



Theatre Network Australia (incorporating Theatre Network NSW)

Member Insight

NSW Government Response to COVID-19

Insight pulled from the following Surveys:

1. THIS IS HOW WE DO IT 2020 - Working Trends of Independent Artists and Creatives (48 NSW responses out of a total of 283)
2. 2020 NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT SURVEY OUTCOMES (86 responses)
3. Additional Company Member Insight into NSW Govt response to COVID-19 (Responses from 18 NSW companies).

1. THIS IS HOW WE DO IT 2020 - Working Trends of Independent Artists and Creatives (48 NSW responses out of a total of 283)

This is How We Do It, is Theatre Network Australia's second report on the working trends and conditions for independent artists and creatives in the performing arts. The survey received valid responses from 284 independent artists and creatives from across Australia. It provides comparison from the 2018 survey. Additional questions were asked about the impact of COVID.

We were able to filter those who ticked the state NSW as their base. There were 48 of these, which is around 17% of the total responses.

RESPONSES

How many creative projects/gigs did you have planned for 2020, before the impact of COVID-19?

Projects planned: 8 on average

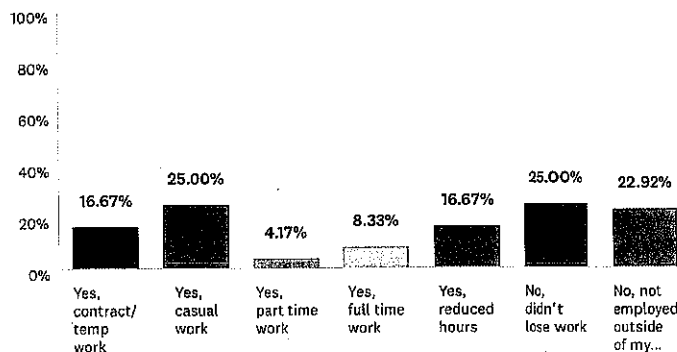
How many projects have proceeded, or will proceed in 2020, even if in a different form?

Projects going ahead: 2.5 on average.

69% of creative projects have been cancelled

Did you lose employment, outside of your creative practise, due to COVID-19?
(Select all that apply)

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0

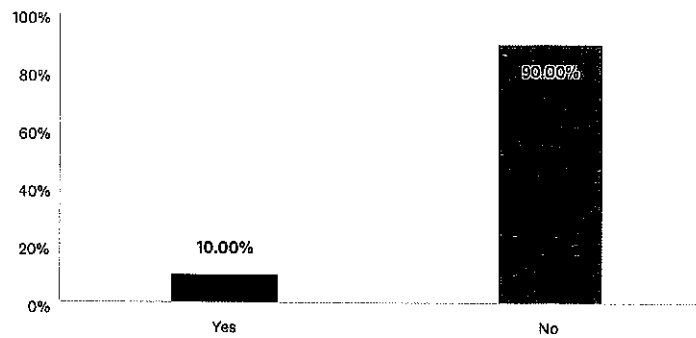


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52% of respondents lost work outside their creative practice

Did you access your superannuation due to COVID-19?

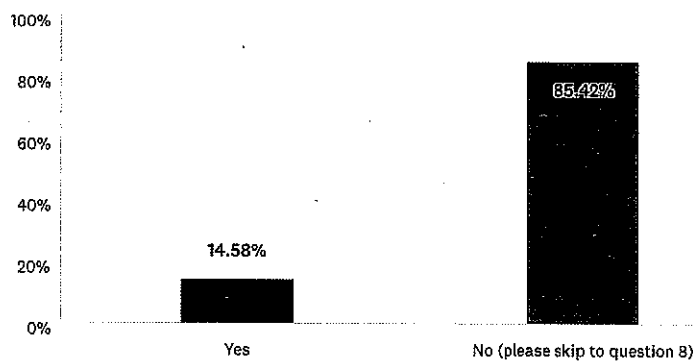
Answered: 40 Skipped: 8



10% of respondents accessed their superannuation

Did you relocate due to COVID-19?

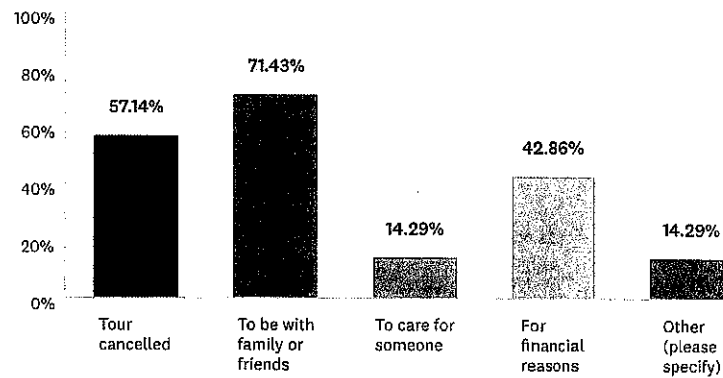
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14.58% of respondents relocated due to COVID

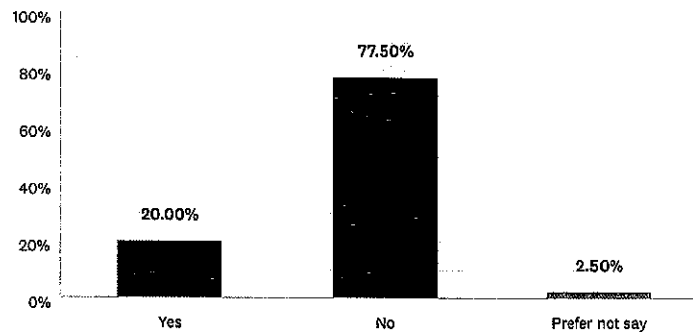
Why did you relocate? (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 7 Skipped: 41



Have you accessed any mental health services due to the impact of COVID-19?

