

From: Chloe Powell <chloe.powell@rmit.edu.au>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 10:54 AM
To: Awards <Awards@fwc.gov.au>
Cc: Grace McQuilten <grace.mcquilten@rmit.edu.au>; Kate MacNeill <cmmacn@unimelb.edu.au>; jnlye@unimelb.edu.au; Marnie Badham <marnie.badham@rmit.edu.au>
Subject: Attn: Deputy President Millhouse; Modern Awards Review consultation follow up

RMIT Classification: Trusted

Dear Deputy President Millhouse,

Thank you again for your time yesterday. It was a pleasure to meet with you to discuss the experience of artists and arts workers in relation to the Fair Work Commission's Modern Awards Review. We're excited this work is happening and appreciate your consideration of and focus on the issues we discussed.

Please find attached the full reports from our survey, as promised. Additional articles and discussion papers are also available on our [website](#).

If there's anything else we can assist with or explain further at any stage, please let me know.

Best of luck with the remaining days of consultation and the Review overall.

Best wishes,
Chloë
- on behalf of the Visual Arts Work research team

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Chloë Powell

Research Assistant: [Visual Arts Work](#)
Office hours: Wednesday - Friday
RMIT University – School of Art, College of Design and Social Context
(post) Building 24, 124 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, VIC, AUS, 3000
Email: chloe.powell@rmit.edu.au

I acknowledge the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of RMIT University. I respectfully acknowledge their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

Insights into the hybrid and diverse incomes and career patterns of visual and craft artists

Survey analysis
June 2023

Jenny Lye, Joe Hirschberg, Kate MacNeill,
Chloë Powell, Grace McQuilten, and Marnie Badham

Visual Arts Work

This research was funded in part by the Australian Government through the Australian Research Council. The Linkage Project *Ambitious and Fair: strategies for a sustainable arts sector* (LP200100054) is a collaboration between Grace McQuilten, Marnie Badham and Chloë Powell at RMIT University; Kate MacNeill and Jenny Lye at The University of Melbourne; Esther Anatolitis at Test Pattern; and partners the National Association of Visual Arts (NAVA) and the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA).



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Implications for Policy Development

Policy Implication #1

Policy that is confined to those visual and craft artists whose practice is their main occupation or profession will be based on a distorted gender profile. Consideration must be given to supporting visual and craft *practices*, a definition that better captures the representation of women than is achieved by a focus on visual art and craft occupations and/or professions.

Policy Implication #2

When asked to self-identify their career stage, visual artists and craft practitioners remain in the early career phase for a much longer period than might be reflected in eligibility criteria for grants and awards. This suggests that support during this period needs to be extended to ensure that early career artists can maintain a practice for a sufficient time to enable them to move through into a more stable mid-career status. Likewise, mid-career artists require support and resources to progress toward establishing their careers in the arts.

Policy Implication #3

All funding agencies should review the categories of art and craft practice and application processes to ensure that they do not indirectly discriminate based on age, cultural background, disability, or gender identification.

Policy Implication #4

An examination of the adequacy of incomes across the visual arts and craft sector (including part-time work in the education sector) is required to ensure that those who combine an art practice and arts work receive an adequate income. The gendered nature of the sector suggests that this examination needs also to consider whether gender segmentation is in part a contributor to lower incomes.

Policy Implication #5

The level of unpaid activity required to support the visual and craft sectors requires further examination, as does the fact that this load is disproportionately carried by females and those that identify as non-binary.

Policy Implication #6

The diversity of visual arts and craft practices, career stages and gender identification among artists needs to be recognised by philanthropic organisations, and funders across all levels of government to ensure:

- that the range of all visual and craft practices are encompassed within funding programs, including broader infrastructure requirements, support for artists as entrepreneurs and income support.

- prestigious and generous grants are available to those in the early-mid stages of their career.

Policy Implication #7

When short term measures are introduced to mitigate against the impact of catastrophic events such as pandemics, the precarious, hybridised and self-employed nature of Arts Work and Artistic Practices needs to be taken into account to ensure equal access to government support payments.

Introduction

This paper reports on the results of a survey conducted as part of a large-scale research project exploring the incomes, and working conditions of visual and craft artists, and arts workers in Australia.¹ The survey was conducted in 2022 and sought information about the working practices and incomes of respondents and the extent to which this had changed over the preceding two years. A key focus of the survey was to better understand the multiple sources of income and job holdings of visual and craft artists, and ultimately to inform policy interventions. We present the initial results from this survey with a focus specifically on respondents who identified primarily as visual or craft artists. Subsequent reports will analyse the data from the perspective of those that primarily identified as arts workers.

In the first section, we provide details of the survey method and a broad description of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. We then present the results that relate to the incomes and career stages of visual and craft artists, their hybrid employment activities, grant-seeking activity, both in general and specific to COVID-19 related support. The paper concludes with a discussion of more general findings and implications for policy and further research.

Part 1: Survey and Sample Demographics

Data was collected through an online survey, available at the *Visual Arts Work* research project website during May to July 2022.² Information about the survey was disseminated through an extensive list of arts organisations and educational institutions across Australia compiled by the project team, and directly through its project partner, the National Association of the Visual Arts. A series of advertisements were placed in Arts Hub, a national networking site for the cultural sector, and related member-based organisations were encouraged to include reference to the survey in their newsletters. In total, seventy organisations were contacted to assist in the distribution of the survey link. In addition, a snowballing method was used, whereby project staff distributed information about the survey to direct contacts who then shared it via email or social media with wider peer groups of artists. This produced a total of 702 complete surveys for analysis, making this the largest single scholarly survey of visual arts and craft professionals to date in Australia.

Respondents did not need to meet any criteria other than self-definition as a visual or craft artist, or arts worker in the Australian visual arts and craft sector. Unlike other data sets, there was no requirement that the respondents be ‘professional practicing artists’ (Throsby and Petetskaya 2017), or for their art practice to be their main job (Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2021). In so doing, the survey sought to capture the broadest possible range of artistic practices and careers.

¹ This research is funded in part by the Australian Government through the Australian Research Council. The Linkage Project ***Ambitious and Fair: strategies for a sustainable arts sector*** (LP200100054) is a collaboration between Grace McQuilten, Marnie Badham and Chloë Powell at RMIT University; Kate MacNeill and Jenny Lye at The University of Melbourne; Esther Anatolitis at Test Pattern; and partners the National Association of Visual Arts (NAVA) and the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA).

² <https://www.visualartswork.net.au/>

Respondents were first asked to self-identify as primarily either an artist or an arts worker using the question ‘Regardless of your main source of income, do you mostly identify as an artist or an arts worker?’. Of the 702 surveys, 523 were completed by respondents who primarily identify as visual or craft artists and 179 were completed by respondents who primarily identify as an arts worker. These two populations sometimes overlapped in that respondents whose primary identification is as an artist might also be arts workers, and respondents whose primary identification is as an arts worker also maintain an arts practice. This initial analysis of the survey results focused on the 523 respondents whose primary identification is as a visual or craft artist.

Figure 1 presents the range of creative practices of survey respondents. The most prominent is painting, drawing, printmaking (34.9%) followed by interdisciplinary (23.5%), sculpture and installation (11.2%), other (11.2%), craft and object making (9.1%), photography (5.0%), video, sound and media art (3.1%), and socially engaged and community arts (1.9%).

Figure 1 Main areas of creative practice (percentage)

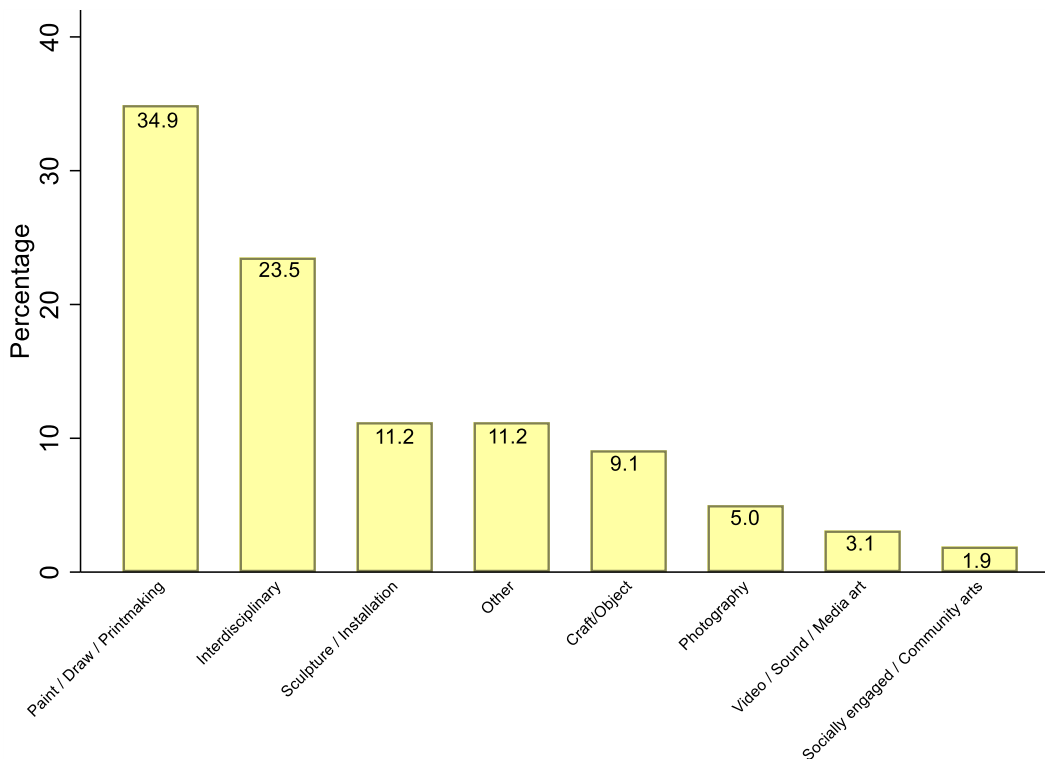


Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of our survey and presents a comparison with the demographics of visual artists and craft professionals in the most recent report in Throsby and Peteskaya (2017) and the *Australian Census of Population and Housing* (2021). Overall, the demographic characteristics of our survey are not dissimilar to those data sets. However, the scope of the visual art and craft practitioner category varies across these surveys: the Census category consists of those whose main job in the reporting period is that of a visual

artists or craft practitioner, and the Throsby surveys require that respondents meet criteria that seeks to determine whether they are professional artists.³

One notable difference is that of the gender breakdown of respondents: the proportion that identify as female in our sample is 10 percentage points higher than that recorded in the four-digit coded classification of Visual Arts and Craft Professionals in the 2021 Census and 15 to 20 percentage points higher than that recorded in the work of Throsby and Petetskaya (2017). The percentage of artists living in a capital city in our sample is lower than that in the Throsby and Petetskaya (2017) sample and in the Census results for Visual Art and Craft Professionals, and the percentage of visual and craft artists living in a regional city or town is higher than in these two other surveys.

Table 1 Demographics of Visual and Craft Artists

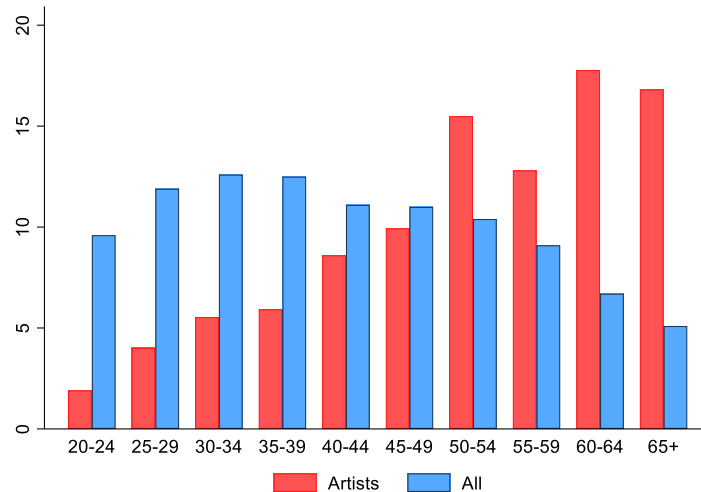
	Current survey (2022)	Throsby and Petetskaya (2017)		Australian Census of Population and Housing (2021) ^d
	Visual & craft artists	Visual artists	Craft practitioners	2114 Visual art & craft professionals
Observations	523	190	88	6,793
Mean Age	53	52	54	49
Median Age	54	52	57	50
%65+	16.8%	22%	21%	16.0%
Gender (Female%)	73.5%	54%	58%	64%
Born Australia	81%	78%	70%	70.5%
Single, no dependents or children	22%	21%	21%	
Single, dependents or children	6%	6%	7%	
Married/Living with partner, no dependents	37%	45%	58%	
Married/Living with partner & dependents	22%	28%	14%	
Other ^a	14%			
Capital city	51%	64%	53%	61.3%
Regional city/town	37%	24%	27%	
Rural/remote	12%	12%	20%	
Language other than English ^b	10%	9%	15%	15.2%
Disability ^c	16%	14%	13%	3.0%

- a. The current survey includes information about shared households of adults that neither the Throsby and Petetskaya (2017) or Census (2021) uses. b. Throsby and Petetskaya uses language first learned. c. The Census identifies disability using 'Has need for assistance with core activities'. d. Data retrieved using Census TableBuilder see: <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/tablebuilder?opendocument&navpos=240>

³ The Throsby and Petetskaya *Making Art Work: an economic study of professional artists in Australia* (2017) survey sought to include a representative sample of 'professional practicing artists' across all artforms. For visual artists this required them to have at some time during the 3 to 5 years prior to the survey had a work or works shown at a professional gallery; or work commissioned; contributed to the development of a major community arts project, festival or event; had created a serious and substantial body of work as an artist in the last five years; or had had full-time training or received a grant to work as an artist (see Throsby and Petetskaya 2017, 18).

A breakdown of the percentage of survey respondents and all workers by age group is shown in Figure 2⁴. The mean age for artists is 53 and the median age is 54. The largest cohort is the 60-64 age group followed by 50-54. 17% of the sample is 65 and older. Consistent with previous surveys, the age profile of artists is significantly older than that of the Australian workforce. The mean age of all workers is 43 and the median age is 42. The largest cohorts are between the 30-39 age groups, and only 5.1% of all workers are 65 and older.

Figure 2 Age groups of artists compared to general Australian workforce (percentages)



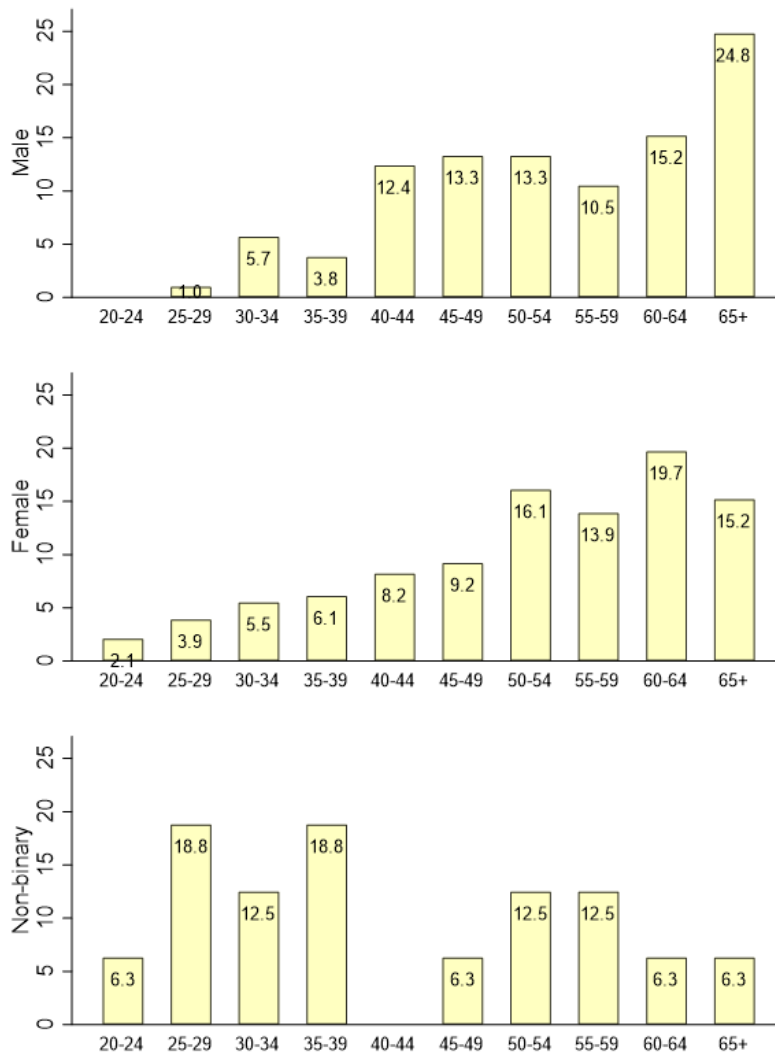
Our survey allowed respondents to self-identify their gender, to enable an analysis of the experiences of non-binary artists. Overall, 73.5% of respondents identify as female, 20.2% male, 3.1% non-binary and 3.2% either did not respond or nominated another category. However, with only 16 respondents in the category of ‘non-binary’ we are careful not to generalise from these results.

The gender composition of our survey is in contrast with the Throsby surveys and the Census results, where males account for just under half of the respondents. However, the higher prevalence of female respondents in our survey is consistent with results from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of *Participation in Selected Cultural Activities* (2017-18), in which females comprised 69.4% of Australians actively involved in visual arts or craft activity. In the discussion section of the paper, we explore the reasons for this difference and the implications it may have for policy.

As illustrated in Figure 3, the age distribution is relatively similar for males and females. The average age for males is 56 and for females 53. 25% of males were aged 65+ compared to 15% of females. Those who identify as non-binary had an average age of 43.

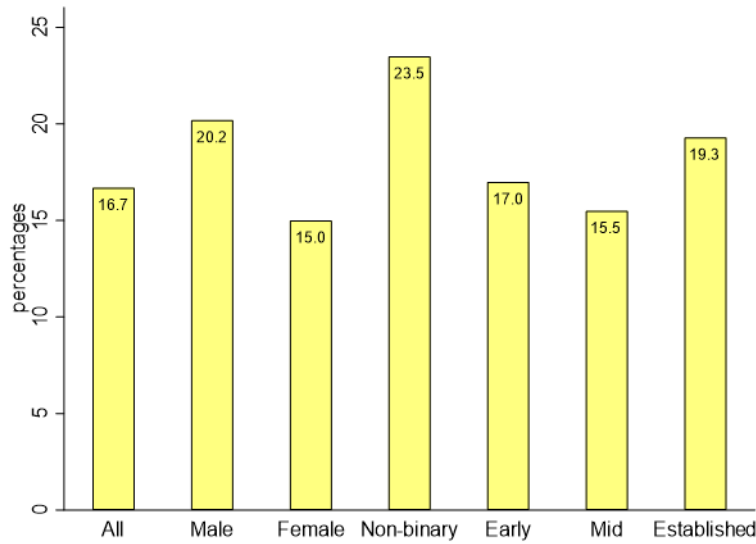
⁴ The percentage in age groups for all workers was computed using 6291.0.55.001 - LM1 - Labour force status by Age, Greater Capital City and Rest of State (ASGS), Marital status and Sex, February 1978 onwards.

Figure 3 Distribution of age across gender



81% of respondents were born in Australia and of the remaining respondents, the most common country of birth is the United Kingdom (7%) followed by New Zealand (2%). This is higher than that reported for Visual Art & Craft Professionals in the 2021 Census (75.5%). A relatively low proportion (17%) identified as having a culturally and linguistically diverse background, higher among male artists than female artists (Figure 4). 10% of the respondents used a language other than English at home, compared with 15.2% of Visual Art & Craft Professionals in the 2021 Census.

