

## Regional Arts Funding Priorities Survey

A Snapshot of Findings - December 2013

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## Executive Summary

Country Arts WA, through its advocacy project Vote Arts, conducted research to discover the priorities of regional Western Australians after the State Government announced an historic investment in regional arts of \$24 Million over three years. The funding will begin to flow via the Royalties for Regions scheme in the financial year 2014-15. Country Arts WA is the peak body for regional arts organisations in Western Australia and has a responsibility to ensure that decisions about the direction of the funds are in accordance with the wishes and best outcomes for regional Western Australians.

The research was conducted using a survey available online, via web link, embedded in Vote Arts' website and via Facebook. The survey was made available on paper to any community or individual who requested it. Country Arts WA targeted regional people from across a range of sectors including artists, arts workers, local government representatives and community development ensuring that responses came from across the spectrum of those who interact with the arts in its various roles, as entertainer, educator, health promoter, cultural custodian and community builder as well as reflecting the wishes of people from all regions.

The Survey was available from 30 August to 23 October, 2013.

A follow up question was put to respondents asking them to estimate the size of arts groups of which they were members. The largest portion of respondents indicated that they were members of groups of fifty or more people. These groups reach audiences larger than their memberships and we consider it likely that respondents were considering the tens of thousands of regional people who benefit from regional arts and culture programs that their groups and organisations are responsible for producing and presenting.

This report reveals key themes found in the research. The data indicates that people from around the state have strong views about the value of the arts and the direction that the Government's investment should take. Regional differences surface on some of the key questions and this reflects the different challenges facing individual communities around the state. However the themes presented in this report are a valid representation of trends found across responses. Tabulated answers to all questions are available in Appendix 1.

One key finding is respondents see significant value in the people and programs that support arts activity in regional Western Australia. When asked to consider what was most likely to have the best outcomes for their regions people from across the state nominated investment in programs and the people to run them ahead of spending on hard infrastructure such as the upkeep of buildings. The authors suggest that that this finding should be considered by policymakers as they plan for the efficient use of the State Government's new financial commitment to regional arts.

Focussing on programs delivered locally by arts workers in the regions, meets the first goal of Royalties for Regions spending as it clearly helps to build capacity in regional communities. Regional people see themselves as creators as well audience members and consistently people expressed the desire to see local people, making things in their communities. This was revealed not merely in their preferences for directing spending but also in their preferences for arts consumption.

The survey asked people about their desire to have more arts activities in their regions, something that was almost unanimously endorsed, and people expressed the desires for the types of experiences that offered a tangible benefit to the participant. Workshops, masterclasses, artist in residence programs were favoured as examples whereby communities could learn new skills and therefore become more productive themselves.

Country Arts has for some time, advocated for the need for a regional arts policy for Western Australia and this survey went some way to testing people's response to this idea. Only a third of people were able to identify that no such policy currently exists but 79% of respondents agreed that such a policy would support the future of arts and culture in their region.

People want to participate in the arts and they are prepared to pay for quality arts offerings. Whilst people made a distinction between National and International touring works compared to locally produced works there emerged a pricing sweet spot of between \$20 and \$40. Producers and presenters of work touring regionally should be aware of this when planning their venue programs.

People showed strong support for the arts and recognised the many aspects of life that are influenced positively by an engagement with the arts. This finding is particularly encouraging as Country Arts WA has championed the case for the arts as central feature of healthy communities for many years. Indeed in the respect Royalties for Regions and Country Arts WA's objectives are aligned. Throughout this survey we have found that respondents want to include the arts in their lives. They show a preference for doing it themselves and see the value of investment in people on the ground in their communities as the key way to deliver successful arts outcomes.

In conclusion we commend this report as a valuable insight into the opinions of regional Western Australians and recommend that policy makers responsible for decisions about investment in the regional arts sector in Western Australia consider its findings carefully.

## Who Answered the Survey?

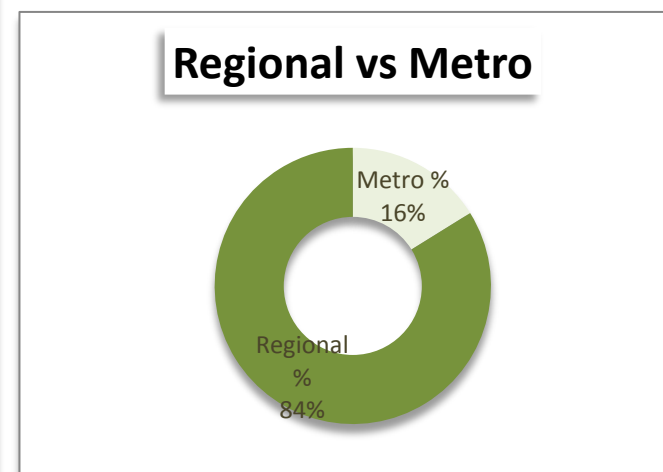
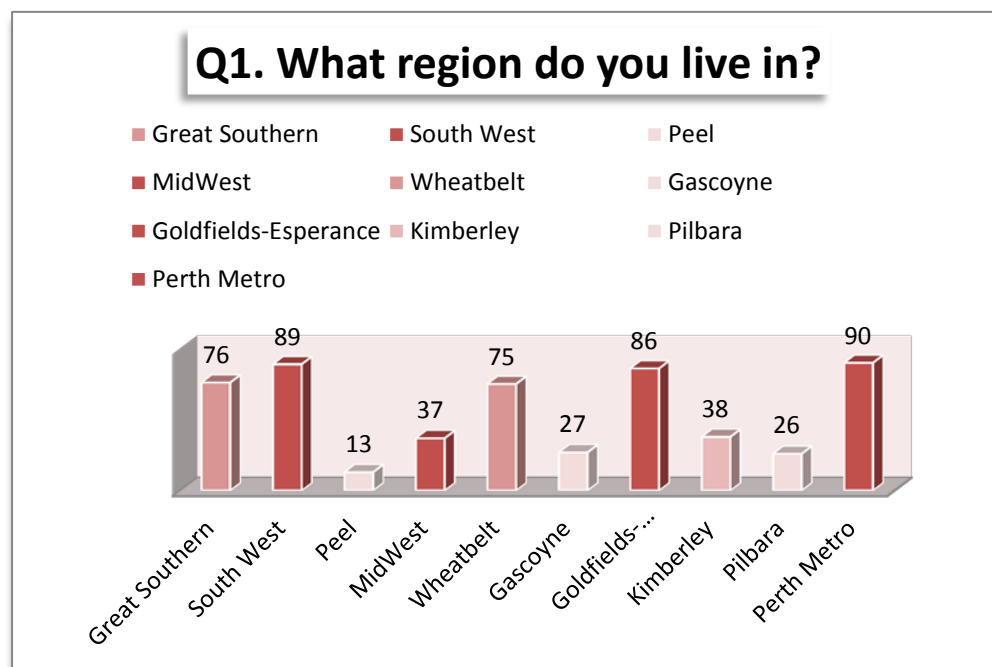
People from all the regions responded to the Regional Arts Funding Priorities Survey. Over 80% of the 557 responses came from outside of the metro area.

The top three regions were separated by only four completions and the top two by just one.

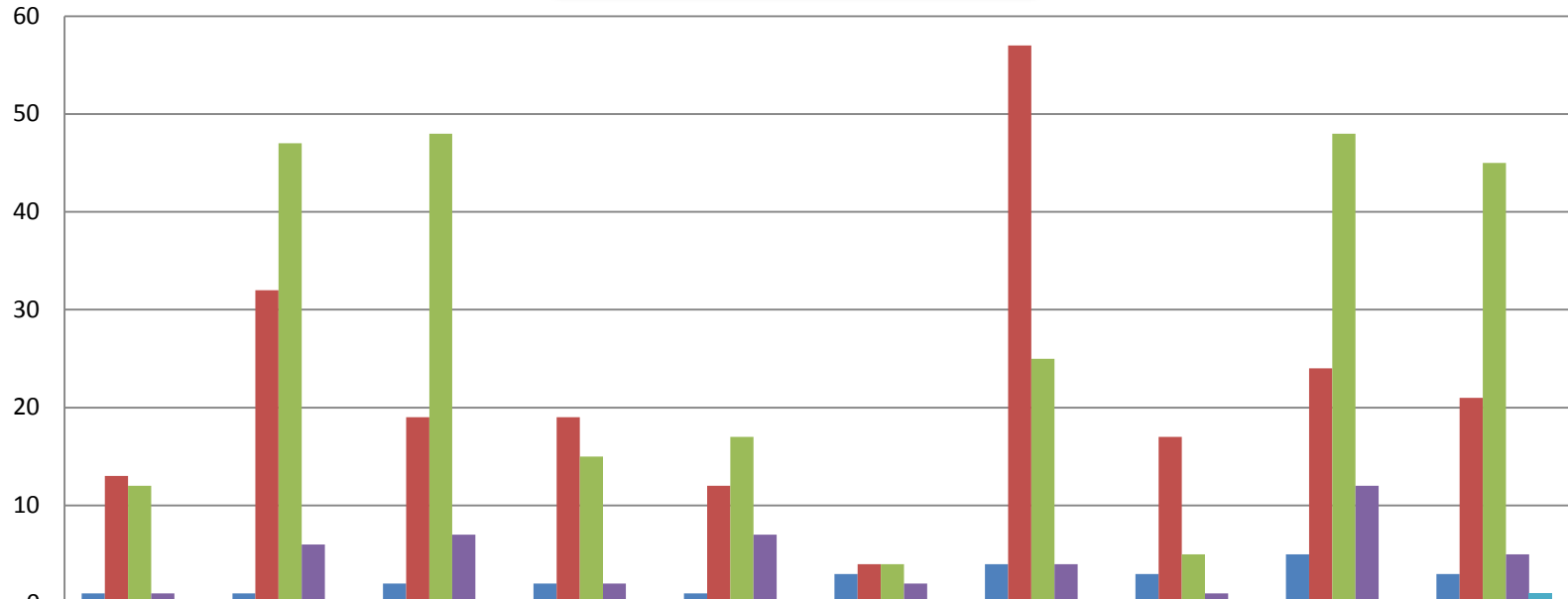
86% of respondents were working and aged, that is, between 25 and 64.

