

Creative Confidence Indicator Poll – July 2024 vs October 2023

> [INFOGRAPHIC HERE](#)

SUMMARY:

The survey gathered insights from 74 respondents working in 23 varied creative sectors, many with interdisciplinary practices. 50% said they work in visual arts, and range of practices were specified from mixed media to illustration, fibre art, textiles and craft. 24% were in the performing arts field including theatre, music, poetry performance and dance. Some worked in sculpture, silversmithing, woodwork, and wire wrapping, alongside photography, graphic design, videography, events, teaching, art therapy and creative art facilitation.

As one respondent said... *"We have so many creatives and a lot of potential here!"*

Some interesting insights were revealed in comparing the data to the 2023 poll results:

- 36.5% of creatives are "established" in their careers in 2024 compared to 20% in 2023 - likely linked to more responses from mature creatives (32.4% over 65 compared to 8.3% in 2023)
- A higher percentage of respondents undertook their creative practice casually or as a hobby (37.8% up from 28.3%) - again could be linked to demographic of respondents.
- There's reason to be optimistic! In 2023, 31.7% felt unconfident or very unconfident about the region's creative communities and industries, which dropped to 17.6% in 2024.
- Confidence about one's own future creative practice was up 11.6% from last year, with 65% of people feeling confident or very confident in their own creative activities in the next 12 months.

We gathered some amazing intel on priorities for the next regional strategy, alongside insights on the challenges and the barriers faced by creatives.

The strongest theme was of the need for funding, grants and subsidies. There were 4 references to art needing to be supported "like sports" - it's been said before that this sector needs to be more direct and perhaps demanding "like sports" in funding applications since opportunities are so competitive!

Other strong themes included access to more creative spaces and affordable opportunities to exhibit, as well as to perform (and be paid to do so).

Echoing the sentiments from the Build Up, Reach Out survey, you also want more opportunities to connect in person, network, share ideas and to seed partnerships and collaboration.

This includes needing opportunities to learn and develop, to access affordable classes and workshops, and to become more education about the industry e.g around grant writing, governance, lobbying, funding etc.

Many comments related to the need to promote the arts and local assets, showcase (and utilise) local talent, promote what's on and attract tourism to the region, alongside more engagement and communication in all directions.

This extends to arts advocacy and educating government and the public about the validity and benefits of the sector.

Young people were a strong focus in your comments, too - from investing in young creatives to needing more opportunities for teens and better resources and experiences for arts in schools (that's what our YEAH! campaign was all about, so we agree!)

There were multiple references to rising costs of living, financial constraints and people not spending as much money on events and tickets. This is backed up by the research in Creative Australia's

[National Arts Participation Survey analysis](#)

Larger graph = 2024 data

What is your age?

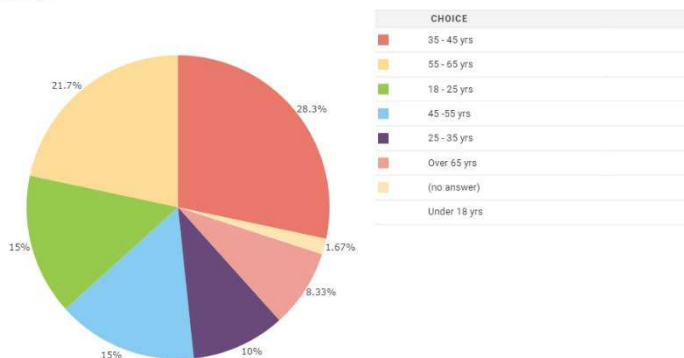


More older aged respondents in 2024 than 2023 – 32.4% over 65 vs 8.33%

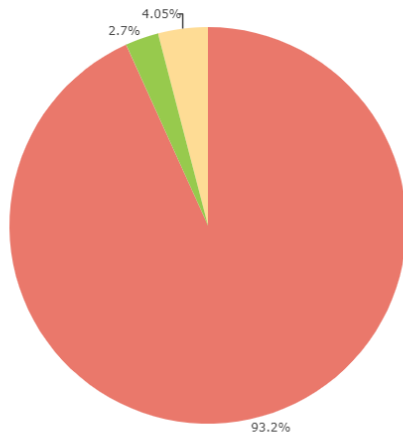
13.5% in 35-45 category in 2024 vs 28.3% in 2023

Only 1.35% of answers from 18-25 year olds vs 15% in 2023 – could be since survey was promoted mostly via Facebook and Email where this demographic show up less

What is your age ?



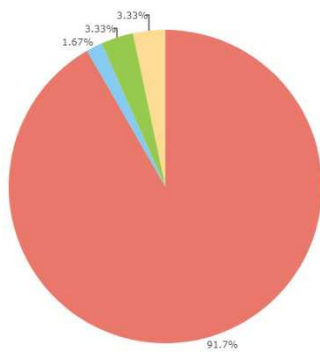
Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?