Figure 4 Percentage identifying as having a cultural linguistically diverse background



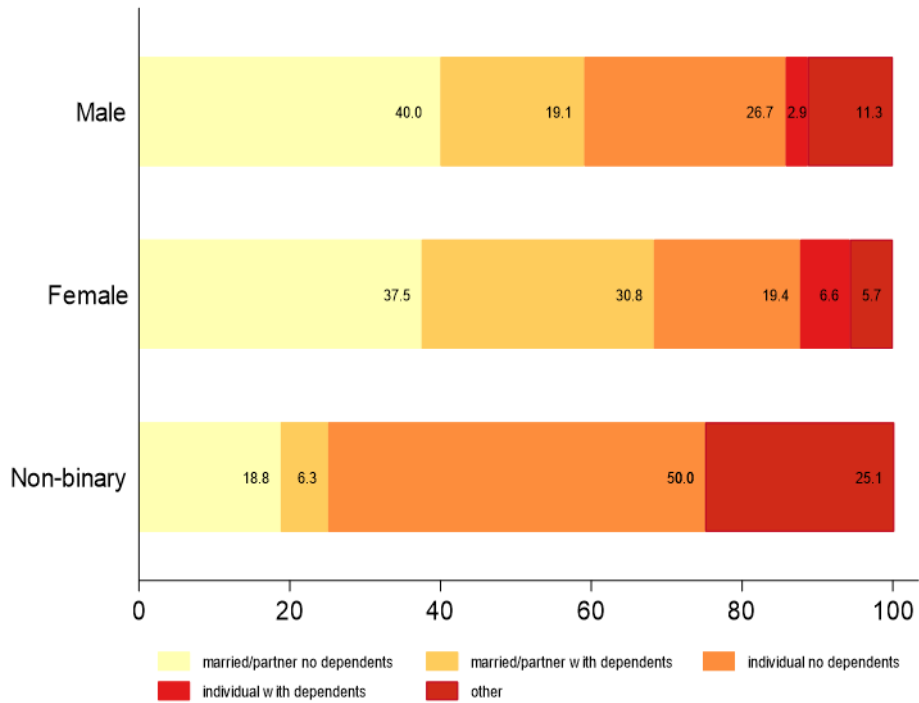
51% of artists in our survey live in a capital city, 37% in a regional city or town, and 12% in a rural or remote community. Early career artists are more likely to live in a capital city, as are those who identify as non-binary. While the distribution of career stage varies only slightly, more established artists live in rural or remote areas than their early or mid-career peers.

Table 2 Location of artists (%)

Type	Capital City	Regional city or town	Rural or remote
All	51.3	37	11.8
Early	60.6	30.3	9.1
Mid	47	40.4	12.7
Established	44.4	40.7	14.8
Male	52.3	37.4	10.3
Female	49.4	38.2	12.4
Non-binary	70.6	23.5	5.9

As shown in Figure 5, household types vary by gender. 37.4% of women live in households with dependents, defined in the survey as children or people the respondent cares for, compared to 22% of men and 6.3% of non-binary artists. Those who identified as non-binary are more likely to live in individual households with no dependents.

Figure 5 Household types by gender



16% of artists in our survey identify as living with a disability; similar to the population figure of 17.7%. Nationally, the prevalence of disability is split relatively evenly between men (17.6%) and women (17.8%). This varies more in our survey, with 13.3% of men, 15% of women, and 18.8% of non-binary artists identifying as having a disability. Across the whole sample, those aged 50 and over are more likely to identify as having a disability (62%).

Part 2: Survey Results

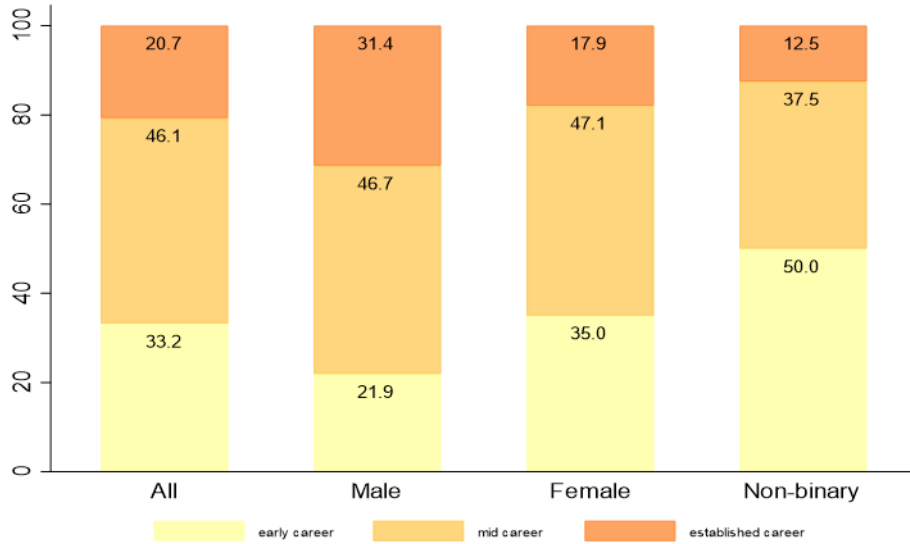
In this section we report on the results of the survey, with the results clustered under a number of headings which provide a framework for subsequent policy implications in Part 3. We start with results relating to age and career stage among visual and craft artists, followed by income and expenses of an arts practice, the hybrid nature of arts practices and employment both within and beyond the visual arts and craft sectors, unpaid and voluntary activity, grant seeking activities and outcomes, and finally results that relate specifically to experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Education, Career stage and Duration of Practice

Respondents were asked to self-identify their career stage. 33% of the sample describe themselves as early career (33.2%) with an average age of 45, 46% as mid-career artists with an average age of 54, and 21% as established artists with an average age of 64. The survey also asked about length of time practicing, and the trajectory of their career in the previous five years (2017-2022). As illustrated in Figure 6, gender differences in self-identified career stage are evident:

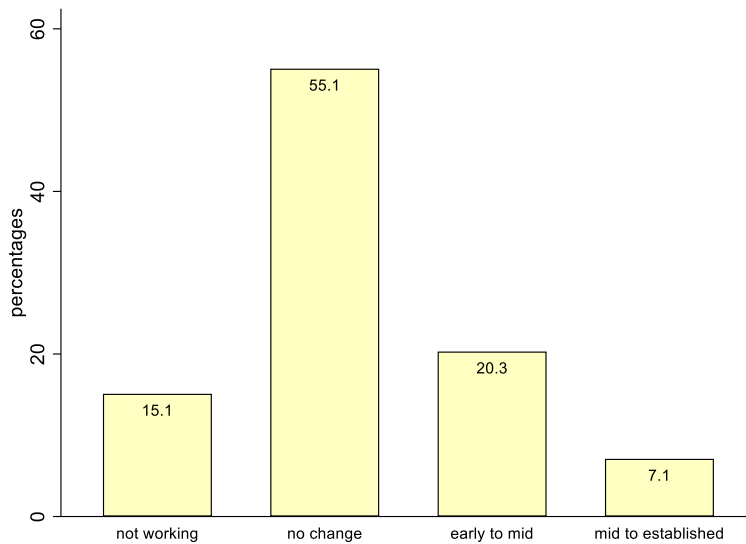
non-binary artists are most likely to identify as early career, both males and females are most likely to identify as mid-career. A higher-than-average proportion of male artists identify as established artists, whereas a higher-than-average proportion of women and non-binary artists identify as early career.

Figure 6 Career stage by gender (2022)



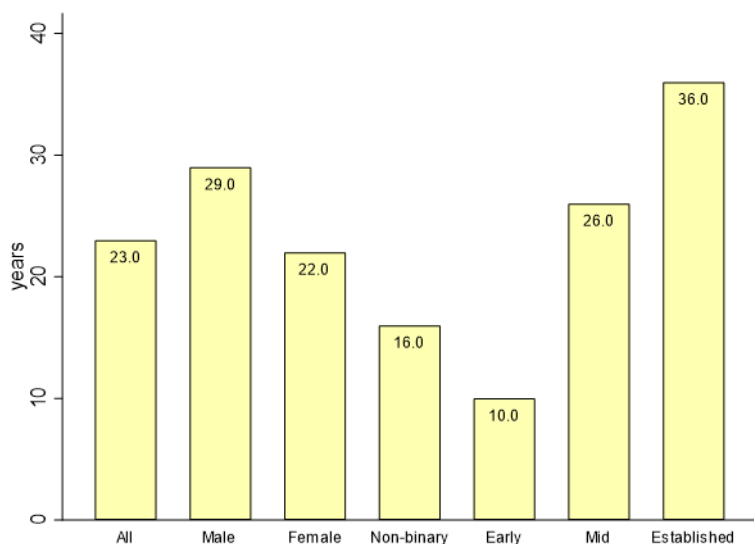
Over half of the sample (55.1%) did not change their career stage between 2017 and 2022. 15.1% are recorded as “not working” as an artist in 2017, presumably commencing their career during those five years.

Figure 7 Change in Career Stage between 2017 and 2021



On average, artists have maintained a practice for 23 years. Those who identify as early career artists have maintained a practice for an average of 10 years, mid-career artist for 26 years, and established for 36 years.

Figure 8 Length of time art practice has been maintained



Male artists have maintained their practice for an average of 29 years whereas artists who identified as female have maintained an arts practice for 22 years, and non-binary artists for 16 years.

The visual and craft artists in our survey have high levels of education in their creative practice. 62.5% have a relevant undergraduate qualification and 35% have postgraduate qualifications. There is virtually no difference in undergraduate qualifications by gender; whereas a higher percentage of male artists have postgraduate qualifications. A large percentage participate in community and collective peer learning, with differences recorded across gender and career stage. Those identifying as female are more likely to be currently studying, participating in collective activity, community activities, peer learning and private classes or workshops.

Table 3. Education and Training in visual art/craft (percentage)*

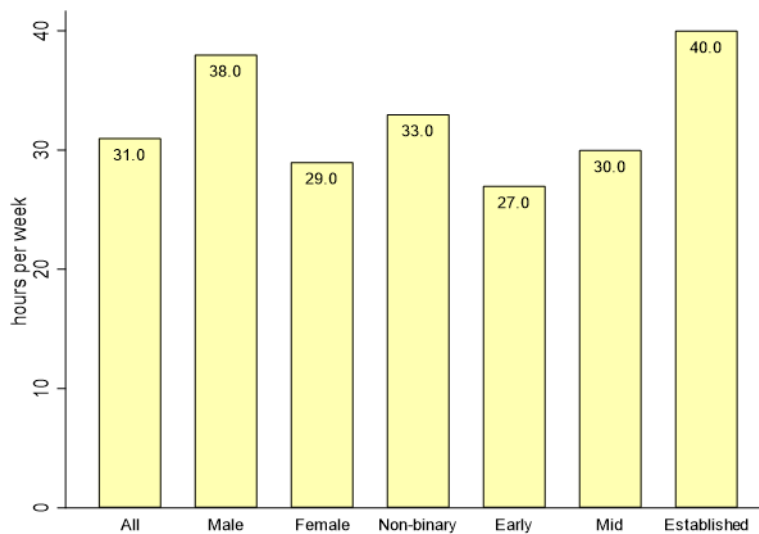
	All	Male	Female	Non-binary	Early	Mid	Established
Undergraduate education	62.5	63.8	63.6	62.5	58.4	69.2	54.6
Postgraduate education	34.8	40.0	33.0	37.5	22.5	40.0	43.5
Currently undertaking study/training	12.8	6.7	14.7	12.5	20.2	10.8	5.6
Private classes/workshops	42.6	23.8	48.2	43.8	42.8	47.5	31.5
Collective activity/peer learning	31.4	22.9	33.3	50.0	30.1	36.3	23.2
Community activity/centre	23.7	15.2	26.4	25.0	23.7	25.8	19.4
None	3.8	4.8	3.7	0.0	5.2	2.1	5.6
Other	18.6	5.2	19.9	6.3	20.2	16.7	20.4

*Multiple responses allowed

Income from and hours worked in Visual Arts and Craft Practice

The hours worked by survey respondents according to gender identification, and self-designated career stage appears in Figure 9. On average, visual and craft artists spend around 31 hours per week on their art practice. This differs across gender and career stage. Males on average spend 38 hours, which is higher than both females and non-binary artists. Established artists spend on average 40 hours on their art practice compared to early career artists, who on average spend 27 hours per week.

Figure 9 Hours spent per week on Art Practice in 2020/2021



The survey asked respondents to compare the hours that they currently work on their art practice with those worked in the year 2018/19, that is pre-COVID-19 pandemic. 23.4% reported that in 2020/2021 they worked more hours in their art practice than pre-pandemic, 20% of respondents reported a decrease in the hours worked per week, and 56% of respondents had no change. In this two-year period, 27% of females increased the hours worked on their art practice as compared to only 12.5% of males. 31% of early career artists increased their hours worked compared to 15% of established artists.⁵

The mean and median incomes from visual and craft activities for the financial years 2018/2019 and 2020/2021 are reported in Table 4. These results are consistent with previous survey outcomes, in that there are significant gender differences in income from visual art and craft practices. Female visual/craft artists receive a lower mean income than male visual/craft artists, and the mean income for early career artists is on average 25% that of established artists.

⁵ It is difficult to interpret these results. Possible explanations may be that respondents engaged in switching behavior as other work dried up, returns from other work were so low that the tradeoff in terms of satisfaction versus income shifted, or that the respondent received income through Covid financial support that enabled an increase in time spent on their art practice. The gender differential may reflect the fact that male respondents on average reported spending more time on their art practice in any event and may not have had any external motivation to lift their hours.

Table 4 Variation in Visual Arts or Craft Practice Income 2018/19 to 2020/21

Type	2018/19 Mean (\$)	2020/21 Mean (\$)	% diff Mean	2018/19 Median (\$)	2020/21 Median (\$)	% diff Median
All	10,878	11,321	4.0	2,599	2,872	10.5
Early	3,451	4,758	3.8	928	1,499	61.5
Mid	12,934	12,967	0.3	3,171	3,683	16.1
Established	17,866	19,413	8.7	6,832	5,267	-22.9
Male	25,059	22,906	-8.6	4,671	4,437	-5.0
Female	7,740	8,507	9.9	2,395	2,671	11.5
Non-binary	8,061	10,157	26.0	1,171	2,693	130.0

The results show no overall decline in income derived from an arts practice over the two most significant years of the COVID-19 pandemic. The exception to this overall result is that of male artists, whose average and median income from their visual arts and craft practice declined. As only 20% of the total respondents identify as male this does not have a significant impact on the overall outcome.

Table 5 Main sources of income from visual art/craft practice (percentages)*

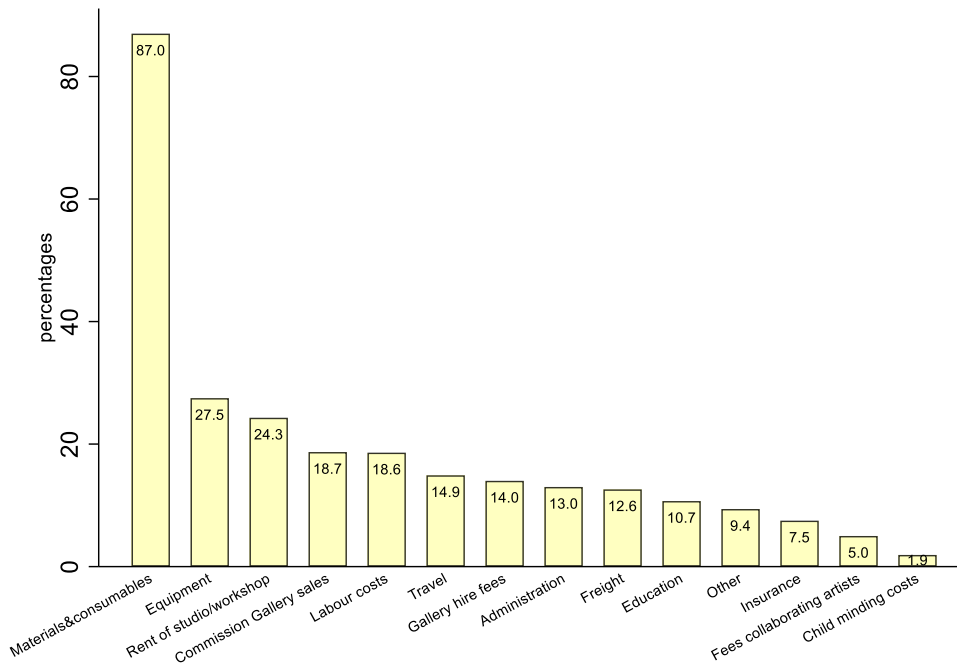
	All	Male	Female	Non-binary	Early	Mid	Established
Sales and/or commissions between artist and buyer	46.7	44.8	48.4	18.9	45.1	47.9	46.3
Sales and/or commissions through a gallery	27.3	29.5	27.8	12.5	29.5	22.5	35.2
Exhibition/Artist fees	22.6	23.8	22.0	37.5	17.3	25.0	25.9
Grants/Prizes/awards	17.6	14.3	17.8	31.3	20.2	19.2	10.2
Workshop/Speaker fees	15.3	10.5	16.5	12.5	11.6	17.1	17.6
Commissioned Public art and/or Festivals	10.9	14.3	9.2	25.0	8.1	13.3	10.2
Other	17.2	16.2	16.8	31.3	19.7	14.6	19.4

*Multiple responses allowed

The range of income sources from respondents' visual and craft art practice appears in Table 5. The most common source of income is that of sales directly between the artist and buyer. The second most common source is that of sales and/or commissions through a gallery. The sources of income for the non-binary group are more likely to be exhibition and artist fees followed by grants, prizes, and awards. Those with established careers are more likely to receive income from sales and or commissions through a gallery and less likely to receive grants, prizes, and awards. Workshop and speaker fees as a source of income is higher for females than males whereas commissioned public art and/or festivals is higher for males than females.

The range of expenses incurred in maintaining a visual art or craft practice appear in Figure 10. Survey respondents were asked to indicate the top three categories of expenses incurred in their visual art/craft practice. Close to nine out of ten respondents nominated 'materials and consumables' (87%), considerably more than the second and third highest ranked categories, namely 'equipment' (28%) and 'studio or workshop rental' (24%) by respondents.

Figure 10 Expenses incurred in visual art/craft practice (percentages)



Hybrid Employment Activities and Incomes

One of the goals of the broader research project is to better understand the ways in which visual and craft artists combine a range of income generating activities and allocate their time across these activities. 40% of visual or craft artists are engaged in arts work in the broader visual arts and craft sector and 35% undertake work in areas outside of the sector.⁶ Figure 1 illustrates the average percentage of working time allocated across an arts practice, other work in the visual art and craft sector and work outside of the sector.

⁶ In our project we use the term Arts Worker to refer those who work alongside artists, or in educational settings or arts and cultural institutions as for example designers, curators, gallery assistants, studio assistants, art technicians, community arts officers, arts educators or arts researchers and writers.