Respondents indicated that they interacted with the arts on a range of dimensions. As individuals they saw themselves as audience members and consumers of the arts but they also saw themselves as members of groups and organisations that contributed to the arts including community developers, educators and members of local government authorities.

The graphs below explore the demographics of the respondents.

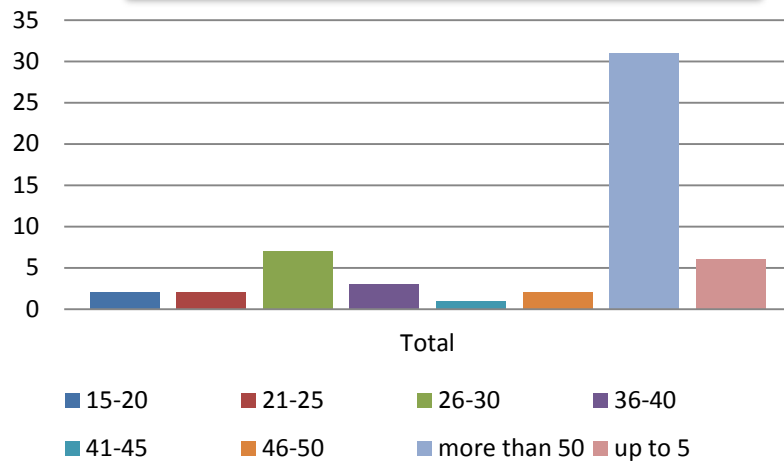


## Regional Demographics

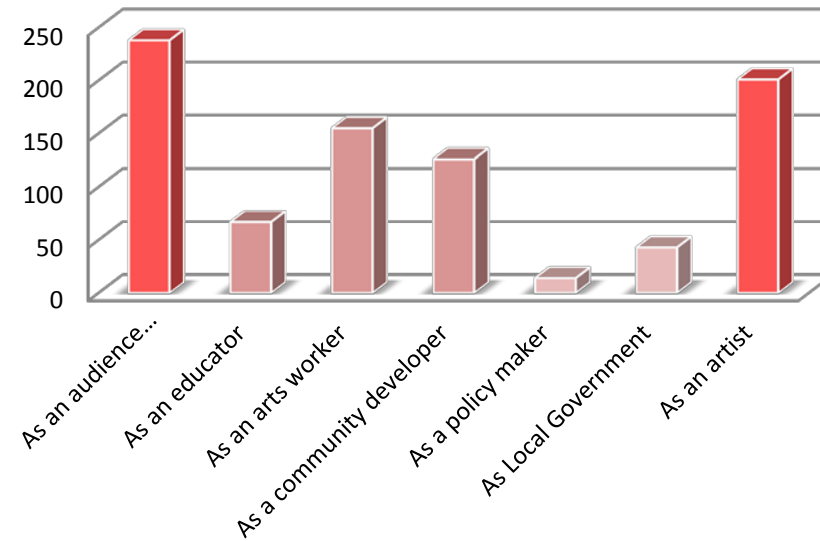


	Gascoyne	Goldfields-Esperance	Great Southern	Kimberley	MidWest	Peel	Perth Metro	Pilbara	South West	Wheatbelt
0 to 24	1	1	2	2	1	3	4	3	5	3
25 to 44	13	32	19	19	12	4	57	17	24	21
45 to 64	12	47	48	15	17	4	25	5	48	45
65 to 84	1	6	7	2	7	2	4	1	12	5
85 or older										1

### How many members does your organisation have?



### How do you most identify with the arts?



## People Make the Difference

Having made an historically large allocation of funds to regional arts in WA the state government now faces the challenge of deciding how that money will be spent. Country Arts WA has consistently argued that a balance must be found between spending on hard infrastructure such as building maintenance and upkeep and money allocated to soft infrastructure, or, the programs and human resources to fill these venues.

The Survey asked people to consider spending in two contexts, firstly on the venues within their communities and secondly as part of the goal of improved arts and cultural outcomes for their communities. In both contexts the responses were unequivocal: People favour spending on people and programs above spending on venue upkeep. This view is reflected at the aggregate response level and across the regional breakdown. It is notable that Goldfields-Esperance and Pilbara were the regions in which hard infrastructure scored strongly suggesting that there is need for specific infrastructure spending in those regions.

When asked to rank spending priorities on regional venues the highest number of first rank allocations were allotted to audience development and community engagement programs, while building maintenance and upkeep ranked last.

When asked to consider what respondents thought would produce better arts outcomes in their communities, investment in local arts and cultural programs eclipsed investment in hard infrastructure.

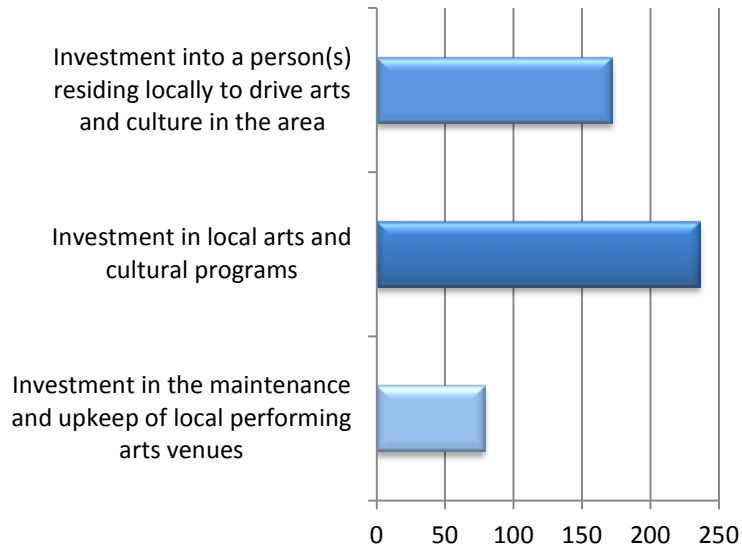
Regional people again demonstrated their independent spirit when asked to rank funding priorities more broadly. Increased funding for local groups to create and stage art events received the highest first and second place rankings. Regional communities also supported increased funding to extend specialised long-term regional arts programs and a policy for regional arts that established minimum level of support for regional arts activities.

From these findings a pattern begins to emerge that regional people prefer to be engaged with the arts as cultural producers as well as consumers, rather than as the passive beneficiaries of cultural content prepared in cities and exported to the regions.

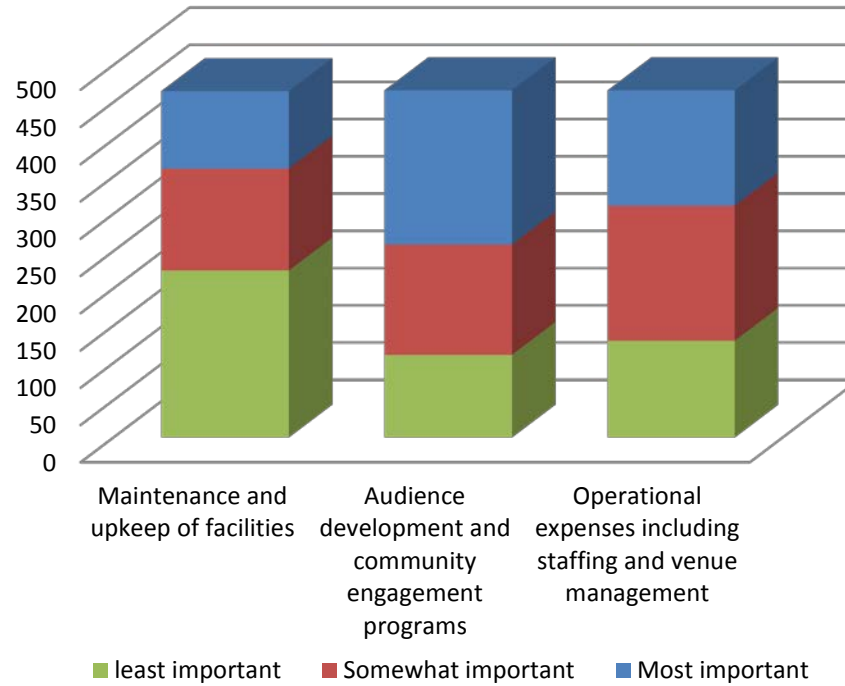
The following graphs explore people's responses to questions related to funding priorities.