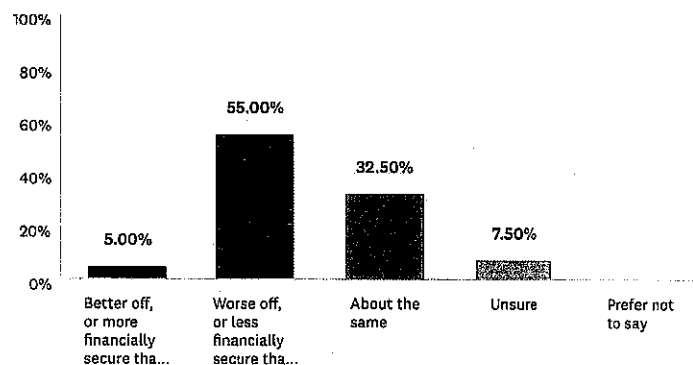
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20% of respondents accessed mental health services due to the impact of COVID-19

What is your current financial position considering the impact of COVID-19?

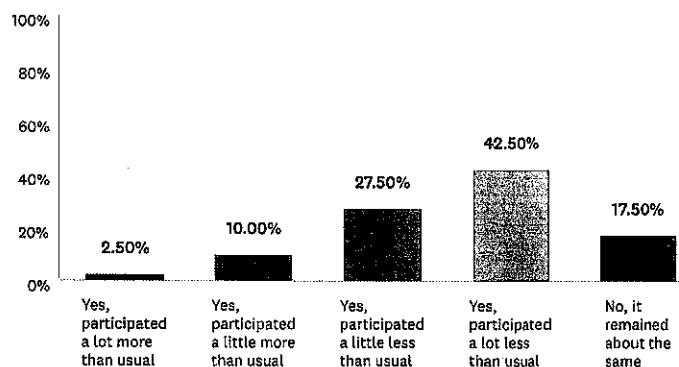
Answered: 40 Skipped: 8



55% of NSW respondents are financially worse off now, due to the impacts of COVID-19, compared to 49% of Victorian respondents and 50% of the overall respondents.

Putting your creative practice and projects aside, did your participation in the arts community change due to COVID-19?

Answered: 40 Skipped: 8



Only 12.5% of NSW respondents participated in the arts community more, compared to 22% of the overall respondents. 87.5% of NSW independents participated less or the same, compared to 78% of the overall.

Did COVID-19 have an impact on your creative practice? Briefly explain in your own words.

Positive Outcomes - 3 out of 48

Neutral outcomes - 9 out of 48

Detrimental outcomes - 36 out of 48

Positive Outcome Examples

2 different shows which were being performed overseas have been postponed; moved 1 project online, made some valuable overseas connections unexpectedly by online practices

I planned to produce a theatre show later this year, which was post-poned. I've had a lot more time to write. With all productions put on hold during quarantine, there were very few/no auditions earlier in the year and then a whole bunch selftape auditions when restrictions started to ease.

Yes. I went from leaving the house at 7am and coming back at 11pm nearly 7 days a week working multiple creative projects to cold turkey at home. It took me a while to adjust, but what it has done has allowed me to take a step back, reassess my priorities and focus myself more.

Neutral outcome Examples

Had to stop devising a theatre show and turn it into a webseries instead. Missed out on performing live all together so far.

It had both a positive and negative impact. It did give me more time to work on my creative practice specifically writing my own work but negatively affected my mental health

Yes - it came to a grinding halt- however companies that I create for found ways to adapt with my input.

Yes- cancelled a re-mount of a major work. Gained work for a development. Possibility of a tour of a different work.