Figure 11 Distribution of working time

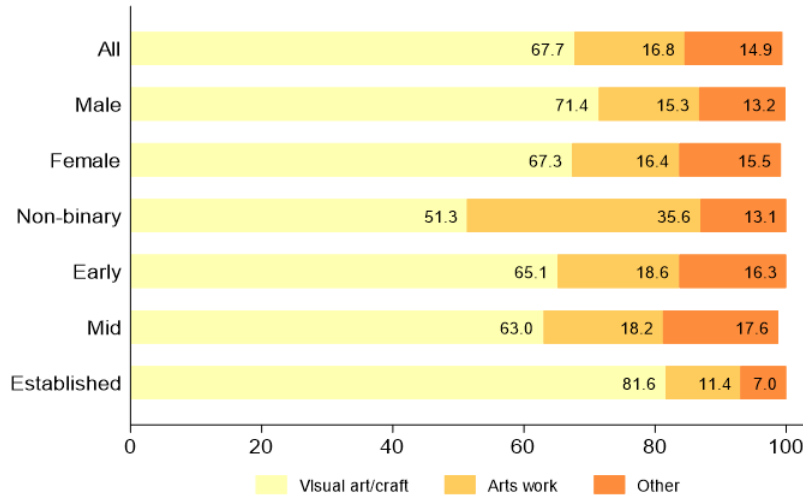


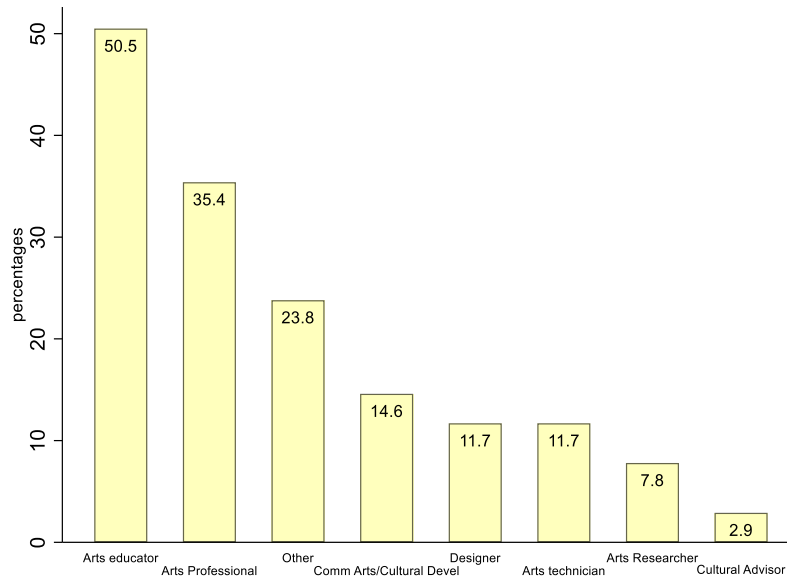
Table 6 presents the demographic profile of those in our sample who identified as an artist and are also engaged as an arts worker in the visual art and craft sector, and who identified primarily as an artist and are not engaged as an arts worker in the visual art and craft sector. Those in the latter category are more likely to be female, younger, and to have dependents and are slightly more likely to identify as being from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and less likely to be established artists. Artists that are also arts workers spend only slightly more time on average on their work as an artist, as they did as an arts worker. On average their income from their arts practice was 30% lower than that reported by artists who did not also undertake arts work.

Table 6 Artists who are also Arts Workers

	Artist and Arts Worker	Artist and not Arts Worker
	(NB may or may not be engaged in other work outside the sector)	
Observations	206 (39.4%)	317 (60.6%)
% hours worked artist	47.2	80.9
% hours worked arts worker	42.8	0
% hours worked other	10	18.1
Mean Age	50	55
Median Age	52	56
%65+	11.7	20.2
Gender (Male)	18.1%	26.1%
Born Australia	80.4%	80.9%
Single, no dependents	11.7%	22.2%
Single, dependents	6.3%	5.7%
Married or living with partner, no dependents	34%	38.3%
Married or living with partner, dependents	24.8%	20.6%
Other	14.1	13.4%
Capital city	52.4%	50.4%
Regional city/town	35%	38.3%
Rural/remote	12.6%	11.2%
Language other than English at home	14.4%	12.2%
Disability	16%	14.7%
CALD	18.9%	14.9%
Early	35%	32.1%
Mid	48.5%	44%
Established	16.5%	23.5%
Arts hours – mean	27	34
Arts income – mean	\$9,175	\$12,749
Arts income – median	\$2,747	\$2,964

Figure 12 below illustrates the area of arts work, with multiple options selected. Most notably, half (50.5%) work as arts educators and 35.4% as arts professionals.

Figure 12 Areas of work*



*Multiple responses allowed

Table 7 sets out the characteristics of work undertaken in the arts and cultural sector by visual and craft artists.

Table 7 Characteristics of arts work

Length of time worked	Mean	17 years	
Career Stage	Early	38.8%	
	Mid	33.0%	
	Established	28.2%	
Hours per week worked 2020-21	Mean	19	
Income		2018-19	2020-21
	Mean	\$20,844	\$20,662
	Median	\$7,982	\$8,327
Employment Type	Fixed-term contract	9.7%	
	Permanent or ongoing basis	11.7%	
	Casual	23.8%	
	Self-employed	36.4%	
	Other	18.5%	

On average they are engaged for 19 hours a week in this work with an average income from this employment in 2020-21 of \$20,662. In May 2022, average weekly ordinary time earnings across the workforce generally were \$92,029 per annum, approximately \$46,014 for a 19 hour week.⁷

⁷ ABS, Average Weekly Earnings Australia, May 2022, released 18 August 2022.

Over a third of artists who are also arts workers are self-employed and almost a quarter are casual workers. The average length of time worked as an arts worker is 17 years with around 40% describing themselves as early career arts workers.

As shown in Figure 13, 60.7% of all visual and craft artists receive income from sources outside the visual art/craft sector. Not surprisingly this is higher for early career visual artists (68.2%) and lower for established artists (55.6%). There was little variation according to gender.

Figure 13 Income from other sources outside of visual arts and craft sector

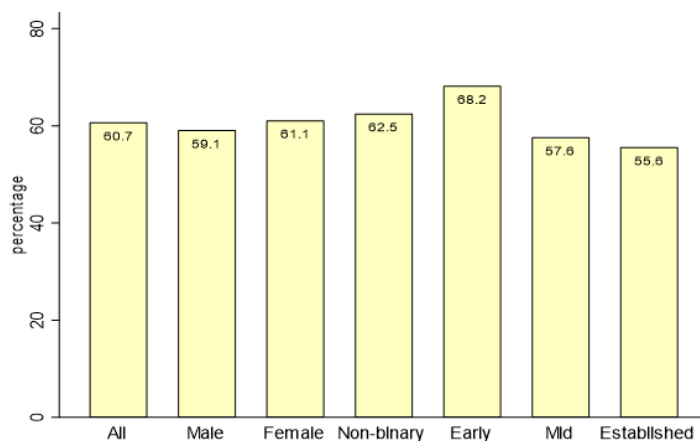


Table 8 shows the sources of “other” income, that is income from outside of the visual art and craft sector. 34.6% of all artists receive an income from employment outside of the arts sector, with 47.4% of early career artists engage in employment outside the sector, reducing to 13% of established artists. Similar percentages of early career and established artists receive government support (approx. 20%), with 15% of established artists in receipt of a private income, and 17.6 % also in receipt of income from ‘other’ sources, possibly superannuation. A greater percentage of non-binary artists receive government support than males and females.

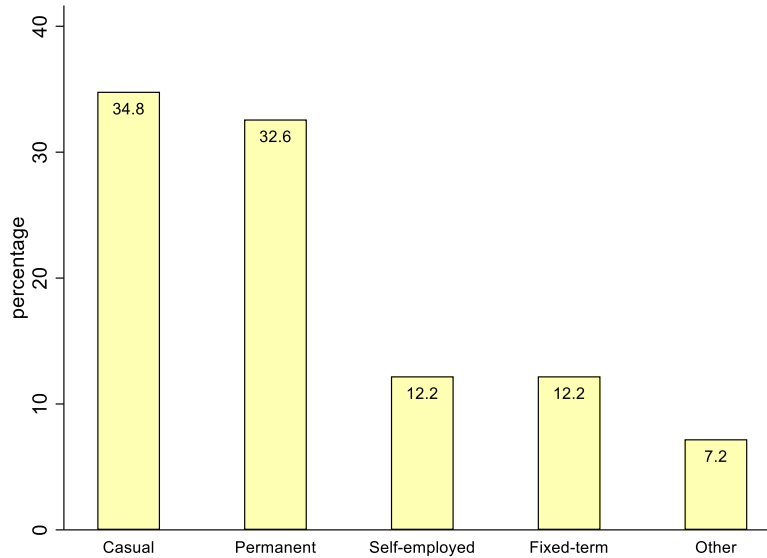
Table 8 Sources of other income (percentages)*

	All	Male	Female	Non-binary	Early	Mid	Established
Other employment	34.6	31.4	35.1	37.5	47.4	35.4	13.0
Government support	16.3	14.3	16.2	25.0	20.2	12.1	19.4
Private income	9.6	8.6	10.5	0	5.6	9.6	14.8
Family support	3.4	0	4.5	6.3	2.9	3.8	3.7
Scholarships	1.7	1.0	2.1	0	2.3	2.1	0
Other	8.2	10.5	7.3	6.3	4.6	6.7	17.6

*Multiple responses allowed

Figure 14 below shows the status of employment for the 35% of artists who have employment in the non-arts sector. Only a third are in a permanent role and over half are working either in a casual or fixed term appointment or are self-employed.

Figure 124 Types of employment in the non-arts sector



Unpaid Work undertaken by Visual/Craft Artists

Around 45.9% of visual/craft artists participate in unpaid work in the arts sector including volunteer Board membership; in artist-run initiatives; on self-managed projects; in family arts-related business and mentoring. The table below reports the percentage of artists according to gender identification and self-designated career stage participating in unpaid work, and for those the average total number of hours each month spent on this work.

Table 9. Participation in unpaid work

Type	% Participating	Average total hours each month
All	45.9	24.8
Male	43.8	20
Female	45.8	26.6
Non-binary	50	28.9
Early	41	25.8
Mid	50.4	24.5
Established	44	23.9

A similar participation rate is found across gender identity and career stage. The average total number of hours for those in unpaid work is also similar across career stage but there are differences across gender with male artists reporting lower average hours of unpaid work than females and non-binary artists. The table below reports the average hours each month spent on each of the types of unpaid work for those in unpaid work.

Table 10 Average hours each month for those participating in unpaid work

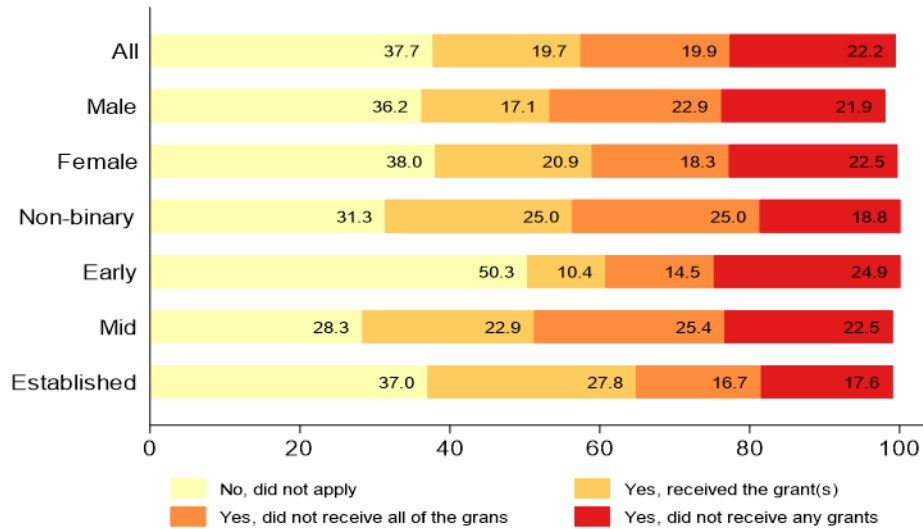
Type	All	Male	Female	Non-binary	Early	Mid	Established
Artist-run initiatives	5.1	4.2	5.0	14.3	5.9	4.8	4.7
Boards	2.0	4.5	1.4	3.4	1.0	2.2	3.1
Self-managed projects	9.8	6.1	11.1	7.9	10.4	10.3	7.8
Family arts-related business	2.0	1.0	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.0	1.7
Mentoring	2.2	2.4	2.3	0.9	0.9	2.8	2.6
Other	3.7	1.8	4.4	0	5.5	2.5	4.0

On average male and female artists spend more hours each month on self-managed projects. Male artists average more hours in unpaid work on Boards than do female artists. Across the career stages the hours spent on each activity are similar although those in early career stages are less engaged in Board membership.

Accessing Grant Funding

Figure 15 represents the respondents’ experience with grant funding. 38% of the sample had not applied for any grants for their practice/arts work. 50% of early career artists had not applied for any grants, and early career artists are also most likely to be unsuccessful in their grant applications. Established artists are the least likely to not receive any grants.

Figure 13 Experience with grant funding (percentages)⁸



State Government art funders, local government art funders and the Australia Council for the Arts were the most common destination of applications, as shown in Table 11. Male artists are more likely than female artists to apply to the Australia Council for the Arts and established artists more likely than early and mid-career artists. Males were also more likely to have applied to a Philanthropic organization than females. Those in the non-binary group were more likely to have applied for grants from State Government art funding agencies.

Table 11. Most Common Funding Organisations for applications*

	All	Male	Female	Non-binary	Early	Mid	Established
State Government Art Funders	33.1	32.3	33.1	54.6	30.2	36.5	28.4
Local Government Art Funders	31.9	29.2	33.9	18.2	30.2	32.4	32.8
Australia Council for the Arts	27.6	38.5	25.6	9.1	20.9	25.3	41.8
Philanthropic Organisations	9.3	13.9	8.5	9.1	10.5	9.4	7.5
Creative Partnerships Australia	4.6	6.2	4.2	0	4.7	4.7	4.5
Commonwealth Office for the Arts	2.8	6.2	2.1	0	3.5	2.4	3.0
Other	13.3	7.7	16.1	0	15.1	12.9	11.9

*Multiple responses allowed

⁸ A very small percentage stated that they did not remember, this percentage is not included in the graph.

As illustrated in Figure 16 below, there was no consensus among respondents as to the nature of the activity or expenditure that granting bodies should support.

Figure 14 Financial support most beneficial (percentages)

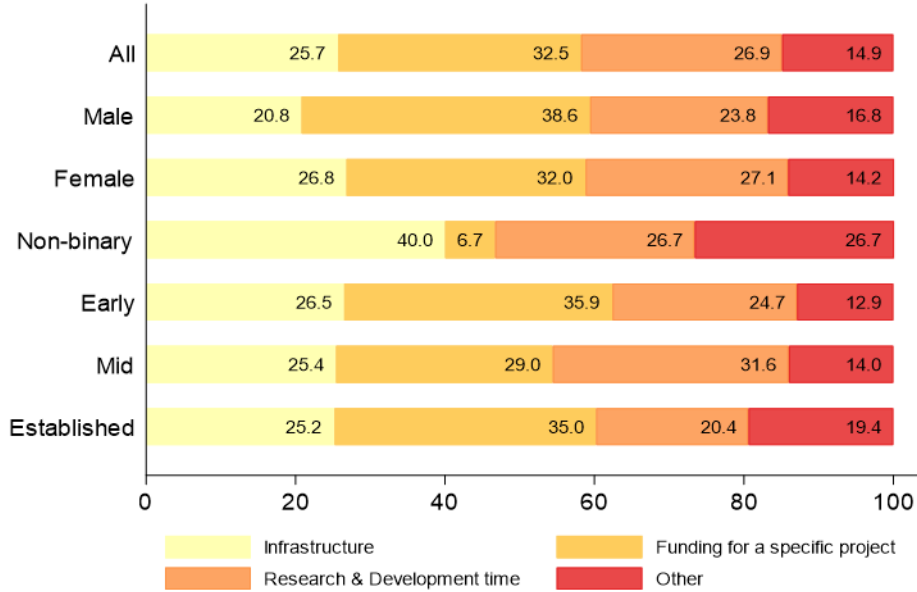


Table 12 records the challenges of and barriers to applying for arts grant funding. The amount of administration and/or time taken to prepare applications and a mismatch between funding priorities and the applicants’ aspirations are the two most common barrier to applying for grants. 62% of artists that identified as female considered that the administrative time to prepare applications for arts grants were a major disincentive to apply, whereas 50% of male artists felt that this was a disincentive. Other important barriers include the amount of funding available and not a strong enough track record. The track record was seen as a major barrier particular for early career artists and those identifying as non-binary.

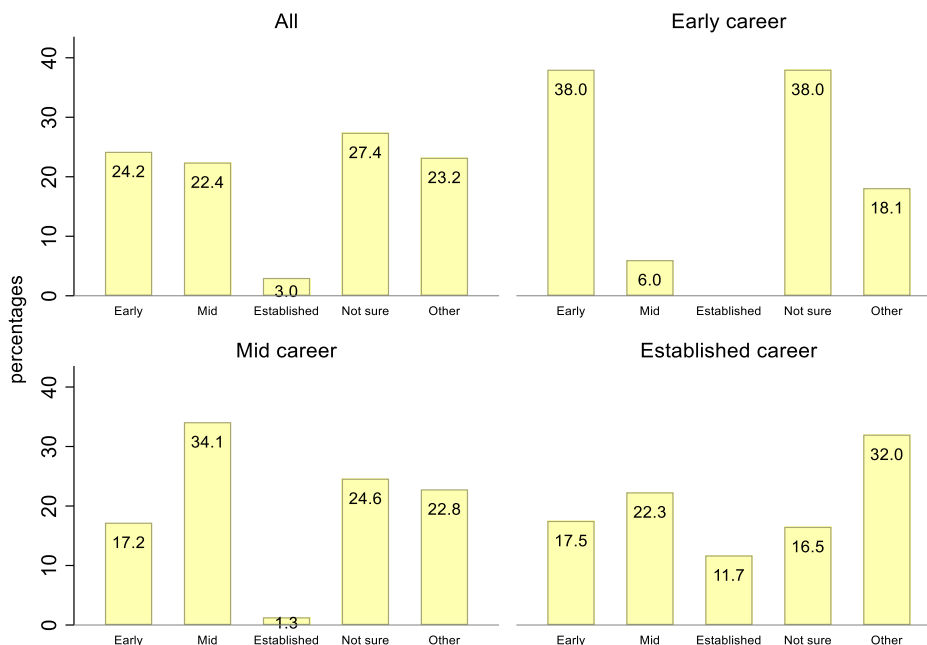
Table 12. Disincentives to apply for arts grants (percentages)*

	All	Male	Female	Non-binary	Early	Mid	Established
Admin/time to prepare application	59.7	50.5	61.8	50.0	61.3	60.0	57.4
Funding priorities don’t match	48.6	55.2	46.1	56.3	42.8	52.5	49.1
Amount funding available	35.0	38.1	34.8	25.0	31.2	37.9	35.2
Track record	31.7	28.6	31.7	50.0	42.2	28.3	23.2
Application timelines	17.6	12.4	18.1	31.3	23.7	17.5	8.3
Project timelines	7.7	8.6	7.3	12.5	6.4	8.3	8.3
Contract terms & conditions	6.7	4.8	6.8	0	7.5	5.4	8.3
Other	19.9	22.9	19.4	12.5	21.4	18.3	21.3

*Multiple responses allowed

Respondents were asked to identify when in their career or practice would grant funding be most beneficial.

Figure 15 Career Stage funding most beneficial (percentages)



Unsurprisingly responses varied by the career stage of the respondent. Even so, early to mid-career were strongly supported by all respondents, including those who had identified as established artists.

Pandemic Impacts

The Australian Government rolled out a succession of economic response packages to support household and businesses during the pandemic. The JobKeeper Payment was introduced in March 2020, which allowed employers to claim a fortnightly payment of \$1,500 per eligible employee. The payment covered casual employees if the person had been employed for 12 months or more and was not a permanent employee of another employer. Employers were only eligible if they could show a ‘significantly reduced turnover’. A combination of criteria produced a situation where most universities and numbers of local, state, and national galleries and museums were not eligible.