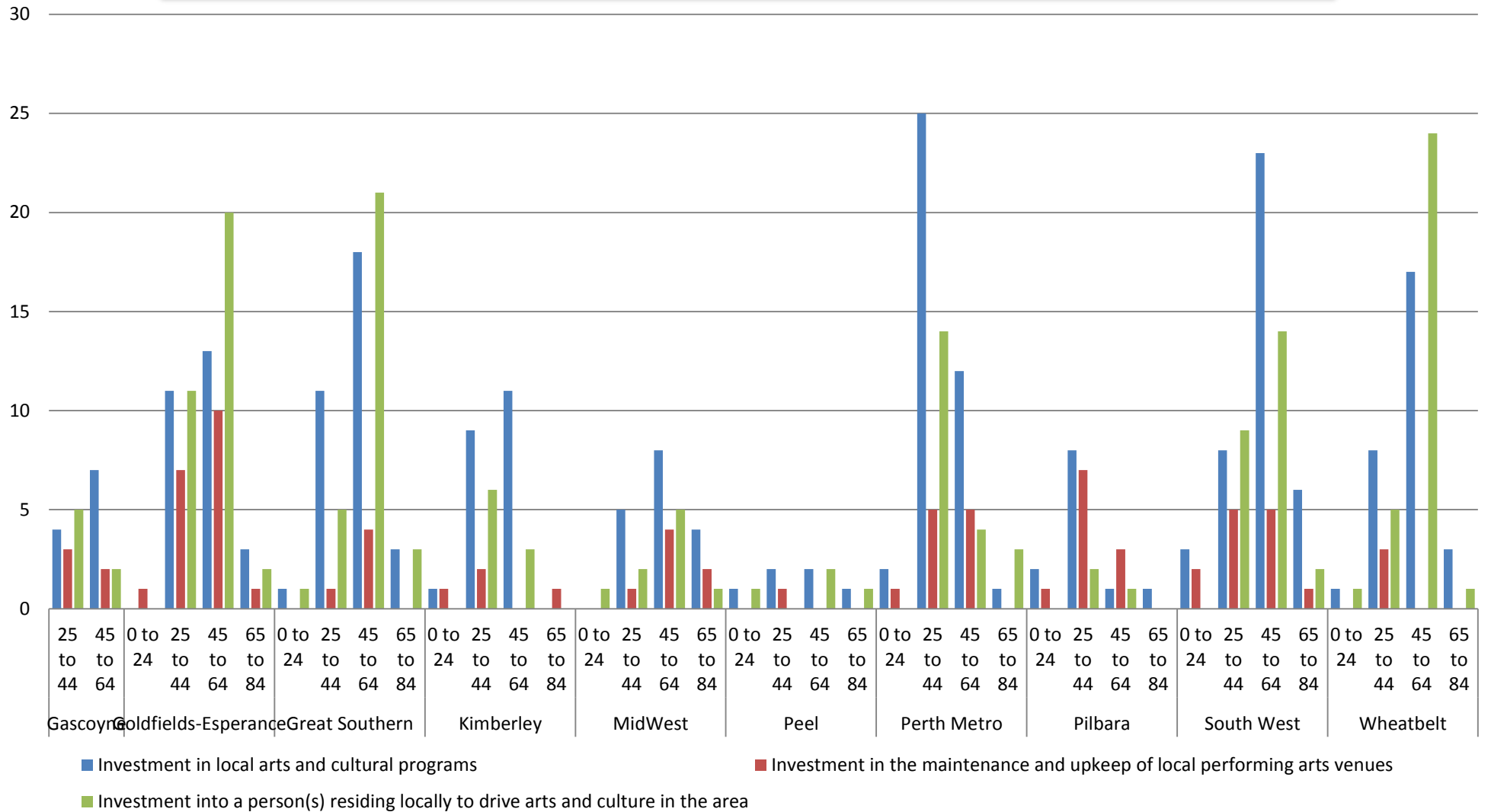
**Q13. What do you think is likely to have the better arts and cultural outcomes for your community?**



