

Australians AND THE arts

What do the arts mean to Australians?

A REPORT TO THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL
FROM SAATCHI & SAATCHI AUSTRALIA

OVERview



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ISBN 0 642 47227 0

Design by Quality St
Printing by Red Lion Printing Services

Published by the Australia Council
372 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010
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We did not, however, believe that the current level of support and engagement would be sufficient to deliver our aspirations nor the aspirations of the sector..

Australians and the Arts is about how Australians see the arts today and how they would like to see the arts tomorrow.

When the Australia Council gathered in 1998 to determine Council's priorities for the coming triennium, we spent some considerable time contemplating the characteristics of the buoyant artistic environment we would like to see flourishing in Australia in the next decade.

This environment had many attributes. But the more we developed the scenario, the more we saw that a key factor needed to underpin it was a high level of public support for and engagement with the arts, in all their manifestations. This public support, we believed, ranged from support from governments at all levels, to support from the corporate sector, and most importantly, support from the general community.

We did not, however, believe that the current level of support and engagement would be sufficient to deliver our aspirations nor the aspirations of the sector, and hence the idea of a strategy to promote the value of the arts was born.

Easy to say, but much more difficult to implement. First and foremost, the information base upon which to build a strategy simply wasn't there. We knew a lot about attendances at arts events, purchasing patterns within the arts, patterns of work within the arts sector, and the like. But we had no clear perspective upon the way in which the general public values the arts.

After consultation with other people who had been involved in a variety of attitudinal change projects within the Australian community, we decided that our first step would be the acquisition of the information we needed in order to begin planning the strategy. Hence this research, which was undertaken for the Council by Saatchi & Saatchi and which is presented by the consultants in this report.

Australians and the Arts is about how Australians see the arts today and how they would like to see the arts tomorrow. This report interprets the current perspectives, as derived from the quantitative and qualitative research, and suggests possible strategies for the future.

One of the key issues revealed during the research is that the term ‘the arts’ tends, in our society, to have a meaning which is rarely questioned but which is extremely indeterminate. Using it as a blanket category, some people assume that others value the arts as they do, or, even worse, assume that others have no capacity to value the arts as they do. The report shows us that the monolithic-sounding phrase ‘the arts’ has to be unpacked if we are to successfully promote the value of ‘the arts’ to our community because, in reality, ‘the arts’ cover different sets of attitudes and aspirations in the mind of every individual.

As a result, measuring the value of the arts and developing strategies to promote this value to all Australians, are demanding, though not impossible, tasks.

The knowledge this report contributes on these issues will, we hope, stimulate debate, and assist the Council in developing a strategy which will show our community how the arts play a role in shaping a vision of Australia’s future, a vision in which we can all play a part at a personal, community and national level.

Many people have contributed to the development of this report, and our thanks go to all of them. But in particular, we must thank Sandra Yates, Chair of Saatchi & Saatchi for her abiding interest in the project, and Paul Costantoura, the principal researcher who has travelled Australia with us, listening to people, presenting his findings, continually surprising us with new information, and generally going way beyond the call of duty in the completion of his consultancy for us. To Paul, and to Janice Besch and her team at the Council, our heartfelt thanks on a task well done.

Dr Margaret Seares
CHAIR
AUSTRALIA COUNCIL

Jennifer Bott
GENERAL MANAGER
AUSTRALIA COUNCIL

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...at the beginning of the century, we appear ready to encourage each other to become tall poppies on the national and world stage rather than simply reaching for the scythe.

...while some Australians love the arts, others don't feel so positive about them.

The central message of this study is:

‘Welcome to the Australian Arts.’

Simple? Yes.
Obvious? No.

Hopefully, it will provide a focus for the Australian arts sector — something that every individual and organisation can keep in mind when making decisions about the nature of their artistic practice and how it is presented to the public.

It is a message that reflects the changing attitudes among Australians and the need to re-evaluate some of the stereotypes and perceptions that seem to have continued long past their useful lives. Perhaps most importantly, at the beginning of the century, we appear ready to encourage each other to become tall poppies on the national and world stage rather than simply reaching for the scythe.

Nevertheless, while some Australians love the arts, others don't feel so positive about them.

On the one hand, some members of the public hold out-of-date perceptions of what constitute ‘the arts’ and what the arts can mean to them personally and nationally. On the other hand, some people in the arts sector apparently hold out-of-date perceptions of who constitutes the Australian public, what motivates them and how to deal with them.

This could be a classic case of mistaken identity. However, if the arts sector wants to promote the value of the arts to all Australians, every member of that sector needs to take the responsibility for any gaps in these perceptions. The sector needs to improve its own understanding of the Australian public and it needs to actively work to change perceptions of the arts among that public.

The key challenge facing the sector is to become better organised in its capacity to communicate with the general population. It also needs to become better integrated with the evolving interests, hopes and desires of all Australians.

That is why our proposed central message makes three main points:

- One: That all Australians should feel welcome to be creative and artistic themselves and should encourage others to be so, regardless of their background and circumstances.
- Two: That all Australians should feel welcome to enjoy the creative and artistic output of others without having to deal with real or imagined obstacles created by the practical or social environment of the arts.
- Three: That all Australians should be proud of the arts in Australia as a realistic expression of who Australians are and the things that they value.

The foundation of the strategy we are proposing is based on the 12 strategic objectives and the eight areas of best practice we have identified. There are also more than 60 recommendations dealing with specific aspects of promoting the value of the arts.

Some readers might find the level of detail in this report and some of the observations and recommendations confronting. However, the study holds up a mirror to the arts on their place in Australian society.

It is for readers to interpret for themselves how relevant this information is to their own lives and to their work.

Paul Costantoura
STRATEGIC PLANNER
SAATCHI & SAATCHI

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PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

This section provides a brief introduction to the study and indicates where readers can find summaries of the report's contents. The 'comments' referred to under 'The good news and room for improvement' highlight interpretations of the findings that can be found on the CD-ROM and in the main report.

The report at a glance

STRATEGIC ADVICE

This study offers advice to the Australia Council on promoting the value of the arts to all Australians. The challenges facing the study are at: Background and methodology p.14.

The advice takes three main forms:

- **The 12 strategic objectives:** A summary of these is at p.33 and the detailed reasoning behind each one is at p.47-57.
- **Best practice:** Best practice principles are discussed at p.58-60 and eight specific areas of best practice for communicating with the general population are at p.61-75.
- **Recommendations:** More than 60 recommendations covering action Saatchi & Saatchi recommends as part of the proposed strategy are at p.76 to p.95.

KEY FINDINGS

There are a number of ways to quickly understand the main findings of this report.

- **The study conclusions in summary:** The overall findings at p.18-19, findings about attitudes among the general population at p.20-27 and findings relevant to the arts sector are at p.28-32.
- **Overview of population and attitudinal segments:** An overview of some of the key data arising from the telephone surveys conducted as part of the study is at p.34-39.
- **Summary description of segments:** A brief description of the main attitudinal segments that were revealed to exist within the population is at p.40-41.
- **Guide to the main report:** An outline of information found in the main report is at p.96.

THE GOOD NEWS AND THE ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The findings in this report provide both very good news and reveal the room for improvement for the arts sector in Australia, but the picture overall is very optimistic. Some selected highlights from the report are set out below. Readers should be cautious about drawing conclusions from one or a few findings without acknowledging the broader context.

THE GOOD NEWS

A nation of creative intellectuals: Nine out of ten Australians surveyed place a high or fairly high value on: learning about new things (93%); being intellectually stimulated (89%); and having some creative skill (88%). Only two-thirds of the population place the same value on having some sporting skill (68%). (Comment 19: Are we a nation of intellectuals?)

Being creative: 80% of people agree 'I feel good when I can express myself creatively' and 67% believe that 'the arts should be as much about doing these things yourself as being part of an audience.' (Comment 54: The arts - a natural part of life?)

Interest in the arts: 77% of people agree 'we should all learn more about the arts', 74% would feel more positive about the arts if they were 'able to understand the arts better', 74% agree 'there should be more support for the arts from business', 71% agree 'there should be more coverage of the arts in the media', 66% agree that 'more Australians should directly participate in the arts', and 66% agree that 'people should go to arts events and activities more often'. (Comment 67: A healthier diet of the arts; and Comment 75: Arts education for adults.)

Being proud and inspired: 89% of people agree 'I feel proud when I see the creative talent of Australians being recognised locally and internationally' and 85% agree that 'I find the skill of a great artist, musician or writer very inspiring.' 87% of people agree that 'The arts are an important part of helping young people to learn how to express themselves'. (Comment 63: Who is looking for a tall poppy now?; Comment 62: Capitalising on inspiration; and Comment 61: A ticker-tape parade for an orchestra?)

Various ways of enjoying the arts: The majority of people get a lot of enjoyment out of the creative output of others either live (58%), in books (56%), or through recordings or broadcasts (53%). They also get a lot of enjoyment out of supporting family or friends in the arts (58%). A relatively large proportion of Australians get a lot of enjoyment out of being artists themselves, either just for their own enjoyment (34%) and/or for others to enjoy (24%). (Comment 28: Enjoying the arts in many ways; and Comment 30: The arts? Just do it.)

Education: 85% of people agree that 'the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian kid' and 86% would feel more positive about the arts if there were 'better education and opportunities for kids in the arts'. (Comment 53: Arts education for children - a strong idea; and Comment 75: Arts education - whose responsibility?)

Kids growing up: Children who are encouraged by their parents to be involved in the arts are more likely to grow up and value the arts than are those who do not receive encouragement. (Comment 31: How do we reach kids with the arts?)

Ready to understand the arts: While 59% of people believe the arts 'require understanding to appreciate them fully', 69% agree that 'people shouldn't need any special understanding to appreciate the arts'. (Comment 52: To 'dumb down' or to understand?)

Meaning in life: 66% of people agree that 'the arts are good for my inner self'. (Comment 56: Are Australians shy about the meaning of life?)

Relaxation: 88% of people agree that they 'look forward to being able to settle into a book, a film or some good music and escape from life for a while'. (Comment 59: Let's just take it easy.)

Distinctively Australian: 68% of people agree that 'It is important that the arts reflect who we are as Australians'. (Comment 57: What is distinctively Australian?)

Non-English speaking origin: People with non-English speaking origins have a relatively more positive view of the arts than those who do not. (Comment 47: Are the arts fair dinkum? and Comment 48: A strategy to deal with diversity?)

Arts content: The majority of Australians would feel more positive about the arts if there were: 'more Australian performances, shows and writing' (76%); 'more multi-cultural events and activities' (67%); and 'shows and performances more relevant to the way things are today' (59%). (Comment 71: Content - a sensitive topic.)

Broader definition: More than half the survey participants were prepared to accept design, advertising and several other items as part of a future definition of the arts. (Comment 25: A nice frock, a good advertisement, a great car, or art?)

Arts, sport and popular entertainment: 80% of people agree 'the arts are at the heart of every form of popular entertainment', and 78% agree that 'people can enjoy the arts in the same way that they enjoy sport'. (Comment 60: Joining the dots between the arts and entertainment; and Comment 18: Not enough sport and not enough arts?)

Practical changes: Large proportions of the population would feel more positive about the arts if there were changes to the cost (85%), information (80%), location (74%), environment (72%), timing (69%), and transport (68%) related to the arts. (Comment 72: Practical factors and perceptions.)

Owning art: 67% of people 'would love to own a really good piece of art'. (Comment 64: My kid could do better, but can I afford it?)

Ready for change: Only 36% of people would 'like the arts to stay pretty much the way they are'. (Comment 69: A tolerant approach.)

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

More accessible: 84% of people believe the arts should be ‘more accessible and available to average Australians’ and 81% would feel more positive if there were ‘a greater sense that the arts are available to everyone’. (Comment 65: I want to know that I can do it.)

Elitism: 66% would feel more positive if there were ‘less elitist attitudes within the arts’, 51% believe the arts attract people who are ‘somewhat elitist and pretentious’, and 42% agree that ‘the arts are a class thing’. (Comment 73: More available and less elitist; and Comment 50: What is elitist about the arts?)

OK but irrelevant: 35% of people agree that ‘the arts are OK, they are just irrelevant to me’. (Comment 51: OK but irrelevant - the sleeping giant.)

Value of the arts: 20% of the population are unable or unwilling to spontaneously suggest any way in which the arts have value. (Comment 10: Is 20% good or bad?)

Limited definition of the arts: 79% of Australians only suggest four or fewer items as part of the arts. (Comment 22: Expanding the definition.)

Complex definition of ‘the arts’: At least six different definitions are used in the arts sector to describe ‘the arts’, leaving many people confused. (Comment 66: What should be in a definition of the arts?)

Men and boys: Men and boys have a substantially more negative view of the arts than do women and girls. (Comment 35: Blokes, boys and bonding.)

Families: Parents are less likely than non-parents to place a high value on the arts. (Comment 37: Parents - two different mindsets.)

Low incomes: People earning from \$25,000 to less than \$40,000 give the arts a lower value than the rest of the population and are most likely to feel the social and class issues in relation to the arts in terms of their perceived elitism. (Comment 40: Low-income earners with potential.)

Educational qualifications: There is a strong link between higher educational qualifications and more positive attitudes towards the arts, indicating that the needs of the less educated are not being met as well as those of the most educated. (Comment 42: Arts for the well-educated?)

Rural and regional Australia: People in rural and regional Australia are less likely to value the arts than are people living in cities. (Comment 43: Pull the other leg - is that the arts in the country?)

Outer-city areas: People living in outer areas of capital cities place a lower value on the arts than people living in inner-city areas. (Comment 44: Closer to the city means closer to the arts?; and Comment 45: How far is too far?)

Background and methodology

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

When the Australia Council became a statutory authority 25 years ago, replacing its predecessor that had operated since 1968, it was required to deliver nine specific benefits to the Australian population. Section 5 of *The Australia Council Act 1975* defines its functions as:

To formulate and carry out policies designed:

- (i) to promote excellence in the arts;
- (ii) to provide, and encourage provision of, opportunities for persons to practise the arts;
- (iii) to promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts;
- (iv) to promote the general application of the arts in the community;
- (v) to foster the expression of a national identity by means of the arts;
- (vi) to uphold and promote the right of persons to freedom in the practice of the arts;
- (vii) to promote knowledge and appreciation of Australian arts by persons in other countries;
- (viii) to promote incentives for, and recognition of, achievement in the practice of the arts; and
- (ix) to encourage the support of the arts by the States, local governing bodies and other persons and organisations;

Within this mandate, the Australia Council received a broad brief for what were the ‘arts’:

‘Arts’ includes creative and interpretative expression through theatre, literature, music, visual arts, and crafts.

Consequently, in 1998, when the Australia Council sought submissions for a research and strategy development project to promote the value of the arts to all Australians, it was clear that this exercise fell within the ambit of at least five of its functions. In particular, this was intended to help Council better fulfil its function:

- (iii) to promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts.

The need for the study emerged from a decision by the Australia Council to develop a three-year promotional strategy ‘as a crucial means of addressing emerging challenges for the management of Australia’s cultural resources into the twenty-first century’.

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In particular, this was intended to help Council better fulfil its function: (iii) to promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts.

THE KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE STUDY

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The apparently straightforward requirement of developing a strategy to 'promote the value of the arts' raised three key challenges:

WHAT ARE 'THE ARTS'?

The first challenge was to understand what are 'the arts?'

Despite the broad-ranging definition of the arts included in *The Australia Council Act 1975*, it became apparent early in the study that there was little, if any, agreement about exactly what 'the arts' comprised. In fact, not only was there a considerable range of views about the items that should form part of 'the arts', but different people would apply various explanations for why something should either be included or excluded in their definition of 'the arts'.

...different people would apply various explanations for why something should either be included or excluded in their definition of 'the arts'.

Consequently, we based the study on two key assumptions:

- That we would allow the participants in the study to devise, and reflect on, their own definitions of the arts.
- That we would include in our questioning any possible expression of the arts. This would range from no-cost personal involvement in the arts, to supporting friends and family in their pursuit of the arts, to any commercial arts-related activity, such as buying a ticket, recording or book, being a member of an audience at a show or exhibition, or any other way that people might perceive their experience of the arts. In this regard, the study differed from most other audience development work undertaken within the sector which has focused on increasing the number of consumers of arts activities and/or products.

HOW CAN AUSTRALIANS 'VALUE' THE ARTS?

The second challenge was to understand how Australians might 'value' the arts.

Again, there were no simple answers, with value covering everything from the joy of watching a small child's clumsy attempts at finger painting, to a major Australian performing arts company filling concert halls in major world capitals. Consequently, we made two key assumptions about the way we would assess the value of the arts to Australians:

...there were no simple answers, with value covering everything from the joy of watching a small child's clumsy attempts at finger painting, to a major Australian performing arts company filling concert halls in major world capitals.

- That we would allow people to describe the ways in which the arts had value for them, both personally and in Australia today.
- That we would present people with a suite of possible ways in which the arts currently does or possibly could have value, to see the extent to which these gained agreement among the general population or might be influential in their future attitudes.

...the Australia Council was conducting the study on behalf of the sector, but perceived that its own role would be as a catalyst for change and to provide some coordination...

WHO SHOULD DO WHAT?

The third challenge was to understand who might be involved in a strategy to promote the value of the arts and what each person or organisation would do as part of the strategy.

In addressing this challenge, two key issues emerged:

- There were very limited central resources for a strategy. Any potential funding earmarked by the Australia Council from within its own resources was insufficient for a national communications campaign, particularly for funding generic arts-related advertising. In addition, the Australia Council was conducting the study on behalf of the sector, but perceived that its own role would be as a catalyst for change and to provide some coordination where possible. Beyond this, the responsibility lay with the arts sector itself to deliver on any strategy.
- Despite the high level of self-identification that many people have of being part of the 'arts sector', it is difficult to identify who exactly comprises the arts sector let alone enlist their support in a communications strategy. While there are some networks of communication, these tend to operate within restricted circles and there are few mechanisms for the sector to work together to achieve common goals.

Developing an effective strategy meant answering three fundamental questions in order to bring about the long-term shift in attitudes and behaviour that the Australia Council was seeking to lead Australians to better appreciate, enjoy and engage with the arts:

1. How do Australians view the arts now?
2. How could they be influenced to have a more positive view of the arts in the future?
3. What actions would the arts sector need to take to bring about any positive change?

The research phase of the study focused not only on attitudes among the general public, but canvassed among the arts sector for current ideas and activities through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. This is explained in detail in the main report, but in summary it involved:

1. 16 discussion groups or equivalent sessions held across a number of States with people representing all life stages from age 16 to retirement, including parents and working adults. People were selected to ensure coverage of different attitudes towards the arts as well as socio-demographic groups representing the population as a whole. This included those living near to, or far from major cities, and those from a diversity of cultural origins.
2. A short initial national survey of 1200 people to clarify some of the early principles.
3. A major national survey of a further 1200 people (with a 30 minute questionnaire) exploring attitudes and involvement in relation to the arts in a wide range of ways.
4. Extensive consultations with people in the arts sector through a range of meetings and workshops covering more than 200 people representing almost every artform and approach to artistic practice.

Throughout the study, staff of the Australia Council worked very closely with Saatchi & Saatchi to develop the strategic directions which were evaluated during the research. Council staff were present at every discussion group and Australia Council members met on several occasions to consider the findings and to make preliminary decisions about the action required.

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...Australia Council members met on several occasions to consider the findings and to make preliminary decisions about the action required.

The arts have become very much part of Australian society, but the benefits of the arts are not enjoyed or recognised equally by all Australians.

Despite a relatively high level of disinclination towards or disengagement from the arts, there is little evidence of anger or hostility towards the arts.

Study conclusions in summary

KEY FINDINGS - OVERALL

1. The arts have become very much part of Australian society, but the benefits of the arts are not enjoyed or recognised equally by all Australians. Hence, there is significant scope to more broadly promote the value of the arts and to expand the ability of all Australians to enjoy them and to see their value.
2. Many Australians can and do enjoy the arts in a variety of ways. These range from intense personal, intellectual and spiritual engagement, to enjoying the arts as a source of relaxation. They are appreciated as a form of entertainment and a forum for social opportunities with friends and family. The arts involve Australians as consumers of the artistic output of others. There is also a high level of interest among all demographic groups in being personally creative and artistic.
3. On the other hand, many Australians do not feel welcome to enjoy the arts, either by appreciating the creative and artistic output of others or by being creative or artistic themselves. There are a wide variety of impediments to their engagement with the arts which can be seen broadly as either practical or social. These include a perceived sense of exclusion and a lack of access due to financial or geographical barriers. There is a perceived lack of relevant information and education about the arts. The perceived social environment of the arts precludes many from feeling comfortable exploring the opportunities available.
4. Despite a relatively high level of disinclination towards or disengagement from the arts, there is little evidence of anger or hostility towards the arts. The dominant negative feeling of these people is that the arts are irrelevant to their lives.
5. As a result, a key focus of any strategy needs to be to make Australians feel welcome to explore their own creative and artistic talents and to enjoy those of others.
6. The arts sector is not well-organised when it comes to dealing with the general public outside specific markets. The focus is usually on those market segments which will most likely contribute to the immediate financial viability of individual artistic ventures.
7. Some people in the arts sector are operating on the basis of out-of-date and incorrect stereotypes of the 'average Australian'. Consequently, there is significant need for the sector to understand better the needs and motivations of people outside the current catchments of arts consumers and supporters. There is also need for the sector to overcome gaps in perceptions of the arts by making it easier for the general public to understand the arts and to know how to enter into the experience of the arts.