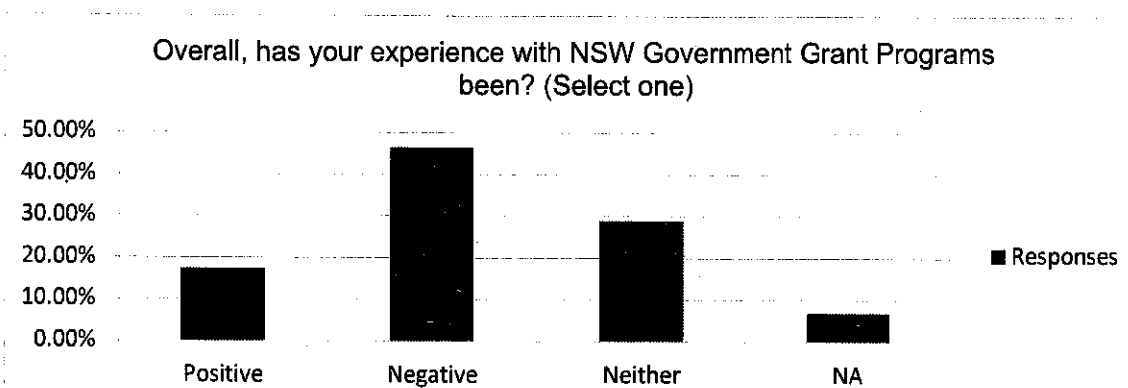
Detrimental outcome Examples

All domestic & international tours postponed or cancelled.
COVID-19 caused to cancellation of multiple paid gigs - interstate residency, international residency, interstate tour, intrastate workshops and tour and therefore a full year's worth of income. Isolation also meant no access to studio.
Hugely. The play I was rehearsing was canceled and I lost all my teaching work at 5 different institutions
I lost 3 gigs, including an 8-month tour. Lost around \$35,000.
Major impact on my practice. There are not many gig opportunities at all at the moment due to Covid-19. I lost all my work and classes. I had to teach on Zoom just to pay the rent it was very difficult
Yes - it's hard to do lighting design for shows when few projects are using a traditional theatre space
Yes - my practice is primarily international. I lost all of that - and the Australian premieres, & developments moved to 2021. Essentially I lost all my income for 2020.
Yes and I received no support. Many opportunities that were not confirmed however were likely to happen (callbacks, final stages of auditions, meetings for potential projects) were canned. Although I didn't have a contract as such a lot of very close to being signed jobs were cancelled.
Yes I was no longer able to support myself financially. I also have had to put a hold on projects and I haven't picked them back up yet and finding it hard to do so.
Yes, I lost 8 months of touring full-time work as well as the ability to work independently on my own projects/creative developments due to gathering restrictions.
Yes, it devastated it- was meant to be earning and making in NYC right now. Loss of opportunity and income at all levels. Increased isolation.
Yes. Apart from a season of a show being cancelled and poetry readings and events connected to my book launch cancelled, the closure of state libraries affected my ability to research new projects. Likewise not being able to travel interstate or overseas for research and related purposes.
Yes. I had a projection gig deferred. I was unable to take up two exhibitions in Victoria. And unable to travel to Shanghai for a residency. And I have spent more time trying to find funding and opportunities because I have no income currently.
Yes. I was meant to be on tour with a company that performs in schools across Australia from May - November.
Yes. I was planning on wrapping a TV show in the US which has been postponed, a theatre show closed down early and a majority of projects planned for mid to late 2020 have dissolved. I have been fortunate in that my company has been able to take advantage of the pandemic, forming partnerships and starting initiatives to assist the industry as it rebuilds.

2. 2020 NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT SURVEY OUTCOMES (86 responses)

1. Overall, has your experience with NSW Government Grant Programs been? (Select one)

There was a mixed response to participants' overall experience with the NSW Government Grant Programs. 46.51% of respondents stated that their overall experience was negative, 17.44% of respondents had positive experiences and 29.07% were ambivalent. There is recognition that departmental staff work hard and are supportive, however they are often restricted in what they can do for the sector due to external forces. Issues that have impacted negatively on people's experience include long delays in announcing funding decisions, Ministerial influence on outcomes, lack of accessibility within funding programs, and onerous bureaucratic processes.



Commentary:

"Unclear communication, long delays, missed agreed timeframes. Often have the same conversation meeting after meeting. No clear action within the Department for greater disability inclusion."

"Communication is extremely poor. Announcement dates were set by Create NSW, but then not adhered to. No information given to applicants about the delay. There is still no announcement on the LGA multi years - they were supposed to be informed at the end of May."

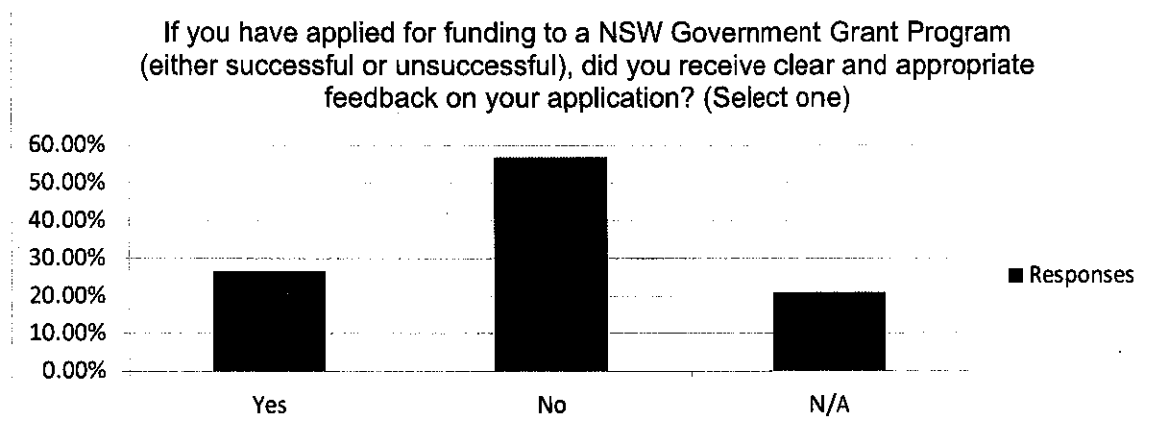
"We have had mixed experiences over the years. Often the engagement with staff is positive. But there is a feeling of powerlessness from them. They would like to help you but they cannot. They are hamstrung by either the Minister or their own bureaucratic processes. Nothing stands out as particularly "bad" except the delays that roll on. One year we did not find out about our annual funding till January of the year we were funded!"

"I say positive because we were awarded funding, however the process was frustrating for both the sector and I suspect the Create NSW team. The delays at this time were incredibly stressful and the lack of information or clarity that the team at Create were able to provide compounded the stress."

"MIXED - Slow decisions, staff don't have influence, Minister is controlling with biased approach."

2. If you have applied for funding to a NSW Government Grant Program (either successful or unsuccessful), did you receive clear and appropriate feedback on your application?

56.98% of survey respondents said they had not received the feedback needed to better understand the reason for the outcome and/or to improve future applications. There is concern that 'unfunded excellence' or 'there is not enough money' is often tabled as the reason for unsuccessful grants. Grant applicants want concrete information about why they were not funded.



Commentary:

"Completely hands off feedback - too much protection of staff, this can be humiliating given Create NSW is the most demanding grant app form in the country (have been working for decades in perf arts)."