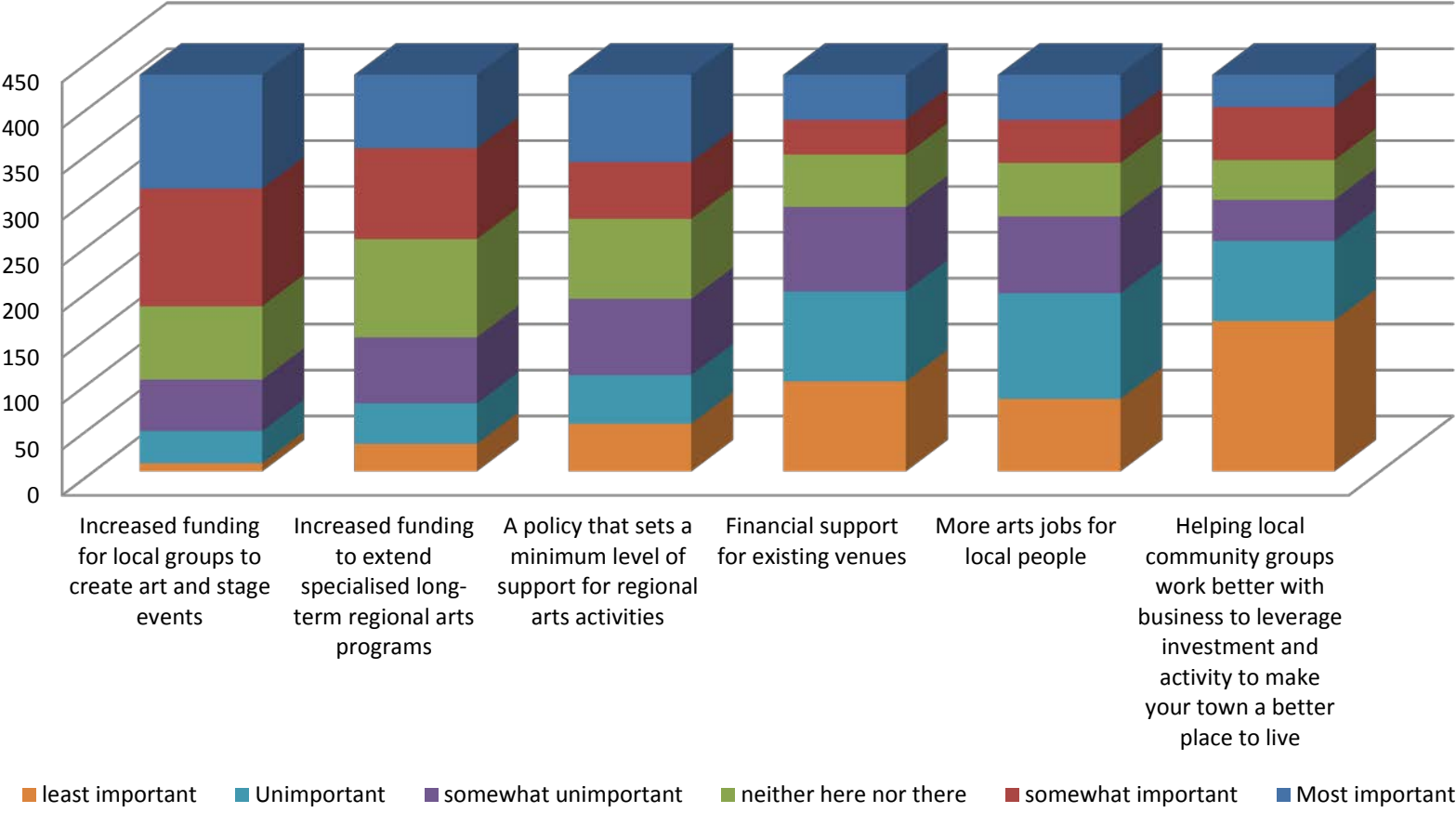
### Regional Venue Spending Priorities



## Answer to: What do you think is likely to have the better arts and cultural outcomes in your town, by Age and Region

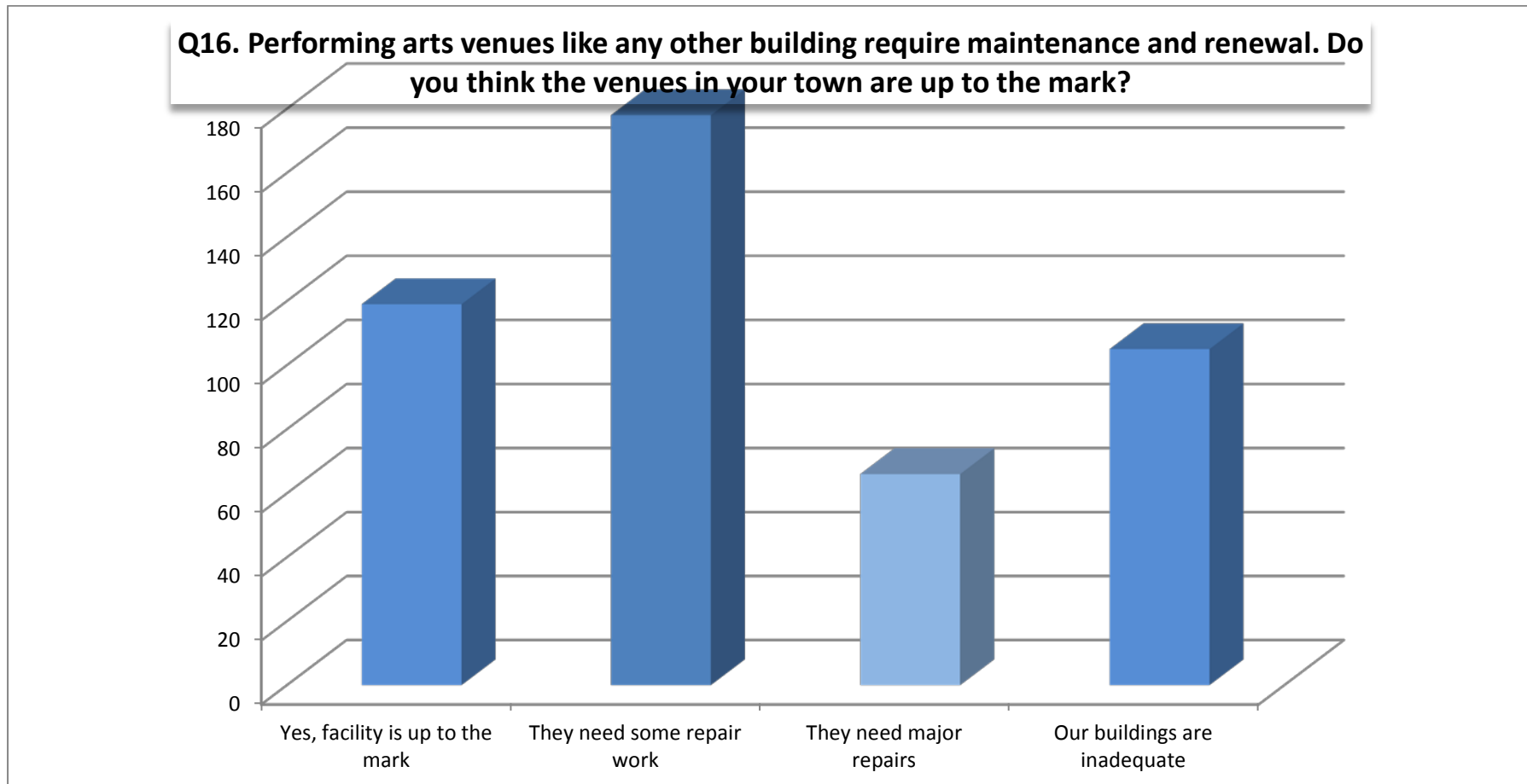


### Ranking funding priorities



## People are Concerned about the State of Regional Hard Infrastructure

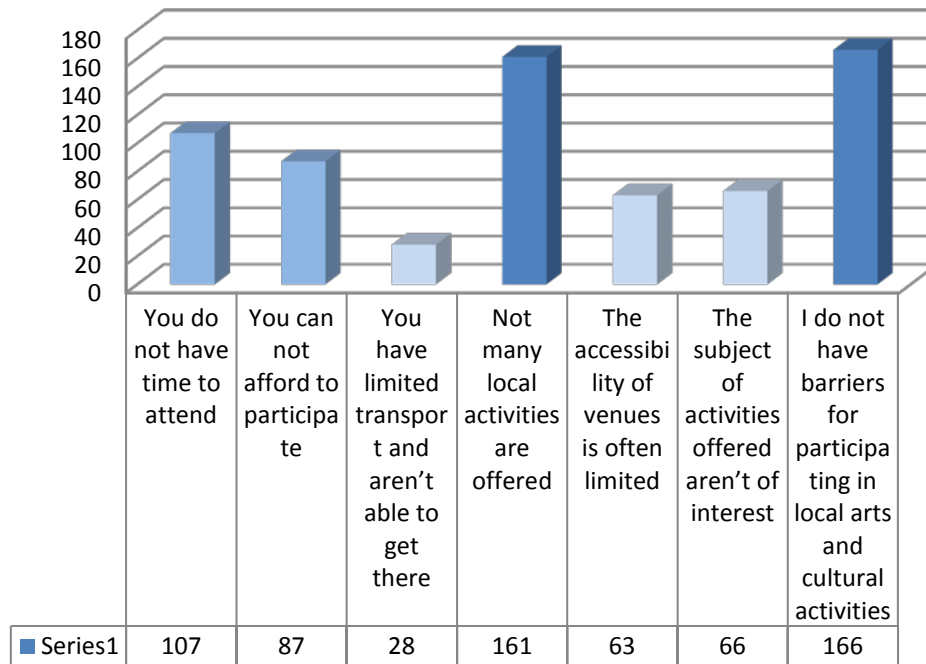
Whilst we have demonstrated that people are overwhelmingly interested in ensuring the long term sustainability of the arts in the towns and communities through channelling investment into programs and people, regional people are concerned with the state of venues in their towns. Just 25% of respondents thought that their facilities were up to a sufficient standard whilst 22% thought their buildings were inadequate.



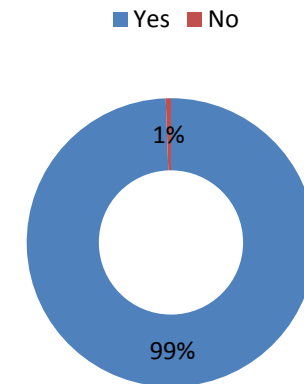
## People Want to Participate in the Arts

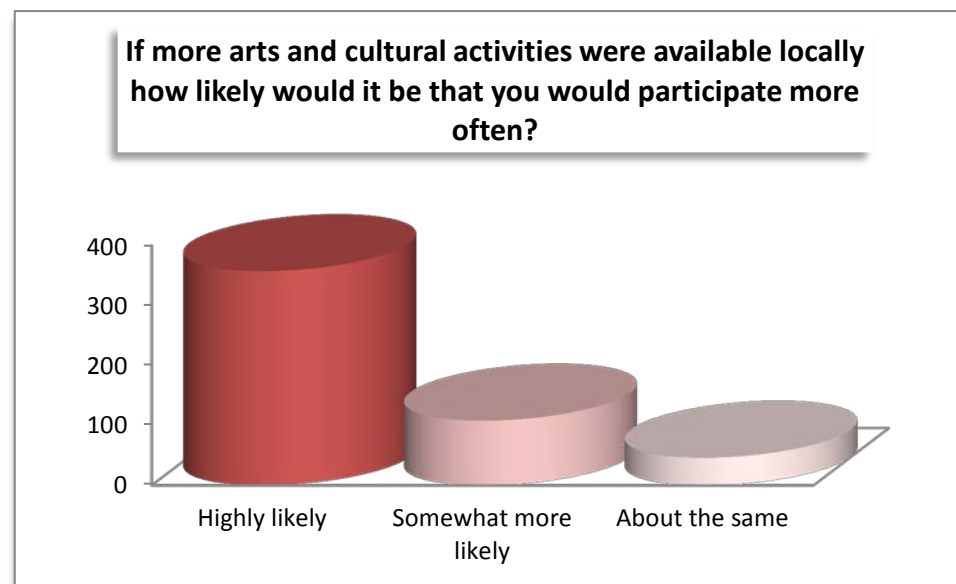
We asked people what barriers prevented them from participating in the arts. Whilst 35% said they faced no barriers 33% cited lack of local activities as the main reason they did not engage more often with the arts. Overwhelmingly people want more arts activities in their community.