8. Communication within the sector is based on relatively complex networks which often link like-minded individuals and organisations based on common localities or artform interests. There are also groupings which distinguish between arts-based activities on the basis of the size of the organisation or their commercial or community focus. However, the sector lacks the organisational structures and mechanisms which allow sharing of information, skills and relevant developments among all existing and prospective arts practitioners. Such mechanisms are a prerequisite for enlisting the support of the entire arts sector in any strategy to promote the value of the arts.
9. There is also a lack of a common vision for the future of the Australian arts. Such a vision would need to see the arts playing a role that Australians see is relevant and meaningful to their lives - personally and nationally - and distinctively Australian. This needs to contribute to shaping Australia as a country with a strong creative culture. This evolution is already taking place and the arts sector needs to ensure it takes its place as a valuable player in the creative Australia of the future.
10. Similarly, there is a lack of recognition of the common goals which every individual artist or arts organisation might accept as important to the future of the sector. This is partly due to the lack of an effective, independent coordinating body (apart from the Australia Council) that might serve the interests of the sector. This could enhance internal communication and ensure that the 'brand image' of the arts is well-presented to the general population, to existing and potential consumers of the arts, to potential participants in the arts and to governments.
11. In this regard the arts sector could learn from the experience of other industries and professions which work together to achieve common goals throughout their sectors despite internal competition. The wine sector, tourism, agriculture in general, and various other industrial and professional associations all provide models which might be considered relevant to the arts.
12. A key objective of any enhanced organisational capacity within the sector should be the sharing of 'best practice' in those activities which either directly or indirectly influence the attitudes Australians have towards the arts. The eight key areas of potential best practice identified in this report are: media relations; education; relationships with key stakeholders; information; research; the production; events and competitions; and advertising.
13. The future of the arts will depend significantly on finding new supporters and markets outside the areas of current traditional support. There has been considerable effort in some areas of the arts to more carefully and intelligently carve the existing (and in some cases declining) 'audience cake'. An effective strategy to promote the value of the arts to all Australians will have the associated benefit of helping to bake 'new audience cakes' - or new markets where none currently exist.

Some people in the arts sector are operating on the basis of out-of-date and incorrect stereotypes of the 'average Australian'.

There is also a lack of a common vision for the future of the Australian arts.

The future of the arts will depend significantly on finding new supporters and markets outside the areas of current traditional support.

KEY FINDINGS - THE PUBLIC

The 'sleeping giant'

1. Overall, any discussion of 'the arts' stimulates passionate and deep-seated feelings among most people. While it may not be a strong top-of-mind issue for many, it is a topic about which almost everyone has an opinion if they are asked. While some are passionately devoted to the arts, many Australians do not see or feel how the arts can be relevant in their lives and they feel that the arts are somehow removed from their life experience.
2. As such, a substantial proportion of the public can be seen as a 'sleeping giant' in relation to the arts. They are neither 'for' the arts nor 'against' the arts. This means they have enormous potential to be influenced in either a positive or negative direction if given new information, encouragement and options related to the arts.

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Reasons for valuing the arts

3. There is a wide range of perceptions among the population in relation to the arts. It is not possible to find a simple way to categorise attitudes. The question of whether or not people 'value' the arts yields different responses depending on precisely how they are asked to consider them, with people divided almost 50:50 when asked to consider the personal value of the arts. However, when people are asked to consider the question in its broadest terms - covering both personal value and value to the nation as a whole - the survey findings revealed that the population is basically split into thirds. One-third place a high value on the arts, one-third place a low or fairly low value on the arts and the remainder fall between them. This is not a 'report card' for the arts sector, but the findings provide guidance for future strategies when the underlying motivations are examined.
4. Generally the following demographic characteristics are more likely to be associated with those who place a high value on the arts: female; with university and postgraduate qualifications; living close to the centre of capital cities; without children; older; and in households with higher incomes. The converse applies to those who place a low value on the arts. That is, they are more likely to be: male; with lower level qualifications; younger; living away from the centre of capital cities; with young children; and in households with lower incomes.
5. In simple terms, people who feel positive about the arts engage with them for a variety of reasons, but enjoyment, entertainment and relaxation are the most common. After these come a range of 'higher order' issues, which include the contribution the arts make to our national identity and other intellectual, social and emotional benefits.
6. The reasons offered by people for feeling negative about the arts generally relate to a lack of engagement, with many suggesting they are just not interested in, or 'not into,' the arts. This can be due to practical impediments as well as emotional factors, social customs and expectations which present barriers to their engagement with and involvement in the arts. The most negative feelings are associated with a sense of social exclusion.

This is not a 'report card' for the arts sector, but the findings provide guidance for future strategies when the underlying motivations are examined.

7. There is also a strong relationship between a person receiving parental encouragement when they were young and eventually placing a high value on the arts. This appears to exceed the influence of formal school education alone.

Definition

8. The question of the definition of the arts is a critical issue in relation to perceptions. 'The arts' can be considered as a 'brand' which carries brand imagery in the same way as other sets of products or services. Most people have a very limited spontaneous perception or 'brand image' of the arts, with the majority being able to spontaneously suggest only three or fewer specific items.
9. This limited spontaneous perception tends to focus on a '1900' definition of the arts which includes those forms of artistic expression that would have existed (mainly in Europe) at the beginning of the twentieth century. These traditional items can be seen as the 'big A' arts.
10. However, at the same time, the majority would like to see a very wide range of activities accepted as part of the arts in the future. These are the 'little a' arts and they include things like: fashion design; graphic design; shows or bands at the local pub or licensed club; performers like Kylie Minogue; TV drama like 'Blue Heelers'; and painting and play-acting done by small children.
11. The source of the limited definition of the arts appears to be the arts sector itself. While there is no clear definition being promulgated by the arts sector, the majority of people are influenced by what they were taught in 'art' at school, or how they see 'the arts' reported in the media, not just in the arts coverage, but also the reporting of events in the social pages and the attention paid to the arts in the news pages (e.g. expensive purchases of the visual arts). The ambience and style of 'arts events' provide people with clues as to the customs and expectations that apply to people who are part of 'the arts'. They are also influenced by what they perceive as the claims for 'arts funding' from the sector and their perception of how these funds are used.

Relationship between participating and enjoying

12. There appears to be a relationship between an interest in participating in creative activity and an interest in enjoying the creativity of others. People are more likely to place a higher value on the arts if they are also involved in the arts, either directly themselves or through friends and family.
13. This relationship means those who have personal experience of the arts are more likely to be interested in them than those who don't. Those with some personal involvement, whether it is creative or social, have a magnified passion for their own arts-related activities and for appreciating the achievements of others. Consequently, personal involvement is a key to helping overcome a lack of engagement and a sense of exclusion. People need to feel that they, or their children, have the option to be involved in the arts, even if they never choose to take up the option.

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People need to feel that they, or their children, have the option to be involved in the arts, even if they never choose to take up the option.

This means learning from Australians' relationship with sport, but it does not suggest a need to use sporting heroes to promote the arts.

'Elitism' is felt even by valuers — who enjoy particular forms of artistic activity but do not necessarily enjoy the social trappings that can be associated with them.

1c(ii) Key findings - the public

Lack of clear 'entry points'

14. However, despite this latent interest, many people cannot see the entry points to an appropriate experience of the arts for themselves or their families. Neither can many see the transition from where they are to where they could imagine to be. This is particularly relevant in the context of the desire of many in the arts sector to maintain the 'excellence' and 'elite performance' of the arts. The strategic challenge involves helping all Australians personally to feel an affinity with that elite achievement and to realise how they might be able to aspire to it. This in no way implies that the standard of achievement should be reduced. But it does suggest that there is a need to build bridges of understanding and awareness.
15. In this regard and in other ways, there are lessons to be learnt by the arts sector from the ways that Australians engage with sport. Sporting spectators enjoy the vicarious satisfaction of the sporting successes of others partly because they can readily appreciate the challenge of the task. Many understand what it takes to achieve sporting success from their own personal experience. They also feel a personal affinity with the individual's struggle to achieve because they feel that they have come to 'know' the sports person through effective media coverage. The challenge for the arts sector is to bring this affinity with artistic achievement closer to the experience and understanding of the majority of people. This means learning from Australians' relationship with sport, but it does not suggest a need to use sporting heroes to promote the arts.

Practical obstacles

16. Practical factors of cost and distance are often mentioned as inhibiting appreciation of the arts. These contribute to the low value that is placed on the arts, particularly among people who live away from the centre of capital cities or those on lower incomes or with significant family responsibilities. While these factors create real impediments to engagement with the arts in specific ways, they also highlight the 'them and us' feeling for many. The perceived high prices and central locations of many highly recognised arts activities tend to send messages to less wealthy or more geographically distant Australians that the arts (at least as performances and shows to be consumed) are not for them.

Social obstacles

17. The elitism and inaccessibility of the arts are mentioned spontaneously at a relatively low level as significant reasons for lack of engagement. However, when asked, about half the population associate the arts with elitist and pretentious people and practices. The 'Chardonnay set' is recognised by its behaviour particularly in relation to the 'higher arts' which include the traditional performing arts and the visual arts. 'Elitism' is felt even by those who place a high value of the arts.
18. The challenge for the sector is to deal with the perception of an elitist image and behaviour within the context of appropriate marketing of events and activities. An exclusive image can be an advantage in some marketing contexts.

However, where such a perception creates unintended obstacles either to the engagement of Australians or to their inclination to see the arts receive more support, this perception needs to be addressed. If such a perception is nothing more than a misunderstanding, then the truth should be effectively communicated. If the perception is founded in actual practices which create a sense of social and emotional exclusion, then these practices need to be changed and the changes effectively communicated.

This vacuum of information about funding leaves the way open to arguments which can find fertile ground by encouraging people to either oppose or support further funding.

Arts funding

19. While the research did not examine in detail the issue of funding for the arts, there is a substantial lack of understanding among the general population about how the arts are funded and what are the roles of different sources of funding. This means many people who might otherwise be interested in availing themselves of government funding are unaware of potential sources. It also means there is little spontaneous concern or support expressed in relation to government arts funding. This vacuum of information about funding leaves the way open to arguments which can find fertile ground by encouraging people to either oppose or support further funding.

Strong potential to be creative

20. Overall, many Australians do not feel encouraged to value artistic and creative endeavour - either their own or that of others. Many adults believe that they did not grow up in an environment which respected and praised artistic achievement. Many children feel that peer pressures at school tend to cast artistic and creative achievements as 'uncool' or 'daggy' compared with sporting achievement (which can turn students into instant heroes).
21. However, the majority of Australians show a substantial latent desire to be more creative and expressive and to appreciate the talents of others. Most expressed an interest in a greater personal association with artistic and creative activities given appropriate and relevant opportunities. The vast majority also agreed that 'the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian kid'.
22. The study also revealed a very strong level of interest among the overall population in 'learning about new things', 'being intellectually stimulated' and 'having some creative skill'. The level of value placed on these by the majority of Australians significantly exceeded the value placed on 'having some sporting skill'.
23. However, this does not mean Australians naturally associate the concept of 'creativity' with 'the arts'. Creativity encompasses a much broader range of pursuits that are set to be the foundation for the future personal satisfaction, entertainment and prosperity of Australians. It is up to the arts sector to ensure it helps Australians understand the contribution the arts make. It is also critical to show how the arts can deliver these benefits to every individual and answer their question: 'What's in it for me?'

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It is also critical to show how the arts can deliver these benefits to every individual and answer their question: 'What's in it for me?'

While our survey revealed that sport is regarded more highly than the arts, this is for a range of reasons, which do not include a lack of interest in intellectual challenges.

It also emerged that people with some non-English speaking origin are at a relative advantage compared with their fellow Australians who do not enjoy such influences.

Out-of-date stereotypes

24. It appears some segments of the Australian community, which includes some parts of the arts sector, are operating with an out-of-date image of Australians. This is expressed in some quarters of the arts as a fear that efforts to make the arts more open and accessible to all Australians would lead to a 'dumbing down' of the arts. The implication of this - that Australians cannot deal with complexity - bears little relationship to reality. While there are no simplistic descriptions of what is 'distinctively Australian', there is considerable danger in underestimating the capacity of Australians, creatively and intellectually. There is also reason to believe that the 'national inferiority complex' that may have dogged Australians in the past is becoming increasingly redundant.
25. These and other findings in the study suggest there are strong reasons to re-evaluate the standard stereotypical perceptions of Australians as sports-obsessed and averse to intellectual challenges. While our survey revealed that sport is regarded more highly than the arts, this is for a range of reasons, which do not include a lack of interest in intellectual challenges. It is also inappropriate for some in the arts to consider that a love of sport and a love of the arts are mutually exclusive.
26. This is particularly relevant to promoting the value of the arts because the population makes astute judgements about their preferences. Some elements of the sector imply that the public is in some way at fault for failing to appreciate the merit of some aspects of the arts, either due to their lack of sophistication or understanding. There are many reasons why some Australians express a lack of interest in the arts, including the failure of the arts to either deliver creative output that they enjoy or to provide appropriate ways of helping them appreciate the significance of the arts to their lives. It is the responsibility of the arts sector to identify barriers to acceptance and to overcome them where they exist. Any claim that the Australian population generally lacks the intellectual capacity to appreciate the arts fully is false.

Changing national origins

27. There is also evidence that suggests it is appropriate to reconsider the relationship between the arts and Australia as a multicultural society. Among the broad population there is a high level of acceptance of Australia as a 'multicultural society' and the study revealed a high level of interest in 'more multicultural events and activities' in the arts. This is due not only to a greater level of recognition of the benefits Australia has reaped from culturally diverse influences, but also to the increasing share of the population that is comprised of people who are of non-English speaking origin or who enjoy backgrounds of mixed national origins.
28. It also emerged that people with some non-English speaking origin are at a relative advantage compared with their fellow Australians who do not enjoy such influences. Survey participants of non-English speaking origin were more likely to place a high value on the arts than those who did not have such a background. A non-English speaking origin was also related to a number of other characteristics associated with placing a high value on the arts,

including higher educational qualifications and a tendency to live closer to the centre of capital cities.

29. This suggests there is scope to re-evaluate the context of the multicultural arts in Australia, since there appears to be significant untapped interest among the population and commercial potential for appropriately developed and executed arts that draw from our diverse cultural origins. The arts sector might well take a leaf out of the modern Australian cookbook. That is, the level of sophistication and pride in modern Australian cuisine is often due to its distinctively Australian mix of national influences not found anywhere else in the world. A similar outcome might form part of the vision for the future of the Australian arts.
30. This also provides evidence to suggest there would be benefit in paying special attention to the attitudes and needs of those people whose recent national origins are within Australia. People who are Australian-born of Australian parents appear less likely than others to consider the arts to have a high value. There is also a tendency for these people to be found in rural and regional Australia or away from the centre of cities and to have lower education levels.
31. A growing frustration also exists at the lack of clear expressions of an Australian identity and the imposition of foreign identities. The 'Americanisation' of Australian TV, films and music bothers young and old alike and yet people can readily see few ways of overcoming this. Consequently there appears to be significant potential for the Australian arts to claim a stronger role and recognition in this regard.

Demographic factors

32. Demographics do not simply define the attitudes Australians have towards the arts, but several observations can be made. Men and boys are much less likely to value the arts than are women and girls. Young people ask 'What's in it for me?' and value the creative opportunities that are available to them directly. People living in outer suburbs of capital cities have more in common with rural and regional Australians than with their inner-city counterparts in the value they place on the arts and their capacity to enjoy the arts as either participators or spectators. Older people feel the breakdown in their social structures, and yet their diminished incomes prevent many from engaging with the arts as much as they might like. Indigenous Australians can apparently offer white Australians many lessons in how the arts can be a family and community-based activity which sees people supported in their efforts regardless of their level of skill. Income does play a role in attitudes towards the arts, with those on incomes below the population average most likely to feel disinclined towards the arts.
33. On the basis of demographics, the most disaffected type of Australian in relation to the arts is likely to be the Australian-born father and son, living in outer suburbs of capital cities or in rural and regional Australia, with a low level of education, a relatively low income, who received little encouragement from his Australian-born parents in relation to the arts when he was growing up, and who now feels that the arts are somewhat elitist activities that are simply irrelevant to his life or to his family.

The arts sector might well take a leaf out of the modern Australian cookbook...

Older people feel the breakdown in their social structures, and yet their diminished incomes prevent many from engaging with the arts as much as they might like.

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*The DISINCLINED (25%):
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Attitudinal segments

34. It is possible to describe a number of clearly identifiable segments and sub-segments that help explain the differences in attitudes within the Australian population. Five main segments emerged which represent the following proportions of the population 15 years and older:

ARTS LOVERS (17%): Who are very positive about the arts and are in favour of change.

SATISFIED (21%): Who are generally quite positive about the arts and who do not see particular reasons for the arts to change.

INTERESTED (25%): Who are open to a positive experience of the arts but can see ways in which the arts could change to improve their attitudes towards them.

DISINCLINED (25%): Who are not particularly interested in the arts at present but can still see changes that would make them feel more positive about the arts.

DISENGAGED (11%): Who have little or no interest in the arts, give them a low value and are not interested in seeing them change in the future.

35. These major segments include a total of 12 sub-segments which are simply described as follows:

Devotees (5%): The arts are an important part of their lives and they advocate the benefits for others.

Highly involved (12%): The arts are an important part of their lifestyle and they are happy to enjoy their benefits.

Enjoy life (13%): Enjoy a wide range of experiences, which include the arts.

Established (9%): Enjoy the arts the way they are now and can see little need for change.

Active interest (6%): Enjoy the arts generally, but agree they would like to see changes, often in relation to their own personal involvement.

Lifestyle interest (12%): Enjoy the arts as part of their lifestyle but principally as an entertainment option.

Personal interest (7%): Appreciate the arts but don't have to get out of the house to enjoy them, and see the benefits of the arts through their personal and family involvement.

Practically disinclined (6%): Don't particularly value the arts but would be motivated by a number of practical changes relating to cost, location, time and access generally.

Socially disinclined (10%): Don't particularly value the arts and tend to feel the arts are somewhat pretentious and class-based. They don't enjoy mixing with people who go to arts events.

Generally disinclined (9%): Don't particularly value the arts for a range of reasons but are generally open to changes to make them more relevant to their lives.

Other priorities (7%): Give the arts a low value but are occupied with many other things on which they place a higher value, such as financial achievement, and sporting and technological skill. Generally they see the arts as irrelevant.

Strongly disengaged (4%): Give the arts a low value, and see them as irrelevant and class-based, but don't care if the arts change.

Socially disinclined (10%): Don't particularly value the arts and tend to feel that the arts are somewhat pretentious and class-based. They don't enjoy mixing with people who go to arts events.

Strongly disengaged (4%): Give the arts a low value, and see them as irrelevant and class-based, but don't care if the arts change.

KEY FINDINGS - THE SECTOR

The 'subsidised' vs 'commercial' arts sectors

1. People who identify themselves as part of the 'arts community' tend to distinguish between the 'commercial sector' and the 'subsidised sector'. Those organisations or artists who attract sufficient revenue from consumers and sponsors form the 'commercial sector'. Those who receive additional funding from government are the 'subsidised sector'. Within this conceptual framework, the majority of those in the 'arts community' tend to think of 'the arts' as the subsidised activities rather than the commercial parts of the sector. It is important to point out that the general public is largely unaware of this distinction.
2. This tends to mean that those in the 'subsidised' sector often act on a partly voluntary basis, motivated by their love of the activity and its associated personal and social benefits. The consequence is that, while many people are highly committed and passionately devoted to their tasks, they often lack the skills, experience and training that are needed for effective marketing and communication.
3. There are strong skills and experience within the subsidised sector, even though these are not uniformly distributed. Some individuals and organisations are at the forefront of marketing and communication with relevant markets. Many others are learning their skills by trial and error without knowing what works and what doesn't. Overall, the sector would be well served by identifying 'best practice' activities in marketing and communication and promoting these widely throughout the sector.