CHOICE	
■	No
■	Prefer not to say
■	(no answer)
■	Yes

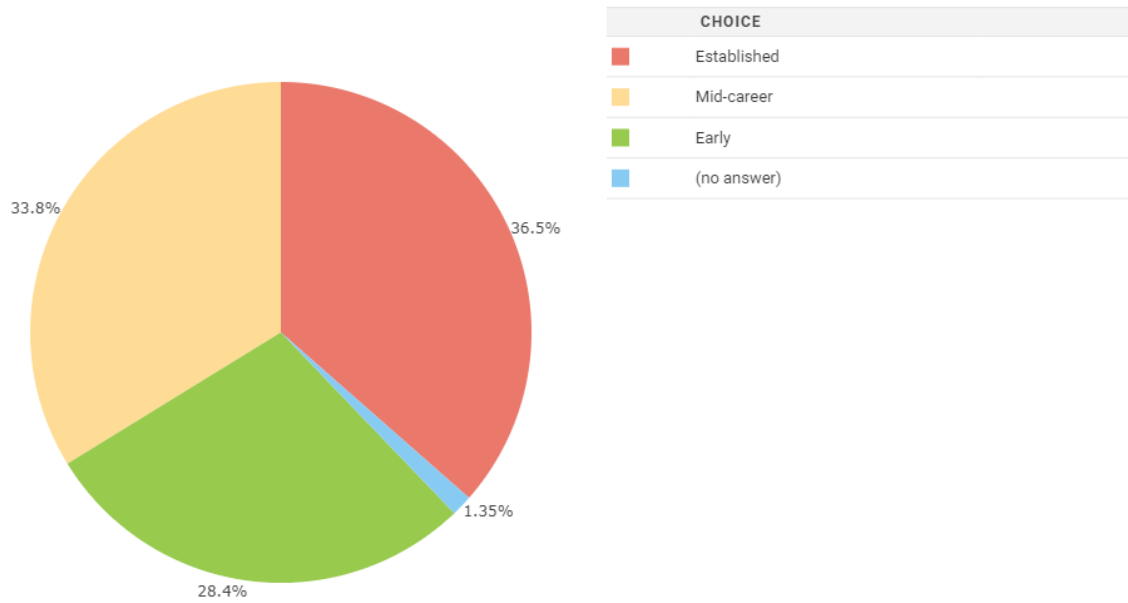
Less first nations respondents than in 2023 – none specifically answered yes vs 3.33% in 2023 – not specifically shared to this segment.

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?



CHOICE	
■	No
■	Prefer not to say
■	Yes
■	(no answer)

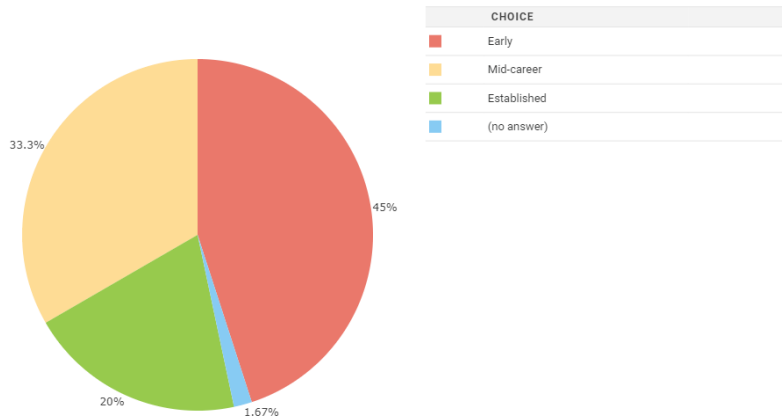
What stage in your creative practice are you?



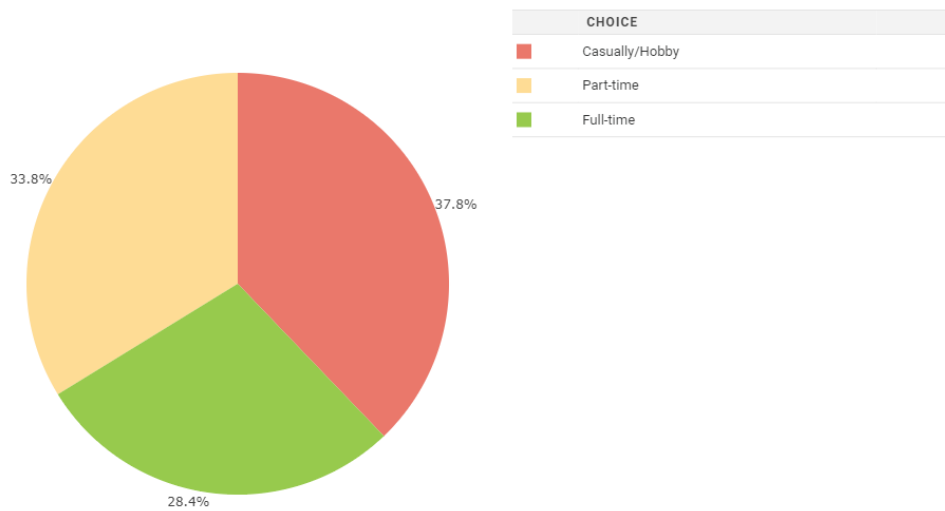
More creatives are established in their careers as opposed to Early or mid-career.

36.5% of creatives are "established" in their careers in 2024 compared to 20% in 2023 - likely linked to more responses from mature creatives (32.4% over 65 compared to 8.3% in 2023)

What stage in your creative practice are you?