### What, if any, barriers do you face in participating in local arts and cultural activities?



### Would you like to see more arts activities in your community?





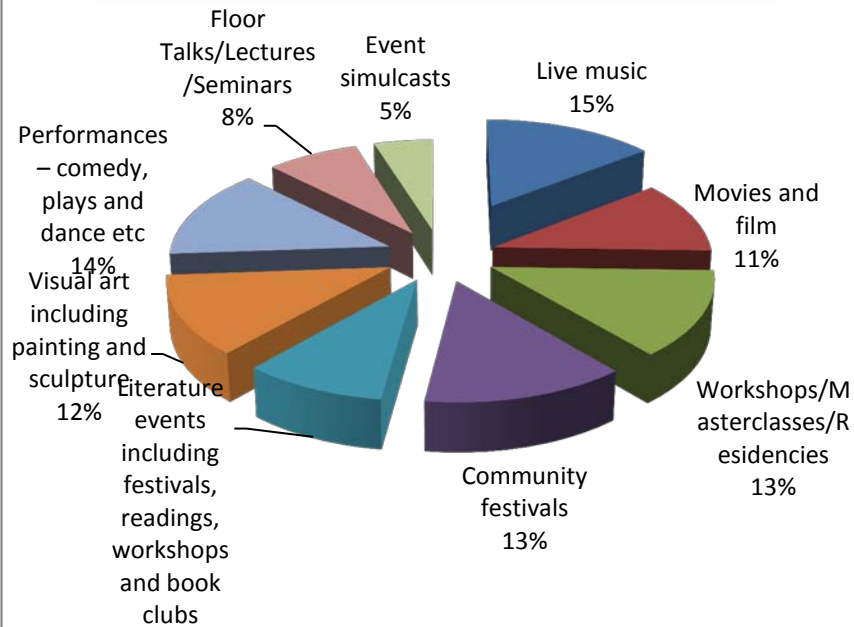
Most people would be willing to increase their engagement with the arts if more activities were available locally.

The performing arts, theatre, comedy, live music and community festivals feature strongly as activities with which regional people would engage in both free and paid contexts.

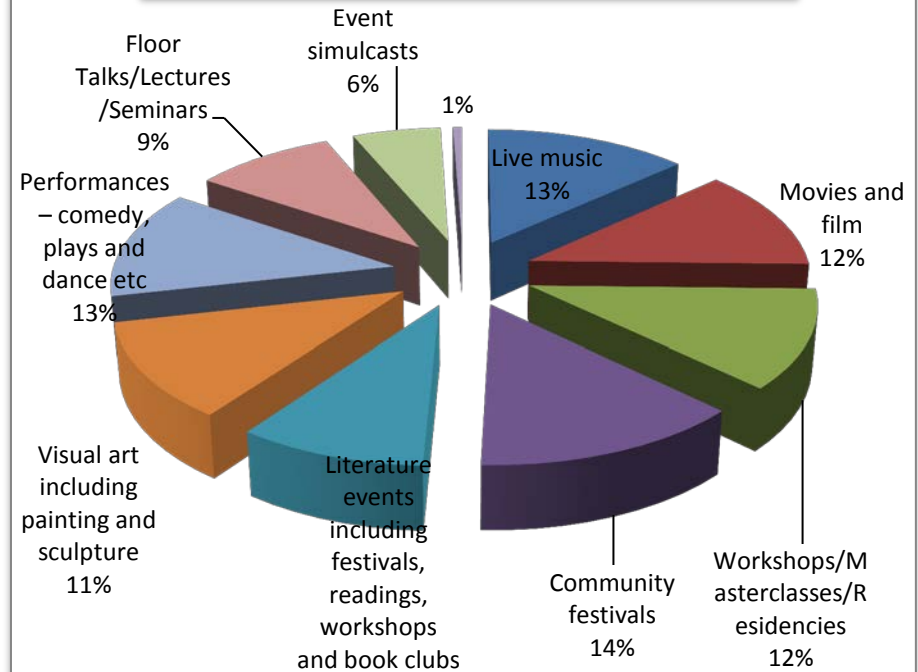
Participatory activities are strongly favoured. Community festivals, workshops masterclasses, artists' residencies are as well supported for example as film experiences. There may be value for those planning regional film events in discovering that audiences may be more inclined to engage with a more experiential program.

Interestingly, event simulcasts are poorly supported. Recently the use of regional simulcasts has been promoted as a way to bring the works of major performing arts organisations to regional communities. The poor showing here may indicate that there are problems with the technology that delivers the simulcasts, the content, timing of these broadcasts, or other factors not captured by the survey

## What type of arts activities would you like to have access to in your community?



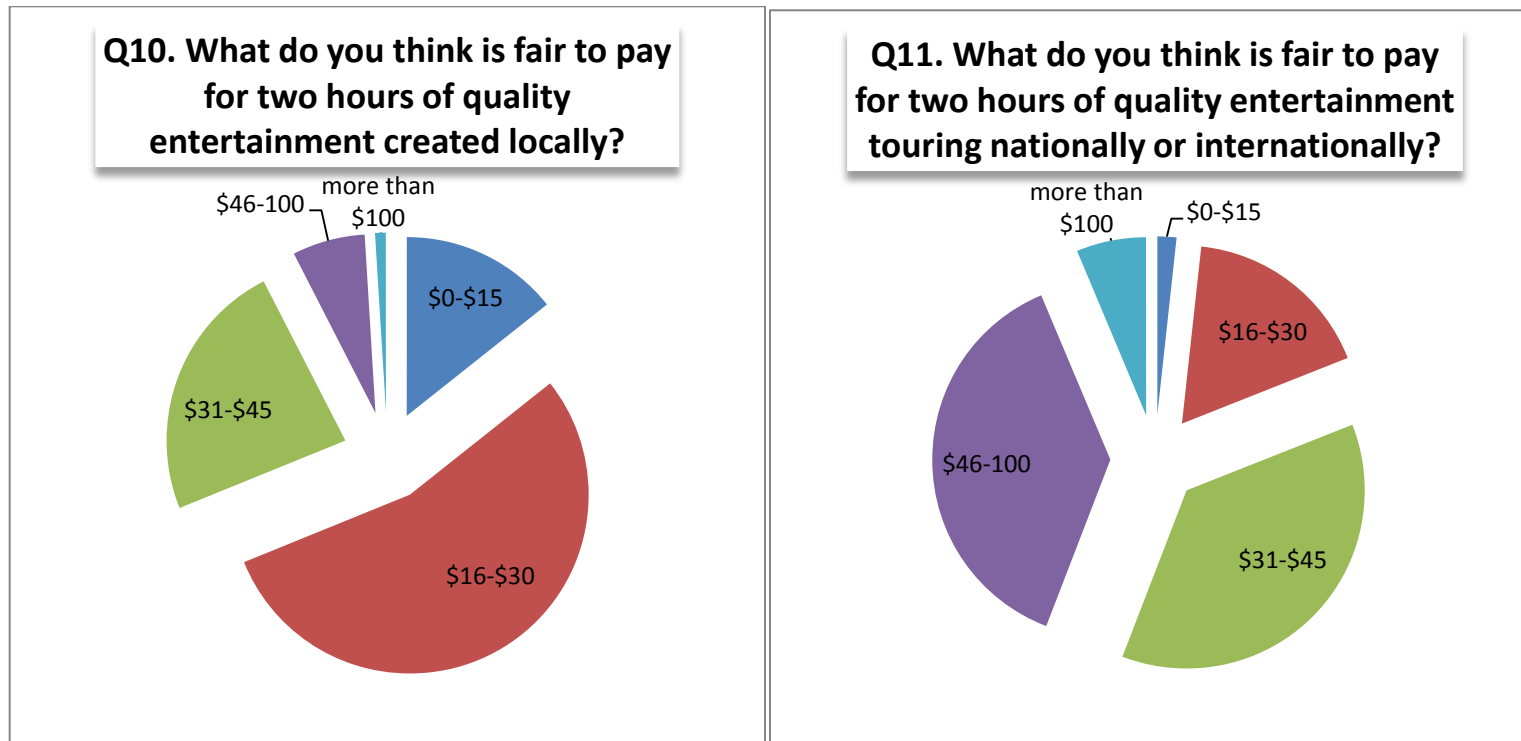
## Which activities you would take part in if they were FREE to attend and available in your town?