Restricted reach of marketing, communication and research

4. A substantial proportion of the 'subsidised' arts sector has a relatively restricted focus in its marketing and communication activities. In many cases this situation has arisen because of the need to direct scarce resources at those people who might bring the most value to the immediate financial viability of the sector. While there are several examples of activities targeted at defined population segments, such as those in regional and rural Australia and school children, the majority of marketing and communication is directed at a relatively limited proportion of the overall Australian population.
5. As a result, substantial effort has been directed at those people most likely to be heavy consumers of the arts in the near future. The focus has been on people who are likely to subscribe to arts organisations and activities. These people have tended to be older, wealthier, better educated and living closer to the centre of cities. They also represent a market which in many cases is ageing and declining in their capacity to consume the arts as they once did.
6. Attention has also been directed at potential patrons or supporters of the arts in the corporate sector and in government since they have been recognised as potential sources of the additional funding that is considered necessary for the arts to survive financially.

People who identify themselves as part of the 'arts community' tend to distinguish between the 'commercial sector' and the 'subsidised sector'.

...those in the 'subsidised' sector often act on a partly voluntary basis, motivated by their love of the activity and its associated personal and social benefits.

7. This has meant that research within the sector has often been conducted relatively narrowly, most commonly among those who could be considered 'the converted' in terms of their support for the arts (for example, research within a subscriber base). This research has also sometimes been directed more at demonstrating support for the arts than at understanding the underlying motivating factors that prevent people from engaging more fully with the arts and determining how their attitudes might be changed.
8. These issues are relevant to developing a strategy to promote the value of the arts to all Australians. There is limited evidence that the sector has been able to obtain a clear understanding of the attitudes and preferences of the general public outside of those who are already engaged with the arts in some way. This has led in some cases to substantial misconceptions about the general public and sometimes to a belief in stereotypes of Australians which are superficial and incorrect.
9. This has also limited the capacity of the arts sector to respond to changing interests and needs in the marketplace. This does not mean that there is a need for the arts sector to have a purely market-based approach to its creative development. However, there is scope for the creative process to be better informed by a realistic understanding of contemporary Australians and how the arts might have a place in their lives.

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Capacity to promote the value of the arts

10. From the perspective of internal communication, there is considerable contact among those within the subsidised sector. However, this communication often appears to take place within informal networks which are loosely defined and often lacking either in formal processes or an external focus. This tends to make it difficult for those without some prior involvement in the subsidised arts to clearly understand the options available to them for personal involvement. It also presents challenges for newcomers to effectively participate in these communication networks.
11. These issues are relevant to a strategy to promote the value of the arts for five main reasons.
12. Firstly, the limited professional marketing and communication skills restrict the capacity of the sector to compete effectively and to more broadly promote the value of the arts. This lack of skill is exacerbated by the low regard that is often given to the marketing and publicity function within arts organisations relative to the central creative or performance roles. It often means that organisations in the subsidised arts are ill-equipped to compete for exactly the same public attention as the often better-resourced and more professionally experienced commercial sector.
13. Secondly, the lack of clearly defined, tangible communication networks within the subsidised sector creates significant issues for undertaking any communication strategy. Given the limited central resources for a strategy to promote the value of the arts, it is imperative to enlist the support of all current and prospective participants in the subsidised sector. This cannot happen without

This has led in some cases to substantial misconceptions about the general public and sometimes to a belief in stereotypes of Australians which are superficial and incorrect.

Given the limited central resources for a strategy to promote the value of the arts, it is imperative to enlist the support of all current and prospective participants in the subsidised sector.

However, there is little recognition of exactly who could or should play a part in such a strategy.

...there is no identifiable independent body which can either organise or advocate on behalf of the sector...

being able to clearly identify who these people are and to communicate with them efficiently. This needs to span differences in location, artform, emphasis, size of organisation and other issues that distinguish one type of arts practice from another.

14. Thirdly, there is only a restricted level of sharing of skills and knowledge throughout the sector. While some information is understandably commercial-in-confidence, the sector could identify the information and skills which can be shared and help to boost the sector's overall awareness and image among the general population. In the absence of such sharing, the image of the entire sector suffers despite there being clear examples of best practice in many areas of marketing and communication.
15. Fourthly, regardless of the merit or otherwise of drawing a distinction between the subsidised and commercial sectors, there is a need to clarify the relationships between the two. For example, while it is generally acknowledged that participation in the subsidised arts might lead to employment in the commercial sector, the flow of people and information between them is not widely understood or accepted. It is important for participants in the arts and for the general public to understand the relationships between both sectors and for transitions between them to be transparent.
16. Fifthly, the lack of an external focus makes it difficult for members of the general public to see clearly accessible entry points for taking a higher level of involvement in the arts, either personally or for their families.

Lack of central coordination

17. When considering the future of the arts, the majority of people in the arts sector strongly agree that more should be done to promote the value of the arts to all Australians, whether the general public, business or the government. However, there is little recognition of exactly who could or should play a part in such a strategy.
18. There is a general tendency to look for central action on a strategy and the Australia Council is considered by many to be an appropriate body to be doing this work on behalf of the sector. However, questions of resources arise in the face of the extreme resistance from many in the subsidised sector against the Australia Council diverting funding away from its grant function to a broader promotional role. There are also questions about the appropriateness of the Australia Council fulfilling this role as a Federal statutory authority.
19. This serves to highlight a major deficiency in the sector's capacity to act as a sector. That is, that there is no identifiable independent body which can either organise or advocate on behalf of the sector, both to help lift the overall standard of marketing and communication within the sector and to present its case as persuasively as possible to the general public, business and government.

20. Some people in the sector feel that such a body would be unworkable because different arts organisations compete for the same markets. However, many other sectors identify common goals and work towards them collectively regardless of competitive differences. Relevant models can be found in most sectors of industry and the professions.
21. It is also apparent that any strategy to promote the value of the arts will only be effective if every individual artist and arts organisation assumes responsibility themselves for encouraging Australians to view the arts more positively and to break down barriers to engagement.

Demystification and the dilution of ‘excellence’

22. A commonly held fear within the arts sector is that promoting the arts broadly to the Australian population may lead to a reduction in the standards of ‘excellence’ that the arts sector applies to itself (in fact the first function of the Australia Council is ‘to promote excellence in the arts’). This not only relates to the misplaced notion of ‘dumbing down’ the arts, but to the view that responding to the preferences of the general population might diminish the level of independent, innovative output from the arts sector.
23. This sometimes leads to a sense of ‘blaming the customer’. That is, the suggestion is that the general public is responsible for their lack of appreciation of the arts. This applies particularly in relation to the more esoteric arts, or those which are steeped in tradition, with the implication that many Australians ‘will never be able to appreciate the arts fully’. This is contrary to the findings of this study in terms of the level of interest that people have in intellectual pursuits in general and the arts in particular. It also needs to be remembered that the ‘buck stops’ with the arts sector in relation to any issues of lack of understanding or engagement with the arts. That is, if the arts sector is concerned about the attitudes of the general public, it is (only) the arts sector which can take responsibility for changing those attitudes.
24. It is also worth recognising that many other industry sectors have successfully engaged in a process of deliberate demystification of their products and services. Two clear examples are the wine industry and scientific research. Over the past 30 years, wine appreciation has grown from the province of a few experienced wine connoisseurs to something enjoyed by the vast majority of Australians. This is partly due to the development of the wine cask which made wine accessible to all, but it has taken place without any reduction in the level of respect for fine wines. Similarly, simple explanations of complex scientific research are now provided as a source of education and entertainment through mass media.
25. This is relevant to a strategy to promote the value of the arts to all Australians because there appears to be substantial scope to further demystify the arts for the general population and to make access to the arts more readily available to all. This needs to be the responsibility of the sector and it does not need to lead to any reduction in sophistication, excellence or innovation in the arts.

...if the arts sector is concerned about the attitudes of the general public, it is (only) the arts sector which can take responsibility for changing those attitudes.

...many other industry sectors have successfully engaged in a process of deliberate demystification of their products and services.

...it will be impossible to undertake a communication campaign to broaden the definition of the arts unless there is some agreement within the arts sector as to exactly what should or should not be included in the definition.

Definition

26. In relation to the definition of the arts, there is a wide number of different conceptual definitions used by people within the arts sector. Some of these relate to government funding policies, some to the question of 'excellence', others to the level of innovation, still others to the context within which the arts are presented, and so on.
27. There is also a widely held belief among many in the sector that it is possible to raise the level of value that Australians place on the arts by broadening the definition of the arts to include the artistic and creative things that feature in everyday life. In this context, the majority of Australians are already prepared to see a much broader range of items accepted in the definition. However, there is considerable debate within the arts sector itself about the merit of a substantially broader definition.
28. The significance of this for promoting the value of the arts is that it will be impossible to undertake a communication campaign to broaden the definition of the arts unless there is some agreement within the arts sector as to exactly what should or should not be included in the definition.
29. The solution to this dilemma appears to lie in re-evaluating the terminology used within the arts. At present the term 'the arts' takes on whatever meaning each individual who uses it chooses to apply. There is scope for more clearly defined descriptions of the various components of those things that might constitute 'the Australian arts' today and in the future. This is particularly relevant in a changing world where the increasingly rapid differentiation in the forms of practice and appreciation within the arts will impose even more demands on the language used to describe the arts.

THE KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1c(iv)

On the basis of these findings, 12 objectives form the foundation for a strategy to promote the value of the arts to all Australians.

Overall vision

1. Shape a vision for the future of Australia which sees the arts playing a role that Australians see is relevant and meaningful to their lives — personally and nationally — and distinctively Australian.

Objectives - the sector

2. Gain agreement within the sector that collective effort is required to work towards the common goals of promoting the value of the arts. Recognise that the responsibility does not lie with someone else, but with every individual in the sector.
3. Make tangible the informal networks that constitute the arts in Australia — to identify who can be involved in a strategy to promote the value of the arts. This needs to include existing and potential practitioners, audiences and supporters.
4. Raise best practice throughout the sector in promoting the value of the arts and promulgate this widely to every individual and organisation. Understand what has worked and why; what has not worked and why not. Where best practice does not exist, develop it.
5. Make promoting the value of the arts to all Australians an integral part of every activity of the Australia Council. This might include broadly targeted promotional activities via the Council's own public relations strategy as well as specific activities in partnership with the arts sector (including grant recipients).
6. Make the arts more welcoming. Address the factors that cause some Australians to feel they are not welcome to be involved in the arts. In particular, recognise that attention needs to be paid to both practical factors (e.g. cost, distance and understanding) and social, emotional, and intellectual factors (e.g. unwritten rules and customs).

Objectives - the public

7. Find ways of helping the public to expand their spontaneous definition of the arts to be broader than it is currently by promoting a broad range of creative activities. This means avoiding a cynical response by demonstrating that 'the arts sector' accepts any broader definition as well.
8. Promote personal engagement with the arts by encouraging Australians to explore the creative arts in two ways: to be imaginative, creative and expressive themselves; and to enjoy the imagination, creativity and expression of others. Promote a distinctively Australian approach to the arts.
9. Help Australians to find suitable entry points to the arts and to be able to see the transition to elite achievement, so that every person can see and feel the opportunities for themselves (and for their children), even if they never take them up.
10. Acknowledge and deal with the strong imagery and branding that is currently associated with the term 'the arts'. Recognise that the term 'the arts' is in very widespread usage and its brand image has strong implications for public perceptions.
11. Engage with the general public about the relevance of the arts to their lives, with a view to ensuring that the arts sector understands the general public better.
12. Utilise visible collaborative activity with business, government and other agencies, with a view to engaging the general public in the arts as part of their day-to-day lives.

Overview of population and attitudinal segments

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Twelve hundred Australians took part in each telephone survey and together these people provide the sample of the population from which we draw the quantitative conclusions. Within the limits of survey techniques, this sample represents a cross-section of Australia. Consequently, where findings refer to ‘the population’, these refer to the survey sample which approximates the overall Australian population over the age of 15 years. The basic demographics give us a snapshot of Australians today. The relationship between these demographics and the attitudes people have towards the arts is relatively complex and are discussed in the main report.

Age: A quarter of Australians in the sample were 55 years or older (26%), only 18% were between the ages of 15 and 24 and 56% were 25 to 54 years old.

Education: The sample was split almost evenly between those with a post-secondary education (48%) and those whose education only reached high-school level (52%). Similarly there were the same number of people with university and postgraduate degrees (23%) as there were with only primary or part secondary qualifications (23%).

Employment: The largest single group in the sample was those in full-time paid employment or the self-employed, but together these did not constitute half the population (44%). After that came retirees who made up 18%, the part-time paid workforce on 14% and students, at 10%.

Income: Even though there is a tendency in telephone surveys to have fewer higher-income people as a proportion of the sample, the income results are reasonably close to the official figures for the population. The \$40,000 mark represents the mid-point in our sample with 39% of people having household incomes above this level and the same number falling beneath it. Only around one in seven survey households (15%) earned more than \$70,000.

Gender: The 49% male and 51% female split matched the actual proportions in the population (because the data was weighted to reflect the current gender proportions).

Lifestage: Approximately two-thirds of the Australians in the sample did not have children up to the age of 20 years (63%) and the remaining third (37%) had the responsibilities of parenthood. Of these, 16% were looking after teenagers and 27% had young children under the age of 13 years. This also meant that 6% had children spanning both age groups. Our other lifestages — the people without children — comprised those who have never had them and those whose children were older than 20 years. Not surprisingly, almost all of the people in later life didn’t have responsibilities towards children under 20 years.

Location: The tendency of Australians to cluster in capital cities was evident from the finding that 62% of the sample lived in a capital and 38% lived elsewhere.

The relationship between these demographics and the attitudes people have towards the arts is relatively complex...

Not only that, but a total of 45% reported that they lived within 30 minutes of the centre of the capital city nearest to them. One out of every five Australians in the sample (22%) lived within 15 minutes of the centre of their capital city. At the other end of the spectrum, 12% or just over one in ten people lived more than 60 minutes from their nearest town.

National origin: The nature of families in Australia meant that the majority of Australians (91%) in the sample were either of English speaking origin themselves or have at least one parent who is from an English speaking country. However only 79% were of Australian origin, with themselves or at least one parent having been born here. On the other hand, just over four out of ten (42%) lay claim to some non-Australian origin while almost one in five (19%) were born in a country where English is not the main language or had at least one parent who had been. The proportion of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in the sample (3%) was in line with the census figures for Australia as a whole.

One out of every five Australians in the sample (22%) lived within 15 minutes of the centre of their capital city.

MEASURES OF THE VALUE OF THE ARTS

1d(ii)

Measuring the 'value of the arts' to Australians represented a significant challenge for the study because 'value' is a term that means different things to different people. In addition, even the way that the question is asked can have a significant influence on the ways that people are likely to respond.

The report sets out some of the basic ways that we measured the attitudes towards the arts in Australia. Each of these are discussed in more detail in the main report, but in summary, the following key points provide an introduction to the findings:

Personal value: The responses to our initial question about the value of the arts to people revealed that the population was split almost down the middle with 49% of Australians personally placing a high or fairly high value on the arts, while the remaining 51% placed a low or fairly low value on the arts. About one in five (18%) nominated a high value and around a quarter (28%) nominated a low value.

...responses to our initial question about the value of the arts to people revealed that the population was split almost down the middle...

Overall value: The responses to a subsequent, broader question on the value of the arts (which formed the basis of our detailed quantitative analysis) showed that people were more likely to highly value the arts if they were prompted to consider both value to themselves personally and the benefits of the arts to Australia as a whole. This also applied to a range of other life activities that were included in the question. The proportion of people placing a high value on the arts increased to 31% and those giving them a fairly high value rose to 35%, giving a total of 66% overall placing a high or fairly high value on the arts. Nevertheless, 34% of the population gave the arts a low or fairly low value in response to this question.

...people are more likely to highly value the arts if they are prompted to consider both value to themselves personally and the benefits of the arts to Australia as a whole.

Liking the arts: Generally, Australians appear more prepared to say they like the arts than to place a high or fairly high value on them. One-third of the sample (33%) said they really liked the arts and a further 41% indicated that they liked the arts. The remainder, around one-quarter of the population (26%) felt that they neither liked nor disliked the arts or that they didn't like them.

1d(ii) Measures of the value of the arts

...most Australians are prepared to accept a broader definition of the arts in the future...

Spontaneous definition: When asked for their top-of-mind definition of the arts, only 22% of people mentioned more than five items. In fact, almost two-thirds of the population (63%) mentioned no more than three items when thinking about the things that constitute the arts.

Current and future definition: Most Australians are prepared to accept a broader definition of the arts in the future than they think applies today. Only 24% of participants picked the same number or fewer items as part of their future definition than their current definition. The remainder agreed that they would prefer to see more items included in the definition in the future, with a quarter (26%) identifying an additional six or more.

'Little a' arts included: Almost all the population accepted at least some of the 'little a' arts (which are those other than the more classically-derived arts) in their definition. The largest single group of the population (36%) were prepared to accept eight or more of these 'little a' items in their current definition and a total of 70% were prepared to accept more than five.

Personal enjoyment of the arts: Most Australians enjoy the arts in a wide range of different forms. Almost three out of ten Australians (29%) gain a lot of enjoyment out of the arts in more than five different ways while a further third (32%) enjoy them in three to four different ways. There are few Australians who cannot identify some manner in which they enjoy the arts even though about a quarter (24%) can only cite one or two different ways in which the arts provide them with a lot of enjoyment.

Participation in the past two weeks: The arts appear to form a part of the routine of the lives of most Australians. Only 6% of the population could identify no way in which they had participated in the arts in the past two weeks (drawing from their own definition of how they would like to see the arts in the future). About a quarter (23%) were in the top bracket by participating in five or more activities, while another 41% could nominate three or four areas in which they had participated.

Only 6% of the population could identify no way in which they had participated in the arts in the past two weeks (drawing from their own definition of how they would like to see the arts in the future).

THE CORE ATTITUDINAL SEGMENTS

1d(iii)

The topic ‘the arts’ stimulates extremes of attitudes that are found in few areas of human interest. The extremes range from a strong dislike through apathy and disinclination to a level of devotion verging on religious commitment.

A relatively large number of factors influence how Australians view the arts. Consequently, while there are general principles governing attitudes towards the arts, there are no simple solutions to the question of promoting the value of the arts to the entire population. The actual solutions will vary according to the specific positive outcomes that are required and the interests of specific groups.

As a result, there is limited merit in making generalisations about how well or otherwise the arts are valued based on the assessment of the broad parameters in the preceding section. When considering the attitudes that people have towards the arts, the population cannot be categorised along simple lines of age, gender, national origin or the like. It cannot be broken up into simple categories such as those who value the arts and those who don’t.

Rather, we need to look at the combination of attitudes and demographics that are likely to influence the overall position people take towards the arts. These reveal that the population can be seen according to a number of different segments and this section outlines that analysis.

This forms an important part of the strategies that will be required to realise the potential for promoting the value of the arts in the future. They show how, while there are some overall strategies which will be broadly effective, the arts will need to focus on the perspectives of individual segments and sub-segments to be truly effective.

...there are no simple solutions to the question of promoting the value of the arts to the entire population.

...while there are some overall strategies which will be broadly effective, the arts will need to focus on the perspectives of individual segments and sub-segments to be truly effective.

OVERVIEW OF SEGMENTATION

The broad proportions of the segments outlined below show five broad segments of individuals. These are arranged in descending order to reflect the general degree to which these people already feel positively towards the arts. It also shows the likelihood of influencing them to feel more positive in the future. These main segments are:

	PROPORTION OF POPULATION %
Arts lovers	16
Satisfied	22
Interested	24
Disinclined	25
Disengaged	12

Note: Figures do not sum to 100 due to rounding

1d(iii) The core attitudinal segments

Within these segments are a total of 12 individual sub-segments. These represent the different attitudinal types which can be found in the population. While every person is different in their own personal combination of specific attitudes towards the arts, in many ways these segments reflect the types of mind-sets that emerged from the discussions we held with the general public during the qualitative phase of the research.

The proportions of these individual segments are:

		PROPORTION OF POPULATION %
Arts Lovers	Devotees	4
	Highly involved	12
Satisfied	Enjoy life	13
	Established	9
Interested	Active interest	6
	Lifestyle interest	12
	Personal interest	7
Disinclined	Practically disinclined	5
	Socially disinclined	11
	Generally disinclined	10
Disengaged	Other priorities	8
	Strongly disengaged	4

Note: Figures do not sum to 100 due to rounding

It is possible to think of the 12 sub-segments as a collection of 12 different groups of people, all of whom reflect attitudes within the broader population. They were derived using a common statistical technique (cluster analysis) which helps distinguish between segments purely on the basis of their level of agreement or disagreement with different attitude statements. More than 70 attitude statements formed the basis of the analysis.