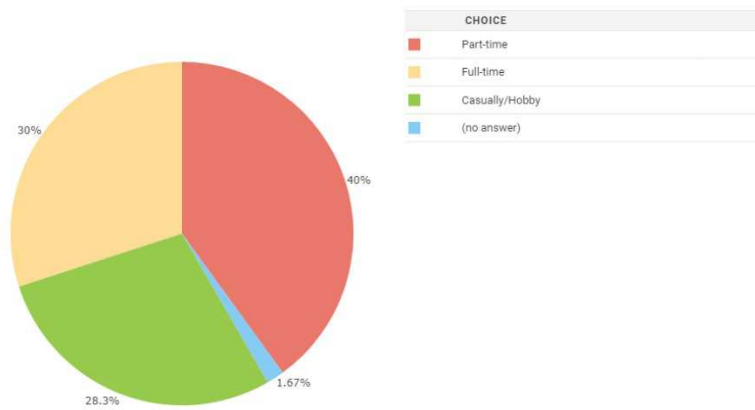
How much time do you spend on your creative practice?



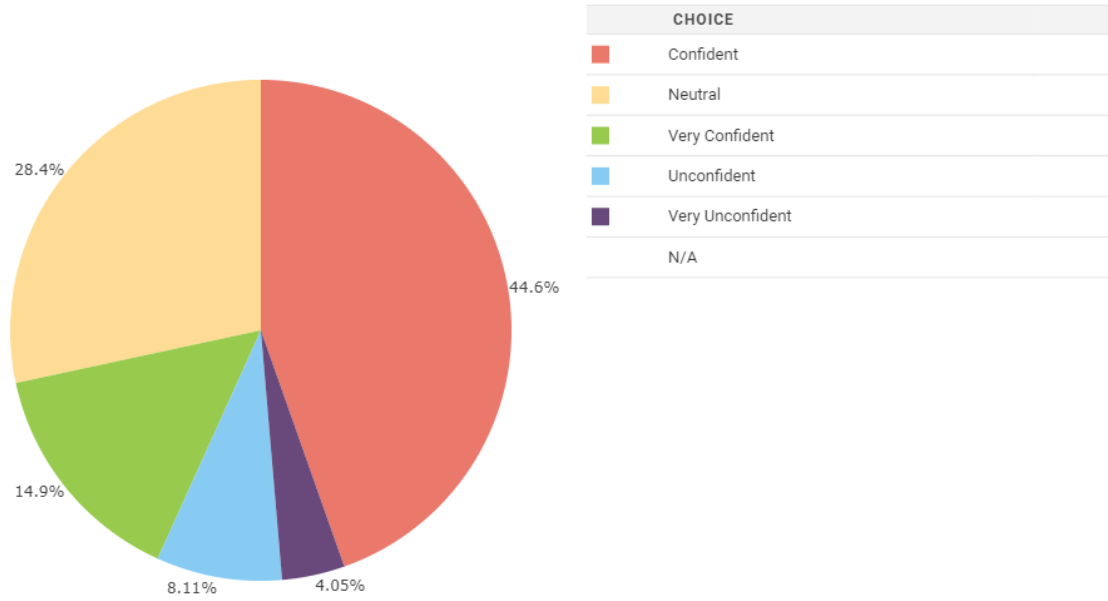
Lower percentage of respondents practicing full-time - 28.4% compared to 30% (small margin)
Higher percentage of respondents practicing casually or as a hobby (37.8% up from 28.3%)

Again likely linked to more retired / older age respondents but potentially also due to the need to earn other income to support rising costs of living.

How much time do you undertake your creative practice?



How confident are you feeling about your creative activities and/or practice right now?



Confidence = generally slightly UP

Greater feeling of confidence in their creative practice – 44.6% compared to 38.8%.

Total very confident or confident = 59.6% = **4.4% rise**

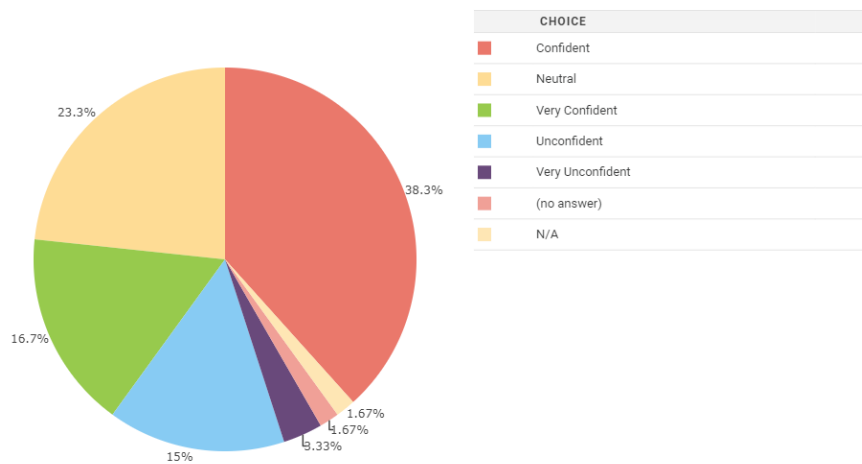
Total very unconfident or unconfident = 12.16% = **6.17% drop**