## People are Prepared to Pay for the Arts

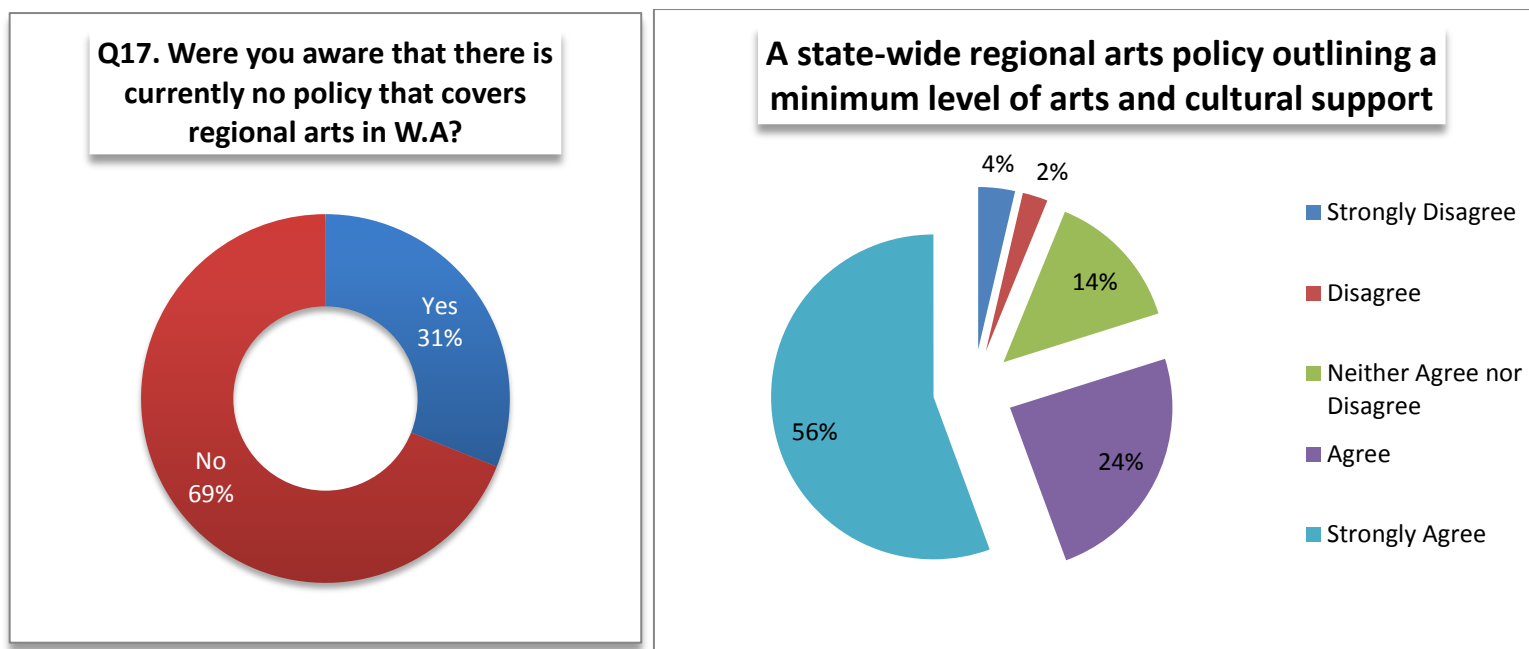
People recognise the value of the arts and are prepared to pay for it. Respondents indicated that they were prepared to pay more for works by major companies, touring international artists and national touring works than for locally produced works.

People favoured a price range for all works of between \$15 and \$100.





## What do People Think about a Policy for Regional Arts

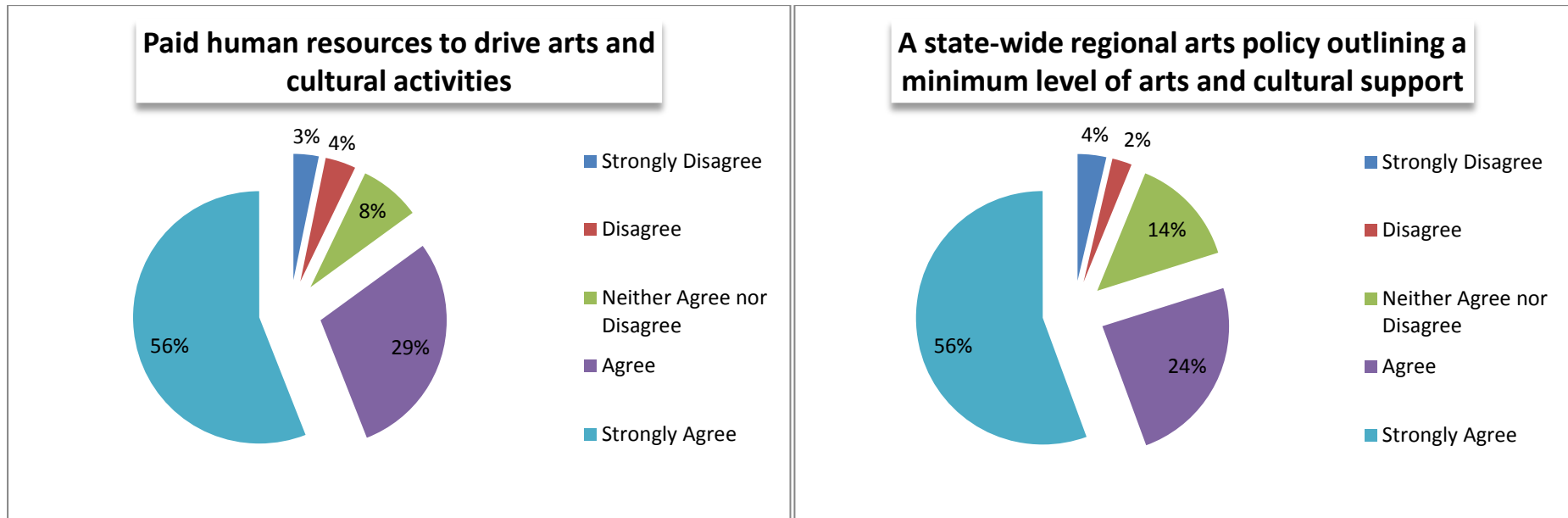


Most respondents were unaware that no policy for regional arts exists at this time, despite the efforts of Country Arts WA to inform people through its 2020nine Manifesto and Vote Arts campaign that WA did not have a regional Arts policy. It is impossible to say based on data that the number of respondents unaware of the lack of policy would be higher or lower without Country Arts WA's campaigning.

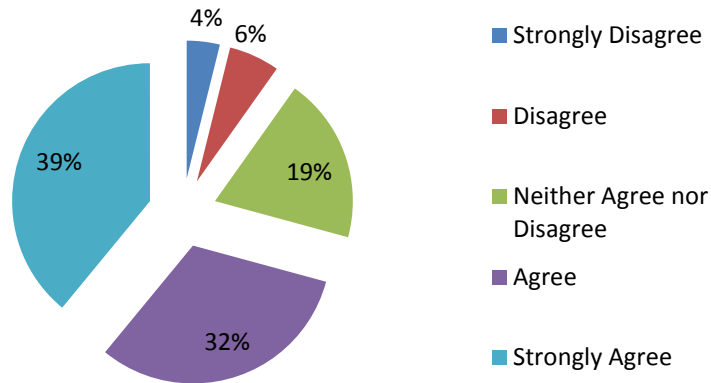
When asked to consider a range of resources to improve arts outcomes in their communities 80% of respondents agreed that a policy for regional arts would benefit them. However this should be seen within the context of ranking funding priorities which listed a policy behind both direct support for regional arts groups and funding to extend programs that are ongoing in the regions.

## What Resources does your Town need to Support the Future of Arts and Cultural Activities?

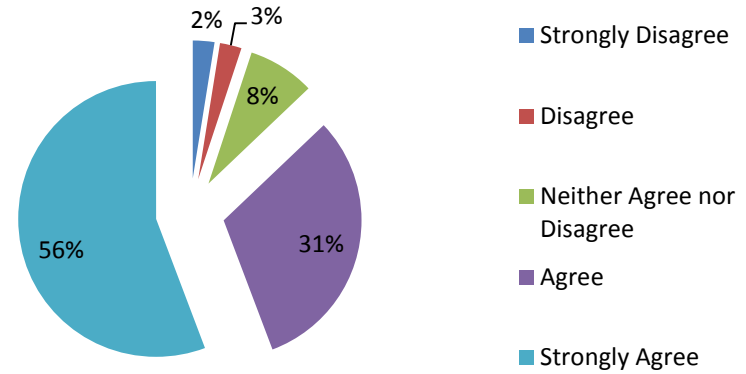
The following graphs represent the extent to which respondents agree that the named resource would support the future of arts and culture in their community. Results are consistent with those expressed elsewhere. Whilst each of these resources is supported there is value in exploring the grain between agreement and strong agreement.