The clusters are derived by identifying those people who tended to agree more with each other than with others in the total sample. It represents the mathematical equivalent of putting the full sample in a hall and then watching to see which groups of like-minded people form as they talk amongst themselves. Put another way, the analysis brings together groups of survey participants that are as similar to each other as possible while being as different as possible from those in other groups.

It is important to point out that these clusters represent attitudinal similarities rather than common demographics. Consequently, while we can identify certain demographic biases that exist within each segment, they should be viewed as representing attitudinal types that cross over demographics such as age, gender and other socio-economic factors.

The question of statistical significance arises in relation to the segments and sub-segments. The segments range in size from 12% of the population (or about 145 people) to 25% of the sample (or about 300 people). These can provide a relatively statistically sound basis for comparisons. The sub-segments are the

It represents the mathematical equivalent of putting the full sample in a hall and then watching to see which groups of like-minded people form as they talk amongst themselves.

component parts of these and range from 4% (or about 50 people) to 12% (about 145 people). The smaller sample sizes are simply not as statistically robust as the larger groupings. Even still, a sub-segment occurring at 4% represents about 50 survey participants. This can still provide valuable evidence of trends and, as we explain throughout the report, the results build a clear picture of the differences between them. The analysis highlights the key characteristics that set each group apart from the rest of the population.

The differences between the segments and sub-segments are summarised in the following table.

The analysis highlights the key characteristics that set each group apart from the rest of the population.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF SEGMENTS

SEGMENT/SUB-SEGMENT	%	SUMMARY DESCRIPTION
ARTS LOVERS	16%	Overall, ARTS LOVERS hold a very strong positive view of the arts and are likely to be involved in some way. They can also see room for improvement in a range of ways. Its two sub-segments differ in their desire to promote the arts to others.
Devotees	4%	Devotees are not only very keen on the arts, but they are strongly of the opinion that the arts are good for others as well.
Highly involved	12%	The Highly involved are very positive about the arts, but they tend to enjoy the arts more for their own personal benefit rather than feeling a need to promote the value of the arts to others.
SATISFIED	22%	The SATISFIED segment consists of two sub-segments who value the arts quite highly. However, they are relatively satisfied with the way they are today and they do not see there is as much need for change as most of the other segments.
Enjoy life	13%	The Enjoy life sub-segment widely enjoys most things in life, including the arts. For example, they are among the most likely to place a high value on the arts as well as sport and they are able to enjoy lots of the benefits available from many life activities and pursuits. Life appears fine for this sub-segment so they don't expect changes in the arts.
Established	9%	The Established sub-segment tends to include people who feel quite positive about the arts but are quite set in their ways about them. They don't see that the arts should change to be much different from the way that they are now.
INTERESTED	24%	The INTERESTED represent a block of the population who, while not enthusiastic about the arts, generally view them in a positive manner. Each of the three sub-segments has a fairly different basis for their interest and they all share an interest in seeing the arts change for the better.
Active interest	6%	In many ways the Active interest people appear to be similar to the ARTS LOVERS without the same strength of view about how good the arts are. They are likely to be actively interested and involved in a range of ways.
Lifestyle interest	12%	The Lifestyle interest sub-segment has an above-average liking of the arts, but tends to see their main value as being the benefits they bring to their lifestyle as a source of entertainment rather than necessarily being concerned about the 'higher order' benefits that some others expect from the arts.
Personal interest	7%	The views of the Personal interest people are shaped largely by their own personal involvement in the arts or by that of family and friends (rather than perhaps getting out to mix with others in the arts). They include a lot of people who are likely to directly participate in something artistic or who see the arts as valuable for their families.

SEGMENT/SUB-SEGMENT	%	SUMMARY DESCRIPTION
DISINCLINED	25%	The DISINCLINED are simply that - people for whom the arts do not hold a strong level of interest. They are usually able to identify some aspect of the arts with which they have problems and the emphasis of this differs for each of the three sub-segments in the segment. They can also readily identify ways in which, for them, the arts could be improved.
Practically disinclined	5%	Practical factors (such as cost and distance) are important to most people in some way, but the Practically disinclined are more likely than most to identify these as factors coming between them and a greater appreciation of the arts. Not surprisingly they include people with children and those on lower incomes.
Socially disinclined	11%	The Socially disinclined sub-segment comprises people who are joined together in their dislike of the social factors that make it difficult or uncomfortable for some people to engage in the arts. More than other sub-segments they think that there is a high level of elitism in the arts and feel the class issues involved.
Generally disinclined	10%	While the Generally disinclined sub-segment is likely to put a low value on the arts, they don't have any particularly strong reasons for doing so. They also tend to put a lower value than the population average on other life activities as well. The arts appear to be of no particular interest but generate no special concerns either.
DISENGAGED	12%	The DISENGAGED segment involves two sub-segments who are neither interested in the arts nor have any real interest in the arts changing. They are disengaged from a perception that the arts provide benefits to them or to others.
Other priorities	8%	The people in the Other priorities sub-segment have little interest in the arts, but they do have significant interest in many other life activities. They aren't particularly opposed to the arts, but the arts just don't feature in their sphere of life interests.
Strongly disengaged	4%	This Strongly disengaged sub-segment represents a group of people who appear to feel strongly that the arts are simply not for them and they can't see any particular reasons why the arts should or could change to become better. Even still they are not especially opposed to the arts, but are very likely to agree that 'The arts are OK, they are just irrelevant to me'.

The left to right axis illustrates the degree to which the segments are likely to consider that the arts are important in their own lives.

THE SEGMENTATION ‘MAP’

The following ‘segmentation map’ shows a graphical representation of the segments.

The two axes show the two attitudinal differences that explain most clearly how the people in each segment differ in relation to the arts. This is a mathematical interpretation of the relationship between the segments which approximates, in two dimensions, what the key differences are between them.

The left to right axis illustrates the degree to which the segments are likely to consider that the arts are important in their own lives. Those to the right are more likely to consider that the arts are important. Those to the left are more likely to consider that they are not important. This is illustrated by the relative placement of two statements that were asked during the survey. At far right people were more likely to agree that ‘The arts are a very important part of my lifestyle’. At far left, they were more likely to agree that ‘The arts are OK, they are just irrelevant to me’.

The top to bottom axis illustrates the extent to which each segment is interested in change occurring in the arts to improve their level of interest or capacity to benefit from them. Those at the top are more likely to consider that change is important. Those at the bottom are more likely to consider that change is not important. This is illustrated by the relative placement of the two statements. At the top, people were more likely to agree that ‘The arts should be more accessible and available to average Australians’. At the bottom people were more likely to agree that ‘I would like the arts to stay pretty much the way they are’.

Consequently in simple terms, we can look at the attitudes of the major segments in the following way:

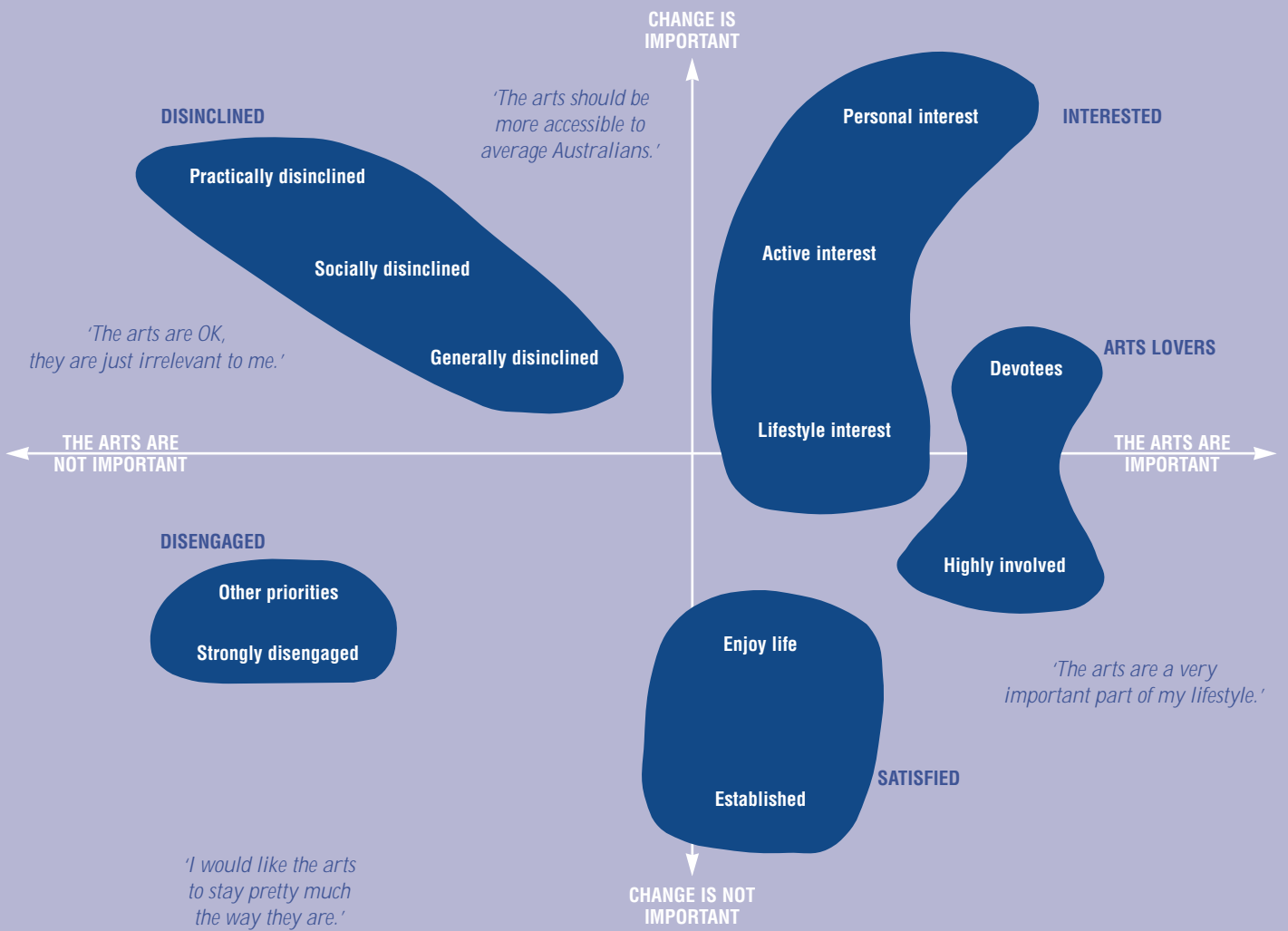
	VIEW OF THE ARTS		INTEREST IN CHANGE	
Arts lovers	++	(very positive)	+ & -	(mixed)
Satisfied	+	(positive)	-	(no change)
Interested	+	(positive)	+	(change)
Disinclined	-	(negative)	+	(change)
Disengaged	--	(very negative)	-	(No change)

Recommendation 1

Acknowledge that no simple measures can describe the complexity of the relationship Australians have with the arts, recognising:

- Effective strategies need to address the reasons why people place a particular value on the arts.
- The inclination to seek change or accept the status quo is a principal component of the different attitudes people have towards the arts
- The proposed segments reflect attitudinal groups in the population and provide a basis for communications strategy development.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF SEGMENTS SEGMENTATION MAP



STRATEGIC ISSUES



2a

We have made no recommendations that are specific to individual artforms or types of artistic expression.

The sector will need to set goals for what it expects to achieve at the end of each successive year of any strategy.

2a Clearly defined goals

Throughout this study, we deal with the population's attitudes towards the arts and strategies for the arts sector in the context of individual areas of interest. However, in this section we focus in particular on the strategic issues that need to be considered as part of a strategy to promote the value of the arts.

Clearly defined goals

The recommendations for action in this report provide a framework within which the arts sector might operate, regardless of how broadly or narrowly the sector is defined. We have made no recommendations that are specific to individual artforms or types of artistic expression. Not only is there debate about the exact scope of the future definition of the arts, but any strategies need to apply to any future changes that might occur.

Nevertheless, it is important for the arts sector to agree on both a vision for the future and on specific goals and timeframes for any strategy. While the overall goal is clearly to 'promote the value of the arts', the sector needs to articulate the tangible, measurable changes that it is seeking to bring about. For example:

- A higher level of organisation within the arts sector which will make it possible to undertake an effective strategy.
- A higher level of agreement among the population with different statements of attitude and value which could be measured and tracked over time.
- Agreement on the scope of a future definition of the arts and an increase in the proportion of Australians who spontaneously identify these items as part of the arts.

Other, associated changes that might indicate the degree to which people value the arts can also be measured. They include a wide range of outcomes such as:

- More people engaging in specific artistic activities, such as painting, writing, acting, dancing, playing a musical instrument, etc.
- A greater recognition that the arts are readily accessible and enjoyable for everyone.
- More people participating in arts-related competitions.
- Fewer people feeling that the arts are elitist.
- More parents encouraging their children to explore their artistic potential.
- A rise in the participation in the arts by specified demographics (for example, younger people or men).

- Fewer people considering that the arts are irrelevant to their lives.
- More people being able to suggest a greater range of ways in which they perceive the arts to have value.
- More subscribers to the arts and higher ticket prices.
- Greater interest and involvement in the arts at all levels of government.

In addition, it will be important to identify time-based priorities for each outcome. The sector will need to set goals for what it expects to achieve at the end of each successive year of any strategy.

Recommendation 2

Develop specific goals for the strategy to promote the value of the arts, and set appropriate timeframes for achieving each goal.

The 12 strategic objectives

2b

As a framework, we have proposed a total of 12 objectives that describe the elements of a strategy to promote the value of the arts to all Australians. These consist of one overall objective, five objectives relating to the arts sector and six objectives relating to the general public.

OVERALL VISION

2b(i)

Shape a vision for the future of Australia which sees the arts playing a role that Australians see is relevant and meaningful to their lives — personally and nationally — and distinctively Australian.

Objective 1

There presently does not appear to be a clear vision for the future of the arts in Australia. Individual artists and organisations are often focused on their own creative excellence and financial survival. However it is unclear as to the role the sector sees the arts playing in the lives of Australians in the future. Such a vision would help clarify the individual goals that a promotional strategy should meet and there are a number of factors that should be considered in its development:

- It should paint a picture of ‘the Australian arts’ 20 years from now, with which all Australians can identify, intellectually and emotionally.
- An appropriate vision needs to bring the benefits of the arts into the lives of individual Australians so that they can understand the benefits that flow from supporting the arts, either directly as consumers or indirectly through their taxes. It should cover all the benefits that the arts can provide, whether social, emotional, intellectual, recreational, national, etc.
- The general population should feel they are as much a part of the vision for the future as those who seek to achieve artistic excellence as professional artists.
- A vision for the arts needs to recognise, and cater to, the different pressures facing Australians at different stages in their lives. This might include, for example: Australian children beginning their journey of artistic discovery and maintaining it into adulthood; the difficulties faced by all people dealing with the pressures of time and a rapidly changing society; the potentially large ‘army’ of interested and capable retired people who could play an active role in a more artistic future for Australia; the pressures facing families with young children; and the interests of single people and couples without children.
- Any vision should receive endorsement from the arts sector and the general public and. It should, as far as possible, receive bi-partisan support within the parliament(s).

A consideration of the possible elements of a vision for the future of the arts is provided in the main report at Comment 58: Building a vision for the arts.

Any vision should receive endorsement from the arts sector and the general public and. It should, as far as possible, receive bi-partisan support within the parliament(s).

It should paint a picture of ‘the Australian arts’ 20 years from now, with which all Australians can identify, intellectually and emotionally.

2b(i) Overall vision

2b(ii)

Objective 2

...while many arts practitioners would like to see the arts more widely enjoyed and supported in Australia, there is little agreement in two key areas...

OBJECTIVES - THE ARTS SECTOR

Gain agreement within the sector that collective effort is required to work towards the common goals of promoting the value of the arts.

- **Recognise that the responsibility does not lie with someone else, but with every individual in the sector.**

People engaged in arts practice are essentially passionate about their work. However, while many arts practitioners would like to see the arts more widely enjoyed and supported in Australia, there is little agreement in two key areas: the need to work together as a sector; and the collective action that might bring about effective change.

This is partly a function of the diversity of arts practice and the different needs throughout the sector. It is also because there has been little effective coordinated activity throughout the sector directed beyond the target audiences for particular forms of artistic expression. It also stems from the essentially competitive nature of different arts practitioners who see themselves competing with each other for the same potential customers or sources of funding.

As a result, a central objective of the strategy should be to work within the arts sector to reach agreement on the steps that need to be taken to promote the value of the arts to all Australians.

A key requirement will be to help the sector understand that every individual and organisation at every level within the arts can play a part in promoting the value of the arts. This means that it is not just up to some central entity to undertake the work, but that it needs to be addressed collectively.

Objective 3

...people find out things as much by who they know as by the formal networks for sharing information.

Make tangible the informal networks that constitute the arts in Australia — to identify who can be involved in a strategy to promote the value of the arts.

- **This needs to include existing and potential practitioners, audiences and supporters.**

The arts sector is built on a sometimes labyrinthine network of contacts and structures that allows information flow within and between different areas of practice. This is no different from many areas of business and public activity - people find out things as much by who they know as by the formal networks for sharing information.

However, an effective communication strategy requires reliable methods of communicating with the people who are going to make it happen. In this regard, there appear to be disparate communication channels, even among those who have been engaged in arts practice on a full-time basis. If these people are to be the 'foot soldiers' for a strategy, they will need to be brought into an information

loop so that they can communicate with each other regardless of whether their arts activity brings them into contact with each other.

It will also be important to find easy ways for potential practitioners, audiences and supporters to gain information about, and to enter into, the experience of the arts. For example, if, as the research suggests, there are many retirees who would be interested in actively promoting the arts in Australia, what are the mechanisms which can help them to find their way to a relevant type of involvement? The same applies to parents with children and the children themselves. Consequently, information networks also need to be transparent to new entrants.

Achieving this objective may require the establishment of an improved coordinating function which can help the various networks find their common ground and possibly provide an umbrella communication network for bringing the sector together.

Raise best practice throughout the sector in promoting the value of the arts and promulgate this widely to every individual and organisation.

- **Understand what has worked and why; what has not worked and why not. Where best practice does not exist, develop it.**

Throughout the arts sector there is an extraordinary number of different actions that influence the impression the general public has of the arts. For example: a child learns that ‘art’ at school is a very different discipline to ‘drama’ or ‘media studies’ or ‘music’; people turn on the TV to see an ‘arts show’ covering a limited number of forms of creative expression and entertainment; the ambience at ‘arts events’ gives people clues as to whether these are the sorts of event for them (whether it is a major performing arts organisation or the local school play); newspaper advertising for events might capture the public’s imagination or just look like the other ads on the page.

Some of these involve spending money to communicate with the public, but very many of them result from the arts sector taking advantage of existing forms of communication. In this regard, the arts sector demonstrates a wide range of capacities to effectively utilise these to shape the attitudes of the general public. This means that, while some individuals and organisations have developed extremely effective strategies for influencing public attitudes, others are ‘re-inventing the wheel’ in the same areas.

The challenge for the sector is to: identify best practice in the areas of activity that might promote the value of the arts more broadly; determine the types of information and skills that can be shared; and develop mechanisms for sharing these to raise the overall performance of the sector.

It will also be important to find easy ways for potential practitioners, audiences and supporters to gain information about, and to enter into, the experience of the arts.

Objective 4

...while some individuals and organisations have developed extremely effective strategies for influencing public attitudes, others are ‘re-inventing the wheel’ in the same areas.

...there is an expectation among some in the arts community that the Australia Council should take the responsibility for undertaking promotional activity on behalf of the arts sector.

We have identified eight key areas of activity that should be considered as part of an effective strategy:

1. **Media relations:** The full range of communication with all forms of electronic, print and other media.
2. **Education:** The role of education, formal or otherwise, in shaping the attitudes and perceptions of the general public towards the arts, and its role in developing the communication and marketing skills of those within the arts.
3. **Key stakeholders:** Effective, specialised communication and involvement for key individuals who can influence the role of the arts in society, specifically those in government and business.
4. **Coordinated information:** Information delivery and sharing within the sector and with the general public.
5. **Research:** A research effort that delivers a practical broad-based understanding, focusing on audiences outside traditional catchments and the potential to pool resources where possible.
6. **The production:** Using the production and its environment to overcome impediments to engagement in the arts, specifically focusing on: the cost of the arts; its location; the social and cultural context in which the arts are delivered; the guidance offered to people to enjoy and understand the arts; and the relevance and appeal of its content.
7. **Coordinated events:** Maximising the effectiveness of events in providing entry points to the arts for the general public, particularly considering the role of festivals and competitions.
8. **Advertising:** Maximising the effectiveness of advertising and its role in influencing purchase behaviour and attitudes, both in terms of specific advertising for arts events and products and any generic advertising and promotion.

