them.

The success of a directory is measured not by the volume of profiles but through the quality of interactions received. Allow for direct contact between members so they can receive work, meet collaborators and talk about their work in a congenial and friendly environment. Promote this aspect regularly so that listers understand the benefits.

### **Create time to nurture directory listers**

Directory launches require appropriate customer service support. A lot of listers will call with questions and requests for assistance. This is especially true of older demographics and those who have limited experience with online properties.

Ensuring a centralised point of contact for assistance in registration together with displayed customer service hours specific for this assistance is beneficial. One-on-one management can also be reduced through offering workshops with live displays of how to set up and save a profile and step-through content via the home of the Directory itself.

Coaching people to accept an identity that is available to them is also part and parcel of running a directory. There will continue to be a percentage of creatives who, by virtue of their creative field, believe they are unique to the point of being singular. It's important to encourage them to see the benefits (i.e., search volume) of being among the sunflower among the daisies instead of asking for a specific sunflower category.

The aim is to protect the experience that a searcher has when they are seeking to buy, hire or collaborate with a creative lister. This means using relatable language instead of jargon, not being too prescriptive when describing a specific field, and to think of who is searching rather than to only think of one's own identity.

For example, while having alto jazz saxophonist who plays by ear helps the musician self-identify and feel empowered, it won't get them work from a layman who won't be anywhere near that granular when they search. They may simply want a jazz musician to play at a wedding. The added level of detail is likely to be overwhelming when it comes to deciding who to pick if the sax player shows up at all.

### **Actively promote the directory**

Promotion through social media, newsletters and other channels brings registrations. The more the Directory is promoted, the more the directory volume will grow.

This includes actively working to keep as up to date as possible. It is recommended that the newsletter attached to the directory prompts listers to check their information and freshen up their profiles on a minimum of a six-monthly basis. This will give listers a reason to come back and meet more people while also proactively adding information to their profile.

Cross promotion is also a part of this process. Utilising the individuals and companies that have registered to promote on launch will help generate interest. Referencing it at council, chamber, and arts body managed events and networking to help continue the growth.



FLY BY: Bodhi Todd  
*Winner of the Youth Prize in the Southern Highlands PhotoVoice Photography Competition, 2020*



### **Build the directory to cope with duality**

While the survey allowed for people to submit their profile as their various creative endeavours, most did not. This is understandable as most see themselves as a creative individual or company with a multitude of talents.

By using categories and tags within WordPress and Ultimate Member, it is easy to cater for these relationships.

### **The point becomes one of education.**

If someone is running completely distinct offerings that they may not wish to promote alongside each other (e.g., a theatre maker who only takes wedding photos because they need money between gigs), this should also be catered for.

How to have this conversation is to align with the values and the idea of audience when searching. A bride-to-be may be put off by a theatre maker taking their precious memories in the off hours of their career. They don't need this level of distraction and detail. All they need to see is a sharp and beautiful photography profile.

A photographer who offers everything from family photos and headshots through to bar interiors doesn't need to separate the offering to such a level. Working across a wide variety of photography may create a benefit for a business looking for someone as capable of shooting the venue as they are of capturing the essence of the staff.

This can be managed through blog tips, social media prompts and workshop level education.

### **Leverage the desire to meet and share**

Networking as well as the mention of sharing tools together with the desire to find spaces means you have a community eager to meet for incredibly practical and tangible reasons. Using the directory to build knowledge of the tools and spaces available in the region can also aid in building networks.

Communities are built on need as a reason to meet people.



DISCUSSION WORKSHOP, *Mental*, 2021.  
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