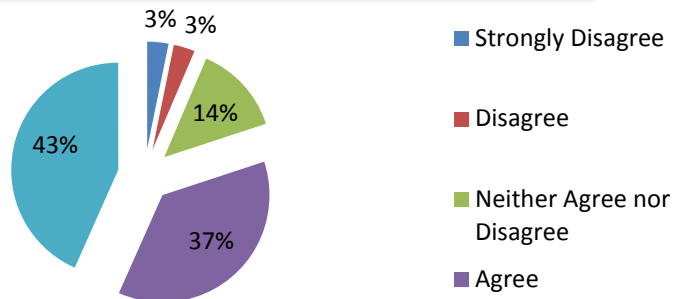
**Hard infrastructure (venues) to host arts and cultural activities**



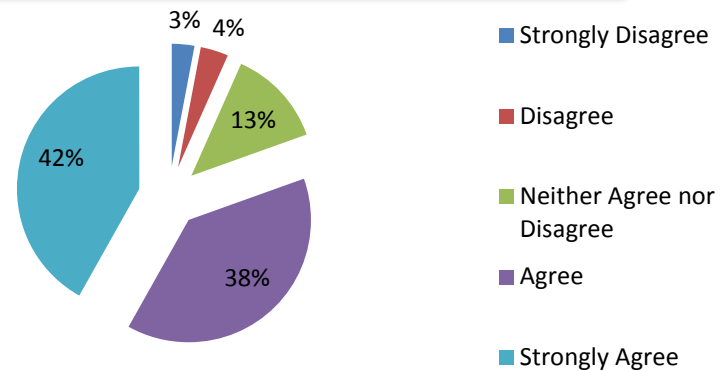
**Increased funding for grass roots funding for local program development**



**Increased funding for Peak arts organisations to extend specialised long-term regional programs**



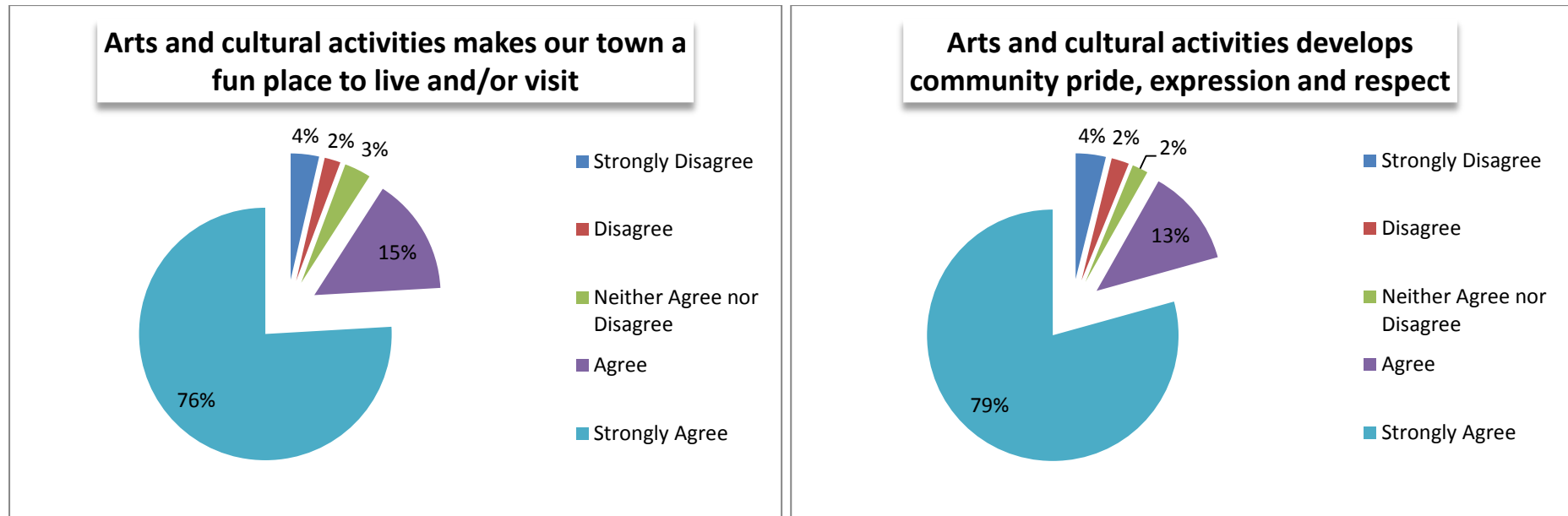
**Leveraged public/private partnerships for long-term community outcomes**



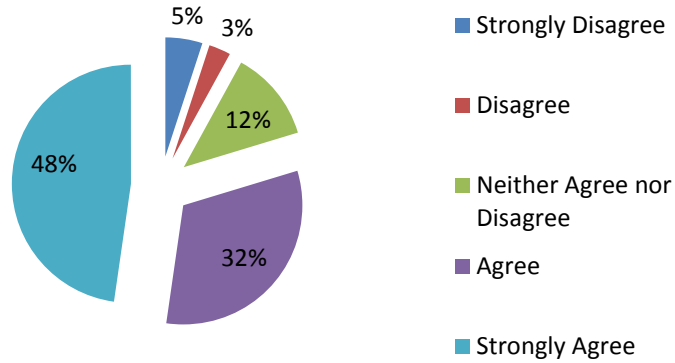
## General Impressions of the Value of the Arts

The following seven graphs represent respondents' attitudes toward the arts as they contribute to cross sector activities including tourism, positive health outcomes, community development and lifelong learning.

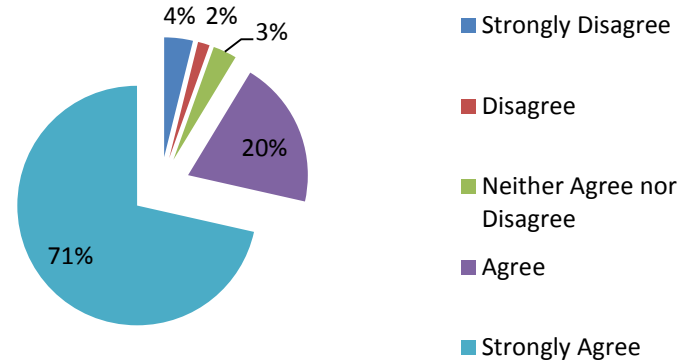
Overwhelming respondents connected positively with the statements, indicating that regional people already see the value of arts as a core element of strong and healthy regional communities.



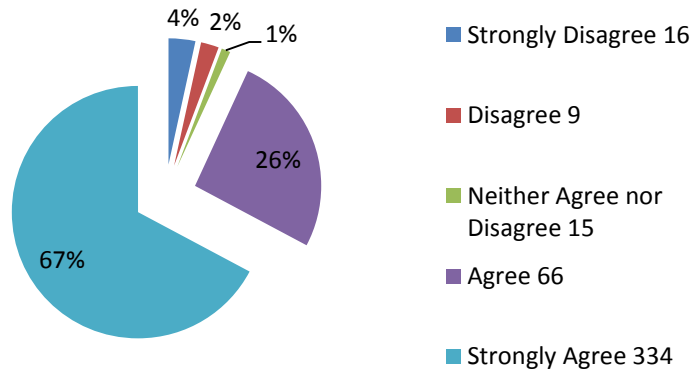
**Arts and cultural activities generates income for local people**



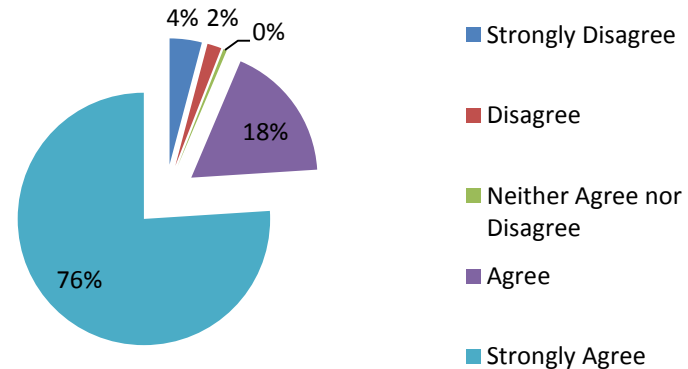
**Arts and cultural activities strengthens community relationships**



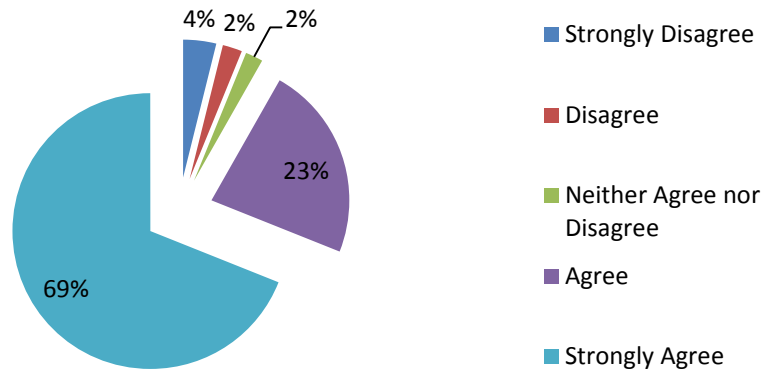
**Arts and cultural activities helps people learn new things**



**Arts and cultural activities provides a positive social outlet**



**Arts and cultural activities increases both individual and community confidence**



## APPENDIX 1 - Aggregate Survey Responses

Q1. What region do you live in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Great Southern	13.6%	76
South West	16.0%	89
Peel	2.3%	13
MidWest	6.6%	37
Wheatbelt	13.5%	75
Gascoyne	4.8%	27
Goldfields-Esperance	15.4%	86
Kimberley	6.8%	38
Pilbara	4.7%	26
Perth Metro	16.2%	90
	answered question	557
	skipped question	0