Objective 5

Make promoting the value of the arts to all Australians an integral part of every activity of the Australia Council.

- **This might include broadly targeted promotional activities via the Council's own public relations strategy as well as specific activities in partnership with the arts sector (including grant recipients).**

The role of the Australia Council needs to be clear in a strategy to promote the value of the arts. In its initial deliberations on the issue, the Council anticipated that its role would be one of 'catalytic leadership, overview and coordination'. It is important to clarify this because there is an expectation among some in the arts community that the Australia Council should take the responsibility for undertaking promotional activity on behalf of the arts sector.

The response to this is clearly a matter for the Australia Council. However a number of relevant issues emerged:

- There is currently no central entity which speaks on behalf of the arts sector, either promoting the value of the arts to the general public or advocating on behalf of the arts to government. There are models for this type of body in other sectors where a national voice can be found in most other industry or professional sectors (e.g. agriculture, tourism, business, the law).
- The appropriateness of this role being fulfilled by the Federal Government's statutory funding authority is questioned by some.
- Even if the Australia Council decided to take a significant role in any strategy, its capacity to divert resources from other areas of arts activity to a promotional role would need to be addressed (since there is opposition from many areas of the arts sector to any diversion from its grant-giving function).

Nevertheless, three key areas of potential involvement by Council emerged as worthy of consideration:

- **The Australia Council's status as a leader in the Australian arts:** The Australia Council is recognised as a body whose decisions and policies influence thinking among the arts community. It also has substantial existing procedures for communicating formally with arts practitioners. These factors give the Australia Council potential leverage to bring about change within the sector and to provide a coordinating role in any strategy to promote the value of the arts.
- **Media programs:** The Australia Council undertakes a certain amount of media activity in the course of its operations. This ranges from routine funding announcements to the management of and publicity for major launches and events. The effectiveness of this in influencing the perceptions of the broader population could be considered within the strategy.
- **The role of funding recipients:** The activities of funding recipients have an influence on the perceptions of the broader population in relation to the arts. So it is relevant to consider the extent to which the Australia Council can work directly with recipients to more positively promote the value of the arts. For example, in some cases, Council might help facilitate development of skills relevant to the task. In other situations it may encourage or require recipients to engage in activities that promote the value of the arts to the broader population (e.g. through their involvement with key target groups).

The Australia Council is recognised as a body whose decisions and policies influence thinking among the arts community.

...it may encourage or require recipients to engage in activities that promote the value of the arts to the broader population...

Objective 6

...where Australians do not feel they can comfortably pursue their artistic or creative inclinations, there will need to be a long-term approach to breaking down barriers.

Make the arts more welcoming.

- **Address the factors that cause some Australians to feel they are not welcome to be involved in the arts. In particular recognise that attention needs to be paid to both practical factors (e.g. cost, distance and understanding) and social, emotional, intellectual factors (e.g. unwritten rules and customs).**

A central issue in the study was that many Australians did not feel particularly welcome to engage with the arts. This had two main dimensions:

- Many people did not feel that the cost, location, ambience and social customs of arts events were particularly comfortable or welcoming. The clearest simple example of this is the question ‘When do I clap?’ at orchestral concerts.
- Many people did not feel comfortable about engaging in artistic or creative activities themselves, despite possibly having a significant personal interest in doing so.

It is important for the arts sector to examine the various practical, social, emotional and intellectual factors that might have the direct or indirect consequence of making Australians feel unwelcome in relation to the arts. In those cases where Australians do not feel they can comfortably pursue their artistic or creative inclinations, there will need to be a long-term approach to breaking down barriers.

The options to deal with this are complex. In some cases the perceived exclusiveness of some arts events can be a useful marketing tool, but it might also send broader messages of inaccessibility to the general population. However, images of quality, accessibility and choice need not be mutually exclusive.

Overall, a central message that Australians need to hear in relation to the arts is:

‘Welcome to the Australian arts’

The arts sector could apply this as a test to its activities - examining the extent to which the various parts of the sector are providing Australians with the information, environment and encouragement to feel welcome to engage with the arts in all its forms.

OBJECTIVES - THE PUBLIC

2b(iii)

Objective 7

Find ways of helping members of the public to expand their spontaneous definitions of the arts to be broader than they currently are by promoting a broad range of creative activities.

- **This means avoiding a cynical response by demonstrating that ‘the arts sector’ accepts any broader definition as well.**

The question of the definition of the arts is central to the debate on how to change the attitudes of Australians in relation to the arts. Some members of the arts sector suggest that the value of the arts might be more widely appreciated if Australians had a broader view of what constitutes the arts. While it is clear that those with the most positive views of the arts also have the broadest definitions, it is not clear that broadening the definition will necessarily lead to a more positive view of the arts. In particular, causing people to realise that, say ‘painting and play-acting by small children’ is part of the arts, will not necessarily have any effect on their attitudes towards ‘the arts’ as a whole or to any of its component parts.

Nevertheless, in any strategy to broaden the definition, four key issues need to be taken into account:

- The spontaneous definition of the arts held by the majority of Australians — which can be seen as the ‘brand image’ of the arts — is relatively narrow and is focused on the more traditional ‘big A’ arts that have been around for a century or more. Consequently there is room to expand this definition.
- However, the majority of Australians have no problem with a broad definition of the arts. Most survey participants already accepted a wide range of items as part of the arts, and would like to see an even broader definition in future. The majority also supported the inclusion of many of the ‘little a’ arts, including activities like fashion design, shows or bands at the local pub or licensed club, painting and play-acting by small children, TV drama like *Blue Heelers* and advertising.
- On the other hand, there is little agreement within the arts sector about how broad this definition of the arts should be. In the absence of a clear brief about the scope of the arts, it will be impossible to conduct any communication strategy to broaden the definition. The solution appears to lie partly in reviewing the terminology used to describe the arts and determining a definition of ‘the Australian arts’ which is appropriate today and will position the arts for the future.
- Once determined, the arts sector will need to show the general population how these things are included in the arts, not just tell them. Otherwise any communication could run the risk of being received cynically as suggesting one definition for the general public and another for the arts sector.

...causing people to realise that, say ‘painting and play-acting by small children’ is part of the arts, will not necessarily have any effect on their attitudes towards other arts activities towards the arts as a whole or any of its component parts.

The solution appears to lie partly in reviewing the terminology used to describe the arts and determining a definition of ‘the Australian arts’ which is appropriate today and will position the arts for the future.

Objective 8

Promote personal engagement with the arts by encouraging Australians to explore the creative arts in two ways: to be imaginative, creative and expressive themselves; and to enjoy the imagination, creativity and expression of others.

- **With a distinctively Australian approach to the arts.**

...the trend throughout the next decade will increasingly be towards a greater emphasis on creative skill, both professionally and as a source of recreation and entertainment. However, 'creativity' is not necessarily seen as synonymous with 'the arts'.

... 'the Australian arts' need to be open to whatever direction the evolution of Australian identity takes.

This might draw from the quintessential Australian notion of people who are down-to-earth, accessible to all and without any airs and graces.

Promotion of the arts has traditionally focused on encouraging more Australians to be consumers of the arts and to provide political or other funding support for the arts. However, there is a clear relationship between the inclination of people to be interested in the arts and their own personal involvement in the arts (and/or that of their families and friends). Consequently, promoting the value of the arts needs to be addressed in two main ways:

- Promoting the opportunities for every individual to be imaginative, creative and expressive in arts-related ways.
- Promoting the appreciation of the imaginative, creative and expressive skills of others in arts-related ways.

These are both important in promoting the development of a 'creative culture' in Australia that sees every Australian proud and confident in their own creative skills and ready to support the creative efforts of others. It appears that the trend throughout the next decade will increasingly be towards a greater emphasis on creative skill, both professionally and as a source of recreation and entertainment. However, 'creativity' is not necessarily seen as synonymous with 'the arts'. This means that the arts sector will need to ensure that it plays a significant role in shaping the creative future for all Australians and helping people to understand the creative benefits that the arts bring to everyone.

Many in the general public lament the strong cultural presence of American and other influences, particularly in film and television. Consequently, the arts also need to be seen as 'distinctively Australian' in two key ways:

- First, the content of the arts should reflect those influences that are distinctively Australian. It is impossible to prescribe what this should involve, but 'the Australian arts' need to be open to whatever direction the evolution of Australian identity takes. There is considerable debate within the arts sector about the extent to which the arts rely on traditional cultural influences and reflects Anglo-Saxon origins. As with the development of Australian cuisine over the past several decades, there appears considerable scope to innovatively draw from the various cultural and national influences we enjoy to create forms of the arts that are unique to Australians.
- Second, the manner in which the arts are conducted should reflect attitudes and approaches that are distinctively Australian. This might draw from the quintessential Australian notion of people who are down-to-earth, accessible to all and without any airs and graces. It might reflect the Australian inclination to not take things too seriously or the wry and intellectual approach to humour. Whatever form this takes, the arts sector needs to be aware of how it and the opportunities that it offers are perceived and whether these are seen to fit with the evolving Australian self-concept.

Help Australians to find suitable entry points to the arts and to be able to see the transition to elite achievement.

- **So that every person can see and feel the opportunities for themselves (and for their children), even if they never take them up.**

Objective 9

Many people in the arts sector express a concern that elite achievement in the arts is not recognised or appreciated in the same way as elite achievement in other areas of endeavour. They suggest that 'elite sporting achievement' is held up as a thing of national pride whereas the arts can be described as 'elitist' despite at least the same attention to excellence.

Part of the reason for this difference is the way that Australians personally identify with the transition to elite sporting achievement compared with their relative lack of understanding about the progression to elite artistic performance. It also relates to a perception that it is the social circumstances of the arts (the audiences and the environment) which can be elitist.

This highlights the importance of generating a sense of personal identification with the arts as an important part of promoting their value. This principle applies to gaining support for any product, service, or idea. People will identify more with something when they understand it and feel part of it.

In the case of sport, Australians can appreciate the achievements of others with the vicarious pleasure of believing that 'it could have been me' or 'it could be my kids'. Most people know that they could choose to get involved in sport by heading down to the local swimming pool or playing a team game on a Saturday morning and, then, if they are good enough, they could compete at successive levels until they eventually are recognised as being at the peak of their sport.

On the other hand, many Australians can neither see how it is possible for someone to become engaged in the arts nor the steps that are required to achieve elite performance in the arts. They do not see the same 'entry points' to the arts, either for themselves or for their friends and family. Neither are they able to understand how it is possible to get from their current situation to the standards of excellence that are achieved by the best artists. Similarly, they cannot see the basis for determining 'excellence' in some areas (e.g. modern art). In this situation, they are less able to personally identify with the achievements of others and their vicarious pleasure is diminished.

The arts sector lacks the same well-organised infrastructure for easy participation that exists for sport. With the exception of the Eisteddfod movement, it is difficult to find the arts equivalent of the thousands of parents who organise junior competitions in association with major sporting organisations. A parent whose child displays some sporting skill can encourage them to capitalise on it in a range of ways. For a parent with a child who displays some artistic skill, the opportunities for advancement are less clear.

From the perspective of people engaging in the arts as audiences or other consumers, the sport analogy also has some relevance. The low-cost opportunity

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to be part of a game by being on the 'hill' or through lower-priced stands creates a sense of openness for participation in sport that is not so universally associated with the arts. Sports-goers are relatively relaxed about the rarefied experience enjoyed by those in corporate boxes because, in the end, everyone has access to the same game.

On the other hand, many Australians perceive that arts audiences are concentrated around a much wealthier demographic, with others precluded from participating through lack of means, not choice. Consequently, clear entry points to the experience of the arts as an audience member need to be developed and promoted more comprehensively.

Objective 10

Acknowledge and deal with the strong imagery and branding that is currently associated with the term 'the arts'.

- **Recognise that the term 'the arts' is in very widespread usage and its brand image has strong implications for public perceptions.**

Another area of substantial debate within the arts sector is the issue of whether there should be any coordinated promotion of 'the arts' per se rather than dedicated promotional activities for each specific area of the arts. This is based on the notion that people do not relate to 'the arts', but they relate to individual artforms such as music, theatre, film, dance, etc.

While this argument is valid, it is also true that the term 'the arts' is in widespread use to collectively describe the sector from the point of view of infrastructure, policy development, funding, education and training, media coverage and a host of other aspects. There are 'arts centres', 'government arts departments', which create 'arts policy', 'arts reporters' who are responsible for 'arts shows' and 'arts pages' in the media. The 'arts sector' calls for more 'arts funding' from government and 'arts sponsorship' from business. Importantly, 'the arts' take their place alongside other candidates for scarce government resources when political parties and governments are determining their policy and funding priorities. In this context, it is important for the arts sector to ensure that the general population have a positive view of 'the arts', should they be canvassed for their own views about support.

Consequently, the term 'the arts' is very much a 'brand' that is recognised in the marketplace of public opinion. As such, the sector needs to be constantly aware of its brand image and how this is changing. The strategies proposed in this study are intended to redress what appear to be the deficiencies in that brand image.

Objective 11

Engage with the general public about the relevance of the arts to their lives, with a view to ensuring that the arts sector understands the general public better.

In the pressured environment of the arts, attention is often directed at the existing and immediately potential markets which are most important for short-term survival. Gaining an understanding of the perceptions of the arts among the

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broader population is often a luxury that individual arts organisations cannot afford. In fact, this study is the first broad-ranging examination of the views of the Australian public undertaken by the Australian arts sector.

This lack of breadth has contributed to a gap in perceptions between the arts and the general public. If the arts sector is misunderstood by the general public, so the general public is often misunderstood by the arts sector. During the research a substantial lack of understanding of the attitudes and feelings among the general public was revealed, sometimes associated with a readiness among some in the arts sector to stereotype certain segments of the public as 'never likely to have an interest in the arts'. The research suggests that, while some people are clearly disengaged from the arts, a point of identification can be found for most people. Consequently, there is clearly scope for individuals and organisations within the arts sector to engage more with the general public, not only to provide them with messages about the arts, but also to understand how their needs and desires can be fulfilled by the arts.

There are a vast number of ways in which this can be done, but above all, members of the arts sector need to find ways to remain constantly in touch with the views of those outside the sector. In this regard, it would be valuable to establish an independent advisory panel of people from outside the arts sector who can help ensure that any promotional strategies might meet the real needs of Australians.

Utilise visible collaborative activity with business, government and other agencies, with a view to engaging the general public in the arts as part of their day-to-day lives.

The arts sector engages in significant collaborative activity with business, government and other entities, often with a view to securing additional funding. While there is substantial scope for closer associations between the arts sector and other entities, it is also important to consider how these can be leveraged most effectively to promote the value of the arts to the general population. The arts sector traditionally provides sponsors and supporters with access to their own markets in exchange for funding. However, this collaboration could also see the arts sector gaining a wider exposure to the general community by leveraging appropriate linkages to broadly promote the value of the arts.

Allocate resources to implement a strategy according to the 12 key strategic objectives, recognising:

- The need for an overall vision.
- The importance of enlisting the support of every organisation and individual in the arts sector.
- The need to generate personal identification with the arts among the general population.

If the arts sector is misunderstood by the general public, so the general public is often misunderstood by the arts sector.

Objective 12

...this collaboration could also see the arts sector gaining a wider exposure to the general community...

Recommendation 3

Best practice

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Not a communications audit

This study did not involve a communications audit of the arts sector. However, in the course of the industry consultations, it became apparent that there was substantial room for improvement in the sector's capacity to influence the attitudes of the public in a variety of ways.

We have identified a total of eight areas which deserve greater attention because of the influence they have on overall attitudes towards the arts. It became clear that the performance of the overall sector in these areas is extremely variable. Some individuals and organisations are performing extremely well, while others do not even consider the relevance of particular activities. In many cases, more could be done within their own core markets. In almost every instance, greater attention could be paid to dealing with the population outside their existing markets.

Critical to a distributed strategy

Raising the overall performance of the sector in these areas is critical to a strategy which must rely on the combined resources of the sector for its implementation. In the absence of centrally coordinated resources, the only real option available to the sector is to maximise the effectiveness of its own actions in promoting the value of the arts to the general population.

Consequently, raising standards throughout the sector firstly depends on identifying best practice activities in each area and then promulgating these to every individual or organisation who can act on them. It is not sufficient for some parts of the arts sector to know that effective promotion of the arts is taking place somewhere else. Everyone needs to assume responsibility to maximise their own efforts in this regard.

There will be potential commercial-in-confidence issues in relation to some of the areas we have identified. Some organisations will not be interested in sharing their practices with other parts of the sector. Nevertheless, part of the challenge will be to find the common ground where agreement can be found in raising the performance of every arts organisation and individual practitioner in order to serve the long-term interests of the sector as a whole. For example, there could be little, if any, downside to improving the capacity of the sector to deal with the media, whether it involves a major capital-city organisation or an individual artist in a remote area.

Best practice identification

There needs to be a process of continual identification of best practice activities that could be applied within the sector. There have been some efforts in this regard, for example cataloguing case studies which represent effective practice in certain areas of marketing and communication within the sector. However, an effective information base should not only include current activities of the sector,

...the only real option available to the sector is to maximise the effectiveness of its own actions in promoting the value of the arts to the general population.

...an effective information base should not only include current activities of the sector; but also should draw from the expertise in other industry and professional sectors locally and internationally.

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This would need to take the form of a formal mechanism which would:

1. Encourage individuals and organisations in the sector to consider the influence of all their activities on the perceptions Australians have of the arts.
2. Identify the types of specific activities being undertaken by individuals and organisations (both within the sector and elsewhere) that might have a direct or indirect effect on perceptions.
3. Evaluate how well these activities could or do communicate a positive message about the arts among the overall population.
4. Where deficiencies exist throughout the sector, undertake research and/or strategy development to identify how these might be overcome.
5. Continually update and review this information and provide it to participants in the arts sector as rapidly as possible.

Encourage individuals and organisations in the sector to consider the influence of all their activities on the perceptions Australians have of the arts.

Formal training and development needed

It is also important to recognise that this sort of change will not come about through osmosis. It will be necessary to make information available, but this cannot, in itself, be expected to change attitudes and behaviour. There is a tendency in the sector for some people to believe that publishing information or posting it on a website will lead to changes in skills and attitude. Rather, the proposed strategy will require considerable skills development. As such, it should be based on a process of continual training, prompting, and encouragement for current arts practitioners and new entrants to improve their own understanding and performance.

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Ultimately this will require people-to-people contact in order to make it work. Consideration should be given to four main areas of professional skills development:

1. Formal training and education, which might be managed by coordinating coursework and training materials with established educational services (public and private) and making information about relevant options widely available throughout the sector.
2. Skills-development representatives who could have the responsibility of making direct contact with individuals and organisations. They could help to identify best practice and to raise the overall standard throughout the sector.
3. Pooling of resources in those areas where professional expertise is required. For example, in dealing with the media, it may be appropriate for a number of arts organisations to share the services of a professional media expert or to jointly contract the services of a media relations agency. Not only would this provide more efficient access to specialist skills, but it would help the participating organisations to better understand their respective needs.

2c(i) Best practice principles

...the best practice program should also involve incentives to cause people in the sector to recognise the implications that failure will have on the long-term viability of the sector.

...skills development in these areas cannot be seen as a one-off activity but must undergo continual development and evolution.

4. Networks of people within the sector. The most effective learning often comes from learning together with others who are in a similar situation. Consequently, there could be value in establishing mechanisms which bring people from the sector together to share their understanding with each other. While major conferences may be a useful part of this, ideally, this should take place on a day-to-day basis among like-minded and similarly positioned organisations and individuals.

Active incentives needed

Some have argued that they lack time or resources to consider these broader issues. However, there is little doubt that the future viability of the sector and its potential to generate additional resources from all sources will depend on promoting the value of the arts more broadly. Consequently, the best practice program should also involve incentives to cause people in the sector to recognise the implications that failure will have on the long-term viability of the sector.

These incentives could follow the example of professional development programs which require professionals to engage in certain training and development activities to maintain their recognised status within the profession. There might be some linkage between funding and performance in these areas, for example by establishing funding criteria which involve some demonstrated skills and performance in promoting an artistic activity to the broad population.