"In the past feedback was clearer but now the main feedback is that there isn't enough money to fund all eligible projects."

"Reasonable feedback, but when asking deeper questions around process and communication the individual staff could not provide any guidance - often 'someone else's' department."

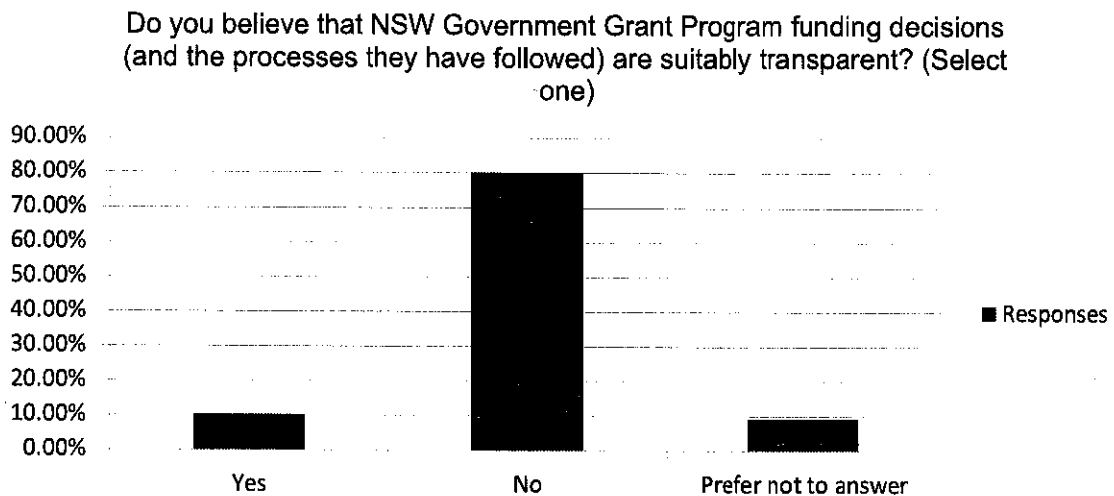
"I have mostly received clear feedback for grant results, appropriate is contentious. ... The process by which board members have recently been appointed to Create NSW artform boards, at the discretion of chairs appointed by the minister, has resulted in inappropriate appointments of people who are not deeply engaged in the sector and lack the adequate expertise to appropriately assess the quality and impact of artists' work. (NB this isn't the case for every appointment, and some boards are stronger than others, but this is also because the chairs of strong boards are stronger appointments - the Minister shouldn't be the person to hand-pick Chairs, and Chairs shouldn't be given executive powers to make decisions that impact the sector largely)."

"The rounds are so competitive that feedback can be disheartening to hear you scored well but others scored better. It makes you wonder if politics are at play rather than your application detail."

"Feedback basically 'too many applicants of excellence, not enough funds to give out.'"

3. Do you believe that NSW Government Grant Program funding decisions (and the processes they have followed) are suitably transparent?

There is overwhelming concern amongst the sector about funding decisions. 80.23% of respondents believe that current decision-making processes are not transparent. The key issue raised was political interference and Ministerial oversight, which raises concerns about the viability of the peer assessment process. Peer assessment is the main process for assessing and allocating funding in the Arts; and peer assessors are normally artists and arts workers with relevant industry knowledge. Other issues mentioned include: a lack of diversity on Artform Panels; a Sydney metro bias; and a lack of transparency with budget allocations.



Commentary:

"Regional applicants are not considered in the same light as metropolitan applicants. This is clearly evident by both the number and value of successful regional applications compared to metro."

"I trust the peers on the panels but I do not trust what happens when their recommendations are sent to the Minister. He is known to change decisions to suit his own agenda."

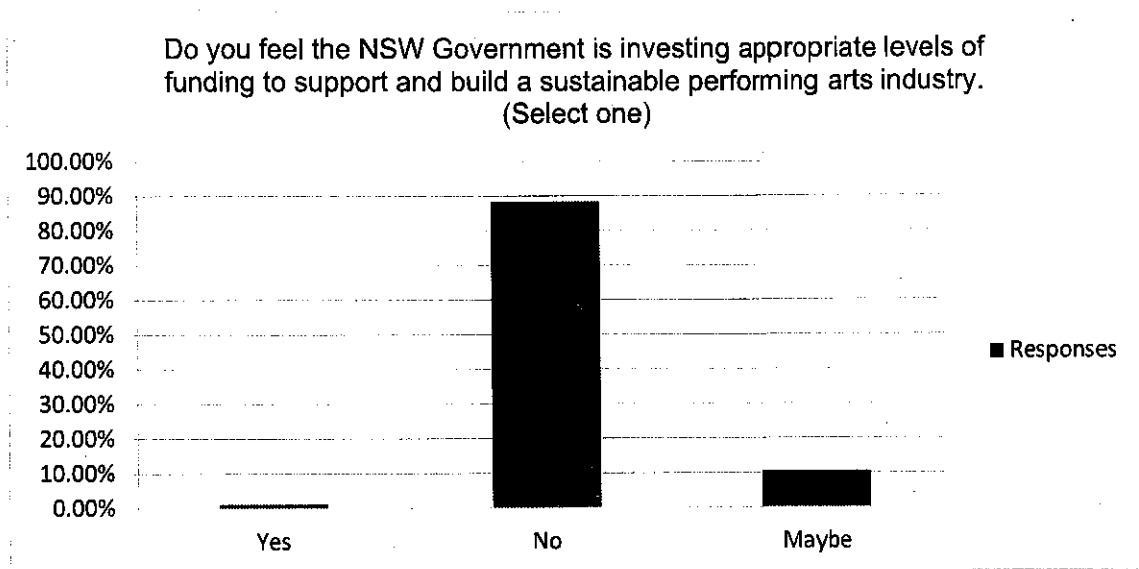
"We have concerns that applicants are allowed to sit on decision making panels (albeit they absent themselves); we have concerns that there is often no clarity around the quantum of funds on offer and that the Minister's discretion is frequently used by the current Minister; that panel recommendations are regularly overturned by the Minister and that more applicants are approved than funds allow."