In 2023:

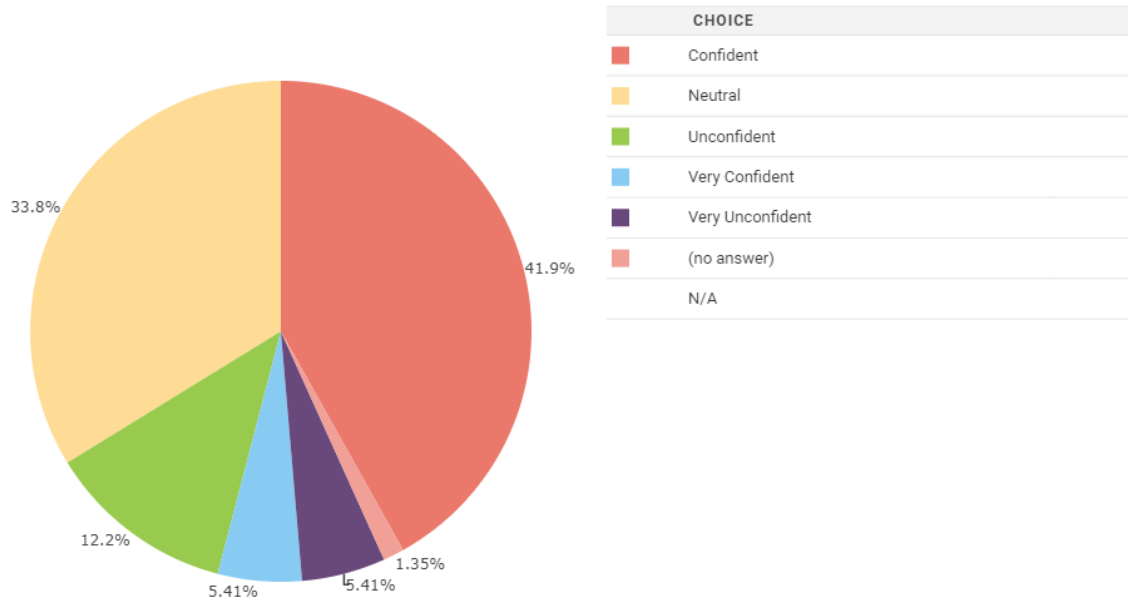
Total very confident or confident = 55.2%

Total very unconfident or unconfident = 18.33%

How confident are you feeling about your creative activities and/or practice right now?



How confident do you feel about the region's creative communities and industries?

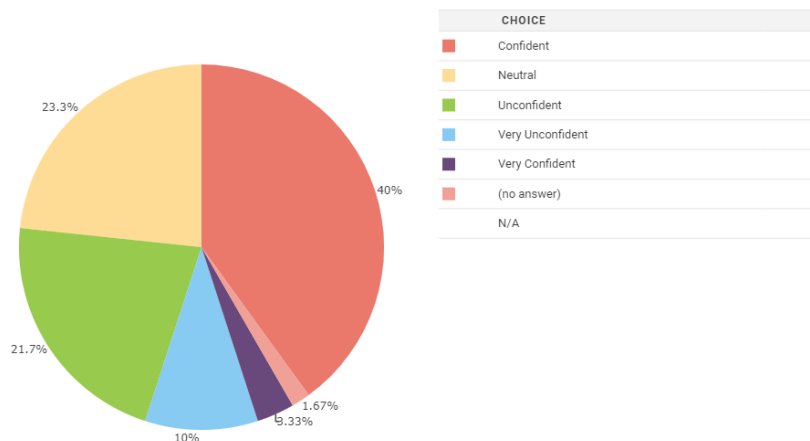


In 2023, 43.33% felt confident or very confident about the region's creative industries

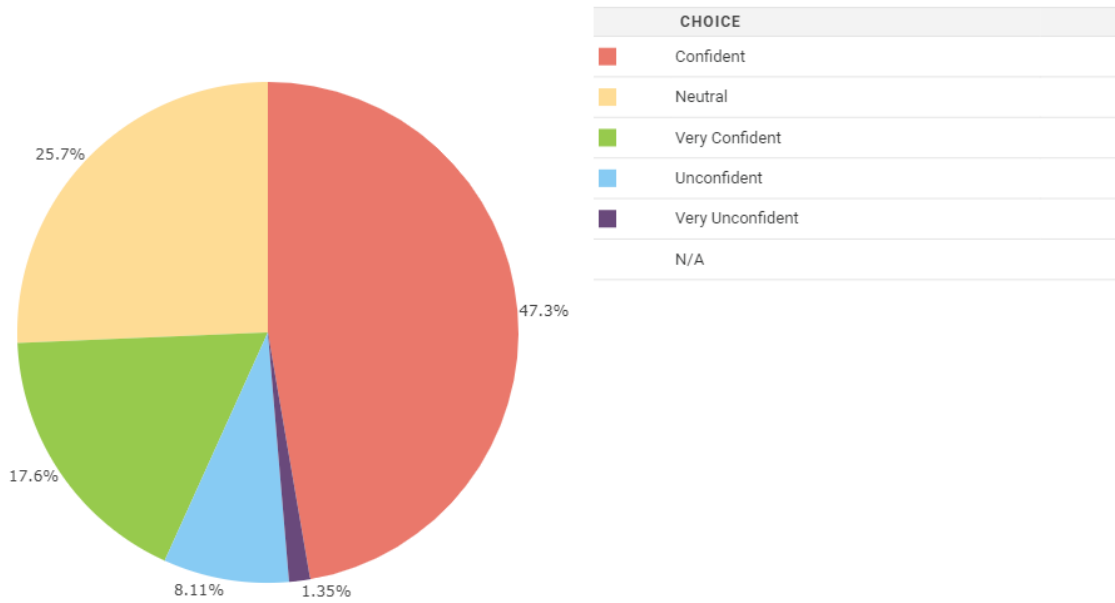
In 2024, 47.31% feel very confident or very confident about the region's creative industries – **rise of 4%**