Rapidly changing environment

In communications strategy development, what used to work might not work particularly well any more. Consequently, any approach to skills development in these areas cannot be seen as a one-off activity but must undergo continual development and evolution. An example is the use of the internet as a communication tool. This is currently characterised by a great deal of trial and error in different markets. However, by its distributed nature, the arts sector would appear to be particularly well-placed to share and pool its experience to help establish the sector as a leader in effectively utilising internet communication both among arts practitioners and with the general population.

Eight key areas of activity need to be addressed to enable every individual and organisation in the arts sector to contribute to the promotion of the value of the arts to all Australians.

1. Media relations
2. Education
3. Key stakeholders
4. Coordinated information
5. Research
6. The production
7. Coordinated events
8. Advertising

These 'tools' are available to the sector from within their existing resources. The list is not exhaustive but highlights some ways in which the sector can have a direct or indirect effect on attitudes among the general population. Two key questions should be asked in relation to each area:

- In what ways are some organisations and individuals already having a positive impact?
- How can others learn to have a more positive impact themselves?

MEDIA RELATIONS

The modern commercial print and electronic media is a business which derives its profit from attracting specific consumers who are of interest to advertisers. Consequently, dealing with the media requires an understanding of how each media outlet segments its market and then shaping information and story angles accordingly.

While this might appear obvious, it appears that many practitioners within the arts sector lose sight of this imperative in two main ways:

1. There is a widespread reluctance throughout the arts to consider media outside dedicated arts coverage. Often this is based on the view that the arts are not accepted as 'news' and therefore it is futile to expect that they will gain attention beyond specialised arts reporters.
2. Many people expressed the view during the sectoral consultations that the perceived lack of appropriate media coverage of the arts is due to a philosophical opposition among parts of the media toward the arts. Many believed that the arts sector should receive coverage because it makes a worthy contribution to Australian life rather than because it necessarily meets the needs or interests of specific target groups. This highlights a potential point of conflict with the media, some of whom reported that the arts sector displayed a sense of entitlement or expectation in their relations with the media.

While clear evidence of these views can be found, there are also very clear exceptions. Some organisations and media professionals deliver information and stories to the media shaped to suit the interests of their readers, viewers or listeners. These people recognise how the arts can make the news pages and how they can offer colour and feature stories to all types of media.

Relations with the media should be one of the key areas of activity in the proposed strategy. This will require considerable dedicated effort, which goes beyond the scope of this report. However, there was a lack of recognition among some parts of the sector about certain prerequisites in dealing with the media, particularly the need to do the following:

1. Create stories for the media, don't just provide information. Always look for an innovative 'angle'.
2. Understand the specific markets of specific media outlets and be aware of any commercial objectives they may have.
3. Shape stories to suit the individual style and personality of each media outlet.
4. Think beyond standard stereotypes in media placement.

Some organisations and media professionals deliver information and stories to the media shaped to suit the interests of their readers, viewers or listeners.

...there was a lack of recognition among some parts of the sector about certain prerequisites in dealing with the media...

5. Don't think of the media just in terms of reviews and be prepared to think 'outside the square' of conventional arts reporting.
6. Focus on personalities and highlight the real people involved in the arts (including their struggles) in order to build an ongoing dialogue with the audience.
7. Start from first principles in building a picture for journalists and for the public. Don't assume they should know your area.
8. Avoid jargon and unnecessary complexity. Speak in a language that would suit any member of your family.
9. Respect the role of journalists and recognise the pressures facing them. Do as much as possible to prepare the full package of background, possible story angles, access to key players, visuals etc.
10. Feed the media, don't wait to be eaten by it. The media needs stories to survive. It is rarely malicious, just pragmatic. It's better to prepare stories for the media than have it come looking when you're not ready.

Effective media relations involve substantial skills, usually developed by working in the media itself. However, often media relations are almost taken for granted by the arts sector as an ancillary activity which requires informing the media of forthcoming activities. There is clearly scope for a better understanding of the needs of the media and the skills in dealing with it at every level.

Avoid jargon and unnecessary complexity. Speak in a language that would suit any member of your family.

The media needs stories to survive. It is rarely malicious, just pragmatic.

EDUCATION

The role of education, formal or otherwise, in shaping the attitudes and perceptions of the general public towards the arts, is widely recognised throughout the sector as central to promoting the value of the arts to the general population. However, there is considerable variation in views about how education could or should play a role.

A range of views

One line of thinking in the arts sector suggests that the main factor preventing Australians from having a more positive view of the arts is the failure of the formal education system.

One line of thinking in the arts sector suggests that the main factor preventing Australians from having a more positive view of the arts is the failure of the formal education system, principally at primary and high school level, to adequately teach the arts to Australian children. According to this view, the consequence is a population which lacks the intellectual understanding or familiarity that is required to feel positive about the arts. The solution is thought to be greater recognition of the importance of teaching the arts and a greater emphasis on the arts in school curricula.

In its most indirect form, this might mean a strategy to lobby governments to appreciate the benefits flowing from a comprehensive arts-based education (perhaps even with some form of the arts being compulsory). However, in order to be effective, it would see artists working directly in close association with teaching professionals in a range of ways, including: the development of relevant and interesting curricula; helping to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers; and having artists 'on the ground' in schools and other institutions working with teachers to directly help students and to act as a source of inspiration.

An alternative line of thinking within the sector is a view that all Australians need to have access to information and knowledge about the arts at all ages in a form which can be readily understood and digested on their own terms and in their own time.

An alternative line of thinking within the sector is a view that all Australians need to have access to information and knowledge about the arts at all ages in a form which can be readily understood and digested on their own terms and in their own time. The consequence of this would be a population prepared to dabble in and explore the arts and to be educated in the arts throughout their lives. The solution would be a greater recognition by the arts sector itself of the importance of demystifying the arts for all people and delivering information that suits the needs of existing and prospective audiences as part of their engagement with the arts. The responsibility would lie with individual artists and arts organisations in their contact with the general public. The communication challenge for a strategy would be to find ways in which this type of education would form a natural part of the activities of every artist.

This might include ensuring that the program notes for a play or the audio guides in galleries help people to understand the background and context in a jargon-free manner which does not presume any prior knowledge. It might involve arts organisations offering broadly accessible adult education opportunities or hands-on skills development for children. It might also take into account the varying skill levels of magazine and newspaper readers and make sure that arts reviews speak in a language that extends beyond the aficionados of a particular artform. It might lead to more programming on television and radio which helps people understand the arts from first principles even if the underlying concepts are complex.

It also emerged during the consultations that a range of artists, organisations and teaching professionals took an innovative approach to educating people of all ages in the arts. Some of these approaches originated within the arts sector and some among educational professionals. Nevertheless, the one clear message that emerged from these investigations was that the arts sector needs to establish how it can most effectively deliver educational opportunities directly to Australians and how it can work with education professionals (public or private) to bring this about.

Education of artists

The other side of this issue is the education of artists themselves. While it is quite possible that effective education opportunities will lead to more Australians choosing to pursue creative and artistic careers, it is equally important to make sure that these people are well-equipped to prosper as artists.

Success as a professional artist in Australia involves at least the same suite of skills expected of any person who chooses to set up a small business. These include: understanding the market in which they operate and the competition they face; dealing with government processes that might either provide funding or require compliance; communicating with their audience directly or via the media; legal issues; basic administration; and so on.

This education could also be focussed on the issues relevant to the perceptions Australians have of the arts and how this matters in relation to the long-term viability of the sector. This would involve building communications skills as well as helping artists remain aware of the factors and trends that influence the lives of all Australians.

Different people will recognise the importance of these skills at different times, so there should be ready access to information and understanding when it is needed.

The arts sector needs to establish how it can most effectively deliver educational opportunities directly to Australians and how it can work with education professionals (public or private) to bring this about.

Success as a professional artist in Australia involves at least the same suite of skills that are expected of any person who chooses to set up a small business.

While some understand the complex win-win outcomes that have to be constructed in effectively dealing with these groups, others have overly simplistic views of what it takes to gain their support.

The views that people in marginal electorates have of 'the arts' (and every other area of government activity) will continue to be important in determining policies.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

There is a range of individuals outside the arts sector who are likely to be particularly influential in its future. We have identified these key 'stakeholders' in two main areas:

Government: Elected representatives and bureaucrats at local, state and federal levels.

Business: Proprietors and people with influence in small, medium and large businesses.

The performance of the arts sector in dealing with these groups is, again, variable. While some understand the complex win-win outcomes that have to be constructed in effectively dealing with these groups, others have overly simplistic views of what it takes to gain their support.

Government

Effective government liaison requires understanding the different interests and motivations of people at each level of government, whether elected representatives or employed officials. Any detailed analysis of these factors is clearly beyond the scope of this study. However, the following points are relevant to the development of appropriate strategies. They highlight potential problem areas in the perceptions that some arts sector practitioners have in dealing with governments:

1. **'The Government' is not the key target for promoting the value of the arts:** A proportion of the arts sector feels that a strategy to promote the value of the arts should principally be directed at government policy-makers, either elected representatives or officials. This view is predicated on the notion that convincing these people directly of the value of the arts will lead to greater government support which will secure the future of the sector. While it is important to ensure that government policy-makers are provided with accurate and persuasive information, the 'main game' of this strategy is to influence attitudes among the general population directly.
2. **Elected governments are guided by public opinion:** The essence of democracy is that public opinion is one factor taken into account in all government decisions. Modern governments and political parties are often more aware of public attitudes than the lobbyists who seek to persuade them. Consequently, the arts sector has to be aware of the movements in public opinion that are relevant to developments in the arts. It also needs to understand the underlying factors that are driving any shifts in opinion. While this does not need to drive thinking in the sector, it at least has to be considered in dealing with governments. It is also important to recognise that funding for 'the arts' is an issue that will arise in an election policy context as one of the many areas competing for attention. The views that people in marginal electorates have of 'the arts' (and every other area of government activity) will continue to be important in determining policies.

3. **Endorsement by political leaders is helpful, but does not necessarily change public opinion:** Some people in the sector believe that endorsement of the arts by senior politicians (Ministers, Premiers and the Prime Minister) is a key to changing public opinion. The belief is that, if a senior political figure is seen to support the arts, then the public will be more positively disposed towards the arts as well. While such endorsement is an important part of any attitude change, it cannot be expected to sway public opinion unless it is also linked to a very clear presentation of the direct benefits to individual Australians.
4. **The responsibility for maintaining relationships lies with the sector, from the ‘bottom up’:** Attitude change in government at all levels involves influencing the understanding of a range of people, many of whom will have a range of competing demands. This includes more than just the most senior politicians and officials, and will involve individual artists and organisations taking advantage of opportunities to communicate positive messages and build relationships with bureaucrats and elected representatives at every level .
5. **The media is the ‘third party’ in any dealings with government:** In any dealings with government, it is important to recognise the importance of the media as potentially either a positive or negative force. It is in the joint interests of both the sector and government to maximise positive publicity where possible. Consequently, individuals and arts organisations should exploit the most positive angles in relation to media coverage of any government involvement in the arts.
6. **Local elected representatives value relevant opportunities for community involvement:** Elected representatives at every level, from local councillors to federal parliamentarians, are interested in opportunities for community involvement. These are most valued when they provide scope for demonstrating inclusive benefits to their constituency (rather than perhaps just entertainment for the representative or their staff). Consequently, it is important to work with local offices of politicians to maximise the recognition of government support of the arts among local communities.
7. **There is room for an independent advocacy role:** A number of people in the sector believe the Australia Council should take responsibility for promoting the value of the arts to all Australians, and that this should involve active lobbying of governments in the interests of artists and the sector in general. *The Australia Council Act 1975* does require the Council to ‘encourage the support of the arts by the States, local governing bodies and other persons and organisations’. However, it appears that there may be room for a separate, independent advocacy body which originates from the sector itself which could more appropriately take responsibility for political advocacy on behalf of the sector.

While such endorsement is an important part of any attitude change, it cannot be expected to sway public opinion unless it is also linked to a very clear presentation of the direct benefits to individual Australians.

It is in the joint interests of both the sector and government to maximise positive publicity where possible.

Business

There is considerable activity in some areas of the arts to develop skills throughout the sector in its dealings with business. There are a number of initiatives in place to help arts organisations better deal with business, principally in relation to sponsorship opportunities. However, this is another area where there is substantial scope to lift the overall standard of the arts sector. It is beyond the scope of this study to address it in detail.

In relation to a strategy to promote the value of the arts, it is important to find ways that collaboration with business might contribute to the overall image of the arts. This would involve maximising opportunities arising from a sponsor's involvement with the arts to bring the arts to the attention of a broader audience.

There are a large number of repositories of information about the arts in Australia. Many of them are held at a government level and others are held by private organisations and individuals. However, many people do not know how to access this information or do not understand how it might be relevant to them. Mechanisms for information sharing are often not clear or operate within limited circles of activity. The challenge is to make information as readily accessible as possible so that people can readily find what they need. This might be something as simple as a parent looking for a music teacher for their child, through to the potentially complex legal issues of establishing and running an arts organisation.

The outcome should be accessible and comprehensive sources which deliver relevant information to existing and potential future participants in the arts. This need underpins a number of other activities, principally:

1. **Finding the ‘foot soldiers’ in a strategy:** Making a distributed strategy work will involve communicating effectively both with existing people in the arts sector and with those who are interested in becoming a part of it in the future. At this stage, there do not appear to be any straightforward ways of identifying who is in the arts sector, let alone communicating with them effectively. Establishing clear lines of communication is an essential prerequisite for any strategy.
2. **Finding the right people and opportunities:** A key requirement for providing more effective ‘entry points’ to the arts for the Australian population is to equip people with the information they need so they know where to go and who to contact. This is equally important for interested ‘dabblers’ in the arts and for experienced professionals.
3. **Best practice:** Improvement in sectoral performance depends on identifying what people in the arts are doing and ‘spreading the word’ about this to other individuals and organisations. There appear to be many people in the sector hungry for information and many others willing to share their knowledge. However, there are deficiencies in the mechanisms for making this happen.
4. **The media:** The media needs ready access to information about the arts, both future events and background. This not only relates to simple ‘what’s on’ information but also involves the process of educating every arts practitioner in the type of information that is relevant to the media and the best ways to package this and deliver it.
5. **Education:** Information and education are often linked, particularly in the need to deliver opportunities for life-long learning to Australians about the arts. The delivery of information about the arts to people in a ‘user-friendly’ form could make a substantial contribution to the overall level of understanding Australians have of the arts.
6. **Business and government relations:** Communicating effectively with business and government often involves presenting the right information as persuasively as possible. This cannot be seen as a once-per-government or

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once-per-business activity since influential people in government and business are constantly changing and there is a need to constantly renew their understanding of the arts.

7. **Research and development:** Despite various catalogues of information about research that has been undertaken in the arts, the right information does not always find its way to the right people in a form that they can use. This can lead to re-inventing the wheel which is frustrating and inefficient for the people involved unless they can easily locate the information they need when they need it.
8. **Publish and perish:** The publication of information, either in hard copy or on the internet is an essential first step in communicating, but it is rarely effective unless it is backed up by constant reinforcement, incentives and personal contact. This applies among participants in the arts sector and to communication with the broader population.
9. **New technologies:** New technologies, such as the internet, video, and CD-ROM based interactive tools, are not a panacea to the communication needs of the sector. However, they could be extremely useful adjuncts to making complex information easily digestible. The widely diverse nature of the sector would lend itself to a coordinated strategy to improve skills among individuals and organisations delivered through and based on new-technology tools.

A considerable amount of research is undertaken in the arts sector, often focusing on individual aspects of arts practice. Potential gaps exist in two areas: research that delivers a practical broad-based understanding, focusing on audiences outside traditional catchments; and cooperation between different arts organisations in research.

Firstly, the need for a better understanding of the marketplace outside traditional arts marketing catchments is essential to the continued viability of the arts. The focus of research among existing supporters and/or purchasers of the arts is clearly appropriate to meet the immediate commercial needs of organisations. However, in a marketplace where the evidence suggests that existing audiences for many forms of the arts are growing older and declining in numbers, a broader focus is required.

This type of research need not necessarily attempt to take in the entire population, but it might simply broaden out to unconventional potential markets. For example, those arts organisations which find few young people in their audiences, could focus research on the broad needs of a defined group of young people to understand why they are not being attracted now and how they might be attracted in the future.

It is also important for the arts, as a sector, to remain in tune with shifts in the broader population. To fail to do so means potentially being subjected to some unexpected political and commercial ‘surprises’ when public opinion changes. Modern governments and businesses recognise the need to be aware of broad attitudinal developments that might affect their future. The arts sector needs to be prepared to ask difficult questions in its research in order to know the real answers and how to deal with potentially adverse changes in attitude.

Secondly, there appears to be considerable scope for a greater level of sharing of research findings and techniques among different arts organisations as well as more collaborative research. However, the highly competitive environment of the arts has often acted against this taking place.

There are apparently many opportunities for resources to be pooled without cutting across boundaries of commercial competitiveness. For example, art galleries in different cities could readily improve their techniques at researching visitors without fearing any consequences for competitiveness. The same could apply to performing arts organisations that are geographically distant.

Some of this is happening. However, during the industry consultations, a number of organisations expressed an interest in better collaboration on research or more effective sharing of research findings. However, often they lacked the means to identify either appropriate research partners or simply to know who was doing what. This suggests there is potential for better coordination of research and dissemination of findings, both within different areas of the arts and within the sector as a whole.

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The arts sector needs to be prepared to ask difficult questions in its research in order to know the real answers and how to deal with potentially adverse changes in attitude.

This sometimes means rejection of any suggestion that either the artistic output or its context could be shaped to better meet the needs and interests of the consuming public.

The social and cultural factors and 'unwritten rules' that make people feel unwelcome, 'at home' or out of place are critical to the enjoyment or discomfort that people feel in relation to their experiences of the arts.

THE PRODUCTION

The most vigorous debates within the arts relate to the sanctity of artistic expression. This sometimes means rejection of any suggestion that either the artistic output or its context could be shaped to better meet the needs and interests of the consuming public.

Without stepping into this debate, it is important to recognise that the content of the arts product, production, performance, exhibition or show is ultimately the reason why people either do or don't engage with the arts.

Nevertheless, there are many ways of influencing the benefit that people derive from the arts without undermining the essential creative independence of artists. In particular, there is evidence of extensive innovation throughout the sector in a range of areas related to the production. This innovation is often very effective at attracting new audiences or better meeting the needs of existing audiences. As such there is room for identifying these practices and they fall into at least four key areas:

Cost: Many artists and arts organisations need help knowing how to match the pricing structure to the audience. Considerable knowledge and innovation in approaches to pricing exist and could be more effectively shared.

Location: A number of arts organisations have found ways to ensure the physical environment of their activities has a positive influence on attitudes through attention to location, structure and familiarity to audiences. This involves addressing basic issues of 'user friendliness' in conventional venues as well as utilising unconventional environments to appeal to broader audiences. The body of knowledge from these efforts could be useful to many others within the sector.

Context: The social and cultural factors and 'unwritten rules' that make people feel unwelcome, 'at home', or out of place are critical to the enjoyment or discomfort that people feel in relation to their experiences of the arts. Organisations could draw from a range of practices throughout the sector to address these, such as: the tone and style of advertising and communication; utilising social networks and creating relevant social occasions around the arts; the manner and attitude of people at venues; and helping newcomers feel relaxed and comfortable.

Guidance: Initiatives to actively guide people to a better understanding of the arts are often delivered in the environment of productions and events. Best practice examples of these can be identified to enhance the appreciation audiences have of specific activities (e.g. through program or exhibition notes written with the needs of the audience in mind, introductory speeches, interactive technology etc). Other initiatives capitalise on the opportunity (of an 'artistic high') to lead or inspire people by offering guidance on greater involvement in the future.

Competitions in general, and in their association with festivals, appear to be under-utilised in the landscape of the arts in Australia. Australians are well-known for their competitive spirit, either through their own participation or by supporting others. Consequently, there would appear to be scope for better satisfying this spirit in the context of the arts.

Competitions are also valued by Australians because they are felt to be a great 'leveller'. No matter who you are or what your background is, a competition allows anyone to prove themselves against others. This is an integral part of the Australian sporting psyche. However, it is not so readily part of the view of the arts.