"To be honest I think the team at Create NSW are trying and would like to run a transparent process but they are hampered by bureaucracy and a change of leadership at the ministry level."

"Artform boards are a problem. How do you equitably divide the money between artforms? Whose choice is that? When boards are now only looking a small fraction of the overall, where is the big picture of the entire ecology? I can't stress how BAD the communication is. And how incredibly frustrating. We feel undervalued."

4. Do you feel the NSW Government is investing appropriate levels of funding to support and build a sustainable performing arts industry?

Lack of appropriate funding for the Arts in NSW is regarded as a major issue. 88.10% of the survey respondents did not believe that the NSW State Government invested appropriately in the Arts. There is a direct correlation between low levels of funding and artists moving interstate, high levels of burn out and mental health issues, and the competitiveness of funding in NSW. This is particularly true for independent artists and the small to medium sector.



Commentary:

"There is no way near enough funding for the arts - across all levels of government. Very concerned at the lack of funding of service orgs."

"Multiple portfolio changes and reviews have occurred for both Create NSW and the sector in general. Despite the level of contribution of the sector to the economy, employment (creative industries in particular), tourism and community health and well-being (one of the first sectors to be called upon to support disaster recovery), the performing arts sector and the arts in general are not provided the level of support of other sectors."

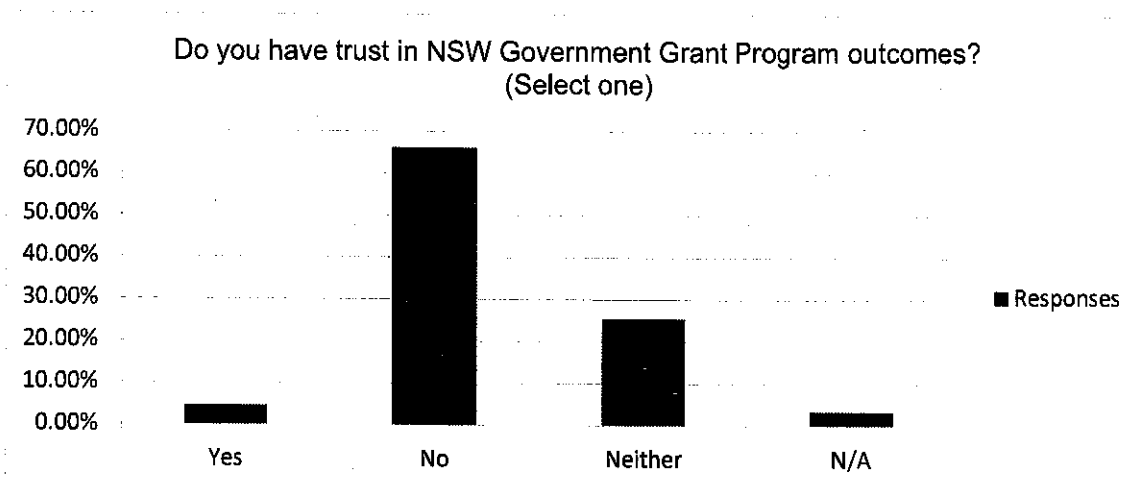
"Too much emphasis on major performing arts. Inadequate resources for contemporary practice including Independents, small to medium sector, regional and youth arts as well as mid-career and senior artists."

"More funds should be invested in smaller organisations and independents who are the backbone. In addition, real diversity means standing by your 'priorities' applying processes of Affirmative Action and Equity and Inclusion. Consultation with the sector."

"Funding levels have not changed since 2016. NSW defers any reference to disability to NDIS and Federal funding, ignoring the crucial role that state based organisations play in supporting NSW artist and artworkers with disability."

5. Do you have trust in NSW Government Grant Program outcomes?

This question highlighted that there is a significant lack of trust in State Government Funding Programs. In response to this question 66.67% said they did not trust State Government Grant Programs; while only 4.6% said they did.



Commentary:

"The Art form boards are biased toward metro based organisations and artists. 'Known' artist are often provided grants because they have delivered successful projects in the past, not necessarily because the application has more merit than another. Regional artists and organisations are not considered as professional or having the capacity to deliver."

"There has been recent interference by government. I think many artists are frightened to speak up about this - feels completely undemocratic. Saying that, this year is an improvement. Staff communications MUCH BETTER in 2020, much friendlier and their emails are on the website AT LAST after being hands off and mysterious for a very long time."

"As mentioned, political interference in the assessment process. A lot of work goes into applying and assessing, to then have Ministers play favourites and impose political priorities is very poor form."

"If you analyse the successfuls so far, there is very limited resources that go to service organisations, capacity building projects, community engagement. There is little understanding of how regional NSW works. In some boards, while there have been successful regional applications, they have been funded at a much lower rate."

"I trust organisations who receive funding, but I don't trust the equity and transparency of the funding process. I've been successful in receiving funding in the past not just because of the merit of my work, but because of my education and because English is my first language. Not everyone has these advantages."

6. Do you have any additional comments or examples you wish to add?

"The lack of transparency in the pot means that far too many applications are being laboured over for a pool of money that is too small."