In 2023, 31.7% felt unconfident or very unconfident, in 2024 that reduced to 17.61% - **14% less people are feeling unconfident about the region's creative communities and industries**

How confident do you feel about the region's creative communities and industries?



How confident do you feel about the future of your creative activities and/or practice over the next 12 months?



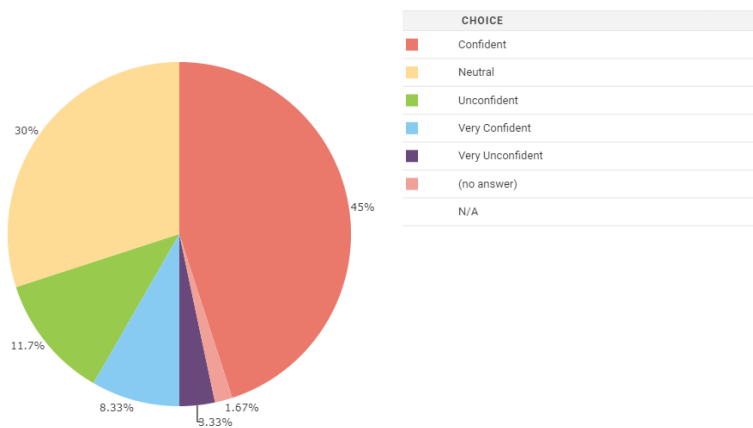
Optimism up - Slight increase in the confidence people feel over next 12 months in their creative activities and/or practice:

In 2024, confident or very confident = 64.9% - **11.57% up from last year**

In 2023, confident or very confident = 53.33%

In 2023, 15.03% felt unconfident or very unconfident in next 12 months, in 2024 that reduced to 9.46% - **5.57% less**

How confident do you feel about the future of your creative activities and/or practice over the next 12 months?



COMMENTS 2024:

Theme / Priority:	Mentions:
Funding / grants / subsidies	22
More creative spaces / affordable opportunities and spaces to exhibit	14
Networking / connection / opportunities to gather & share	12
Promoting arts / local artists / Showcasing assets & what's on/ attracting tourism	10
Opportunities to learn and develop / affordable classes and workshops / education about the industry e.g grant writing, governance, lobbying, funding etc	9
Collaboration/ working with other creatives	8
Increased engagement / communication	8
Youth programs / investing in young creatives / teen opportunities / school resources and experiences	7
Access to more performance spaces / paid performance opportunities	6
Advocacy / educating government & public about validity and benefits of the sector	4
Access & inclusion	4
Facility upgrades	2
Increased membership	2
Less outsourcing to Melbourne	1
Adapting to AI	1
Less bias	1

Plus...

4 references to art needing to be funded / supported like sports

3 references to cost of living / financial constraints / people not spending \$ on events

POSITIVE COMMENTS 2024:

The Creative Industries Strategy has provided a valuable tool for accessing funding for those who know how to use it. There remains a significant arts community in this region who are passionate and skilled, but unaware of how to harness their combined power for lobbying government and attracting funding.
I am excited at the growth and connection of people in the Southwest, especially through the many Artist Run Organisations and also Hamilton Art Gallery who seem dedicated to connect with local artists.
I've seen a lot of growth and support for the local creatives over the last 12 - 24 months in Hamilton, which has been great. I've particularly enjoyed seeing youth group workshops and inclusive community art pieces being offered. It would be good to have an opportunity to connect with local creatives as a hub to brainstorm, collaborate and encourage community participation and connections.
Community run initiatives like F project, South West Makers, drama groups (e.g. Holiday Actors), music groups, and choirs are extremely important. They require more support to cover their basic running costs (e.g. insurance, rental) to free up funds for more creative activities and subsidising young people and others who need extra help to participate. The arts are not only about what is 'made' physically, they are about making people, connections, and communities. They help us process big emotional things at an individual and group level and are extremely important for our physical and mental health. Our society at the moment places