There are, of course, examples of Australian arts-based competitions that attract a high level of interest from the general population, such as:

- Over the course of an average year, 130,000 competitors of all ages present more than 100,000 items as part of the competitions organised and adjudicated by 3,500 volunteers with the 55 member organisations of the Association of Eisteddfod Societies of Australia for an estimated combined audience in excess of 325,000.
- 560 portraits competed for the \$35,000 Archibald prize this year and 144 entries were received for the \$20,000 Sporting Portrait Prize.
- Thousands of teenage children take part in the annual Rock Eisteddfods, dancing and singing their way to success for their school.
- 36,000 people watched the 2000 Tropfest short film festival live from locations around Australia to see which of the 354 entries would win prizes including a year's supply of coffee.
- The 2000 Tamworth Country Music Festival attracted 6275 dancers, who broke the world record for the world's longest line dance.
- A reported 2600 girls applied for five positions in the *Popstars* competition and more than 2,500,000 Australians watched at least one episode of the television series.

Competitions have an important part to play, not only in developing interest in the arts among the general population, but also in identifying emerging talent. They also bring aspiring artists face-to-face with the skills and competition that exist in the population, leading them to a realistic perspective of what it takes to succeed.

A strategy to promote the value of the arts should involve an examination of the ways in which competitions could be better utilised. One area worth pursuing would be the integration of competitions and festivals. For example, there might

Competitions are also valued by Australians because they are felt to be a great 'leveller'...

...there might be scope for a national arts-based competition, which centres around local festivals, bringing forward the best of Australian artistic talent.

...parents could be encouraged to sign their children up to learn musical instruments, singing and dancing...

be scope for a national arts-based competition, which centres around local festivals, bringing forward the best of Australian artistic talent. Not only would this provide a showcase for emerging artists, but it could also provide ongoing media and public interest that might see all Australians keen to follow the fortunes of individual artists as they pursue success in each category.

There also appears to be substantial scope to make better use of other events generally in providing entry points to the arts for the general public, particularly considering the role of festivals.

There are a range of major and minor arts festivals in Australia throughout the year. They range from the most 'serious' end of the classically derived arts to comedy and 'fringe' activities. In many cases, they appear and disappear in relative isolation, without having clearly identifiable links with the communities from which they draw audiences and participants.

It is important to capitalise on initial exposure and interest to help people realise how they might be able to pursue the experience further. This is the 'call to action' that is associated with many promotional activities and the arts offer considerable opportunities to better pursue these types of initiatives in the context of festivals. An arts festival may represent the first point of contact many people have with the arts, whether it is via a major city festival or a local community arts festival. More effort could be made to make sure that these people have access to the information and encouragement they need to pursue the experience in the future once the festival has passed.

The same principle applies to the major arts events which attract the interest of a broader public than regular arts activities, for example, the opera, ballet or symphony 'in the park' performances. In the context of these events, there could be greater effort to engage people in a richer experience of the arts. This might not only involve offering people information and encouragement to sign up as subscribers, but it could also provide opportunities for people to explore the arts in other ways. For example, parents could be encouraged to sign their children up to learn musical instruments, singing and dancing. Similarly, there could be 'friends of the arts' associations that people might choose to join.

While advertising is commonly used in attitude-change campaigns, the industry consultations revealed considerable anxiety among the arts sector at the prospect of using advertising to change attitudes towards the arts. The common view was that this type of generic advertising was far too expensive and that any available resources should be directed at supporting artistic output directly.

We noted this view, but it played no part in the absence of any recommendations calling for generic advertising for the arts sector at this stage. Rather, the first priority is to address many practical changes that are required in the nature of the arts sector's own level of organisation and its dealings with the general public. In fact, advertising at this stage could have an adverse effect if it led the public to believe that they could expect a certain type of arts-related experience that was not actually available.

Nevertheless, advertising is widely used throughout the arts sector to advertise specific arts companies or events. Many arts organisations use the press and, to some extent, TV advertising. In most cases there is room for improvement in the effectiveness of specific advertising in terms of its strategy, execution and placement.

Advertising, like marketing and public relations, is a task within the arts which does not often receive the attention it deserves. It is also important, as part of a strategy to promote the value of the arts, to consider the impression that advertising leaves with the overall population.

If advertising were intended to attract a broader audience, the key challenge would be to set the arts apart from alternative entertainment options. In this regard, the best prospects appear to lie in the edgy, real-life experiences that only the arts can provide in all its forms.

Effective advertising is like art, because, while it is difficult to know exactly how it will actually affect people's attitudes, what is bland will be forgotten and what is innovative and creative will be remembered. With some notable exceptions, the lack of creative advertising in the arts is surprisingly incongruous given the creative talent that drives arts practice.

As a result, the arts sector should identify best practice in advertising development and execution and, where possible, share this to raise the overall performance of the sector.

Develop mechanisms for identifying best practice in communication between the arts and the general population and raise the level of performance throughout the sector, beginning with the eight key areas nominated, recognising the importance of developing best practice in those areas where it does not exist.

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Recommendation 4



3

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Strategic development

3a

KEY ACTIONS

3a(i)

Develop specific goals for the strategy to promote the value of the arts, and set appropriate timeframes for achieving each goal.

Recommendation 2

Allocate resources to implement a strategy according to the 12 key strategic objectives, recognising:

- The need for an overall vision.
- The importance of enlisting the support of every organisation and individual in the arts sector.
- The need to generate personal identification with the arts among the general population.

Recommendation 3

Develop mechanisms for identifying best practice in communication between the arts and the general population and raise the level of performance throughout the sector, beginning with the eight key areas nominated, recognising the importance of developing best practice in those areas where it does not exist.

Recommendation 4

KEY PRINCIPLES

3a(ii)

VISION FOR THE ARTS

Shape a vision for the future of the arts in Australia which promotes ‘the Australian arts’, recognising:

- ‘The Australian arts’ should represent a point of pride for all to recognise our collective national talents.
- Any vision should be crafted to deliver benefits to every Australian from the arts in tangible ways that they can recognise in their own lives.
- The vision should deliver benefits that meet real needs that the majority of people consider important (including those identified in this study).
- The vision should be endorsed as far as possible by the Australian public, governments and policy makers and those who form the Australian arts sector.

Recommendation 49

NO SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS

Acknowledge that no simple measures can describe the complexity of the relationship that Australians have with the arts, recognising:

- Effective strategies need to address the reasons why people place a particular value on the arts.
- The inclination to seek change or accept the status quo is a principal component of the different attitudes towards the arts.
- The proposed segments reflect attitudinal groups in the population and provide a basis for communications strategy development.

Recommendation 1

3a(ii) Key principles

Acknowledge that the current overall attitudes of the Australian population, driven by their personal perceptions of the value of the arts, are fairly evenly balanced between those with positive (49%) and negative (51%) views of the arts, recognising:

- Those with the most positive attitudes express a personal connection and association with the arts.
- Those with the most negative attitudes express a ‘don’t care’ detachment.
- There is considerable scope to promote the value of the arts with many in the Australian population being seen as a ‘sleeping giant’ with potential to be persuaded in a positive or negative direction.

Recommendation 5

Acknowledge that the population cannot simply be divided into those who value the arts and those who do not, but that it is possible to understand the complex range of factors that lead people to either have a positive or negative view of the arts.

Recommendation 6

Acknowledge that a person’s demographics (such as age, income, etc.) do not necessarily offer an adequate explanation of how people relate to the arts and why:

- The attitudes towards the arts among people of the same demographic can often differ more than those of people in different demographics.
- Nevertheless, some clear relationships do emerge which can inform strategic decisions (for example, males are less positive than females).

Recommendation 7

DEALING WITH CHANGE

Help the arts sector to focus on the changing interests of and pressures facing the general public, recognising:

- The arts take their place in a highly competitive market where most Australians face a wide range of competing demands for their time and attention.
- People in the arts must continually update their understanding of the Australian public in order to meet their real needs and to form a valuable part of their personal interests and life experience.

Recommendation 13

PRECISE OUTCOMES

Agree on the precise outcomes required from a strategy to promote the value of the arts, recognising:

- Almost every person in the survey could identify some suggestion that would make them feel more positive about the arts and 70% of them nominated at least one change that would make them feel much more positive.
- No segment can be viewed as a ‘bad target’ or lacking potential for improvement in attitudes.
- It is important to match the target to the objective. For example, the ARTS LOVERS would be the key target for short term sales of expensive tickets, whereas the DISENGAGED offer the most important market for messages to deal with possible political criticism.

Recommendation 60

LESSONS FROM SPORT

Draw lessons for the arts from the way that Australians relate to sport, in particular the need to:

- Make every effort to demystify the arts.
- Maximise the vicarious enjoyment people get from the arts by encouraging them to be personally involved.
- Provide clear entry points that make it possible for anyone to 'have a go' (either as audience or participant).
- Help the public feel more affinity with people in the arts through broadly available news and information about artists themselves.
- Make effective use of competitions in the arts, not only to create interest but also to offer people entry points that represent a 'level playing field'.
- Provide more opportunities for family involvement, both through family-friendly events and venues and by more effective use of 'little leagues' in the arts to attract young people.
- Make sure that the arts can be 'fun' and something that people look forward to regularly.

Recommendation 14

THE 'TALL POPPY' MYTH

Help to dispel the myth that Australia is a nation of people who suffer from the 'tall poppy syndrome' in relation to creative expression and the arts, recognising that nine out of ten people feel pride and inspiration from the creative talent of Australians.

Recommendation 54

Arts definition

SPECIFIC DEFINITION(S) OF THE ARTS

Decide whether it is possible to identify clearly those activities and/or areas of interest which should be considered as ‘the arts’ in the future, recognising:

- The term ‘the arts’ is currently used extensively by those in the sector to describe an undefined grouping of areas of interest that are the subject of government policy, infrastructure development, media reporting, advocacy, career development, education and a range of other activities and initiatives.
- It appears that the term ‘the arts’ will continue to be used within the sector and will therefore have meaning to the general public.
- Despite the willingness of a majority of the population to accept a broad definition, there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers about what should be included in the arts in the future.
- From the perspective of philosophical, academic debate, there may be no need to be definitive about what constitutes the arts as long as no action follows such debate.
- However, without a firm description of what constitutes ‘the arts’ (and why), it will be impossible to undertake a communication campaign to broaden the scope of the definition of the arts held by the general public.
- This is for two main reasons. Firstly, it will not be possible to determine who should be involved in any attitude-change strategy. Secondly, confusion in the nature of any message being communicated will lead to confusion in the minds of those who hear the message.

Recommendation 21

TERMINOLOGY OF THE ARTS

Review existing terminology used to describe the arts and the types of definitions that are used to include or exclude various activities as part of ‘the arts’, recognising:

- Three-quarters of all people would like the arts to include a ‘much broader range of creative things’ (76%) and six out of ten would like to see people ‘accept all popular entertainment as part of the arts’ (62%).
- There is a variety of definitions used within the arts sector to determine if something is part of ‘the arts’, but these do not leave the general public with a clear understanding of what qualifies and why.
- There is substantial scope to craft new definitions for ‘the Australian arts’ which accurately reflect the arts in Australia today and which position them for changes that are likely to occur in the future.

Recommendation 57

BROADER SPONTANEOUS VIEW

Promote awareness of the current range of activities that comprise the arts in Australia, recognising:

- The majority of Australians are currently able to provide only a relatively limited spontaneous definition of the arts (less than three items).
- The attitudinal segments with the most positive views tend to have broader definitions of the arts.

Recommendation 18

Determine to what extent the arts sector would like Australians to have a broader definition of the arts which extends beyond the most traditional forms of the arts, recognising the dominant spontaneous definition is largely limited to the more traditional, 'higher arts' which have been around for over a century.

Recommendation 19

INCLUDING 'LITTLE A' ARTS

If considered appropriate, encourage people to expand their spontaneous definition of the arts from their current limited, traditional range of items, to include more of the additional items that many people are currently prepared to accept as part of the arts, recognising:

- There is apparently a very large difference between the limited scope of the spontaneous definition of the arts held by most people and the broad range of items they are prepared to accept if prompted with suggestions.
- People are more inclined to naturally think of a 'big A' definition of the more traditional arts but are already prepared to accept a much broader range of 'little a' arts as well.
- There is considerable potential to encourage people to expand their spontaneous perceptions of the arts in this direction.

Recommendation 20

POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

Clarify the relationship between the concepts of 'the arts' and 'popular entertainment', recognising:

- The vast majority of Australians accept that 'the arts are at the heart of every form of popular entertainment' (80%) and that 'people can enjoy the arts in the same way that they enjoy sport' (78%).
- The considerable debate within the arts sector about the distinction between the arts and popular entertainment creates the impression of two 'warring tribes', with the arts on one side and popular entertainment on the other.
- This diminishes the capacity of the general public to understand the differences between them and to recognise the contribution of one to the other, and it denies both the potential benefits of a clear relationship and smooth transitions in either direction, both creatively and commercially.

Recommendation 51

LIMITED 'COLLATERAL' DAMAGE

Take account of the potential concerns some people may have about broadening the definition of the arts, recognising:

- There is limited evidence that broadening the definition of the arts would lead to 'collateral damage' among those who currently have a positive view of the arts.
- Even those with the most positive views of the arts (the ARTS LOVERS segment) and those who are currently satisfied with the way the arts are (the SATISFIED segment) show a significantly greater level of acceptance for the 'little a' arts in their future definitions than in their current definitions.

Recommendation 22

3b Arts definition

Communication and promotion

BRAND IMAGE

RELEVANCE

Help all Australians believe the arts have at least some relevance to their lives, recognising:

- More than one-third of all Australians agree that ‘the arts are OK, they are just irrelevant to me’ (35%), and these people tend to have negative perceptions of the arts.
- This finding supports the idea that many in the Australian public can be seen as a ‘sleeping giant’ in relation to the arts.
- People who fail to see the relevance of the arts to their lives are receptive to either negative or positive messages about the arts, which means the arts sector needs to reach them with positive messages before they receive a contrary impression from elsewhere.

Recommendation 43

ACCESSIBILITY

Help the general public see that the arts can be accessible to average Australians, recognising:

- The vast majority (84%) believe that the arts should be ‘more accessible and available to average Australians’.
- Two-thirds agree that ‘more Australians should directly participate in the arts’ (66%) and that ‘people should go to arts events and activities more often’ (66%).
- It is important to help Australians understand the choices they have in relation to the arts, regardless of whether or not they take them up.

Recommendation 56

ELITISM

If an image of elitism and class distinction is considered to be a disadvantage to the arts, develop initiatives that address this image, recognising:

- A sense of exclusivity is considered by some in the arts to bring advantages and is not necessarily seen as a universally negative feature.
- About half the population believe the arts attract people who are ‘somewhat elitist and pretentious’ (51%) and that ‘the arts are a class thing’ (42%).
- If the perceptions of elitism and exclusivity are not true, then the arts sector needs to effectively communicate the truth to the general public.
- Any elitist aspects of the arts considered to be a handicap need to be changed, and the changes need to be communicated effectively to the public.

Recommendation 42

OPENNESS

Create a greater sense that the arts are available to everyone, recognising:

- A substantial majority of people would feel more positive if there were ‘a greater sense that the arts are available to everyone’ (81%) and ‘less elitist

attitudes within the arts' (66%).

- A majority of ARTS LOVERS feel this way too.
- Many social factors, customs and unwritten rules have a strong effect on people's perceptions of arts activities.
- These factors need to be reviewed in relation to each arts activity, organisation and venue with a view to eliminating unintended obstacles to people feeling welcome to be part of the arts.

Recommendation 63

TOLERANCE

Promote an image of the arts as tolerant of the differences between all Australians and one that is open to future changes in the arts, recognising:

- Almost nine out of ten Australians (85%) agree that 'we can't expect the arts to appeal to everyone' and only about one-third of Australians would 'like the arts to stay pretty much the way they are' (36%).
- There appears to be a relatively high level of tolerance towards the arts, even among those who have negative views of the arts (who are least likely to expect change in the arts).
- For people in the negative segments, this tolerance is founded on lack of engagement with the arts, leaving them highly susceptible to negative messages from people who may wish to use the arts as a 'political football'.
- Consequently any communication strategy should: show that the arts are tolerant of the differences between all Australians ('mainstream' and minority); avoid any sense of being patronising or lecturing in tone; and show people how the arts can have value in their lives (not just tell them).

Recommendation 59

PRACTICAL FACTORS

Overcome the practical factors that restrict the capacity of people to enjoy and value the arts by helping all parts of the arts sector to put in place initiatives that break down these barriers, recognising:

- Large proportions of the population would feel more positive about the arts if there were changes to the cost (85%), information (80%), location (74%), environment (72%), timing (69%), and transport (68%) related to the arts.
- These factors not only encourage or discourage consumption, but they also strongly influence perceptions of the arts.
- There are a large number of options available to the arts sector to overcome these obstacles.

Recommendation 62

ARTS CONTENT

Develop a culture of open debate about the content of the arts with a view to helping artists gain a realistic understanding of how their content is perceived by Australians and how it might be informed by an accurate understanding of Australians today, recognising:

- The majority of Australians would feel more positive about the arts if the arts provided: 'more Australian performances, shows and writing' (76%); 'more multicultural events and activities' (67%); and 'shows and performances more relevant to the way things are today' (59%).

- Discussions about artistic content are often restricted by the view that only artists should make decisions about content without any external reference.
- There is a view within the sector that valuable artistic content and commercial objectives are mutually exclusive, which tends to deny the artistic process a market-based objective understanding of Australians today or how they relate to the arts.
- Such objective information could not only inform the artistic process but also help with critical ‘packaging’ considerations that may make the same arts content more relevant and appealing to specific audiences.

Recommendation 61

REASONS TO VALUE THE ARTS

VALUE

Ensure that every Australian can identify at least one way in which the arts might have value, either to them personally or to the nation as a whole, recognising that 20% of the population are currently unable or unwilling to spontaneously suggest any way in which the arts have value.

Recommendation 9

PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

Wherever possible, provide people with an answer to the question ‘What’s in it for me?’ when promoting the value of the arts, since people will be more likely to support the arts if they can see some relevant, personal benefit.

Recommendation 8

PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

Capitalise on the many ways in which Australians can and do enjoy the arts in their lives, recognising:

- The majority of Australians get a lot of enjoyment out of the creative output of others either live (58%), in books (56%), or through recordings or broadcasts (53%).
- The majority of Australians get a lot of enjoyment out of supporting family or friends in the arts (58%).
- A relatively large proportion of Australians get a lot of enjoyment out of being artists themselves, either just for their own enjoyment (34%) and/or for others to enjoy (24%).

Recommendation 23

Capitalise on the significant potential to encourage people to see more value in the arts from the point of view of their own personal involvement, recognising that few people think about this spontaneously, but the overall level of interest is relatively high.

Recommendation 10

Capitalise on the relationship between people directly participating in the arts and having a positive view of the arts, recognising:

- People who feel most positive about the arts are also most likely to directly participate in them in various ways and the converse applies to those who do not feel positive about the arts.
- People will be more likely to support an activity and appreciate the efforts of others in that activity if they also participate in it, or at least have personally tried it, or believe that the option to do so is available to them (or to their family and friends).

Recommendation 24

CHILDREN

Encourage appreciation of the value of the arts for children, recognising there is significant potential for people to spontaneously acknowledge the benefits the arts can and do bring to children.

Recommendation 11

INTELLECTUAL INTEREST

Ensure the arts sector makes every effort to communicate clearly and effectively with the Australian public, without underestimating their interest in learning and intellectual stimulation, recognising:

- Nine out of ten Australians place a high or fairly high value on: learning about new things (93%); being intellectually stimulated (89%); and having some creative skill (88%).
- Only two-thirds of the population place the same value on having some sporting skill (68%).

Recommendation 15

CREATIVE SKILLS

Capitalise on the value that Australians place on creative skills by demonstrating more effectively the link between the arts and creative skill, recognising:

- The majority of Australians consider that 'having some creative skill' has a high or fairly high value (88%).
- The term 'the arts' is not synonymous with 'creativity', but there is a wide range of creative options available to people, and that the arts sector needs to take a more prominent role as a rich source of creative opportunities.

Recommendation 16

EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE

UNDERSTANDING AND EDUCATION

Provide all people with access to the understanding required to appreciate the arts, recognising:

- While many Australians recognise that the arts 'require understanding to appreciate them fully' (59%), more believe that 'people shouldn't need any special understanding to appreciate the arts' (69%).

3c(iii)

3c(iii) Education and knowledge

- The arts sector needs to constantly re-examine their communication against the question: 'Are we making every effort to ensure that people can understand the arts as easily as possible?'
- The fear of 'dumbing down' the arts to make them more accessible to the general public is misplaced, partly because of strong evidence that the population is interested in intellectual challenges which would include the arts.
- There are many models from other sectors (e.g. wine and science) where substantial changes in appreciation have been brought about by deliberately increasing the access and understanding available to the general public.