The Coronavirus Supplement of \$550 per fortnight was introduced for welfare recipients in March 2020⁹. This provided extra support for some casual employees who experienced a

⁹ These included those receiving JobSeeker payments, Sickness Allowance, Youth Allowance for jobseekers, Parenting Payment Partnered, Parenting Payment Single, Partner Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Farm Household Allowance, Youth Allowance, Austudy and Abstudy. The supplement was cut to \$250 per fortnight at the end of

reduction in hours of work and were not eligible for the JobKeeper Payment. People were also able to draw on their superannuation, tax-free: up to \$10,000 of their superannuation within the 2019-20 financial year, and a further \$10,000 within the 2020-21 financial year. Quick Response Grants were also available in some Local Government municipalities and States to support the work of creative practitioners impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰

Table 13. Assistance received due to COVID-19 pandemic (percentages)*

	All	Male	Female	Non-binary	Early	Mid	Established
None	43.9	51.4	42.7	31.3	38.2	45.0	50.9
Received JobKeeper	23.9	28.6	23.0	31.3	23.1	27.5	17.6
Received Government stimulus payment	12.4	16.2	11.8	0	12.7	11.3	13.9
Received Coronavirus supplement	12.4	5.7	12.8	50.0	17.3	11.3	7.4
Found an alternative source of income	9.6	3.8	9.7	12.5	12.1	10.0	4.6
Early access superannuation scheme	8.4	7.6	8.4	18.8	9.8	7.1	9.3
Quick Response Business Grants	6.7	12.4	5.2	12.5	4.1	9.6	4.6
Other	12.8	9.5	13.6	12.5	12.1	13.8	12.0

*Multiple responses allowed

Table 13 reports the percentages of those who received assistance through the COVID-19 pandemic. 56.1% of the sample accessed or sought out some form of additional income including: government grants or income support, early access to superannuation and seeking additional income from other sources. A large proportion of the sample (44%) received no additional income. JobKeeper was the most common form of assistance, received by almost a quarter of survey respondents (24%). This was higher for males (28.6%) and mid-career artists (27.5%). These results are not dissimilar to national estimates.¹¹ 12% of the sample received the Coronavirus supplement although this was higher for early career artists (17.3%) and non-binary artists (50%). This is a measure of those in receipt of working-age government income support payments. 8% accessed their superannuation, this was slightly higher for early career artists (9%) and much higher for non-binary artists (18%).¹² 10% of the sample found an alternative source

September 2020 and then decreased again to \$150 in January 2021. It ceased altogether at the end of March 2021 although was replaced by a permanent increase of \$450 per fortnight.

¹⁰ For example see <https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/arts-and-culture/news/covid-19-arts-grants-support>

¹¹ At the peak of the numbers of JobKeeper recipients (May-June 2020) around 29% of Australians employed were receiving the payments (Borland and Hunt 2021, 7) although in April 2020 around 63% of employees in the arts and recreation services industry were receiving the payments see https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Communications/Arts/Report/section?id=committees%2Freportrep%2F024535%2F78295

¹² Wang-Ly and Newell (2022) found that the scheme was primarily accessed by individuals who genuinely needed financial support. In our sample the average age of those withdrawing was 51 whereas in general it was 38 see <https://www.moneymanagement.com.au/news/superannuation/average-super-early-access-recipient-has-30-years-make-it>. As this scheme resulted in these individuals reducing their retirement savings this will have longer-

of income. This was higher for early career artists (12.1%) and lower for established artists (5%). Around 7% received Quick Response Business Grants.

Table 14 sets out the characteristics of those that received JobKeeper and those that did not. JobKeeper recipients were younger on average, and likely to have been eligible through their engagement as an arts worker and/or engagement in other work outside of the arts and cultural sector. Artists were known to have had difficulty establishing the necessary reduction in turnover to be eligible for JobKeeper in relation to their art practice.¹³

Table 14. Characteristics of JobKeeper recipients/non-recipients

	All	Received JobKeeper	Did not receive JobKeeper
Mean age	53	49	54
Pre-COVID-19 (2018-19) arts mean income	\$10,878	\$19,581	\$8,100
Pre-COVID-19 (2018-19) arts median income	\$2,599	\$5,040	\$2,146
Also an arts worker	39.4%	44%	38.1%
Employed as a casual as an arts worker	23.8%	16.4%	28.2%
Employed on fixed term contract as an arts worker	9.7%	16.4%	7.1%
Employed permanent/ongoing as an arts worker	11.7%	7.3%	12.8%
Also does other work	34.6%	37.6%	32.8%
Employed as a casual in other work	34.8%	38.3%	33.6%
Employed on fixed term contract in other work	12.2%	10.6%	12.7%
Employed permanent/ongoing in other work	32.6%	23.4%	35.8%

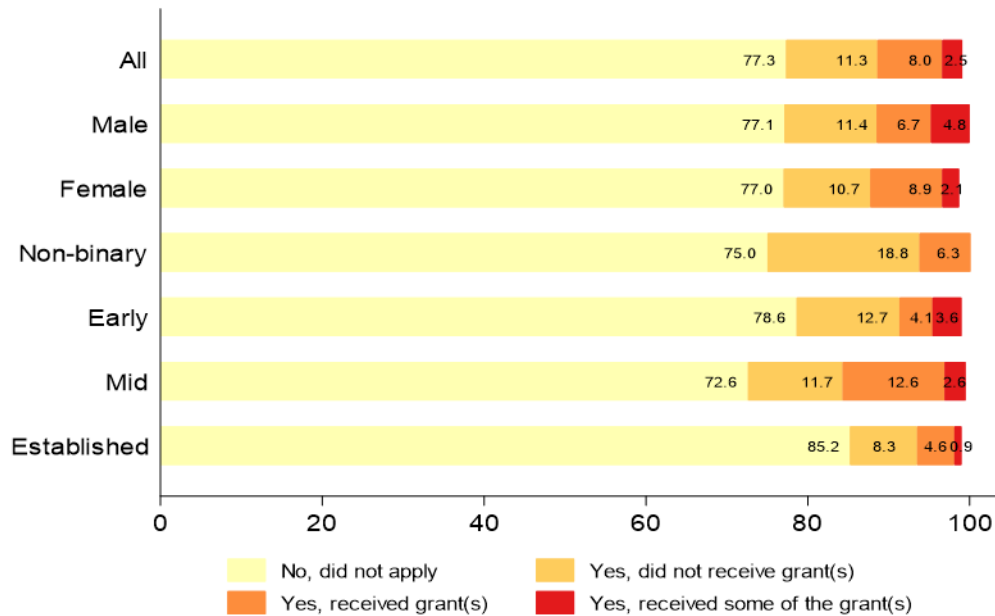
COVID-19 pandemic specific art grants were available between 2020-2021, however our survey results indicate they had little impact on artists' incomes. As shown in Figure 18, almost 80% of respondents did not apply for any of these grants.¹⁴

term consequences for these individuals as based on a retirement age of 67, they will only have another 16 years to make up the shortfall.

¹³ Many artists are sole traders and while sole traders were potentially eligible for JobKeeper many found it hard to establish the 'significantly reduced turnover' criteria see <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/briefing-paper-jobkeeper-and-5ebcc73109bea-2.pdf>

¹⁴ Examples of these types of grants include the Australia Council Resilience Fund, Arts NSW COVID Development Grant and Sustaining Creative Workers Initiative.

Figure 16 Applied for COVID-19 specific art grants between 2020-2021(percentages) ¹⁵



Of those that did apply, only 50% received some or all of the grant(s). Of those that were successful in obtaining a specific arts grant, 31% primarily used the funding to make new work, almost 30% mainly used it to adapt their practice due to the COVID-19 pandemic and 21% mostly used the funding for living expenses.

Part 3: Policy Implications and Further Research

Our task now is to interrogate the data presented in part 2, to make connections between various findings from the survey, and to shape these into insights and strategies that resonate with the visual and craft artists who participated in the survey, and those who advocate on behalf of the visual arts and craft sectors more generally. In this part we try to join the dots around a number of threads in the analysis so far. We do this by returning to the characteristics of the respondents, the nature of their participation in the visual arts and craft sector and the use of quotes from survey participants.

One key element sets our research apart from previous research and surveys. By focusing on those engaged in visual arts and craft activities, those who self-identify as visual and craft artists, we have focused on those who make art and contribute to cultural activity. We have not limited the survey to those who might be considered visual arts and craft “professionals” or those whose main occupation is that of a visual or craft artist according to the Census. A consequence of this approach is that we are presenting data that reflects the broader demographic of art makers and producers, and provides a deeper understanding of the ways in which many visual and craft artists also have identities as workers in the arts and cultural sector, and beyond the sector, in addition to an art practice.

¹⁵ A small number responded that they could not remember, and these are not shown here.

Gender Composition of Visual and Craft Artists

The gender composition of the sample is consistent with other surveys in that the majority of respondents identify as female, however this majority is more significant in our sample than in a number of other surveys. Our sample comprises 20.2 % male, 73.5 % female, 3.1% non-binary and 3.2% who either did not respond or identified another category. One explanation for this variation is that our survey did not impose a definition of an artist in terms of eligibility to participate in the survey, instead allowing anyone who identified as a visual or craft artist to participate. Given the occupational categories in the Census are determined by the main job undertaken in the week prior to the Census, this may decrease the number of female artists who are included in the four-digit occupational category. Similarly, Throsby and Petetskaya (2017) require respondents to be professional practicing artists, again failing to capture the full range of those engaged in artistic activity. The eligibility for and composition of our sample has more in common with the ABS's *Participation in Selected Cultural Activities* survey, which contains no requirement that respondents are engaged in an arts practice as their *main job* but asks of the whole population whether they are engaged in a cultural activity that generates income in any way. In the 2017-18 survey, women made up 69% of those who participated in visual arts activities (such as painting, drawing and sculpture) and 77% of those engaged in craft activities. This is consistent with proportions of our survey in which 75% of respondents identified as female.

Policy Implication #1

Policy that is confined to those visual and craft artists whose practice is their main occupation or profession will be based on a distorted gender profile. Consideration must be given to supporting visual and craft *practices*, a definition that better captures the representation of women than is achieved by a focus on visual art and craft occupations and/or professions.

Age profile and career progression

The age profile differs from that of the general workforce, with artists on average being older. In our survey the mean age is 53 and the median age is 54, compared with the workforce mean of 43 and median of 42. This is consistent with results from the 2114 category in the 2021 Census which reported an average age of 49, and Throsby and Petetskaya's *Making Art Work* survey (2017) which recorded an average age of 52. The average age of those who describe themselves as early career artists was 45, for mid-career artists 54, and those who identified as established artists had an average age of 64. The notion of the career trajectory may not be one that is shared by all artists, nonetheless the average age of early career artists at 45 either suggests that entry into the practice of art making in many cases occurs later in life, or that the progression through career stages is delayed for professional artists.

Over half of the sample (55.1%) did not change their career stage between 2017 and 2022. The age profile and career trajectories of visual and craft artists differ from those of others in professional occupations. Not all artists aspire to move through distinct career stages. However, the self-assessment of artists in terms of their career stage demonstrates a much longer period of time before one might consider oneself established in this profession, as opposed to other

professional occupations. As we discuss later, the fact that many visual and craft artists combine an art practice with other paid work in the arts and craft sector and beyond contributes to a slower career progression in all fields of activity.

The older average age will also reflect the fact that many artists are not engaged as traditional employees and will often work for themselves and participate in the “workforce” on a project-by-project basis. This self-directed form of work means that artists are likely to continue working beyond what might be thought of as a conventional retirement age.

Even though the average age of men and women in the survey is similar, with the average age of men being 56 and that of women being 53, gender is a factor in career progression. Men were disproportionately more likely to identify as established artists, and women were disproportionately more likely to identify as early career. Male artists have maintained their practice for an average of 29 years whereas artists who identified as female have maintained an arts practice for 22 years, and non-binary artists for 16 years. This is partly accounted for by the differences in the average age by gender, but not entirely. It may also be the fact that it is more difficult for female and non-binary artists to establish themselves in their artistic practices.

Unlike more traditional fields of practice, such as academia or law, it would seem there is no linear pathway and/or series of professional milestones that define progress or level of experience in the visual arts. This is borne out by the way in which artists position themselves in terms of their career stage: the average age of those identifying as early career is 45, mid-career is 54, and established artists have an average age of 64. Approximately 80% of the survey were either early career or mid-career artists.

It is noticeable that the career development of artists in general takes longer than other professionals, and indeed artists may never identify as “established”. If success is to be equated with self-identification as an established artist, and success comes at a later age, then this implies a relatively short period of an artist’s career during which time they might achieve financial success and security.

At the same time, age or career stage is not necessarily an indicator of financial security. As one respondent explained:

I am 64 years old and my work is held in major public collections. Yet there is no way I can live on the sale of my paintings.

Presumably this artist would have identified as an established artist, with work held in major public collections. Others felt that with age came further financial insecurity, and barriers to participation in the arts:

Ageism has become a major limitation in [their] recent ability to pick up paid jobs or projects, despite [their] considerable work experience.

The working patterns of many artists resemble that of self-employment, and, as was pointed out, self-employment also brings its own challenges:

having no superannuation after 30 years of practice

For others, the sector remains fundamentally sexist:

As an educated white woman I have good access but there are still remnants of sexism in the commercial gallery world and senior levels in universities. I have been overlooked in favour of less experienced or less appropriate men a number of times.

Policy Implication #2

When asked to self-identify their career stage, visual artists and craft practitioners remain in the early career phase for a much longer period than might be reflected in eligibility criteria for grants and awards. This suggests that support during this period needs to be extended to ensure that early career artists can maintain a practice for a sufficient time to enable them to move through into a more stable mid-career status. Likewise, mid-career artists require support and resources to progress toward establishing their careers in the arts.

Types of Arts Practice

The significant number of artists (24%) who nominate interdisciplinary as their main area of creative practice may have implications for future policy development and warrants further investigation. Survey comments indicated a wide combination of practices within this category, from collage to Eco-Arts. One respondent also questioned the concept of disciplinary categories arguing for a more holistic understanding of art practice.

Barriers to participation and financial security

Survey respondents living with a disability noted that:

participation is much more difficult at every level

This was due to a range of factors, including a sense of invisibility and lack of accessible spaces to make and exhibit their work. The financial constraints of living with a disability, such as low incomes and high cost of medications, also impacted their ability to establish a sense of financial security. One respondent explained:

As a person with disabilities I am not taken seriously in Australia, but successfully exhibit internationally due to no face-to-face contact.

When asked about their cultural identity, some respondents observed that this had been a barrier in their participation in the arts, pointing to:

Subtle racial discrimination, poor scaffolds for Aboriginal /POC [people of colour] artists and staff entering into majority white spaces.

Respondents noted the limitations living in a regional or rural area had on their ability to participate in the arts, in particular the difficulty gaining representation with a gallery, as well as access to affordable materials, and opportunities to exhibit and sell their work.

This is echoed in the comments from participants when asked about barriers to their financial security as an artist, such as

art materials and equipment are very expensive. Studio rent is a significant expense...'

The need for subsidized studio rental was also particularly prevalent when asked what additional support had been or would be beneficial to their financial security. This could have potential implications for arts funding policy.

Policy Implication #3

All funding agencies should review the categories of art and craft practice and application processes to ensure that they do not indirectly discriminate based on age, cultural background, disability, or gender identification.

Incomes and hours

As previously noted, the gendered experience of visual artists and craft practitioners runs through the survey data. The average annual income from an art practice diverges also according to gender, with male artists earning on average \$22,906 in 2020/21, and female artists earning an average of \$8,507, 37% of the male artists' average income. A better measure is the median income which moderates the impact of the outliers at the higher end. On this measure the gender gap is reduced somewhat but is still significant with the median income for male artists being \$4,437 and for female artists \$2,671, 60% of the male artists' median income.

The average hours worked per week on an art practice is 38 hours for males and 29 hours for female artists, roughly 75%. In other words, female artists spend around 75% of the time male artists spend on their practice yet receive 37% of the income that male artists receive. To account for the additional hours spent on average by male artists in their art practice, we approximate an hourly income for male and female artists. Assuming the weekly hours identified are worked over a period of 46 weeks of the year: 1,748 hours annually for male artists and 1,334 hours annually for female artists, the gender gap is still considerable. This produces a notional hourly rate from their art practice of \$13.10 for male artists and \$6.40 for female artists, 50% of the mean hourly rate for male artists.

The gender gap in incomes in the visual arts is likely to arise through a number of different factors: the average age of women artists is less than that of men and many may be confined to an earlier career stage, their earnings are likely to reflect the price differentials in the market for art

produced by male and female artists, female artists commit less hours to their practice than do male artists.

A key to understanding the financial circumstances of visual artists and craft professionals is the hybridity of their work: the majority rely on multiple sources of income. 60.7% of those who identified primarily as visual or craft artists received at least some form of income from outside the visual arts and crafts sector, many from other employment, but also including private income and family support. For some this outside work is the only way that they can support their art practice. As one respondent said:

It is difficult to practice as a visual artist consistently and regularly as I need to work in a job outside the arts sector in order to maintain basic living expenses.

Those visual art and craft artists who are engaged in arts work in the broader visual arts and craft sector will likely receive an income that is significantly below the average of professionals in the workforce. The nature of this additional source of income will play a significant role in determining the sustainability of a career in the visual arts and crafts sector. Visual arts and craft professionals have relatively high levels of education: 62.5% have a relevant undergraduate qualification and 35% postgraduate qualification. At first this might suggest that their employment as Arts Workers would be relatively well paid. Indeed, of the 40% of respondents who undertook work as an arts worker, many worked as arts educators (50.5% of arts workers) and arts professionals (35.4%). However, the income generated through this work is relatively low, likely due to occupying part-time and or short-term contract positions, and despite high levels of education salaries in the galleries, libraries, archives and museums sector, and the arts and cultural sector more generally, are not high.

The experience of those teaching in the visual and craft arts varies significantly, referenced as both a source of stability and as another area of job insecurity. One respondent noted that 'being employed as an academic in a permanent/ongoing position' contributed to their 'financial security'. But for others the financial security of teaching was not so straightforward:

While I do have casual employment as an arts educator, this is also only for 9 months of the year, and then I am unpaid for the other three months of the year.

For the majority of those also employed in the arts and cultural sector, and beyond, this employment was most likely to be part-time or casual. This can lead to further insecurity. While income from non-arts related work enables some artists to maintain their practice, it also takes time away from their creative work. Put more plainly by one respondent:

There is no financial security as an artist that is why nearly every artist in Australia has an alternate income stream.

Policy Implication #4

An examination of the adequacy of incomes across the visual arts and craft sector (including part-time work in the education sector) is required to ensure that those who combine an art practice and arts work receive an adequate income. The gendered nature of the sector suggests that this examination needs also to consider whether gender segmentation is in part a contributor to lower incomes.

Expectation of gratitude

Many respondents noted the expectation within the sector that artists do not get paid for many activities related to an arts practice. As one participant said:

the expectation that as an artist you will not only work for free but you will pay a gallery to exhibit there

Another noted that much of their work was unseen and therefore undervalued and/or underpaid:

The nature of the work is that it is based on commission, sales or merchandising of art works. This is one aspect of the work of an artist, but you also must have time to create the work, and this time for the most part is unpaid work.

As was expected, a large amount of work is undertaken on an unpaid basis with 46% of respondents participating in unpaid work, with little variation between levels of participation by way of gender identification. Variation does exist in relation to the number of hours committed per month to unpaid work with male artists estimating an average of 20 hours per month, female artists 26.7 hours and non-binary artists 28.9 hours. The highest number of hours on average is devoted to self-managed projects, which may be unfunded work, or work involved in obtaining grants, or career management more generally. A higher number of hours on a weekly basis is devoted to artist-run initiatives on the part of non-binary respondents, and male artists contribute more hours on average to participation in Boards than do female artists.

Policy Implication #5

The level of unpaid activity required to support the visual and craft sectors requires further examination, as does the fact that this load is disproportionately carried by females and those that identify as non-binary.

Grant Funding

Direct government funding for visual artists and craft practitioners most often takes the form of grants awarded by local government, state government, the Australian Council for the Arts and the Commonwealth Office for the Arts. Creative Partnerships Australia is a mechanism for fundraising for individual arts projects, initiated by the artist with matching funding contributed by the Commonwealth government. 38% of the respondents had not applied for any grants for

their art practice or arts work, for early career artists this figure rises to 50%. Early career artists also appear to have less success when they do apply for a grant.

A number of survey respondents commented that they either hadn't received funding or were unsuccessful when they had applied. Comments pointed to a gap in support and funding beyond the 'emerging' career stage, with an emphasis on the need for greater supports at the mid-career point.

I've only ever been successful in early career, but it would be most helpful now. (513)

"Currently there is little support for mid career /early career artists. So once you pass through the hoops of emerging less options for funding and support." (91)

One mentioned that small business grants have been more relevant to them than arts grants, due to the way they have developed their career:

"since I run my studio like a small business" – a consideration for arts funders wanting to support more entrepreneurial approaches (404).