a big emphasis on sports for young people. There are large numbers of young people who need the arts (and may or may not be part of competitive sports).
I am grateful of all the support I have had in getting my career off the ground in SW Victoria! Please continue supporting more artists and creatives locally and organize more networking and performing opportunities that would be even grand!!
There are so many people doing great work, and a great sense of community. We do need more funding.
Collaborate not competition. Meet and greet newer artists creatives. Travel. it's a wide diverse area. Great to see more happening about the region though. Loved how Portland put on a very warm inviting Sculpture Exhibition the walking event was amazing and inclusive.
As an artist I spend hours marketing our region for its visual artists. I never rely on funding or being supported. As a collective we have proved our success. We are independent and as creatives we are not answerable to anyone.
The growth of Arts in Corangamite Shire is growing very well , particularly in Terang at the Commercial Hotel , we need this positive energy to keep going it makes for a happy connected community .
Artists are slowly being recognised, Corangamite Creatives have started the ball rolling with a yearly exhibition at the Bookaar School, of which I am proud to say I'm part of, The Camperdown information centre has begun monthly exhibitions and Terang opened a new Gallery called TAG, where artists volunteer their time to man it in return for their art being displayed free only paying a commission on sales. It's expensive to display in well known galleries for artists just beginning to show, we need mor venues like what we have begun.
Great to see the growth of community participation in Corangamite eg particularly in the visual arts. Privately owned venues such as the Terang Commercial Hotel and Alderwood Manor have stimulated community participation in the arts with concerts and workshops.
Lots of groups trying to make headway locally in the arts; grants are extremely difficult to access. I personally don't exhibit locally as I'm represented by a gallery in Melbourne. Colac Otway is very supportive and generous in supporting Camperdown artists and crafts people. Eg) arts trail, CrossXpollination, arts expo, small treasures in the Botanical Gardens etc. Corangamite Shire gives nothing unfortunately.
We have so many creatives and a lot of potential here. I find younger people don't do as many classes and workshops (potentially financial restraints) so some funding may help with this. Bringing the arts community together more often would be great to with local events and workshops

CHALLENGES / BARRIERS / NEGATIVE COMMENTS:

It seems to be a grass roots industry, with little or no support from local governments or tourism bodies, even though it is always used in promotions. There is negligible income for the majority of artists, who then rely on "real" jobs. It is the pure passion of people's artwork that keeps them engaged, but this will become harder as the financial environment gets worse. It would be great for these artists to be able to be supported financially with a wage, so that their creative art can be their occupation, rather than just a hobby. The financial support currently available is either too hard or too complicated to apply for individuals and small groups. I'm not sure of the value to practising artists of the non financial support, as it seems directed at early career artists. Our society needs to change how we see artists and their value to us. This changed visibility can only change at a high level, which is hopefully something RAV can help with in the future. To be honest, I don't think this current creative strategy has changed much for artist support from the non art society around us.
Creative industries do not seem to be as highly regarded here as sport is. So much funding and publicity on sport and very little for the arts. The local paper no longer has its Arts What's On

Page. There is a lot of grass roots art activity which could benefit from more local and state government support. Volunteers do so much more than these organisations.
We're a long way from the Melbourne hub, so we might miss out on networking opportunities that are so important for the creative sector. Support, funding, venues, focus events, festivals... all help
Just trying to be resilient and resourceful to keep things exciting and accessible for our community, but it's so hard doing it without funding for programming. I can see the impact it's having, but people just don't have the expendable income they had even a year ago and so paid ticketed events are just not getting the numbers to rely on tickets as income stream for staffing to keep us going strong.
The art market in the South West is limited so we need to bring customers from further afield. Group promotions seem to be more effective at bringing art visitors to the region than individual artists' promotions.
Include young people! We desperately need more live music venues. Big bands skip us but go to places like Torquay, Ballarat and Bendigo. More dance spaces to hire in south west vic would be amazing that aren't private businesses.
We need creative spaces that are accessible to all people in all areas, especially for those that are non ambulant.
I have a retail textiles business, fabric, yarn and quilting supplies to the public, recently I opened up my workroom to host workshops and social sessions. I am finding it difficult to connect with workshop facilitators - ie. folks who have a textiles skill and they would like to teach others how to or improve their skills. I am finding that being in the country it is hard to get the 'big name' textiles creatives to come here without a big financial investment - I cannot afford this so early in my business journey. I would also prefer to support local creatives - give them a space to demonstrate and share their skills to grow the community. A database of creatives with their skills and contact information would be a great resource. Thanks for taking the time to research this field.
the creative industry is suffering to sell due to the high cost of living; But! Creative activities should be encouraged as a wellbeing not a luxury which can be cost effective and affordable.
In SW Vic there is a huge amount of creative practice for adults, but much less for children/young people mainly due to DETs lacking of funding for art, music and drama particularly in primary schools, despite them acknowledging creativity as a skill required for future workforce. This is an access and equity issue for children! Children need adults to demand children can develop skills in music, drama and art so they can have the same access to/participation in community creative practices.
In general a lot is said, nothing is ever done. I hold a nice title 'Senior Mentor Regional Arts Australia' it has never translated into any attempt to make any use of my skills for the good of any creatives in any area that I have happened to live in.
More focus on local creatives and less outsourcing to Melbourne agencies and creatives
It is hard to offer services when people are unwilling to travel. Offering services in towns is cost prohibitive
I feel AI is a threat to artists and graphic illustrators, especially in my field. I have noticed more AI generated images are being posted on social media.
More access to funding to support local artist development living with a disability
Cheaper education some people in rural areas can't afford much.