Recommendation 44

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Ensure the arts are part of the education of every Australian child and that this accessibility is widely known, recognising:

- The vast majority of Australians agree that 'the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian kid' (85%).
- This should involve all types of education, not just that available through the formal school system.
- The benefits to flow from such education should be clearly articulated.
- The role of the arts sector and individual artists in contributing to the education of Australians should be clarified and developed.

Recommendation 45

FORMAL EDUCATION

Identify the best ways in which the arts sector can work together with the education system to deliver high quality and relevant arts education for children, recognising:

- The vast majority of people would feel more positive about the arts if there were 'better education and opportunities for kids in the arts' (86%).
- The education system is under pressure from a broad range of interest groups and subject areas.
- The arts sector needs to work with teachers and students to generate more effective education and opportunities for children in the arts.

Recommendation 64

ADULT LEARNING

Develop innovative ways of delivering arts-based learning opportunities to adults, recognising:

- Three-quarters of all people would feel more positive about the arts by 'being able to understand the arts better' (74%).
- This means there is significant interest in learning about the arts outside of school.
- There are a wide range of alternatives for helping people to 'understand the arts better' beyond formal adult education courses.

Recommendation 65

MEDIA AND BUSINESS

Close the gap in understanding between the arts sector and business, the media and those with limited knowledge of the arts, recognising:

- Around three-quarters of all Australians agree that: ‘there should be more support for the arts from business’ (73%); ‘there should be more coverage of the arts in the media’ (71%); and ‘we should all learn more about the arts’ (77%).
- There is currently a lack of skill and knowledge within the arts sector about how to work effectively with business and the media, and about how to help inform and educate Australians about the arts.
- These areas often do not receive the attention within arts organisations that their complexity deserves.
- There is a parallel lack of knowledge within certain areas of the media about the news opportunities available within the arts, and among business about the potential value of arts-related sponsorship and joint ventures.

Recommendation 58

SPECIFIC BENEFITS

3c(iv)

NATIONAL BENEFITS

Review the use of the message that the arts deliver national benefits, recognising that:

- The ‘converted’ spontaneously acknowledge these benefits much more than do others.
- The manner and context in which the message is presented could be made more effective (and personally relevant).

Recommendation 12

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Develop and promote the social experiences available through the arts, recognising:

- Some people with a strong interest in mixing with others of their own age or in their local community do not necessarily find relevant opportunities through the arts.
- Some people have little interest in greater social contact generally, including through the arts.

Recommendation 17

LIFESTYLE

Help all Australians realise the arts can be a greater part of their lifestyle, recognising:

- Half of all Australians (51%) already agree that ‘the arts are an important part of my lifestyle’.
- There is significant potential on two fronts. Firstly, to enhance the experiences of those who already enjoy the lifestyle benefits of the arts. Secondly, to introduce newcomers to their lifestyle benefits.

- The arts as an ‘event’, particularly the experience of opening nights and associated functions, could be a highly attractive draw-card for many and could make the arts a more accessible lifestyle option.
- The two-thirds of Australians (67%) who believe that ‘the arts should be as much about doing these things yourself as being part of an audience’ reflect the importance of better leveraging involvement in the arts as well as just attendance.

Recommendation 46

QUALITY OF LIFE

Highlight the value of the arts in enhancing quality of life on a deeper personal level, recognising:

- Australians are generally interested in the contribution made by the arts to a more meaningful life.
- Two-thirds of Australians (66%) agree that ‘the arts are good for my inner self’.
- The level of support for these concepts warrants a re-thinking of stereotypes that exist in some quarters, which erroneously emphasise an image of the Australian public as superficial and lacking interest in a deeper more meaningful view of life.

Recommendation 47

REFLECTING AUSTRALIA

Ensure the arts are seen to reflect Australia today, recognising:

- The majority of people expect that the arts should reflect the national identity of Australians.
- 68% of people agree that ‘It is important that the arts reflect who we are as Australians’.
- The concept of national identity is constantly evolving, but for the arts involves two main requirements: firstly, that the content of the arts reflects the Australian experience in its contemporary richness; secondly, that the arts relates to the public with a ‘brand personality’ that has the characteristically Australian qualities of being down-to-earth and accessible.

Recommendation 48

RELAXATION

Promote the relaxation benefits of the arts to Australians, recognising:

- More Australians agreed that ‘I look forward to being able to settle into a book, a film or some good music and escape from life for a while’ than with any other statement of personal benefit put forward (88% total agreement).
- It is important for the arts sector to understand the appeal of a relaxing experience, which includes a comfortable physical and social environment, as well as ready access to appropriate information.
- The specific message about relaxation (and other benefits) should be carefully fine-tuned to match the real needs of each potential target audience.

Recommendation 50

RECOGNITION

Enhance the recognition that Australian artists receive for their achievements, recognising:

- The majority of people enjoy the pride of seeing ‘the creative talent of Australians recognised locally and internationally’ (89% agree).
- The arts sector could improve its ability to bring artistic achievements to the attention of news and current affairs media and to capitalise on other opportunities for publicity to the general public.
- The evidence in this study suggests the news and current affairs media could review the level of recognition they assume that the Australian population would like to see given to Australian creative (and artistic) achievement.

Recommendation 52

INSPIRATION

Capitalise on the inspiration that Australians feel in relation to the skill of others and their enjoyment at being creative themselves, recognising:

- The vast majority of Australians find ‘the skill of a great artist, musician or writer very inspiring’ (85%) and agree that ‘I feel good when I can express myself creatively’ (80%).
- The benefits of the arts in ‘helping young people to learn how to express themselves’ are also widely recognised (87% agree).
- There are marketing opportunities associated with attracting the attention of people when they are inspired by skilled artistic performance.

Recommendation 53

BUSINESS

Capitalise on the potential business and ownership benefits of the arts, recognising:

- Three-quarters of people (76%) agree that ‘the arts can mean very profitable business both at home and overseas’.
- Two-thirds of people (67%) ‘would love to own a really good piece of art’.
- It is important to promote the value of the arts in a context of explaining how either owning art or the benefits from arts-based businesses are within the reach of all Australians.

Recommendation 55

Demographic issues

YOUNGER PEOPLE

Encourage young people in the arts and make relevant opportunities available to them as they are growing up, recognising:

- There is a strong relationship between the level of involvement people have in the arts when they are growing up and the value they place on the arts later in life.
- The two types of involvement that appear to be most strongly linked to valuing the arts are encouragement from parents to be involved, and being involved in things outside of school. However, there appears to be a weaker relationship between whether a child enjoys the way the arts are taught at school and their eventual attitudes towards the arts.
- Consequently, there are likely to be significant gains to be made from providing parents with the incentive and the opportunities to help their children become involved in the arts.
- The role of formal school-based arts education should be clearly integrated with activities involving the support of parents.

Recommendation 25

Promote the value of the arts to young people recognising:

- Young people's attitudes are influenced by the same factors as the rest of the population.
- Young people have a strong interest in taking an active role in the arts.
- The need to clarify the definition of 'the arts' in the minds of young people, particularly the distinction between 'their definition' and 'their parents' definition'.
- The need to encourage flexible appreciation and involvement to accommodate the rapidly changing and widely varying preferences of young people in relation to the arts.
- The importance of family involvement and support.
- The importance of delivering appropriate social opportunities in association with the arts.
- That the formal education system is only one means of influencing the attitudes of children and that it cannot be expected to bring about significant change in isolation.
- The importance of making role models accessible to school-age young people, perhaps drawing from those who are considered by the Australia Council and other bodies to be elite artists.

Recommendation 26

OLDER PEOPLE

3d(ii)

Promote the value of the arts among older people, recognising:

- Many older people have established views (positive and negative) towards the arts and are not expecting change.
- The arts could play a role in providing a social fabric for older people feeling disconnected from society.
- Some older people are among the most solid supporters of the arts, within their means.
- The majority of older people are facing extreme financial pressures which substantially reduce their capacity to pay for the arts.

Recommendation 27

MALES

3d(iii)

Promote the value of the arts among men and boys, recognising:

- Men and boys have a substantially more negative view of the arts than do women and girls.
- There is a perceived lack of opportunities for men and boys to become involved in the arts, individually or with each other (including as fathers and sons).
- There is substantial potential interest among men and boys to enjoy creative expression, either their own or that of others.

Recommendation 28

ADULTS

3d(iv)

Promote the value of the arts more effectively among adults 25 to 54 years, recognising:

- These people are a key target as consumers of the arts in all its forms because of their means and potential interest.
- People in this age group are relatively evenly spread across the attitudinal segments, which means there is substantial potential to garner more support from less positive segments.
- There is scope to look beyond the existing market catchments for the arts and, in this regard, the segmentation arising from this study indicates some obstacles that need to be addressed.
- A positive influence on their attitudes is likely to come from paying attention to practical impediments of cost and location, social factors of perceived exclusiveness or pretension, and concerns about the lack of relevance of the experience of the arts, from the point of view of their content or the context in which they are presented.
- Satisfying the needs of these people will require that the arts fit in with the increasing pressures on the lives of adults today and, for those with children, it requires attention to family issues.

Recommendation 29

FAMILIES

Promote the value of the arts among parents and their families, recognising:

- There appear to be two dominant views of the arts among parents: those who are deterred by practical issues; and those who appreciate personal, family-based involvement in the arts.
- Strategies will need to overcome practical obstacles (in reality and perceptions) and encourage personal, family-based involvement.
- Various measures should be considered, including ‘junior leagues’ in the arts, expanding support among families beginning with the existing subscriber base, and advertising and promotion that better targets parents and families (such as through shopping centres and ‘shopper docket’).

Recommendation 30

INCOME

Acknowledge that income does matter in relation to a person’s attitude towards the arts, particularly:

- The most positive sub-segments (Devotees and Highly involved) tend to have higher incomes, while the more negative sub-segments tend to have lower incomes.
- This relationship is partly a function of a strong perception of the arts being for wealthy people (through the perceived cost and media imagery of arts events).
- Many are deterred from enjoying arts activities through purchase or ticket prices and other practical factors associated with lower incomes (such as living further from central venues).

Recommendation 31

VERY LOW INCOMES

Establish special initiatives for people on the lowest incomes, who include many people over 55 years old and retired, recognising:

- The need to provide low-cost access in order for these people to maintain their involvement.
- The potential for them to act as a source of volunteers in the arts.
- The opportunity to optimise the use of venues during the day with retirees.
- The special needs of older men in relation to the arts.

Recommendation 32

LOW INCOMES

Promote the value of the arts to people on incomes below the national average, recognising:

- This income group is most likely to feel the social and class issues in relation to the arts in terms of their perceived elitism.
- They are open to change in the arts in terms of the relevance of their content, practical aspects of location and pricing, and a greater level of accessibility and availability overall.
- They show an above-average interest in wanting to be able to understand the arts better.

Recommendation 33

HIGH INCOMES

Maintain and expand the importance of people on high incomes to the future financial viability of the professional arts and cater to their needs and interests, recognising:

- High income does not guarantee a positive view of the arts, so there is substantial potential among this group.
- The need for arts marketing and information to be at least as sophisticated as the efforts being made by other suppliers of products and services who are vying for their attention.
- The need to address their above-average level of concern about elitism within the arts by presenting the arts in a context which is high quality but free from the perception of elitism.
- The need to help these people deal with time pressures and unpredictability in their lives.

Recommendation 34

QUALIFICATIONS

3d(vii)

Promote the value of the arts among those who do not have higher-level qualifications, recognising:

- The needs of the less educated are not being met as well as those of the most educated.
- The strong link between higher educational qualifications and more positive attitudes towards the arts.
- That educational qualifications do not act on their own to create this relationship and they are also linked to other important factors, such as higher incomes and proximity to central city venues.
- That much of the arts sector draws its understanding from the highly educated and focuses its communication on them.
- The need for broader efforts to both gather an understanding from the less educated and to better meet their needs.
- The need to take steps wherever possible to help overcome intellectual barriers that may make it more difficult for people to engage with the arts.

Recommendation 35

LOCATION

3d(viii)

RURAL AND REGIONAL

Promote the value of the arts among people in rural and regional Australia, recognising:

- People in rural and regional Australia are less likely to value the arts than are people living in cities.
- There is a larger gap in attitudes between men and women in the country than that which exists in the city.
- There is a larger gap in attitudes towards the arts between the highest income and lower income groups in the country than that which exists in the city.
- There is confusion over whether many creative and expressive activities, which are commonplace in the country (for example, yarn-telling), are recognised as part of the arts.

Recommendation 36

3d(vii) Qualifications

OUTER CITY

Promote the value of the arts among those living in outer areas of capital cities, recognising:

- They place a lower value on the arts than those living in the inner city (and have more in common with rural and regional Australia in this regard).
- They have lower educational qualifications and incomes than those living closer in to the city.
- They face practical obstacles of distance to venues and cost that need to be addressed.
- They are likely to have an optimistic outlook for change in the arts which suggests they offer substantial potential for the future.

Recommendation 37

NATIONAL ORIGIN

Promote the expression through the arts of Australia's national origins, taking account of the influences that national origins have on attitudes towards the arts, recognising:

- People of non-English speaking origin express more positive views of the arts than do those lacking in such origins.
- There is potential interest in and unmet (commercial) demand for arts which truly reflect the diversity of national origins of Australians.
- There is potential for the 'Australian arts' to learn from the development of 'Australian cuisine', which would see distinctive Australian arts that combine our cultural influences as a natural part of Australian life.

Recommendation 38

AUSTRALIAN ORIGIN

Address the relative disinclination towards the arts among people of Australian origin, recognising people with Australian origins have a relatively more negative view of the arts than those with non-English speaking origins.

Recommendation 39

NON-AUSTRALIAN ORIGIN

Promote the value of the arts among the diversity of Australians who have some first-or second-generation non-Australian origin, recognising:

- These people are likely to have a more positive view of the arts than those without such origin.
- The diversity of attitudes towards the arts among people of non-Australian origin is likely to be strongly influenced by factors other than their national origins - such as their relative socio-economic status, education and location.
- These people have similar needs as the balance of the population for the arts to become as welcoming as possible and to address relevant obstacles.
- Any strategy should deal with communication problems related to language difficulties and use appropriately targeted media.
- Arts-related activities should be delivered with relevant content and context to appeal to people with varied national backgrounds.

Recommendation 40

INDIGENOUS ORIGIN

Learn from Indigenous culture and practices in promoting the value of the arts, recognising:

- The importance of traditional arts to Indigenous people and the relatively strong interest Indigenous people have in active involvement in the arts relative to non-Indigenous Australians.
- The view of Indigenous people that the arts should be 'more relevant to today'.
- That non-Indigenous Australians could learn from Indigenous Australians' appreciation of the arts, particularly in relation to their broad acceptance of different standards of arts practice and the encouragement of children from an early age to become involved as part of their family.

Recommendation 41

GUIDE TO THE MAIN REPORT

What is in the main report?

WHAT AM I READING NOW?

You are currently reading the overview to the study. This provides you with a summary of the research findings and some key quantitative data. It also contains background to the attitudinal segments, an explanation of the key strategic issues and all the recommendations from the main report.

WHAT'S IN THE MAIN REPORT?

The main report contains detailed explanations of all the findings from the study. It provides you with an objective detailed analysis of the full quantitative results from the study as well as quotes from the research participants. It also offers more than 90 detailed analytical comments about the implications the findings have for developing a strategy to promote the value of the arts. This information provides the basis for each of the report's recommendations.

HOW IS THE MAIN REPORT DESIGNED?

The electronic version of the report allows you to 'point and click' at indexes, tables of contents and cross-references so you can easily navigate to any section in which you are interested.

The printed version of the report highlights the different types of information and different sections so you can either read it from start to finish or scan individual sections.

WHAT'S IN THE ATTACHMENTS?

There are a number of attachments which provide additional detail to the main report. These include more than 150 separate graphs and charts as well as comparisons to show the key differences among the different demographics and segments. The attachments also provide selected transcripts of comments made by research participants.

HOW IS THE INFORMATION IN THE REPORT ORGANISED?

The remainder of this overview explains in detail what you will find in the main report. It gives you:

- A 'map' which shows the navigation tools in the electronic version.
- A summary of the contents pages showing the main sections.

WHERE DO I FIND THE FULL REPORT AND ATTACHMENTS?

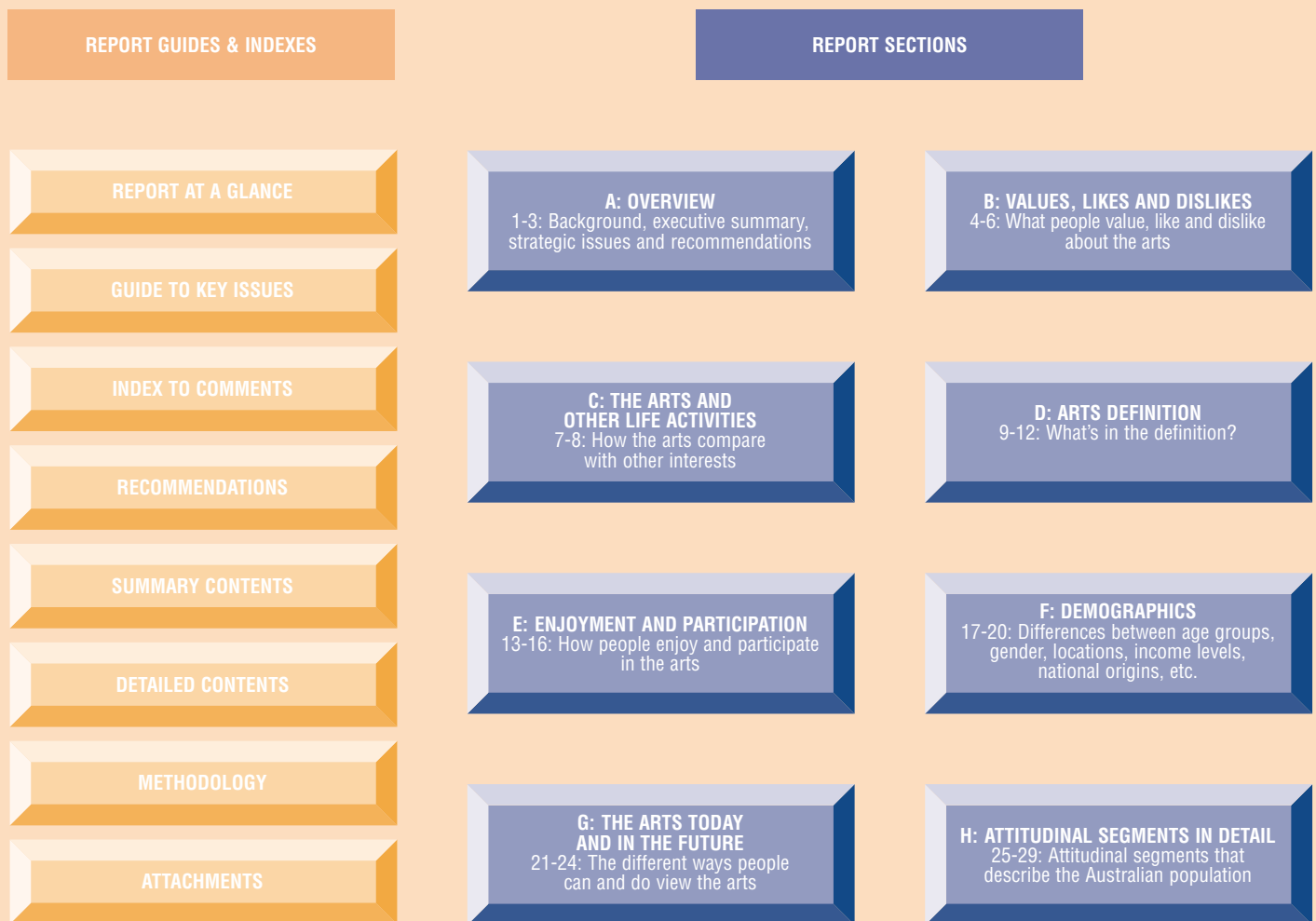
You will find the full contents of the report and attachments on the CD-ROM that is attached to page three of this overview. It can also be found on the internet site of the Australia Council at <http://www.ozco.gov.au>

A printed version of the main report can also be obtained from the Australia Council, which can be contacted at:

The Australia Council
372 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010
PO Box 788, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Telephone (02) 9215 9000
Toll Free 1800 226 912
Fax (02) 9215 9111
Email: mail@ozco.gov.au

Report map

This map shows the navigation tools in the electronic version of the main report.



Main report table of contents

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The major sections in the main report are:

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2.	Strategic issues
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Part B:	What people value, like and dislike about the arts
4.	How much people value the arts
5.	What people like about the arts
6.	What people don't like about the arts
Part C:	The arts and other life activities
7.	How do the arts rate in relation to other life activities?
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Notes