"When funding outcomes are held up for long periods of time after the release dates it is very unsettling. Many years these grants have been late even to the degree in which projects are cancelled or postponed that have been advertised. There is no reason for this disorganisation."

"Indicative of the problem, the recent revelations that the Regional Cultural Fund did not support the top ranked applications after an exhaustive and thorough assessment process of almost 200 applications and to then have one of the key Ministers involved note that we can't leave these decisions just to the 'artsy crowd' was frankly insulting."

"To have every art form board have a member of the Opera House skews the outcomes towards the Sydney status quo. I do not know how to compete - when I am standing so far away from anything they measure! Or let alone see! Or let alone can imagine because urban environments are not my 'centre' or 'apex' of achievement."

"Funding is also a statement of investment. The arts give a huge amount to the economy and sense of collective and cultural well-being in NSW. It needs investment to match."

"Recently sought in-depth accountability on funding decision from one of the Boards. No CaLD representative. All white panellists, all white artists selected. Panel decided to change the priorities after the deadline and gave no warning or opportunity to re-submit. They decided to choose COVID adverse projects, however after 3 weeks of work this is unacceptable to not be given a chance to address this adequately."

"There is a lack of understanding of the stress on small organisations to meet reporting and application requirements in short time frames, only to be left hanging for weeks and months, unable to confirm staff or project contracts, as we await funding outcomes. Applications often ask for information that been provided in several different formats previously."

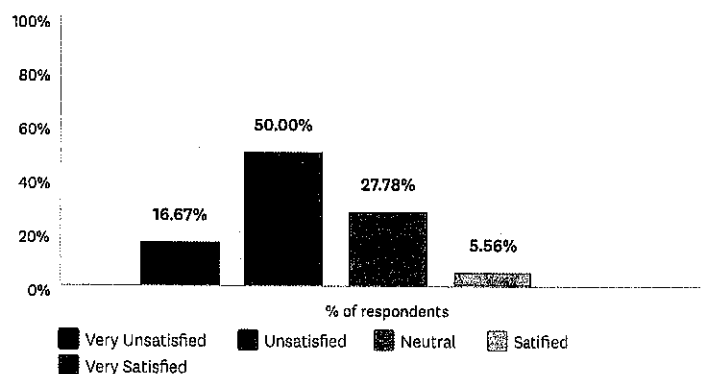
"I think it is very important for the NSW government to understand the diversity of practice and audience that is within the state, instead of focusing most on our capital and major centres. There is a need for a bottom-up approach for funding that develops future audiences and makers from a young age, across all areas in NSW. There is need for a gradual shift in the representation of arts outside of metro areas, including more opportunities for access, engagement and participation."

"When strategies are developed in consultation with key stakeholders in certain subsectors, impacts are greater and outcomes are more trustworthy (for example previous Western Sydney strategies including Making Spaces, Emerging Organisations and Strategic Partnerships) - when government works with the sector, which is incredibly well networked and collegiate, to identify areas of need and provide adequate support to those areas, things start to shift - this is a rare occurrence."

3. Additional Company Member Insight into NSW Govt response to COVID-19 (18 responses).

Based on your own experience, how satisfied are you with the NSW government's communications to the arts sector about shutdowns, restrictions and reopening (including Create NSW)?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Only 5.56% of respondents are satisfied with the NSW government's communications to the arts sector. 66.67% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Comments

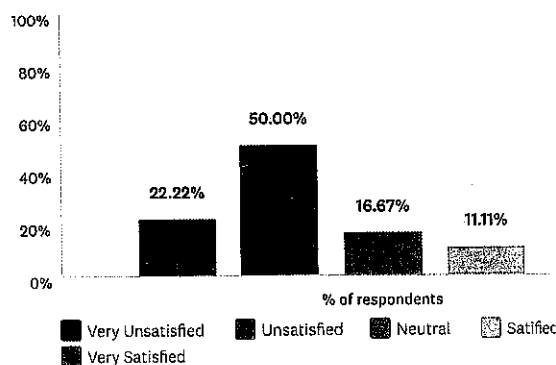
- I still am very unsure what's happening with venue openings and restrictions. I'm planning a season for December but am struggling to confirm with my cast (who are also struggling financially). I feel helpless regarding it and it seems the venue feels that way as well.
- I think the states were put in a difficult position during the pandemic, where the federal government was changing things without properly briefing anyone else, including the states. With that taken into consideration, I feel they attempted to communicate shutdowns, restrictions and reopenings in as timely a manner as possible. It was relatively easy to find the information I needed, and there are a lot of online resources that we've made use of.
- Since lockdown was imposed in March, the arts sector literally was closed down overnight...there hasn't been anything else the NSW Gov can possibly communicate to us other than Covid rules which are pretty clear
- The clarity around voice has been tricky to navigate.
- The shut downs have been disruptive, but communication around them has been clear. However, communications around re-opening have been ambiguous and unhelpful. I think there should be a road map agreed with the industry. Despite theatres being relatively safe gathering places, we seem to be at the end of the queue in terms of re-opening priorities.
- There has been a mixed level of communication around COVID from Create NSW. It's difficult to gauge COVID response in some ways because it needs to be acknowledged that the crisis has come in the middle of extensive change at Create NSW and there is the broader sense of confusion within the department across most funding programs. As a

result there is an inclination to lump the COVID response with the rest of the department's activity.

- There seems to be disparity between what is allowed in the hospitality sector and what is allowed in the arts.
- We have had exceptional assistance as a registered [removed] club with clear guidelines, restrictions and reopening plans. As a performing arts company, we are unsure of when festivals, show and events will return and what restrictions they will have. Long term planning is very challenging.
- While it's clear we can re-purpose existing grants, and that is appreciated, other support packages for the small to medium/independent sector is less clear.