PRIORITIES / SUGGESTIONS:

More interdisciplinary collaboration and network/ performing opportunities
Fostering creative communities where we can share what we know and don't know.
Would love to see more communication and sharing of information, skills etc between creative hubs across the Council sectors, or even within a sector to create a stronger voice and increased opportunities for creatives and benefits flowing on to communities.

It would be great to see more collaborative projects between creatives
There are so many creatives in the area, some way of collaborating and/or connecting would be great.
It would be great if it was more inclusive and also if people had broader minds and not just focus on traditional arts.
Educate local government about the validity and possible benefits of a wide variety of arts.
Storytelling of artists
A collation of art groups/ art classes/art shows in Corangamite. This would be onerous though because it would have to be updated weekly.
A place to connect with Musicians. Host shows, rehearsal spaces.. a registry for locals looking to play would be pretty useful too
Apollo Bay needs an arts space / Affordable Opportunities to exhibit
It would be great to see more support given to enhance facilities such as the Theatre Royal in Camperdown and the potential music conservatorium to help live performance in our region.
More opportunities to talk/be spoken to from local government grant representatives in our sector
Public awareness of the cultural and financial importance of the creative sector.
Support local charities who are working with disengaged/disaffected youth like Bluebird Foundation. The hyper-local focus means children and youth who would either slip through the cracks are getting attention and discovering how any involvement with the arts is valid and contributes to their individual abilities to feel a part of their community and society more broadly.
Educating the arts sector on arts governance, administration, lobbying and funding.
Funding for realistic programming including paying the people who make it happen!
Having a space to hold gigs and using it to not cater to everyone all at once but still keeping at a space that everyone can use
I'd like to understand the process of how to write a grant application so access to a local information/session on how to go about this would be great. Thankyou
Youth classical music programs
Paid performance opportunities for classical musicians
More showcasing for our galleries to attract more tourists and local interest.
More venues to display art that doesn't cost much as most are too expensive

COMMENTS 2023:

Any comments you would like to make about the Creative Industries in the South West Region?
Its very welcoming
ACT Natimuk is a terrific organisation to be affiliated with and the Nati Frinj as a recurring point in time. Like my local ACCA and a little Speigeltent is how I view it in my creative life. My focus is on creative practice fulltime and teaching art maintains the focus.
Collaboration is key. Appreciate the ways in which this strategy is able to hold councils & gov bodies accountable.

it would be great to see local government, particularly Moyne Shire more engaged and positive about community cultural development. Committing some serious \$\$ and positive engagement
FYVCollective has been a wonderful, supporting and nurturing space to explore and reconnect with creativity. I've recently learned that I'm actually not terrible at drawing (amongst other creative endeavors) as previously believed, thanks to FYVC.
There is a lack in performance opportunities
At the moment there are limited opportunities and we wish that there were more in the region.
The music scene is growing and growing, we just need to keep people engaged!
There should more opportunities for people with disabilities to creatively release
In Warrnambool and surrounds it would be good for more performance opportunities
I would like more performance opportunities
It would be good to have more opportunities.
As a resident in Colac Orway Shire it can be hard work to feel the arts is supported by our local government and broader community, thankfully there are many amazing volunteers and artists to make things happen. The need for a large gallery/art space in Colac specifically would be amazing - this is currently lacking....
I think the work of RAV, councils and other formal groups or mechanisms to support artists and volunteers in creative industries is critical. In two key ways, 1) to expand or continue the work of existing practitioners and 2) to attract and inspire new people and audiences to the field. Thanks
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Keep investing, keep growing, things feel like they're changing!

I was based in Warrnambool and have moved to Melbourne this year. I was a part of the Creative Leaders Program. The networking and mentorship opportunities have had a lasting impact on me.

The program helped me realise that there are people like me who are creative and that I can surround myself with people like this who are like me. I have stayed connected with some of the other creative leaders and some have reached out to me for advice.

The best thing is that I run into my mentor, Joel O'Keefe from Airborne regularly in Melbourne and he always stops for a chat. It's a dream come true to have one of my biggest idols as a mentor and to still know me and make time for me years later.

My confidence since moving to Melbourne has decreased as the realities of trying to make it in the music industry has been tough.

I am not confident about the regions creative industries, because the South West is dominated by footy culture and I never felt a sense of belonging as a creative in the general community. I feel like it's good for hobby creatives, but limited for people who want to work in the industries. I have learned a lot and I am confident about moving forward.

I think the best thing that could happen for the South West is more opportunities for mentoring and networking.

There is a feeling that the sector is maturing and showing more confidence in itself as a legitimate industry sector. I know in previous years, there has been a strong sense of arts practitioners claiming they lack funding, support or capacity building avenues, but now I see greater evidence of collaborations, maturity in strategic direction and governance considerations, and more targeted and advanced funding requests.

More of an up to date creative performance venue for large shows or at least current venue to have equipment especially lighting facilities for stage performances updated and raked seating installed.

Corangamite Shire now are very verbose about the Creatives in the region, it's a very positive step forward with more art galleries and craft related shops popping up.

More funding should be available for sole traders promoting south west Victorian artists. Rates, insurance, rent, permits, advertising, signage, social media, staff, cleaning etc etc needs to be paid before even beginning to sell and promote local art. The funding available seems to go to government not for profit.