Q2. What is your age?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0 to 24	4.5%	25
25 to 44	39.1%	218
45 to 64	47.8%	266
65 to 84	8.4%	47
85 or older	0.2%	1
	answered question	557
	skipped question	0

Q3. How do you most identify with the arts?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
As an audience member/consumer	42.7%	238
As an educator	12.0%	67
As an arts worker	27.8%	155
As a community developer	22.6%	126
As a policy maker	2.5%	14
As Local Government	7.7%	43
As an artist	36.1%	201
Comments		26
	answered question	557
	skipped question	0

Q4. When was the last time you engaged with an arts activity?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Within the last week	69.0%	348
Within the last month	17.3%	87
Within the last three months	7.5%	38
Within the last six months	2.6%	13
Within the last 12 months	1.8%	9
More than 12 months ago	1.8%	9
	answered question	504
	skipped question	53



Q5. What, if any, barriers do you face in participating in local arts and cultural activities?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
You do not have time to attend	22.3%	107
You cannot afford to participate	18.1%	87
You have limited transport and aren't able to get there	5.8%	28
Not many local activities are offered	33.5%	161
The accessibility of venues is often limited	13.1%	63
The subject of activities offered aren't of interest	13.8%	66
I do not have barriers for participating in local arts and cultural activities	34.6%	166
Comments		62
	answered question	480
	skipped question	77

Q6. If more arts and cultural activities were available locally how likely would it be that you would participate more often?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Highly likely	69.9%	357
Somewhat more likely	21.1%	108
About the same	9.0%	46
	answered question	511
	skipped question	46

Q7. Would you like to see more arts activities in your community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	99.4%	512
No	0.6%	3
	answered question	515
	skipped question	42

Q8. If Yes, what type of arts activities would you like to have access to in your community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Live music	68.3%	353
Movies and film	52.6%	272
Workshops/Masterclasses/Residencies	63.1%	326
Community festivals	63.4%	328
Literature events including festivals readings workshops and book clubs	44.5%	230
Visual art including painting and sculpture	58.4%	302
Performances - comedy plays and dance etc.	65.0%	336
Floor Talks/Lectures/Seminars	36.0%	186
Event simulcasts	23.0%	119
Comments		33
	answered question	517
	skipped question	40

Q9. Select which of the following activities you would take part in if they were FREE to attend and available in your town?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Live music	78.0%	405
Movies and film	70.9%	368
Workshops/Masterclasses/Residencies	69.2%	359
Community festivals	79.4%	412
Literature events including festivals readings workshops and book clubs	55.1%	286
Visual art including painting and sculpture	67.2%	349
Performances - comedy plays and dance etc.	76.1%	395
Floor Talks/Lectures/Seminars	54.1%	281
Event simulcasts	33.9%	176
Comments		18
	answered question	519
	skipped question	38

Q10. What do you think is fair to pay for two hours of quality entertainment created locally?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
\$0-\$15	14.3%	74
\$16-\$30	54.5%	282
\$31-\$45	23.6%	122
\$46-100	6.6%	34
\$100+	1.0%	5
	answered question	517
	skipped question	40

Q11. What do you think is fair to pay for two hours of quality entertainment touring nationally or internationally?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
\$0-\$15	1.7%	9
\$16-\$30	17.3%	90
\$31-\$45	36.9%	192
\$46-100	37.8%	197
\$100+	6.3%	33
	answered question	521
	skipped question	36

Q12. What are the following resources like in your town?

Answer Options	Thriving	Good	Surviving	Poor	Not Available	Rating Average	Response Count
Local venues for events	35	170	154	103	10	2.75	472
Volunteers to assist coordinating and promoting activities	39	149	204	74	2	2.68	468
Paid arts and cultural position(s)	10	47	131	193	77	3.61	458
Community and government partnerships	14	127	188	112	13	2.96	454
Private enterprise sponsorships	11	97	161	162	21	3.19	452
Local Government funding	10	99	179	163	10	3.14	461
State Government funding	10	95	161	177	14	3.20	457
Commonwealth funding	4	52	150	204	32	3.47	442
Philanthropy	8	54	111	202	66	3.60	441
						answered question	480
						skipped question	77

Q13. What do you think is likely to have the better arts and cultural outcomes for your community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Investment in the maintenance and upkeep of local performing arts venues	16.2%	79
Investment in local arts and cultural programs	48.5%	236
Investment into a person(s) residing locally to drive arts and culture in the area	35.3%	172
	answered question	487
	skipped question	70

Q14. Thinking now about performing arts venues in your town, rank the following in the order in which you think are the most important spending priorities: (hint: you can drag and drop the options to create your order)

Answer Options	1	2	3	Rating Average	Response Count
Maintenance and upkeep of facilities	104	137	224	2.26	465
Audience development and community engagement programs	207	148	111	1.79	466
Operational expenses including staffing and venue management	155	181	130	1.95	466
				answered question	466
				skipped question	91

Q15. Programming for a performing arts venue requires consideration in the range of works presented. Please rank the following in order of importance to you: (hint: you can drag and drop the options to create your order)

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average	Response Count
Locally reproduced work (repertory theatre)	85	93	113	93	83	2.99	467
Locally produced new works	135	111	103	105	13	2.46	467
Work toured by major companies (e.g. Black Swan)	108	104	94	114	47	2.76	467
Touring works supported by organisations such as Country Arts WA and WAM	120	120	105	93	29	2.55	467
Experimental new work	19	39	52	62	295	4.23	467
						answered question	467
						skipped question	90

Q16. Performing arts venues like any other building require maintenance and renewal. Do you think the venues in your town are up to the mark?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	25.4%	119
They need some repair work	38.0%	178
They need major repairs	14.1%	66
Our buildings are inadequate	22.4%	105
	answered question	468
	skipped question	89

Q17. Were you aware that there is currently no policy that covers regional arts in W.A?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	31.0%	130
No	69.0%	289
	answered question	419
	skipped question	138



Q18. The State Government plans to invest in regional arts. Please rank the importance of the following spending priorities to you: (most=1, least=6)

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Increased funding for local groups to create art and stage events	124	128	80	56	35	9	2.48	432
Increased funding to extend specialised long-term regional arts programs	80	99	107	72	44	30	2.98	432
A policy that sets a minimum level of support for regional arts activities	95	62	87	83	53	52	3.22	432
Financial support for existing venues	49	38	57	92	98	98	4.03	432
More arts jobs for local people	49	47	58	84	115	79	3.94	432
Helping local community groups work better with business to leverage investment and activity to make your town a better place to live	35	58	43	45	87	164	4.35	432
							answered question	432
							skipped question	125

Q19. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Arts and cultural activities makes our town a fun place to live and/or visit	16	9	15	66	334	1.43	440
Arts and cultural activities develops community pride expression and respect	17	10	9	55	349	1.39	440
Arts and cultural activities generates income for local people	22	13	54	140	209	1.86	438
Arts and cultural activities strengthens community relationships	17	7	14	87	313	1.47	438
Arts and cultural activities helps people learn new things	15	10	5	113	293	1.49	436
Arts and cultural activities provides a positive social outlet	18	8	2	77	333	1.40	438
Arts and cultural activities increases both individual and community confidence	17	10	9	100	302	1.49	438
						answered question	440
						skipped question	117

Q20. What resources does your town need to support the future of arts and cultural activities?

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
A state-wide regional arts policy outlining a minimum level of arts and cultural support	16	11	61	106	243	1.74	437
Paid human resources to drive arts and cultural activities	14	17	34	126	243	1.69	434
Hard infrastructure (venues) to host arts and cultural activities	17	26	85	139	171	2.04	438
Increased funding for grass roots funding for local program development	11	11	34	136	242	1.65	434
Increased funding for Peak arts organisations to extend specialised long-term regional programs	14	14	59	160	189	1.86	436
Leveraged public/private partnerships for long-term community outcomes	13	16	56	168	182	1.87	435
						answered question	439
						skipped question	118

Q21. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Students in regional WA deserve to have the best performing arts experiences.	12	12	48	116	253	1.67	441
Every regional community deserves to have arts and culture as part of the community development process.	15	10	11	55	351	1.38	442
Every regional community deserves local access to the resources to ensure arts and culture are included in their community development.	16	8	13	72	332	1.42	441
Regional people will benefit by increased interest in literature and writing for people of all ages.	14	8	36	109	271	1.60	438
The contemporary music industry needs to inject vital skills development for regional communities.	14	12	65	141	208	1.83	440
Special emphasis needs to be placed on developing Indigenous musicians through workshops and performances.	18	22	95	135	170	2.05	440
Indigenous Arts Centres need to be developed as successful and sustainable custodians of culture and businesses in their own right.	19	21	80	106	216	1.92	442
						answered question	443
						skipped question	114

Q22. If you would like to know the results of the survey or participate in potential follow up research please include your email

Answer Options	Response Count
	218
answered question	218
skipped question	339