Based on your own experience, how satisfied are you with Create NSW's communications about the support they are advocating for on behalf of the sector?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Only 11% of respondents are satisfied with Create NSW communications about the advocacy they are undertaking for the sector. 72% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

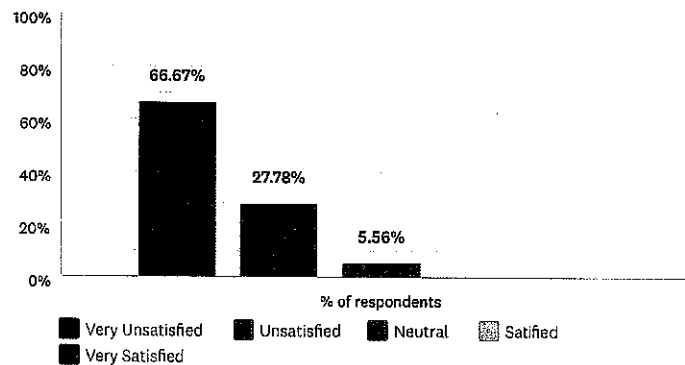
- I am really not sure exactly what they are doing. To get the \$50M support package was fantastic - but it took so long to announce, and it's been shrouded in mystery. In terms of their advocacy for the arts more broadly, I haven't seen very much at all.
- I feel that CreateNSW staff rarely talk to funded services... They are probably not staffed well enough to manage their case load
- I think there are some great people within Create NSW who are trying their best. But they are outnumbered by the people who never answer their phone or reply to emails. The staff seem worn down and defeated. Their ideas are not heard, announcements are pre-empted in the media. It's no wonder they've given up.
- I've not seen any information about their advocating from a public level but know a number of people inside the organisation and know they're working hard through trying circumstances.
- It's very unclear and not transparent.
- The \$50M Rescue and Restart is one of the largest in the country. There hasn't been much transparency around how it has been distributed so far or for how long it will last. I think it

is reasonable that the first organisations to receive support were those closest to actual insolvency. Industry gossip suggests that around 12 companies have received \$13M to date. I believe the remainder is for re-start activities but there is as yet no visibility on that.

- There is a distinct lack of clarity regarding the assessment and allocation processes for the COVID recovery package relating to the Arts. This is a recurring issue at present with the allocation of funding at Create NSW.
- There is little to no communication from CreateNSW about the work they are doing regularly. Further, they said they were going to bring forward their September round to facilitate much needed funding to July and this did not happen.

Based on your own experience, how satisfied are you with the NSW Arts Minister's advocacy for the whole ecology of the arts industry, compared with other Ministers in industries such as hospitality, sport, etc?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



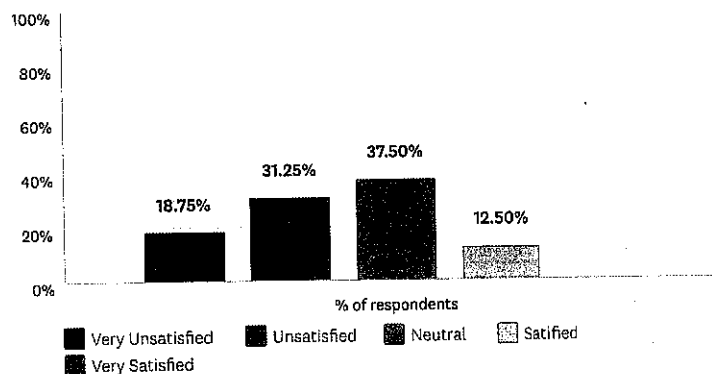
NO respondents are satisfied with the NSW Arts Minister's advocacy for the arts sector. 94% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

- During a pandemic was not a great time for us to lose our Arts Minister - who was replaced by the Premier who had other things on her plate. I was vastly unimpressed with the Federal Ministers response during the pandemic, and we could have definitely used more pressure from the State Minister to advocate for us.
- I feel that arts as a sector is not valued at a governmental level
- I have always felt that the NSW state government was the biggest hurdle to the success of small arts organisations - now I feel they are actively working against us. The rhetoric of jobs and growth feels like bullying from a government that is actively preventing my organisation from growing and offering jobs to artists. At this point it feels ideological.
- In the instance where CreateNSW has tried to install best practice peer processes, the agency fails to uphold and honour the deep knowledge of the ecology of the sector that those peers have as it always goes back to the minister for final decision. The trust in the minister has been completely lost since his numerous blunders eg. the 2019 project round where the money was given to the Symphony and his stepping down from the role during the sectors biggest time during the Covid-19 restrictions due to the Pandemic.

- It appears that once again, the engine for the performing arts (S to M/Independents) is overlooked for a nice shiny chassis (majors - or the participants of the newly titled National Performing Arts Partnership Framework).
- It's hard to tell. While the \$50M fund is a win, there doesn't seem to be much public advocacy for theatre. Also the minister wasn't in office for a while.
- The reality is we have not had an active minister. I appreciate this was not by his choice. I received communications back from the ministers office September 3rd from a discussion last December.
- There does not seem to be any urgency to reopen theatres. When for sport events and pubs it's all fine... when they seem way more uncontrollable.
- There hasn't been a clear indication that the Arts Minister understands the full ecology of the arts and its significance to NSW's economy.
- There is no advocacy or support from the Minister that I am aware of, no consultation. Much more needs to be done - urgently to help get the sector moving.