I'm confident, though at times I find the resources are a bit ad hoc, or based in commercial enterprises. I work part-time in education. Always maintaining connection with other artists, like-minded folk is key.

Lots of support out here.

There seems to be more opportunities to develop artistically and ability to take part more at a local level

Personally I think the people with enough talent and discipline are better off reaching out to Melbourne or other interstate areas to pursue their goals, the south west is developed by tall poppy syndrome and a toxic competitive scene where a lot of people easily get jealous by the success of others.

<p>I would like to see creatives being helped to diversify their income outside of exhibition and teaching classes. A quick example I saw in Warburton is hosting space for artists to see prints and products at the information centre.</p>
<p>The role of creative art activities in peoples lives is always under valued from a mental health point of view. Positive impacts on our communities are not just from professional creatives, or people making an income from the sector. Support for arts based community groups should be equivalent to other community groups, such as sporting clubs. Local government could easily support via equivalent infrastructure for local creative hubs.</p>
<p>I was full time as a sole trader photographer for 13 years. Now I've lost my passion to be full time and have ideas to pursue as a hobby however would still like to make some money. I would love to have a grant to follow through on some of these ideas.</p>
<p>Anecdotally, the Creative Industries are in a disjointed state. There are pockets of great success at one end, and at the other there are practitioners feeling disconnected and unsure. There is community dissatisfaction in the availability of opportunities right now, but also a sense that things are underway to improve the situation. Personally I feel that there is a more collaborative approach between governing bodies, arts orgs and the community at large, and this will lead to good things in the coming years.</p>
<p>More grants support for local projects. More workshops for digital media.</p>
<p>As my creative outlet is community based I answered the above based on my own assumption, this is not reflective of the opinion of my local community who I engage with.</p>
<p>I have lived here for ten years and I've had my art ABN for four. It feels like the arts in this region has been flourishing during this time. I've loved seeing more public art, what The F Project has been doing is amazing, Fresh market has been really helpful for me (I have a stall there during spring and summer). I was disappointed the WAG Cannon Hill project wasn't able to go ahead. I think the public didn't understand the benefits. Many find change challenging, especially post COVID. But on the whole I think the public is an art loving and supportive one. I feel well supported here by the public and by RAV. I think it's wonderful that there are small business mentoring opportunities. I have clicked "full time", but I actually work three days a week while my preschooler is in care...plus weekends and some nights. It probably adds up to full time! Next year he'll be in school so I'll be officially full time.</p>
<p>There needs to be an effort to attract people aged in their 20-40s into enjoyment of the arts. There seems to be a good range of options for youth and for seniors, but the middle age band are missing out. There also needs to be a focus on more budget friendly options for performances and workshops.</p>

I feel the Creative Industry is growing stronger. Slowly but surely people are realising the effect that all forms of art can have on your wellbeing. Whether it's bringing visual joy, being thought provoking, truth telling, sharing unique perspectives, thinking outside the box, providing representation, story telling, therapeutic practice etc. The arts are an incredibly important part of the South West and gives our regions creatives opportunities to express feelings and thoughts through their eyes, from their own perspectives and gives us insight into how they view the world. As a practicing Contemporary Aboriginal Artist myself, I am particularly impressed with the opportunities for First Nations artists but do feel that our artists need help in valuing their work and would benefit greatly from information sessions regarding licensing etc and it would also be great if businesses/companies also had access to information regarding price expectancy when commissioning a piece and costs involved if they want to use that piece further than just being a physical artwork, such as exclusive or non exclusive use and licensing of the artwork, reproduction, digitally and physically, creating a piece that becomes part of their identity/ branding etc. As I feel the difference in value and costs in Metropolitan areas compared to rural areas is significantly substantial and a lot of businesses/companies not understanding the value or worth that that piece can bring them, often dictating the budget, trying to barter the price with the artist or potentially seeking a less experienced or established artist that are not confident with their pricing or don't know their own worth yet. If we can work on some of those things into the future so that everyone is on a level playing field and has a better understanding of these matters then that would be very satisfying.

The southwest region is thriving and mutually supportive. Our galleries are broad and connected to local creatives and I feel very lucky to have a creative practice in this part of the world.

I think my confidence in my creative practice is unrelated to any government policies, documents or activities that are going on. As part of a group we have applied for funding, but been unsuccessful. The only way we have been able to secure a premises for exhibitions, workshops, retail sales and artist studios has been hard work by artist volunteers and their supporters. There is a lot more the federal, state, but especially local government can do to support the arts.

I've noticed a cooling as people find it harder to afford workshops and events. But the interest is still there. Grants needed to help balance accessibility for all financial demographics (Inc youth!)

We need so much practical support and constantly working through grant applications and partnerships is a total drain away from our mission

Thanks

I feel the creative industries in the area are growing and strengthening. I feel confident there are opportunities to network and develop as an artist. Postcode 3228

I would like to see more support offered to artists especially early / mid career.

I have asked for support to write a submission for funding and was told funding only goes to established artists .

Funding to be fair needs to respond to artists at all levels of career.

I have seen no workshops in South West region to assist writing funding submissions, nor mentoring programs or spaces that encourage you to pursue an arts career.