The source of funding applied for varies according to gender with a greater percentage of male artists and craft practitioners seeking Australia Council funding (38.5%) as compared with females (25.6%). Artists that identified as non-binary were more likely to have applied to state government agencies. Of established artists, the Australia Council is by far the preferred source of funds, at least in terms of organisations to which established artists applied, with early and mid-career artists favouring State government funding. This is consistent with what might be expected in terms of the Australia Council for the Arts being seen as the most prestigious funder and hence most likely to align with the interests of artists who are established in their careers.

Several survey respondents talked about the need to fund both individuals (through projects and income-support) and arts organisations. For example, one explained:

"Without infrastructure, you cannot support projects; to justify infrastructure, you need viable projects; and both new projects and new infrastructure need R&D time." (333).

These comments point to the need for a thriving visual arts ecosystem for individual artists to prosper. As one said:

"It would be most beneficial if local arts groups, exhibition spaces, studio spaces were being funded that all local artists could use. Individual grants are small and don't tend to add up to anything long term. Would be more helpful if there was a more vibrant art community, rather than getting a one-off individual grant." (97)

There were also several comments about the need for long-term, ongoing funding for artists that is not project related.

Just money to live, that isn't project-based, a regular income/ living wage.

A guaranteed basic income at minimum wage + indexation without penalty if I generate additional income from my work.

The administrative time taken to prepare the application was identified as a major disincentive especially as it is time taken from other activities:

applying for grants/opportunities is unpaid time that isn't guaranteed to get you anywhere.

This and a mismatch between aspirations and funding priorities were the two most common disincentives across gender identification and career stage. An inadequate track record featured strongly in reasons provided by early career artists and craft practitioners, less so by those who are mid-career and less again by established artists.

50% of respondents that identified as early career visual and craft artists had never applied for a grant, the extended period of time they remain at the early career stage, and the fact that the lack of a track record is one of the major reasons given for not applying for grants. Females, those from CALD communities, those with disability and those that identify as non-binary, in early career and mid-career stages need to be proportionately represented in grant applications and success rate.

Policy Implication #6

The diversity of visual arts and craft practices, career stages and gender identification among artists needs to be recognized by philanthropic organisations, and funders across all levels of government to ensure:

- that the range of all visual and craft practices are encompassed within funding programs, including broader infrastructure requirements, support for artists as entrepreneurs and income support.
- prestigious and generous grants are available to those in the early-mid stages of their career.

Pandemic impacts

The research project was not devised as an inquiry into the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as the survey was being undertaken early in 2022, at the conclusion of the two-year period of COVID-19 related 'lockdowns', it was appropriate to enquire into the experience of our survey respondents to this extreme event. As was noted earlier in this discussion, the impact on visual and craft artists of the pandemic was felt in different ways according to career stage, and likely the extent to which the respondents were supported through this by the work that they undertook as arts workers elsewhere in the visual arts and crafts sector, and in employment beyond the sector. As we note, a large proportion of our sample received no additional income at all through this period (43%), proportionately more established artists (50.9%) than early career artists were in this category. Of those who did receive additional government support

JobKeeper was the most common source, and early and mid-career artists were more likely to have received JobKeeper than were established artists. Early career and established artists were more likely to have accessed their superannuation than mid-career artists. Those that received JobKeeper, had on average a higher pre-COVID-19 income than those that did not receive JobKeeper. Although the majority of respondents did not receive JobKeeper, for those who did, it provided significant financial security. As one respondent said, 'JobKeeper was critical in supporting me last year.'

The gendered nature of artistic practices played out in an unusual way during the pandemic in that over the two-year period 2018/19 and 2020/21 a fall in average income (both mean and median) was reported by male artists, but not by female artists. With female artists comprising 80% of the sample, the overall change in income across the sample was positive over the time. In this same two-year period, 27% of females increased the hours worked on their art practice as compared to only 12.5% of males.⁵ 31% of early career artists increased their hours worked compared to 15% of established artists. Those artists who consider themselves established in their career saw a decline in their median income over the two-year period but not in the mean.

The proportion of respondents that accessed superannuation during the pandemic was 8.4%, significantly less than that of the workforce in total, estimated at 20%.¹⁶ The rate of accessing superannuation was relatively consistent across the different career stages of survey respondents whereas for the workforce it was concentrated among those aged 26 to 40. It is of concern that the rate of superannuation early release was the same for early career artists (9.8% and established artists 9.3%) which demonstrates the lack of financial security throughout an artist's career.

Policy Implication #7

When short term measures are introduced to mitigate against the impact of catastrophic events such as pandemics, the precarious, hybridised and self-employed nature of Arts Work and Artistic Practices needs to be taken into account to ensure equal access to government support payments.

¹⁶ According to the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia Limited, 3.05 million people received early release of superannuation, out of a workforce of 14 million, approximately 20% (Clare 2022, 9).

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Arts Workers: Insights into insecure work and career patterns

Survey analysis
September 2023

Grace McQuilten, Jenny Lye, Chloë Powell
Joe Hirschberg, Kate MacNeill, and Marnie Badham

Visual Arts Work

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Arts Workers: Insights into insecure work and career patterns

Executive Summary

- Arts workers are most likely to identify as arts professionals.
- Progression through career stages resembles that of the population as a whole.
- There is a clear trend of underemployment for arts workers.
- Arts workers are largely underpaid, earning significantly less than other working professionals, with an average annual income of \$51,196 from their arts work, compared to \$92,029 for the general population.¹ (see the footnote added below)
- Arts workers tend to be around the same age as the working population as a whole and predominantly female.
- There is a significant issue of unpaid work in the visual arts and craft sectors, as both volunteer time and additional work within one's role often going unpaid.
- At 23.3%, the gender pay gap for female arts workers is much higher than Australia's gender pay gap of 13.3%.
- Work insecurity is exacerbated by visa conditions and lack of cultural safety for many culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) arts workers.
- The prevalence of people with disability active in arts work (10.7%) is slightly higher than that for the general workforce (9.3%), but significantly lower than that for the population as a whole (17.7%).
- Arts workers note the importance of arts grant funding for organisations and its direct link to the stability of their employment. Arts workers who do apply for grants are more likely to be early or mid-career, often using the funds to deliver projects that contribute to their professional development.

¹ The definition of "professional worker" is based on the occupational definition outlined by The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), available on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website. <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/how-anzsko-works>

Introduction

This paper is the second in a series of reports on a survey undertaken in 2022 as part of *Visual Arts Work: sustainable strategies for the Australian visual arts and craft sector*. This large-scale research project looks at the incomes and career lifecycles of visual and craft artists and arts workers in Australia.

The survey sought information on sources of income and modes of work and employment over two separate financial years: 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. The prevalence of people working in multiple jobs both within and outside of the visual arts and craft sector is well known. A central purpose for undertaking this research was to better understand the circumstances contributing to the hybridity of artists and arts workers' careers, and to provide practical recommendations for policy interventions.

The previous paper, *Insights into the hybrid and diverse incomes and career patterns of visual and craft artists*, reported on the experience of respondents who identified primarily as visual and craft artists. In this paper, we examine the results of those (179) respondents who identified primarily as arts workers. Future papers will explore the hybrid nature of practices in the Australian visual arts and craft sector.

We begin by outlining a definition of arts worker that we adopted in the *Visual Arts Work* research project. Next, we provide details of the survey methodology and demographics of the respondents. We then report on the data—arts workers' incomes, career development, employment circumstances, and engagement with general and, given the dominance of the pandemic in the survey period, COVID-19 specific arts funding programs. A discussion of broader findings, policy implications, and areas of further research concludes the paper.

What is an Arts Worker?

In the context of this survey, the term *arts worker* refers to those in the visual arts and craft sector who contribute to the development and delivery of cultural activity in a range of ways and in different contexts. Often, their work supports visual and craft artists to access opportunities or realise particular goals, such as curators, technicians, and gallery staff, who work with artists to present exhibitions. Educators also comprise a significant portion of this group; training artists in the conceptual and technical aspects of making art, they are often artists themselves.

With recent conversations around the labour involved in creative practice, some artists are describing themselves as arts workers, acknowledging their practice is also a form of work though it is not immediately understood as such by the broader population. While this is interesting in the broader context, for the purposes of our survey we have adopted a more conventional division between artist and arts worker.

One of the difficulties in defining and understanding the role of arts workers is the lack of research into and literature on this group. Available data on the number of arts workers in Australia is inconsistent due to the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes an arts worker.

Government data is likely to underestimate the number. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) *Census* classifies a respondent's occupation based on the 'main job held in the previous week' (Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2021²). The work of arts workers, who often hold multiple jobs to maintain an income, may be omitted by this definition if they had been working most of their time in another role in the week prior to the Census. In examining the circumstances of arts workers as a standalone group, our survey is the largest scholarly study into this cohort in Australia to date.

Another issue in defining arts workers is that some in this group do not necessarily identify as such. For example, people working in cultural teams within local council or state government, such as gallery staff or arts project managers, often define themselves as council workers or public servants. While this is accurate in terms of the source of their employment, it doesn't reflect the significant role they play in the arts ecology.

For the purposes of our survey, we worked with existing Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation (ANZSCO) definitions and categories to identify those professionals that may be considered arts workers.³ Arts workers spend at least some of their paid working time in one or more of the following categories: arts professional (e.g. curator, gallerist, creative producer); arts technician (e.g. studio technician, exhibition installer); arts educator (e.g. lecturer, workshop leader); arts researcher (e.g. academic, market analyst); cultural advisor; community arts and cultural development; and designer (e.g. graphic designer, web/digital designer).

Part 1: Survey and Sample Demographics

Of the 702 respondents to the survey, 179 or 25.5% self-identified primarily as an arts worker (e.g., curator; technician; arts educator etc.) regardless of their main source of income or where they spent the majority of their working hours.

Demographic Characteristics of Arts Workers

Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of our survey of arts workers.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of arts worker respondents (a)

	Current survey Arts Workers	Census 2021 Australian Working Population aged 20+ ^a
Observations	179	11,963,052
Mean Age	44	42
Median Age	43	43
%65+	6.1%	5.1%
Gender (Male%)	10.7%	51.8%

² 2021 Census, <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/guide-census-data>

³ ANZSCO, Australian Bureau of Statistics. <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/how-anzsco-works>

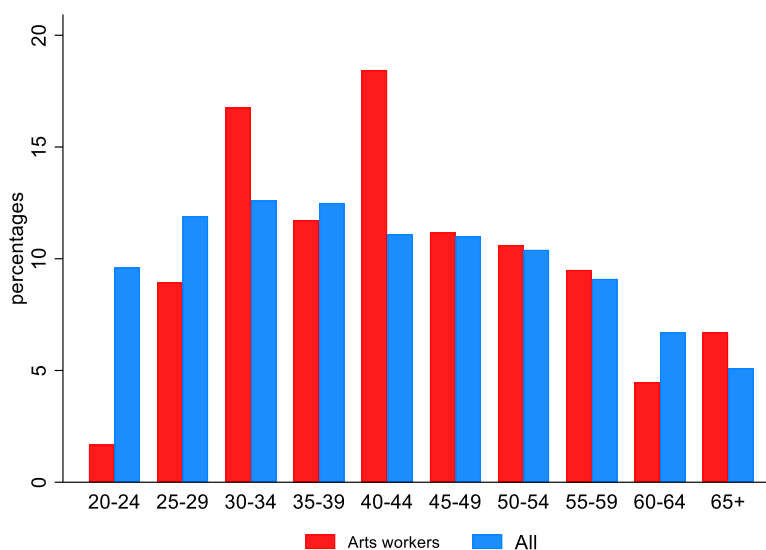
Gender (Female%)	86.4%	48.2%
Nonbinary/Prefer not to say ^b	3%	
Born Australia	75.7%	65.7%
Single, no dependents	21.8%	
Single, dependents	4.5%	
Married or living with partner, no dependents	27.4%	
Married or living with partner, dependents	25.7%	
Other ^c	20.6%	
Capital city	71.4%	69.3%
Regional city/town	24.7%	
Rural/remote	3.9%	
Language other than English	13.5%	24.1% ^d
Disability	10.7%	9.3% ^e

- a. Data retrieved for those aged 20 and over using Australian Census TableBuilder see:
<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/tablebuilder?opendocument&navpos=240>
- b. Only a male/female breakdown is available in the Census.
- c. The current survey includes information about shared households of adults.
- d. Language other than English used at home.
- e. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/employment/labour-force-participation> this data relates to people aged 15 and above.

Age

The percentage of survey respondents and all workers by age group is shown in Figure 2⁴.

Figure 2: Age distribution of Arts Workers and the Australian Working Population



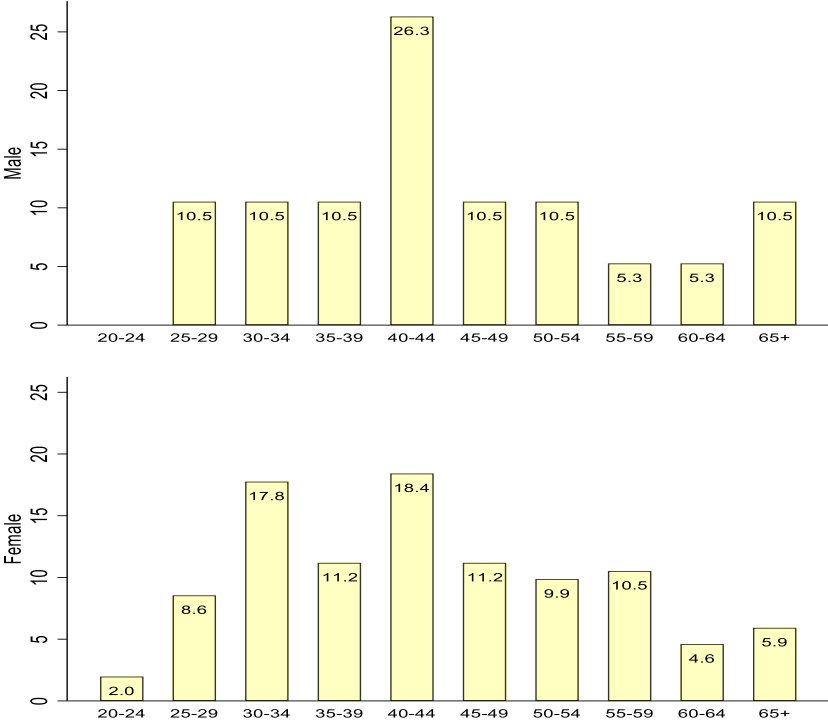
⁴ The percentage in age groups for all workers was computed using 6291.0.55.001 – LM1 – Labour force status by Age, Greater Capital City and Rest of State (ASGS), Marital status and Sex, February 1978 onwards.

The mean age for arts workers in our sample is 44 and the median age is 43. The largest cohort is the 40-44 age group followed by 30-34 and 6.1% of the sample is 65 and older. This is similar to all workers in the general population, where the mean age is 43 and the median age is 42. The largest cohorts of workers in the general population is between the 30-39 age groups and 5.1% of all workers are 65 and older. However, unlike all workers, there are very few arts workers between the ages of 20-24.

Gender

The sample is predominantly female (86.4%), 10.7% were male, 1% identified as non-binary and 2% preferred not to state their gender. With only two respondents identifying as non-binary, we don't seek to draw conclusions or make generalisations from these responses but include them in the analysis for reference.

Figure 3: Distribution of age groups by gender



The mean age of females was 44 and males was 46. There are some differences in the age profiles between males and females. There are more males in the 40-44 and 65+ age groups and more women in the 30-34 and 55-59 age groups.

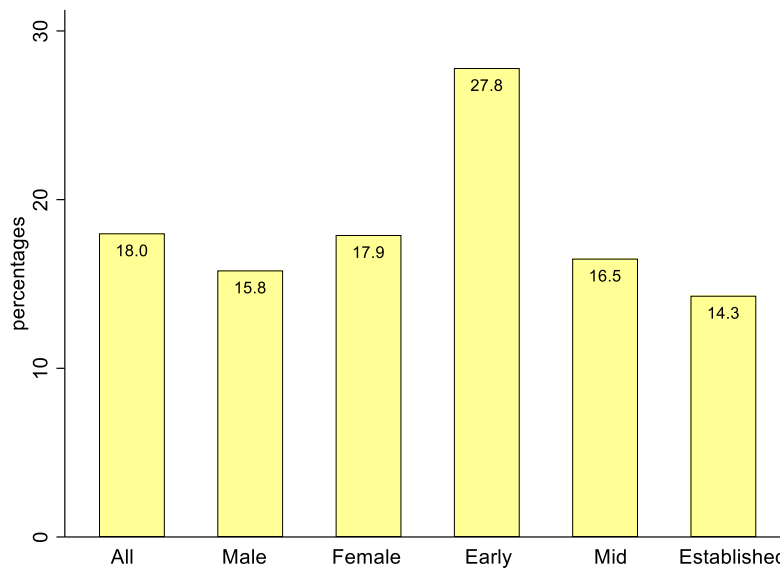
The top three areas of work were the same for males and females – Arts professionals (females 73%, males 53%), Arts educators (females 39%, males 42%), and Community arts and cultural development workers (females 25%, males 26%).

Place of birth and culturally and linguistically diverse

Almost 76% of the sample of arts workers were born in Australia. The next largest group (9%) were born in the United Kingdom. This was similar across males and females. As shown in Figure 4, around 18% identify as having a culturally and linguistically diverse background⁵. CALD arts workers were more likely to identify as being at an early career stage than mid and established career stages.

Over 80% of CALD arts workers agreed that there were barriers to participating in the visual arts and craft sector relating to their background. Specifically, low incomes and wages are a barrier for CALD arts workers, as well as language, visa/residency status, and cultural attitudes.

Figure 4: Percentage identifying as having a cultural and linguistically diverse background



Location

Table 2 shows the distribution of location of arts workers according to career stage. 71% of arts workers in the sample live in a capital city, 25% live in a regional city or town and 4% live in a rural or remote community. Established arts workers are more likely to live in a rural or remote community.

⁵ Coined by the ABS in 1999, the term 'Cultural and Linguistic Diversity' was used to acknowledge "linguistic and cultural characteristics of multicultural populations living in Australia" (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity; Australian Bureau of Statistics: Canberra, Australia, 1999). These characteristics are defined as whether a person living in Australia was born overseas, has one or more parents who were born overseas, and/or speaks a language other than English at home. In recent years, the term has been queried and largely renounced by many in the arts and cultural sector for its inherent bias towards Anglo-Celtic people as the primary culture. The researchers recognise that CALD is not the preferred term but have adopted in this project to enable comparison to ABS data.

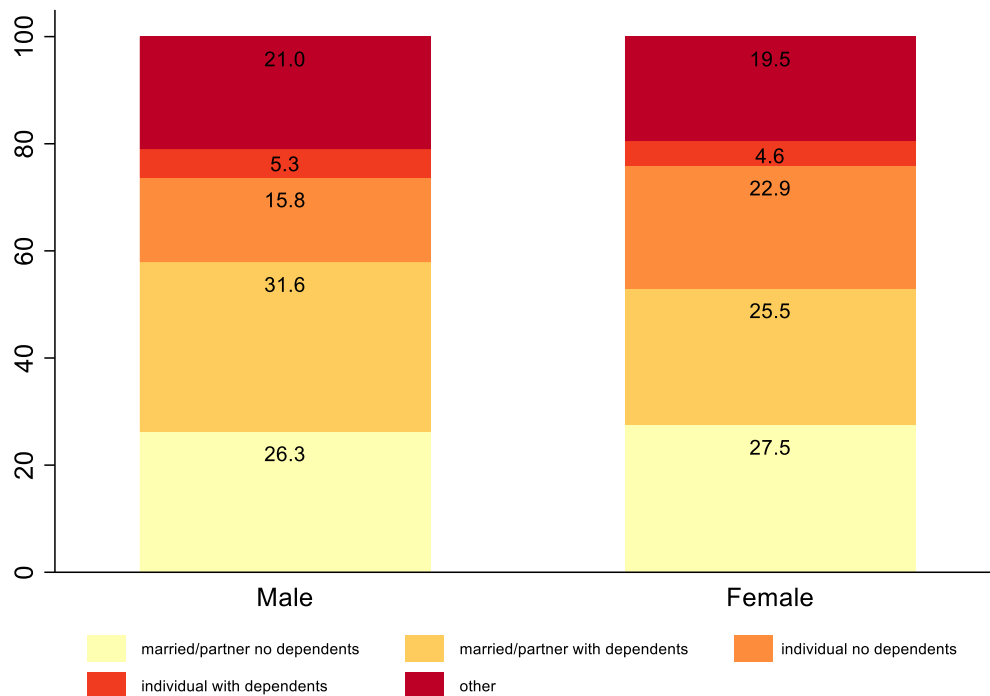
Table 2: Location of arts workers (%)

Type	Capital City	Regional city or town	Rural or remote
All	71.4	24.7	3.9
Early	72.2	22.2	5.6
Mid	80.0	16.5	3.5
Established	57.9	38.6	3.5
Male	79.0	21.1	0.0
Female	70.4	25.7	4.0

Household type

As shown in Figure 5, 37% of males live in households with dependents⁶ compared to 31% of females. We discuss the possible reasons for and implications of this in the Discussion section.