If you are applying for a grant from the Rescue and Restart package, how satisfied are you with the criteria and process?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 2



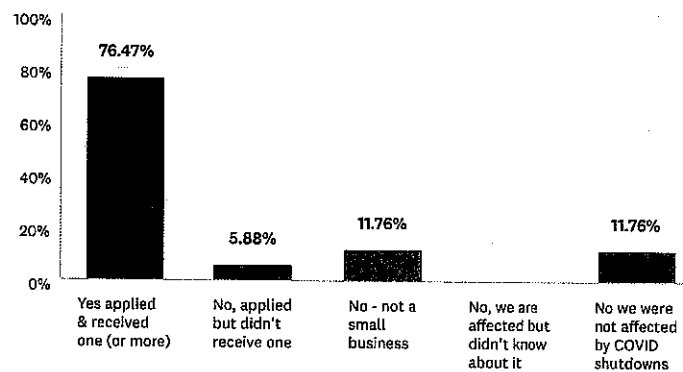
Only 12.5% of respondents are satisfied with the criteria and process for the Rescue and Restart package. 50% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

- I haven't applied for it... it seems that it is for other organisations. It didn't fit with our structure
- It is impossible to gauge because there is no transparency around the process. As a result rumours are abounding about large companies receiving large amounts and others receiving little or nothing.
- It's very unclear and not transparent and focused at the bigger end of town.
- There has been a lack of transparency around this whole process. The first webinar gave very little information, and any deadlines were not made clear - while there are no set deadlines to apply, there were definite dates surrounding the end of financial year which were not at all publicised. And the confusion continues - it is not at all clear when we will hear back about our application.

- There needs to be a transparent process of support, expedited to provide confidence and security to sector. This is sorely lacking despite efforts of individual staff members within Create NSW. We urgently need the process for the Restart package to be announced -with clear guidelines and timelines - so that we can plan for the coming year which will without doubt be just as challenging as this year if not more so.
- This grant is just about figures. There is no ability to speak to the ecology of the sector, what we do and why we are important. At the end of the pandemic when we can see what has survived it will be important to see a spread of cultural activity, not a top heavy sector with no in-roads for emerging artists and no understanding of how to support the growth and development of young artists. We are in danger of seeing that happen.

Were you able to access a NSW government small business grant (of up to \$10k or \$3k)?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



76.47% of respondents applied and received a small business grant. This has been one of the most useful initiatives for small arts companies.

What role can the NSW government play in helping manage re-opening and ongoing viability of organisations/ arts practices?

- A guarantee against loss program is vital to restart regional touring. Tours are already funded and scheduled but presenters and producers are too scared to go ahead. GAL would unlock all of that activity and investment in regional areas. The funds may never need to be spent, but the safety net is needed so we can restart.
- A nuanced and thorough role. As long as theatre and venues abide by restrictions and follow protocols, there is no reason why they can't all open at 2sq metres from now.
- Be prompt and clear about funding deadlines and announcements - we can't plan for things until we know what resources we have available.
- Communication from the state needs to be more efficient. Rescue and Restart for example has been an overwhelmingly silent process. Some companies that are listed as a two are in complete crisis and have very little cash runway once all liabilities are taken into account. These organisations are making difficult decisions right now which will not be easy to reverse. For this process to be as quiet and as drawn out as this feels like a clear message to the people who work in the sector about their value.
- Consulting, clear programs and funding opportunities for all areas of the sector

- I think that one area that they can implement quickly is to increase the number of creative kids vouchers available each year to school children. This would be great for smaller orgs and individual artists
- Increase pool of funding to the sector; prioritise the recovery by listening to the sector
- Not much they can do unless they scrap social distancing and get hold of a vaccine
- Quick support now for organisations in moving forward and planning for 2021, to help us mitigate risk, to help motivate audiences to return to venues, to directly support artists, and to help organisations support artists during this time, and to help rebuild confidence in the sector moving forward with a clear plan.
- Rescue small to medium and invest in a future, not just return to pre covid unsustainability .Restart and Rescue is very much about rescuing majors.
- Space. With new restrictions and cleaning processes in place we need larger spaces to be made available. ... my space is too small to use and spaces all over Sydney are empty.
- There doesn't seem to be a clear roadmap for the role of NSW's cultural industries moving forward. While the State has been investing in infrastructure there doesn't appear to be a vision for how the creation of art and support of artists will feature in the State's post-COVID recovery.
- Understand the ecology. Value the arts and understand the true value of the sector to the economy. Advocate for the sector and unlock the same rules for us as for hospitality.
- We need a road map. We need public leadership to reassure people that theatres are relatively safe spaces There should be a review of baseline funding for culture in NSW which is outspent by most other states on a per capita basis

Other comments

- Delayed timeframe, uncertainly regarding rescue timeframe and lack of feedback about the process.
- Far too slow in making any progress, and although some individual staff members at Create NSW have been very helpful, the bureaucracy and leadership at the top of the organisation and from the minister has been sorely missing.
- I don't believe the NSW Gov have ever managed the performing Arts sector with any great respect (apart from the bigger companies) since the late 1980s...ever since then its been an enormous struggle to achieve any advancements to the sector...COVID was just another huge nail in the coffin for so many artist's livelihoods.... but we will survive
- I think there needs to be a priority to get theatres to re-open with a viable capacity. Find ways to support the re-opening.
- No true understanding of the long term impact on the sector
- Talking with Australia Council staff it is clear that they understand the industry and are advocating within government for targeted support programs that will make a difference on the ground. Talking with Create NSW staff it is clear that they do not understand the performing arts (particularly regional touring). There is nobody with direct experience in touring performing arts within Create NSW at the moment and that loss of expertise is showing.
- Very little funding opportunities for independent arts and a general lack of understanding or interest in the particular concerns of different parts of the sector.