Figure 5: Household types by gender



Disability

In Australia, around 9.3% of the working age population have a disability. In our sample, 10.7% identified as having a disability (male 10.5% and females 9.2%), slightly higher than for the workforce as a whole. Nearly 90% agreed that there were barriers to participation in the visual arts and craft sector for people with disability. Common themes identified by respondents were a lack of adjustments and support in the workplace, and discrimination.

⁶ For our survey, we provided a definition of dependents as being ‘children or people you care for’.

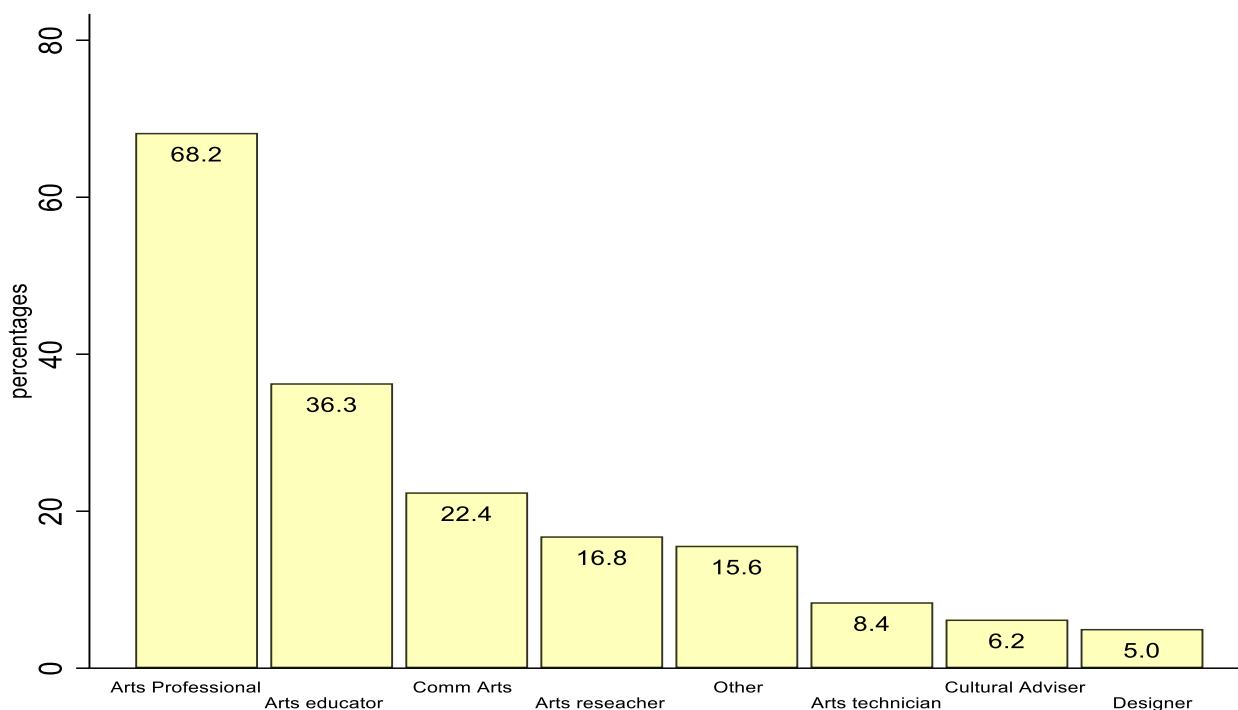
Part 2: Survey Results

Areas of Arts Work

Respondents were then asked to select their area of arts work. Definitions were not provided in the survey but examples of each area of work were given⁷. Multiple options could be selected, in recognition of the fact that many arts workers have more than one job. The responses are illustrated in Figure 1.

The most selected area of work was arts professional (68.2%) followed by arts educator (36.3%) and community arts and cultural development worker (22.4%). In addition to these, some respondents selected 'Other' with the option to provide further detail. A range of areas of work were noted in their responses, including arts-related retail, communications and marketing, graphic design, and working in the care industries, specifically mental health, and disability.

Figure 1: Main Area of Arts Work^a



a. Multiple responses allowed.

Time spent on Arts Work

As shown in Figure 6, arts workers spent the majority (78.2%) of their working time on arts work; a similar pattern across gender and arts worker career stage. Male arts workers allocated a

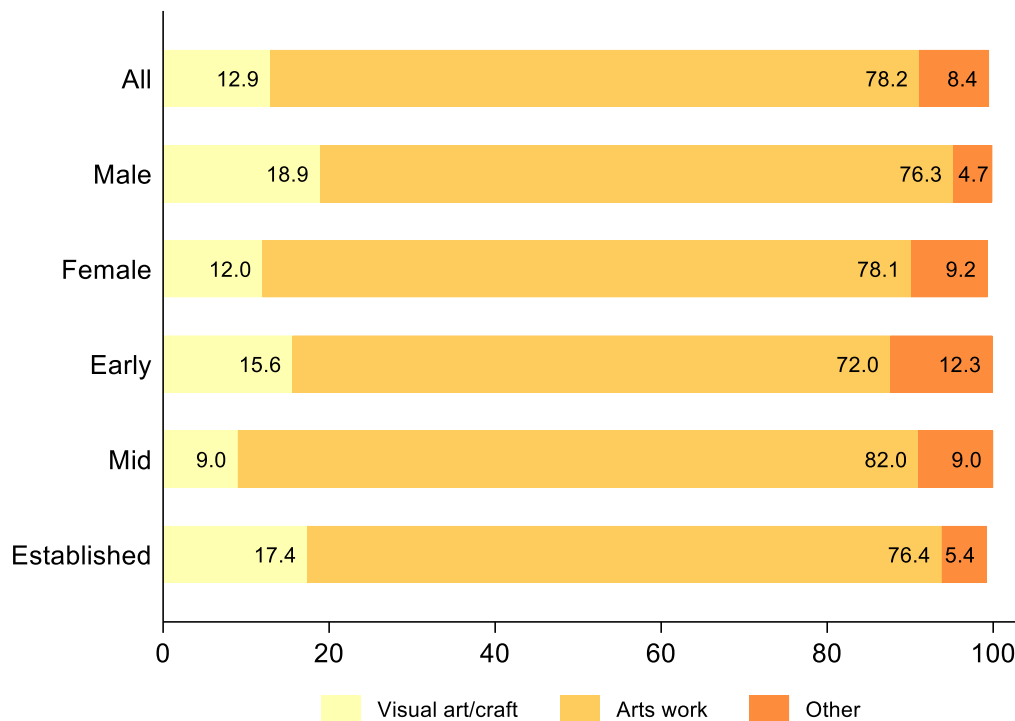
⁷ Examples include Arts Professional (e.g. curator, arts writer, gallerist), Arts Technician (e.g. studio technician, fabricator, exhibition installer), and Arts Educator (e.g. lecturer, workshop leader, private teacher).

greater proportion of their time to their arts practice than do female arts workers, and less time to work outside the visual arts and craft sector than do female arts workers.

Mid-career arts workers and female arts workers reported spending less time on their arts practice, while early career arts workers are spending more time on other work. Male arts workers and established arts workers reported spending less time on other work.

This suggests greater hybridity for female arts workers and early to mid-career arts workers. We explore possible reasons for this in the Discussion section.

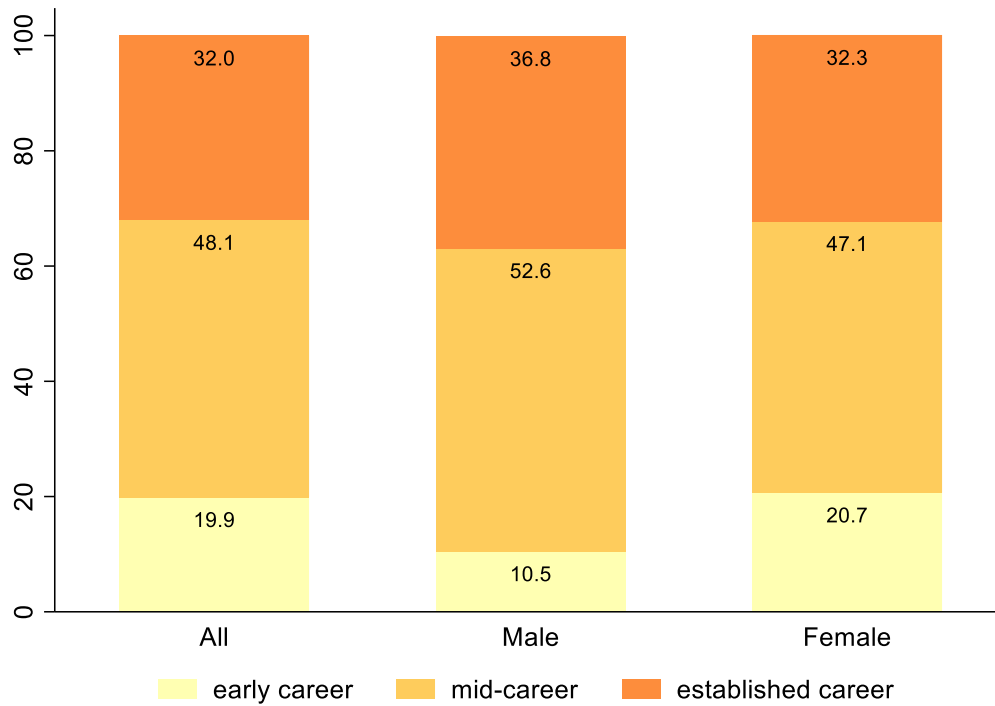
Figure 6: Average percentage of working time



Career Stage

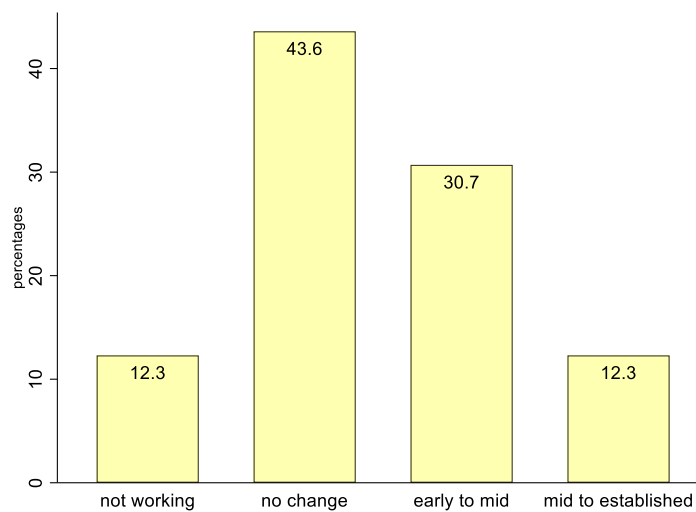
Respondents were asked how they would describe their career stage at the time of completing the survey. No definitions were provided, rather the respondent was free to nominate where they thought they were in their career. Overall, 19.9% identified as being early career arts workers, 48.1% mid-career, and 32% identified as established arts workers. This pattern was similar across both males and females. Those identifying as early career were on average aged 35, mid-career were on average aged 42 and established arts workers were on average aged 55.

Figure 7: Career Stage



Changes in Career stage

Figure 8: Changes in career stage

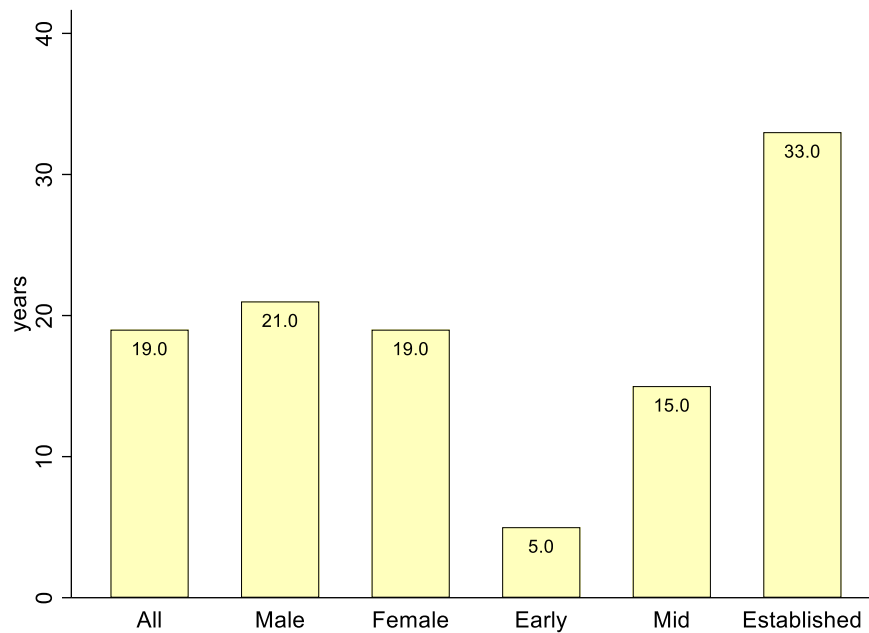


Respondents were then asked to describe their career stage five years previous (2017). Almost 44% of the sample did not indicate a change in career stage between 2017 and 2021. However, there was greater movement from early to mid-career (30.7%) than from mid-career to

established (12.3%). This suggests a pathway for early to mid-career progression for arts workers, but a narrowing of opportunities at the higher levels.

Years worked as an Arts Worker

Figure 9: Length of time worked as arts worker



On average, arts workers had been working for 19 years. This was similar across males and females; however, it differed by career stage. Those who classified themselves as early career had on average worked as an arts worker for 5 years, mid-career 15 years, and established 33 years. The majority of males (72%) and females (76%) who identified as established reported working in the arts for 20+ years.

Education and Training related to Arts Work

Survey results indicate that arts workers are a highly educated workforce. As shown in Table 3, all arts workers had high levels of undergraduate and post-graduate education related to their arts work across both gender and career stage. This is much higher than the general population. In 2022, 32.1% of people aged 15-74 had a Bachelor degree or higher qualification, compared to 68.7% of arts workers surveyed for this research. On average, 8.3% of the general population had a Postgraduate degree as their highest qualification⁸, seven times lower than arts workers at 59.8%. A large percentage of arts workers had also participated in collective and community activity in the sector. Only 1% of arts workers had no education and training at all related to their arts work.

⁸ Data source: Education and Workforce, 2022, TableBuilder.

Table 3: Education and Training related to arts work (%)^a

	All	Male	Female	Early	Mid	Established
Undergraduate education	68.7	68.4	69.3	75.0	68.6	64.9
Postgraduate education	59.8	52.6	60.1	41.7	73.3	50.9
Currently undertaking study/training	12.9	5.3	14.4	27.8	7.0	12.3
Private classes/workshops	38	26.3	40.5	44.4	34.9	38.6
Collective activity/peer learning	33	21.1	35.3	27.8	38.4	28.1
Community activity/centre	19	15.8	20.3	22.2	18.6	17.5
None	1.1	0	1.3	0	2.3	0
Other	11.2	10.5	11.1	11.1	9.3	11.2

a. Multiple responses allowed.

Employment Type

Figure 10: Employment type

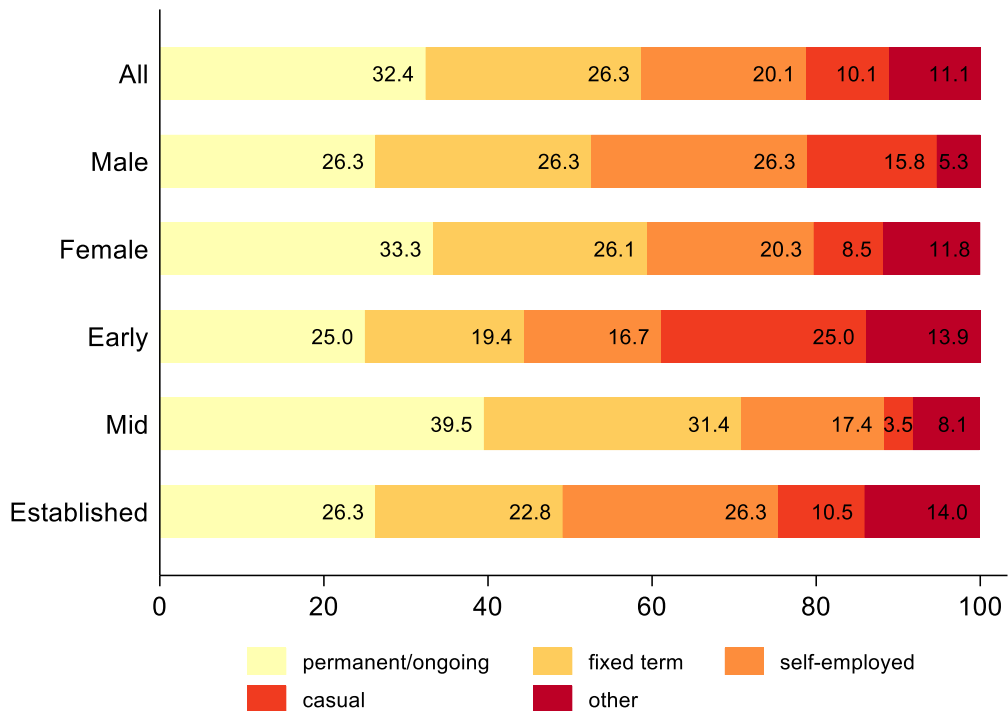


Figure 10 shows the type of employment for arts workers. Overall, 20% were self-employed however this was higher for males at 26%. This is also higher than the average rate of self-employment in Australia, which is 16.6% overall and 20.1% for males.

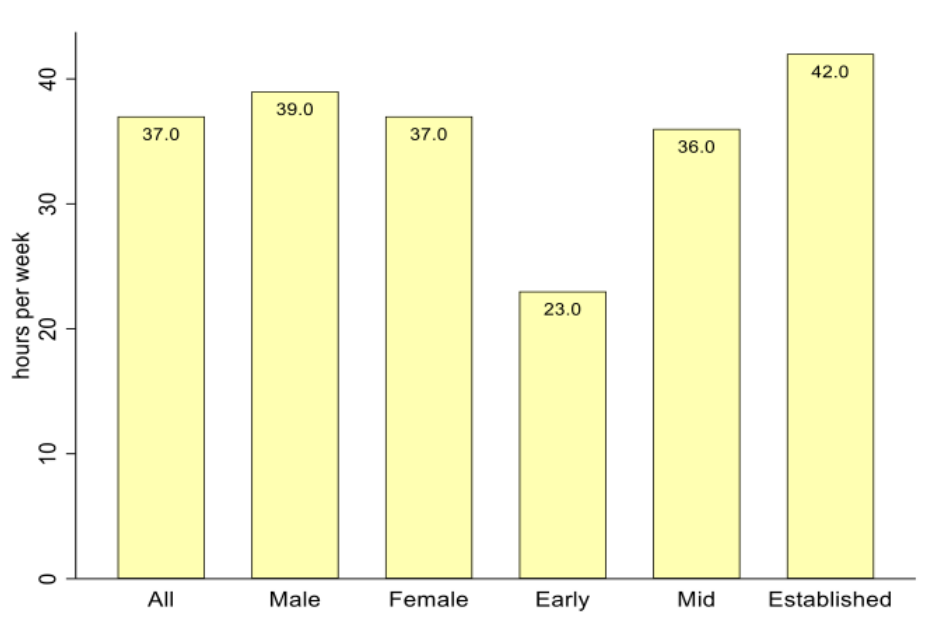
Further, where 10% of arts workers overall were employed on a casual basis, this was significantly higher for the early career group at 25%. Almost a third of the whole group had permanent or ongoing positions although this was lower for males, early career, and established arts workers. 26% of respondents were in fixed-term positions (short term contracts, not ongoing), although this was again lower for early career and higher for mid-career arts workers. This rate of fixed-term contracts is significantly higher than the Australian average of 3.4%, which indicates lack of ongoing job security for arts workers⁹.

Overall, mid-career arts workers were more likely to have stable employment, either with permanent/ongoing or fixed-term positions. Early career arts workers were more likely to be casual and less likely to have stable employment.

Of those casually employed, over one third selected the main reason being that employment on a permanent, ongoing basis was unavailable. Of those that were self-employed, half selected flexibility and independence as the main reasons for being so. On average, they had been self-employed for around 11 years.

Income and hours worked

Figure 11: Hours spent per week on Arts Work



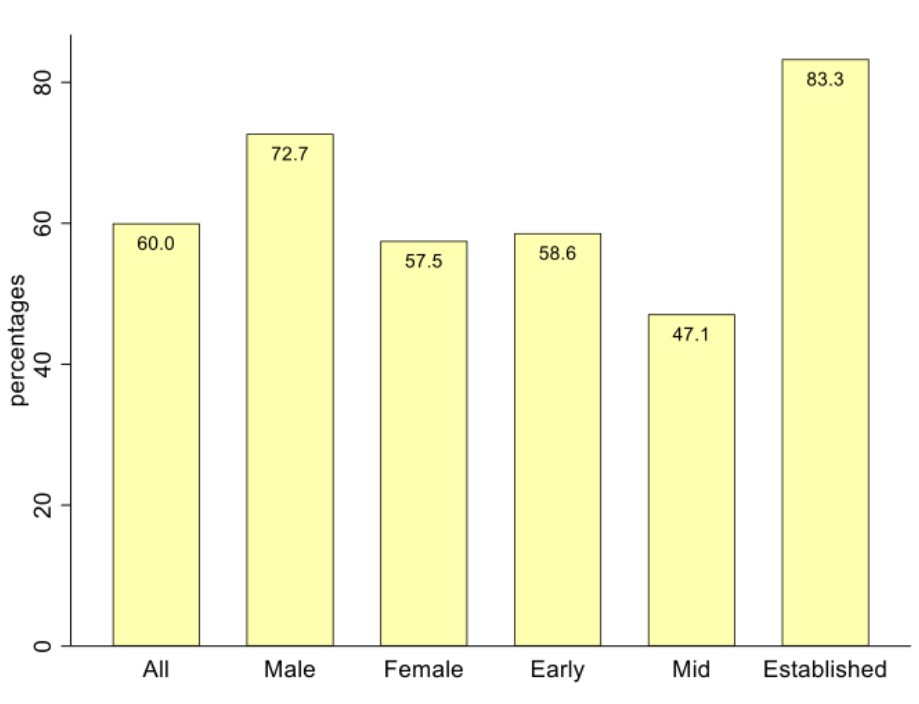
On average, arts workers spend around 37 hours per week on their arts work. While this is similar across males and females, those who identified as being established in their career spend on average 42 hours per week compared to those who are early career, who spend an average of

⁹ Fixed-term contracts 3.4% and casual 23% employees (Aug 2022).
<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/working-arrangements/latest-release>

23 hours per week on arts work, perhaps reflecting the mostly casual nature of their employment.

As shown in Figure 12, more than half (60%) responded that they would work more hours in paid employment if it was available. This was higher for males (72.7%) and those who had established careers as arts workers (83.3%). This points to an issue of under-employment for arts workers.

Figure 12: Percentage would work more hours of employment if available



Arts workers' incomes

Overall, arts workers are earning significantly less than other working professionals, with an average annual income of \$51,196 for an average of 37 hours per week from arts work, compared to \$92,029 for average full-time earnings for the general population.¹⁰ There is a significant difference in mean and median incomes for arts workers by career stage. Early career arts workers reported a mean income of \$31,271 compared to mid-career, which was \$55,212, and established, which was \$62,015. Male arts workers reported a mean income of \$68,885, noticeably higher than female arts workers who reported a mean income \$52,858. This represents a gender pay gap of 23.3%.

The mean and median incomes from work as an arts worker for the financial years 2018/2019 and 2020/2021 are reported in Table 4. All groups saw falls between 2018/2019 and 2020/21 in both mean and median income. The overall fall in average income was 5% although males saw

¹⁰[https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/average-weekly-earnings-australia/may-2022#:~:text=Media%20releases-,Key%20statistics,%2C%20and%20%241%2C523.60%20\(private\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/average-weekly-earnings-australia/may-2022#:~:text=Media%20releases-,Key%20statistics,%2C%20and%20%241%2C523.60%20(private))

the biggest fall with 14.5%. Early career arts workers saw a fall of almost 21% in their median arts worker income.

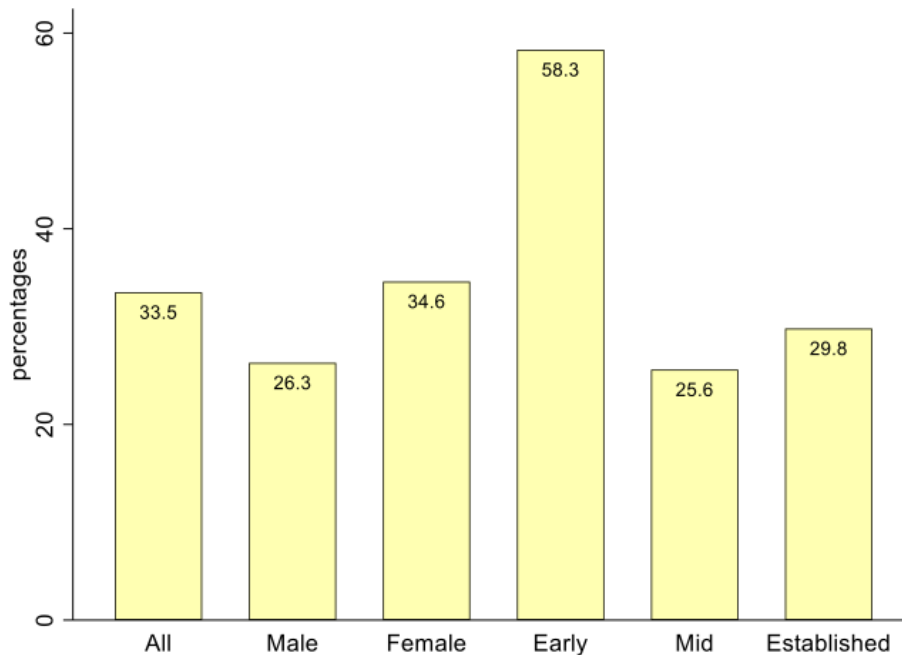
Table 4: Mean and Median Incomes from Arts Work

Type	2018/19 Mean (\$)	2020/21 Mean (\$)	%diff Means	2018/19 Median (\$)	2020/21 Median (\$)	%diff Medians
All	53,744	51,196	-4.7	56,333	48,442	-14.0
Early	31,567	31,271	-0.9	33,800	26,780	-20.8
Mid	55,212	54,559	-1.2	58,500	52,999	-9.4
Established	62,015	58,653	-5.4	63,917	57,953	-9.3
Male	68,885	58,912	-14.5	65,000	45,067	-30.7
Female	52,858	50,619	-4.2	56,680	49,600	-12.5

Other Income

As shown in Figure 13, around a third of respondents earned income from sources outside of the visual arts and craft sector. However, this is much higher for early career arts workers, with over a half earning income from work outside of the arts.

Figure 13: Percentage earn income from sources outside of visual arts and craft sector



The table below shows the sources of this other income. Other employment, such as local government arts-related work, arts teaching overseas, tertiary education, and arts work (not-visual arts), was the most selected option, particularly for early career arts workers.

With almost 40% of early career arts workers sourcing income from other employment, and 11% of whom selected scholarships compared to 3.4% overall, this indicates a high number of arts workers are pursuing higher education while working both within and outside of the visual arts and craft sector.

Table 5: Sources of other income (%)^a

	All	Male	Female	Early	Mid	Established
Other employment	21.2	15.8	21.6	38.9	16.3	17.5
Government support	5.0	5.3	5.2	2.8	4.7	7.0
Private income	2.2	5.3	2.0	2.8	1.2	3.5
Family support	2.8	0	3.3	5.6	3.5	0
Scholarships	3.4	0	3.9	11.1	2.3	0
Other	7.3	10.5	7.2	8.3	16.3	7.0

a. Multiple responses allowed.

Unpaid work

Arts workers are reporting high levels of unpaid work in the visual arts and craft sector (45.9%) with 61.5% of respondents in our sample participating in unpaid work in the arts sector including volunteering on boards, in artist-run initiatives, on self-managed projects, in family arts-related business, and mentoring. Table 6 reports the percentage of arts workers in each group who participate in unpaid work as well as the average total number of hours each month spent on this work. On average, arts workers spend 25.5 hours each month on unpaid work. This is higher for males, at around 40 hours on average.

Table 6: Participation in unpaid work

Type	% participating	Average total hours each month
All	61.5	25.5
Male	73.7	40.0
Female	59.5	21.7
Early	58.3	27.8
Mid	60.5	22.5
Established	64.9	28.4

Of those participating in unpaid work, the average number of hours spent in each area per month are broken down in Table 7. More hours are spent each month on average on self-managed projects, with early career arts workers spending an average of 11 hours each month and males 14.6 hours per month. Overall, arts workers spend an average of around 4.4 hours of unpaid work on artist-run initiatives. Established arts workers spend 8.4 hours on mentoring each month compared to 4.5 hours on average overall. There is a much higher number of unpaid hours in the

areas of family-related business and self-managed projects for male arts workers than for female arts workers. Males spend on average 8.8 hours each month on family arts-related business and 14.6 hours on self-managed projects compared to 1.6 hours and 8.9 hours overall.

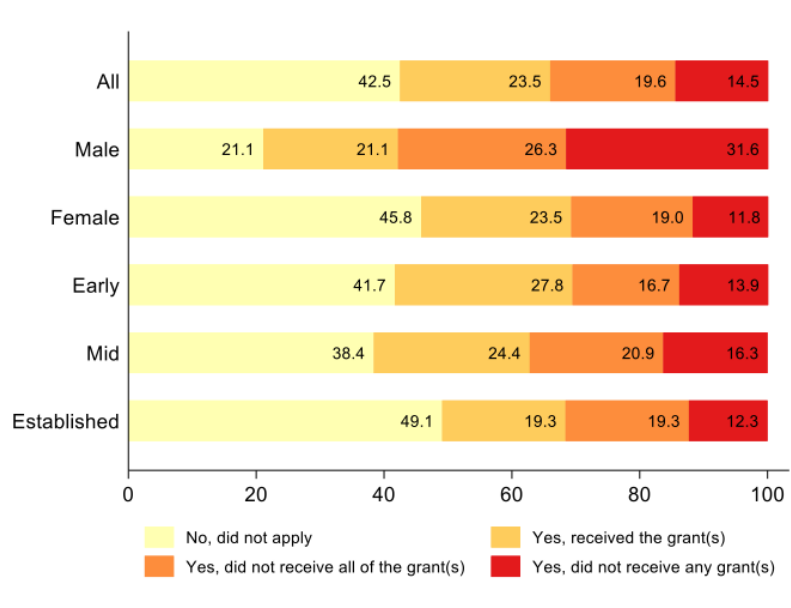
Table 7: Average hours each month for those participating in unpaid work

Type	All	Male	Female	Early	Mid	Established
Artist-run initiatives	4.4	5.6	3.2	5.0	5.7	2.2
Boards	4.3	4.1	4.2	6.7	3.3	4.5
Self-managed projects	8.9	14.6	7.9	11.1	8.8	7.9
Family arts-related business	1.6	8.8	0.5	0	0.2	4.3
Mentoring	4.5	4.4	4.1	1.2	3.0	8.4
Other	1.8	2.5	1.8	3.8	1.5	1.1

Grant Funding

Figure 14 illustrates arts workers’ experience with grant funding. Almost 43% of the sample had not applied for any grants. Around 15% of arts workers had not received at least some of the grants applied for, although for males this was almost 32%.

Figure 14: Experience with grant funding (%)



As shown in Table 8, the most common funding agencies applied to were State Government art funders, Local Government art funders, and the Federal arts funding body, the Australia Council for the Arts (now Creative Australia¹¹). Both established and mid-career arts workers were more

¹¹ Established from 1 July 2023 as part of the Labour government’s cultural policy, Revive.

likely to have applied to Local Government art funders and the Australia Council than early career arts workers. Almost 10% overall had applied to a philanthropic organisation.

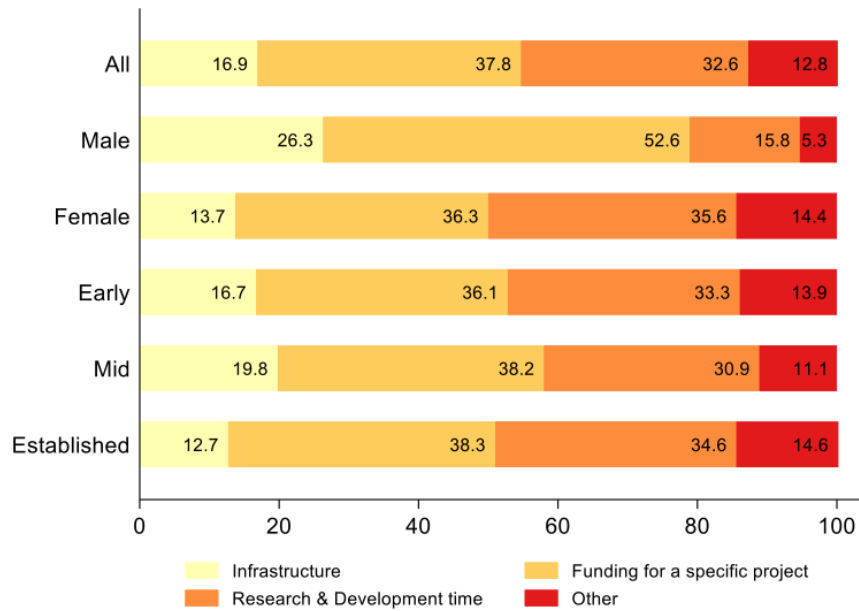
Table 8: Funding organisation applied^a

	All	Male	Female	Early	Mid	Established
State Government Art Funders	39.8	53.3	38.6	38.1	41.5	37.9
Local Government Art Funders	25.2	40.0	24.1	19.1	26.4	27.6
Australia Council for the Arts	25.2	33.3	25.3	19.1	30.2	20.7
Philanthropic Organisation	9.7	6.7	10.8	4.8	9.4	13.8
Creative Partnership Australia	2.9	6.7	2.4	0	1.9	6.9
Commonwealth Office for the Arts	5.8	6.7	4.8	4.8	1.9	13.8
Other	8.7	6.7	7.2	14.3	7.6	6.9

a. Multiple responses allowed.

Figure 15 highlights responses as to where financial support from grants was seen as being most beneficial. Almost 40% of arts workers preferred funding for a specific project followed by another 33% that preferred research and development time. This was a similar pattern across career stage and gender.

Figure 15: Financial support most beneficial (%)



Challenges of and barriers to applying for arts grant funding are recorded in Table 9. Multiple selections were allowed in response to this question. The amount of administration and/or time taken to prepare applications was seen as the most common barrier to applying for grants.

Almost 50% selected the next two major barriers as being funding priorities/criteria not matching projects or practice, and the amount of funding available. A quarter also selected not having a strong enough track record of receiving grants as a barrier. This was significantly higher for early career arts workers (40%). 20% of respondents selected application timelines and 10% project timelines as barriers to applying for grants.

Table 9: Challenges/barriers to arts grants (%)^a

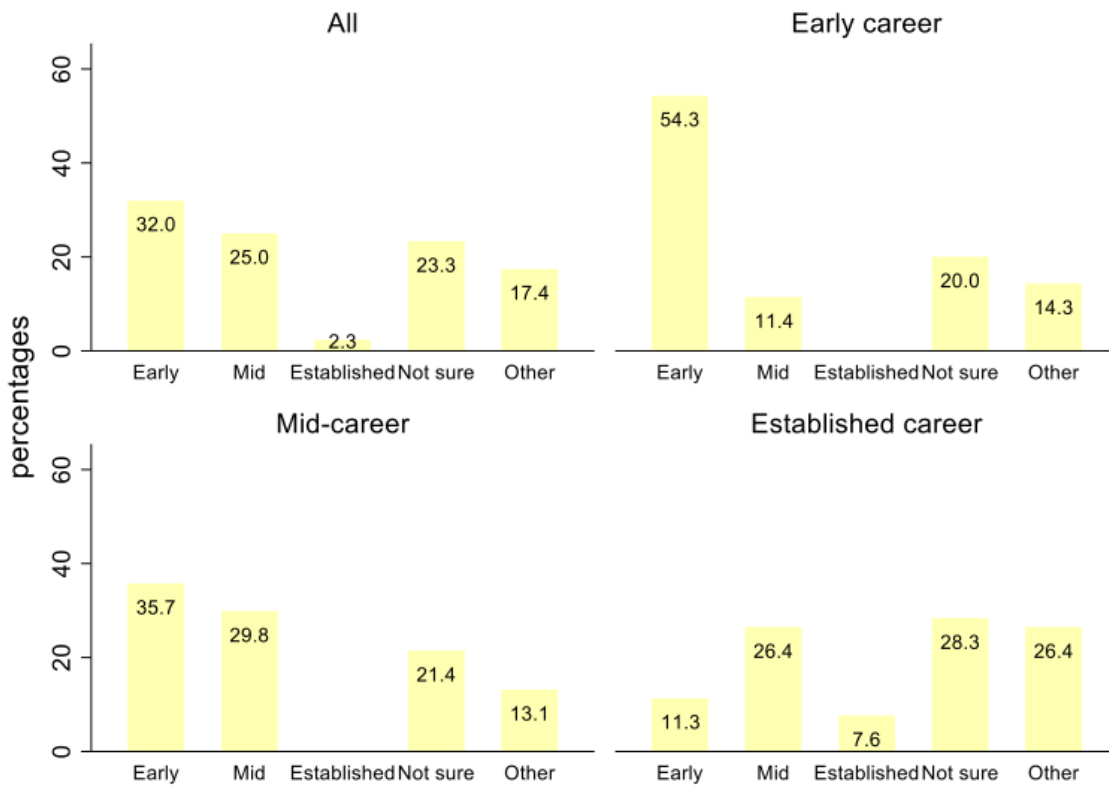
	All	Male	Female	Early	Mid	Established
Admin/time to prepare application	60.3	89.5	56.9	61.1	68.6	47.4
Funding priorities don't match	40.8	21.1	43.1	36.1	38.4	47.4
Amount funding available	46.9	63.2	44.4	47.2	51.2	40.4
Track record	25.7	31.6	24.8	38.9	25.6	17.5
Application timelines	20.1	21.1	19.0	25.0	22.1	14.0
Project timelines	9.5	10.5	9.8	8.3	11.6	7.0
Contract terms & conditions	5.0	0	5.2	5.6	5.8	3.5
Other	21.2	21.1	22.2	19.4	15.1	31.6

a. Multiple responses allowed.

Figure 16 illustrates responses to the question “*At what stage of your career or practice do you feel grant funding would be or has been most valuable?*”. Around 30% of both mid-career and established arts workers selected the mid-career stage as the time in their career that they felt funding was the most beneficial. Only 2.3% of the overall sample selected the established career stage.

Looking at the responses by career stage, each group nominated grant support as being most beneficial at early or mid-career, and least beneficial at established. More than half (54.7%) of the established career group listed ‘Other’ or were unsure of the most beneficial career stage to receive grant funding.

Figure 16: Career Stage funding most beneficial (%)



Pandemic Impacts

Percentages of arts workers who received assistance through the COVID-19 pandemic are reported in Table 10. A large proportion of the sample (44%) received no assistance. This was slightly lower for early career arts workers (38.9%).

JobKeeper payments were the most likely form of assistance received, with 26.8% receiving these payments. This was higher for early career arts workers (38.9%) and lower for males (15.8%) and established career arts workers (15.8%). Those who received JobKeeper payments were on average younger (40) than those who did not (46) and their mean arts worker income pre-COVID (2018-2019) was much lower (\$44,515 versus \$57,294). 13.4% received the Coronavirus supplement although this was much higher for early career arts workers (25%). Around 6% across career stage and gender accessed their superannuation during the pandemic.

This scheme has been shown by Wang-Ly and Newell (2022)¹² to have been primarily accessed by individuals who genuinely needed financial support¹³. In our sample, the average age of those withdrawing from their superannuation was 40, which was similar to the general population where it was 38 (Taylor 2021).

While overall around 6.7% accessed quick response business grants, this was higher for males (15.9%). This finding is consistent with male arts workers spending more time on family-related arts businesses than female arts workers. No early career arts workers accessed these grants.

Table 10: Assistance received due to COVID-19 pandemic (%)^a

	All	Male	Female	Early	Mid	Established
None	44.7	47.4	44.4	38.9	46.5	45.6
Received JobKeeper	26.8	15.8	26.8	38.9	29.1	15.8
Received any stimulus Government payment	9.5	5.3	9.8	11.1	10.5	7.0
Received Coronavirus supplement	13.4	15.8	13.1	25.0	12.8	7.0
Found an alternative source of income	15.1	21.1	15.0	27.8	11.6	12.3
Early access superannuation scheme	6.2	5.3	6.5	5.6	5.8	7.0
Accessed quick response business grants	6.7	15.8	5.9	0	8.1	8.1
Other	10.6	5.3	10.5	5.6	8.1	17.5

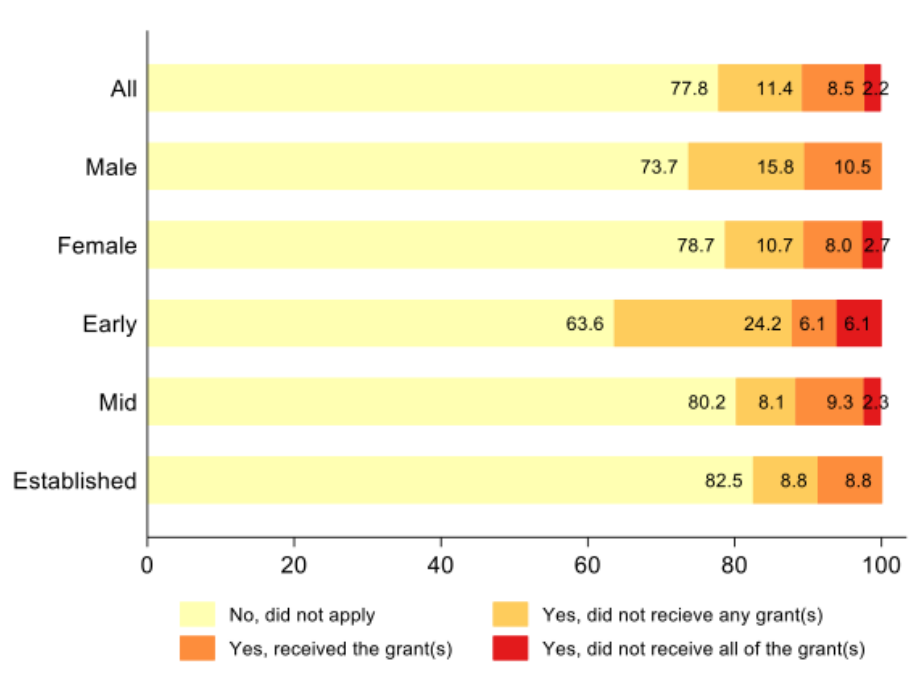
a. Multiple responses allowed

As shown in Figure 17, around 80% of arts workers did not apply for any COVID-19 specific arts grants in 2020-2021. This differed significantly for early career arts workers, who were more likely to apply for and receive COVID-19 arts grants. For those who received grants, 35% mainly used the funding to make new work, 20% to adapt their practice or project due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and 10% used the funding mainly for living expenses.

¹² Wang-Ly, N. and Newell, B. (2022). 'Allowing early access to retirement savings: Lessons from Australia', *Economic Analysis and Policy*, 75, 716-733

¹³ According to Wang-Ly and Newell (2022), the scheme was primarily accessed by those in the poorer financial circumstances, tended to be younger, earned less income and held fewer savings and more debt.

Figure 17: Applied for COVID-19 specific art grants between 2020-2021 (%)¹⁴



Part 3: Discussion

1. Low incomes across the visual arts and craft sector

Arts workers are highly qualified yet earn significantly less than other professionals in the general population. The impacts on their current and future financial security and sense of professional worth rang throughout respondents' comments:

"As an experienced worker, my salary should represent my level of expertise."

"The money is atrocious. I've been on \$70k a year for the last ten+ years, despite changing my jobs multiple times and gaining extensive new skills and experience in this time. I'm single, live alone, don't have any financial support elsewhere—if I stay working in the arts, I am literally facing homelessness in my old age. It has to change."

"Having enough money to get by—even as an arts worker who works 4 days a week, my income isn't enough to meet my day-to-day living costs."

"There is no financial security as an artist or an arts worker. I think about giving up and walking away every few months."

¹⁴ Some responded that they could not remember, and these are not shown here.

“Mental health for arts workers is rock bottom, people are leaving the sector for an improved basic wage, and educational offerings continue to shrink.”

Policy Implication #1

A review of salaries in the arts and cultural sector needs to be undertaken as a matter of urgency, the reasons for the disparity between the sector and wider professional workforce identified, and an agenda devised to remedy this. This needs to be a priority for the newly established Creative Workplaces as part of Creative Australia and state-based agencies.

2. Endemic reliance on unpaid labour

A high percentage of arts workers (61.5%) reported participating in unpaid work in the arts sector, including volunteering on boards, in artist-run initiatives, on self-managed projects, in family arts-related business, and mentoring. This work generally contributes to the overall strength and progression of the sector, as noted in one comment by a respondent who reported: “providing guidance and consultation to other projects of friends who run ARI's etc.” as their regular form of unpaid work. Early career arts workers in particular reported spending an average of 11 hours per month on self-managed projects, potentially indicating that they are contributing unpaid labour to projects with the aim of developing their experience and skillset.

When asked whether they would take additional paid work hours each week, if they were available, 37% of respondents said that they would. This was largely due to needing additional income, but also to address the unpaid work they already undertook within their role.

“I work extra hours to make up for the hours I lost. I can't do all the work required in the time allowed by the institution.”

“It would recognise the unpaid hours I did.”

“I have enough work on my plate with the responsibilities of my role to more than make up another day of work. At the moment, I am trying to fit 5+ days of work into 4 paid days.”

“I usually work overtime and for free.”

This highlights the sector’s reliance on unpaid labour, both in the form of volunteer contributions to organisations as well as the expectation of those already employed to undertake more work within their role than they are paid for.

“Underpayment and no payment across the sector (especially for public programs), and lack of Super.”

“Insecure work and LOW salaries despite the hours of work contributed.”

“Arts workers are paid below standard incomes despite being expected to do the work of at least three people.”

Overall, this indicates that outcomes for visual and craft arts organisations are largely delivered by staff who are underpaid, overworked, insecurely employed, and feel pressure to contribute unpaid labour in the interests of the success of their employer. Artist-run initiatives and independent arts projects are also supported by arts workers giving their time and expertise for little or no pay. Continued reliance on these circumstances risks significant burnout of staff and associated loss of sector knowledge and capacity if these employees leave the arts industry in favour of secure, better paid work elsewhere.

Policy Implication #2

Unpaid work is endemic in the arts and cultural sector. There must be greater, more transparent recognition of the amount of unpaid labour in the arts, and a commitment to moving away from this model. In part this continues due to inadequate award coverage of the sector. An examination of whether work currently performed in a voluntary capacity should be paid in accordance with employment legislation and agreements.

3. Insecure employment

Another key finding of the survey is a trend of under-employment for arts workers, with many indicating that they would work more hours if they were available. Job security also emerged as a significant concern, with high rates of fixed-term and casual employment. This was highest for early career arts workers but was a common experience across career stages.

“I’ve been working in the industry for 10 years and I’ve never had more than a 22-month contract. Permanent positions are hard to find.”

“I nabbed a permanent part time local government arts job after years in ARIs and casual install. I’m so lucky, it’s a workers’ paradise. Everyone deserves this.”

“There is a lack of fixed-term contracts with room to grow or apply for promotion. I have been engaged by a university in casual work for seven years and there is no opportunity to apply for permanent work.”

Of note is the heavy reliance of arts organisations on ongoing operational funding and how this impacts the availability—or lack of—secure employment for arts workers:

“The independent visual art sector is reliant upon multi-year funding. This means every 3 - 4 years my job, and that of my colleagues, is on the line. This insecurity sees people leave the arts sector.”

“I have never experienced financial security as an arts worker. The main barriers are low wages or temporary work (contracts, casual) due to roles being based on grant funding outcomes.”

Arts workers also reported undertaking a significant amount of work outside of the visual arts and craft sector, suggesting that many are working multiple jobs or are studying (potentially to further their careers) while working.

Male arts workers were more likely to be self-employed and were also more likely to report their career stage as mid-career or established (89.4%) compared to women (79.4%). Males also work more hours overall and tend to spend more time on arts businesses than females.

Survey findings indicate that the lack of ongoing work for arts workers contributes to the number of people who are self-employed. While respondents recognised the benefits of self-employment, such as flexibility and independence, others found it a necessary avenue to securing work of any kind.

Self-employment also carries with it many responsibilities that those in secure employment do not have to take on, such as working to gain contract or project-based jobs to maintain a liveable income and managing their own Superannuation and insurance. An over-reliance on self-employment could therefore be a contributing factor to the instability of the sector.

Policy Implication #3

With a number of visual arts and craft organisations supported by operational funding from state and federal government agencies, further research should be undertaken into how current grant funding contributes to the prevalence of unpaid labour and insecure employment terms, and how these agencies might better support arts workers and uphold best practice employment standards across the sector. All methods of funding need to be explored to ensure that, so far as possible, project-based work is minimised, and ongoing positions are created.

4. Gender segmentation and gender pay gap

There is a significant gender pay gap of 23.3% for female arts workers, which is much higher than Australia’s gender pay gap of 13.3%¹⁵. This is only partly accounted for by career stage, as male arts workers were only slightly more likely to report being at an established career stage, therefore earning a higher income (37%) than female arts workers (32%).

When asked to provide the main reason for wanting additional paid hours of employment, both male and female respondents said it was to increase their income and/or better cover the costs of living. Female respondents also noted the need to support their families, and that more work

¹⁵ Reference: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/pay-and-gender/gender-pay-gap-data>

in the arts might enable them to develop their career and to continue working in the sector. Additional paid hours as a form of recognition of their unpaid work was noted by both males and females.

Only a few male respondents said they would not take additional paid hours of work due to already working full-time and wanting to retain time for their practice and other projects. Of the female respondents who said they would not take on more paid work if it was available, the primary reasons given were the need to maintain adequate studio time and managing caring commitments. Others noted they were already working full-time or undertaking study. Illness was also mentioned.

"...the need to pay for studio and rent and childcare for research and development time, low salary as an arts worker."

The lack of a reliable and adequate income was also referenced as a barrier to financial and social insecurity by women:

"Very hard to have job security, always short contracts, hard to get a bank loan with only short contracts. I have children so that makes it extra hard to plan with the job insecurity."

Although there are a significantly higher number of female arts workers in our sample, there are slightly fewer females reporting having dependents than their male peers (30% female versus 37% male). This may suggest that female arts workers with dependents face barriers returning to work after having children. When asked why they were self-employed, for example, one respondent noted they were "laid off due to being pregnant and in [my] job for less than 12 months."

It seems that the issues facing many women wanting to return to work are similar for those in the arts than in the general population. Addressing these barriers, such as job security when taking time away from work to have children and access to childcare when returning to work, would contribute to the sustainability of female arts workers' incomes and careers. Childcare responsibilities and being a single parent were also referenced by women when discussing the barriers to financial security:

"I practiced as a professional when time from my day job and sole parent duties permitted."

Policy Implication #4

Any examination of salaries and working conditions needs to acknowledge the gendered nature of the workforce in the visual arts and craft sector. Gender segmentation is known to contribute to income disparity, with work predominantly performed by women being valued less than that carried out by men. Even in female dominated sectors of the workforce, senior and hence higher paid positions still tend to be held by men. Women in the visual arts and craft sector are doubly disadvantaged: working in a lower paid sector, often on short term or casual contracts, and without the comprehensive workplace protections and security of employment that exists in

more regulated or unionised areas, and where well-paid leadership roles (such as CEOs and Directors of state galleries), are often held by men.

5. Culturally and linguistically diverse arts workers

CALD arts workers were predominantly early career. This could be due to a greater number of opportunities for CALD arts workers entering the workforce at an early career stage. However, given that over 80% of respondents agreed that there were barriers to participation in the visual arts sector, it is also likely related to barriers to career progression. Visa types and residency status were noted as impediments to securing work as well as ineligibility for some grant funding.

In addition, cultural safety in workplaces can be a barrier to CALD artists participating in arts work. As one respondent said: "There are always cultural biases—and, of course, you still need a living wage to support you while you make your art. People of colour—especially women—tend to have lower paying jobs, and so need to spend more time on their paid work than their own craft."

"Residency and visa status as a temporary Australian resident over 10 years blocks a lot of pathways to work as an artist and /or arts worker in Australia. The bureaucratic administrative structures, especially the differentiation between temporary and permanent resident/citizen on their rights, opportunities, and obligations."

"...cultural understanding (convincing migrant parents this is a good idea), general lack of safety within organisations as a POC [person of colour]"

Policy Implication #5

Arts workers on some types of visas or in certain stages of securing residency status have fewer opportunities to secure work or be eligible for some art grant programs, which can in turn impact their ability to progress in their career. Funding agencies and employers who require staff to be permanent residents should review these criteria to ensure that they do not operate as a form of direct or indirect discrimination based on cultural background. Arts organisations need to invest in cultural safety professional development for staff and boards to attract, retain and support the career progression of CALD staff.

6. Disability

10.7% of arts workers in the sample identified as having a disability compared to 9.3% of the working age population and 17.7% of the general population. Among our total survey population, 90% agreed that there are barriers to participation in the visual arts and craft sector. In our free text responses, several barriers were identified, and examples of overt discrimination were given.

"It is not possible to appropriately have work adjustments while working on projects and festivals. I have also requested adjustments whilst applying for jobs and been denied them or had contracts withdrawn".

“My disability and subsequent lack of income (having to survive on a Disability Support pension, when 62% of it goes on rent). I ceased tutoring because I am immuno-suppressed. I might pick it up again soon despite the risk as I need the money.”

Policy Implication #6

Employment in some areas of the visual arts and craft sector could be more accessible to people with disabilities. Visual arts and craft organisations and agencies should undertake an assessment of their workplace accessibility and recruitment processes and diversity requirements to support people with disability entering the arts and sustaining careers in the industry.

7. Arts Education and Educators

As noted previously, arts workers are a highly educated workforce. In addition to this, over a third of arts workers in our survey reported working as arts educators. The field of arts education is therefore playing an important role both in supporting the career development of arts workers and in providing direct employment and incomes to arts workers.

Policy Implication #7

Secure and appropriate funding for visual art and craft programs, particularly in the tertiary sector, has direct and indirect impacts on the sustainability of arts workers’ incomes and employment, as well as on their career pathways. Greater investment in visual art and craft education has the flow-on benefit of increasing incomes and employment for artists and arts workers.

8. Grant funding

Almost half of the sample of arts workers had not applied for grant funding. Nevertheless, arts workers in our survey discussed the important role of funding, both individually and for the sector. Responses to questions about barriers to financial security and areas where grants are most beneficial reveal that arts workers are very much aware of the need for this source of funding.

For arts workers engaged on independent projects, grants are especially valuable as they provide the financial support to realise activities that develop their careers. This is reinforced by the data; the majority of arts workers who had applied for grants favoured funding for specific projects or research and development time, particularly as early career arts workers. However, as their careers progress, arts workers again note that the need for funding shifts towards stabilising the sector they’re working in:

“Grant funding has been incredibly useful with getting projects off the ground in my early career, but working full-time now for an arts organisation, I would rarely go for a grant for myself, more usually for the organisation.”

Issues in how grant funds are expected or allowed to be spent were also raised, further emphasising the findings on unpaid work and underemployment:

“Being able to request adequate funding for arts workers as part of a project budget would be incredibly beneficial. As it is, funders make it a condition that artists are paid—which is fair—but arts workers are not given the same consideration. Graphic designers, photographers, PR reps etc. are all considered valid expenses. The people responsible for conceptualising/delivering/producing the project are not. For me, this is an unrealistic view of how the sector functions and an unsustainable way of supporting it.”

For those that did apply for grants, barriers to and challenges of applying for funding included administration/time of writing grants, funding priorities/criteria not matching projects or practice, and the amount of funding available. A track record of receiving grants also emerged as a significant barrier, which was particularly evident for early career arts workers.

Other challenges identified ranged from the language skills required to interpret and write grant applications, to perceived conflicts of interest with their place of work. As one arts worker noted:

“I administer and assess grant programs so am not able to apply.”

The majority of respondents thought funding was best suited to early and mid-career stages rather than at the established stage, which points to the conundrum of track record in applying for grants at the early career stage. Finally, female arts workers were less likely to apply for grants than male arts workers. This warrants further investigation to ensure that arts funding schemes are equitable.

Policy Implication #8

Grant funding could be further targeted towards early and mid-career arts workers. Consistent, sufficient operational funding for arts organisations is directly linked to opportunities for arts workers gaining secure work in their field. This then influences their career development, as secure work enables people to improve their skills and progress through different roles and levels. Similarly, grant funding that is directed towards projects, research, and project management fees supports arts workers to gain practical experience that enhances their employability.

Concerns relating to career progression on the part of CALD arts workers suggests that some grant applications should be made more streamlined and simpler to understand and write, especially for artists who experience language and writing challenges (such as some CALD artists and arts workers).

9. Pandemic impacts

With overall falls in their average income, arts workers' incomes were more detrimentally impacted by COVID-19 than that of artists. Males saw the biggest fall with 14.5%, while early career arts workers saw a fall of almost 21% in their median arts worker income. Here again, the proportion of early career arts workers in casual employment could be a factor in this. Casual employees were only eligible for JobKeeper if they had been consistently employed by the same

business for more than 12 months and were not employed on a permanent basis elsewhere—whether part-time or full-time. Arts workers in casual roles were therefore the first casualties for organisations reducing staff during the peak of the pandemic.

Although these criteria also applied to artists, results from our survey show that, overall, they did not experience a decline in income from their artistic practice across the 2018/2019 and 2020/2021 financial years. This suggests that early career arts workers were worse off financially than artists during the pandemic. COVID-19 lockdowns also resulted in the cancellation or postponement of large numbers of exhibitions, festivals, public art project and art events, which had a flow-on impact for employment for arts workers. Another significant factor is the high numbers of those working as art educators—with most Universities ineligible for JobKeeper funding, arts educators were particularly vulnerable to loss of employment and income during the pandemic.

Policy Implication #9

Policies developed for emergency situations, such as a global pandemic, should take a broader view of employment that recognises the increased casualisation of many workplaces and number of people working multiple jobs to make a living, particularly in the arts. As a major employer of arts workers and artists—and the workforce in general—Universities must be included in supports provided by government in such circumstances.

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