



# UNLEASHING **CREATIVITY**

Strategies for Growing Western Sydney's Creative Industries



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## CENTRE FOR WESTERN SYDNEY (CfWS)

The Centre combines world-class research expertise with frank and fearless advocacy on issues of importance to Western Sydney. The Centre's work is guided by its commitment to a thriving Western Sydney that leverages the region's strengths to work towards an equitable, prosperous and sustainable future. Delivered through a strong politics of listening and in partnership with key regional stakeholders, the Centre aims to drive informed dialogue and action in Western Sydney.



## WESTERN SYDNEY CREATIVE (WSC)

In 2019, Western Sydney University released its decadal strategy, Western Sydney Creative. The strategy sets out the University's commitment and capacity as a leading learning, research and advocacy organisation for arts and culture in our region. WSC underpins Western's long-term commitment to the arts and cultural sector, including championing, celebrating and investing in the local to assist in the growth and maturation of the region's artistic and cultural landscape. WSC commissioned this report.

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### FRONT COVER IMAGE

The front cover image is a photograph taken by Sally Tsoutas of a digital artwork by Serwah Attafuah titled *Sunset on Red Brick (Polding St)*, 2021, which was part of the *Here:After* exhibition curated by Tian Zhang and commissioned by Fairfield City Museum and Gallery. Serwah Attafuah is a multidisciplinary artist and musician based on Darug land/Western Sydney, Australia. She creates surreal cyber dreamscapes and heavenly wastelands, populated by afro-futuristic abstractions of self with strong ancestral and contemporary themes.

See more of Serwah's work here: [www.serwah.xyz](http://www.serwah.xyz)

*Reproduced courtesy of the artist.*

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# FOREWORD

The creative economy ranks among the world's fastest-growing sectors, yet its significant contributions have often gone unrecognised in New South Wales. In Australia, it plays a crucial role, expanding to \$122.3 billion in 2019–2020, marking a 27.1% increase over the previous decade. This sector contributes 6.2% to GDP and employs over 800,000 people, demonstrating its resilience against automation and its importance as a major source of employment and economic activity.

This report aims to illuminate the potential of Western Sydney's creative industries and outlines opportunities for the region to emerge as a nationwide leader in this vital sector. Western Sydney not only boasts a rich cultural heritage and diverse demographics but is also strategically positioned as a hub of connectivity. With major infrastructure projects such as the Western Sydney International Airport and Sydney Metro West underway, the region is poised to attract new audiences, investors and collaborators from across Australia and beyond.

Further, the creative industries have the transformative power to redefine Western Sydney's identity, offering new narratives that celebrate its history while embracing its future. Western Sydney University has a pivotal role to play in embedding creative skills throughout the workforce and economy to meet future demand.

By nurturing local talent, supporting creative enterprises and investing in cultural infrastructure, we can

harness the full potential of this region. This approach will not only spur economic growth but also foster opportunities for employment, education and community engagement, ensuring a vibrant future where history and innovation converge.

Professor Jennifer  
Westacott AO

**CHANCELLOR, WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY**



# CLR MARTIN ZAITER

LORD MAYOR | CITY OF PARRAMATTA



Parramatta is positioned as a key driver in the growth and development of Western Sydney's creative industries. As a city rich in cultural diversity and innovation, Parramatta reflects the broader creative potential of the region. Our creative sector plays a critical role in fostering community, social cohesion and economic vitality. Yet, like much of Western Sydney, it has faced significant challenges, including funding inequities and a lack of dedicated infrastructure.

Despite these obstacles, the creative industries in Western Sydney have shown resilience, contributing to the region's cultural vibrancy and economic opportunities. Parramatta's investments in major cultural infrastructure, including the redevelopment of Riverside Theatres, underscores our dedication to building a vibrant arts ecosystem that nurtures local talent and attracts global attention.

Creative industries are vital to the future of our region, driving not only cultural expression but also economic growth and employment opportunities. We are committed to providing the resources and spaces necessary for creative professionals to collaborate, innovate and grow. Through this, we aim to position Parramatta as a leading hub for creative industries, contributing to the broader success of Western Sydney's cultural economy.

This report reflects the ongoing efforts and strategic initiatives that ensure Western Sydney continues to be a centre of creativity and opportunity. We are excited to build on these foundations, fostering a future where arts, culture and creativity are at the heart of our community's progress.

# CLR BILAL EL-HAYEK

MAYOR | CITY OF CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN



There is no better testament to the vibrant culture and diversity that enriches Western Sydney than Canterbury-Bankstown. Brimming with a unique blend of multicultural heritage, significant creative institutions like the Bankstown Arts Centre and lively urban landscapes such as the Campsie CBD, our city offers fertile ground for the expansion of creative talent and innovation.

While we may not yet be as widely recognised as other creative hubs around Sydney, our potential is undeniable.

This report highlights how our strategic location, coupled with our growing arts scene and expanding infrastructure, positions us as a key player in Western Sydney's cultural regeneration. It also acknowledges major potential economic and social growth in our city by addressing the gap between the number of residents qualified in the creative industries and those employed locally in these fields. Additionally, it provides substantial examples of how we can bolster existing creative activities and integrate them into our broader economic and cultural fabric. Examples which will undoubtedly increase local employment opportunities and invigorate our night-time economy.

I am confident that with strategic investment, collaboration and a focus on nurturing local talent, Canterbury-Bankstown will emerge as a thriving hub for arts, culture and innovation, enriching residents' lives and contributing to the broader cultural landscape of Sydney.

If imagination is truly the beginning of creation, let us continue to use ours as a compass to create a better tomorrow.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Western Sydney's creative industries are at a pivotal moment, facing both significant challenges and opportunities. As one of Australia's most culturally diverse and rapidly growing regions, Western Sydney boasts a rich array of creative talent, innovative enterprises and a vibrant cultural scene. However, despite these strengths, the region has not received the same level of investment in its creative and cultural sectors as Eastern Sydney, leading to significant inequities in funding, infrastructure and resources that have restricted the success of Western Sydney's creative industries sector. This report examines the current state of the region's creative industries, highlights areas of potential and offers strategic recommendations to cultivate a thriving creative economy.

This research is framed by two key policies: the *National Cultural Policy—Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place* at the federal level and *Creative Communities: NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy 2024–2033*. Both policies underscore the importance of Western Sydney and integrate the creative industries into these broader cultural strategies.



**The aim of this research is to provide a detailed picture of the current landscape in Western Sydney, identifying strategies to attract and retain creative industry talent and investment, thereby informing the implementation of these policies.**

Western Sydney's creative sector faces several challenges, including limited infrastructure, a lack of dedicated creative spaces and under-recognition of the region's unique strengths. However, the region is poised for growth, with the potential to make a substantial economic and cultural impact in Australia and beyond. Major developments in Western Sydney, including the new Western Sydney International Airport, present opportunities to embed creative industries within these projects, fostering economic and cultural vitality. By cultivating regional specialisations, supporting local talent and encouraging collaboration between industries, government and educational institutions, Western Sydney can position itself as a leader in creativity and innovation.

This report advocates for a multifaceted approach to developing the region's creative industries.

## KEY STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

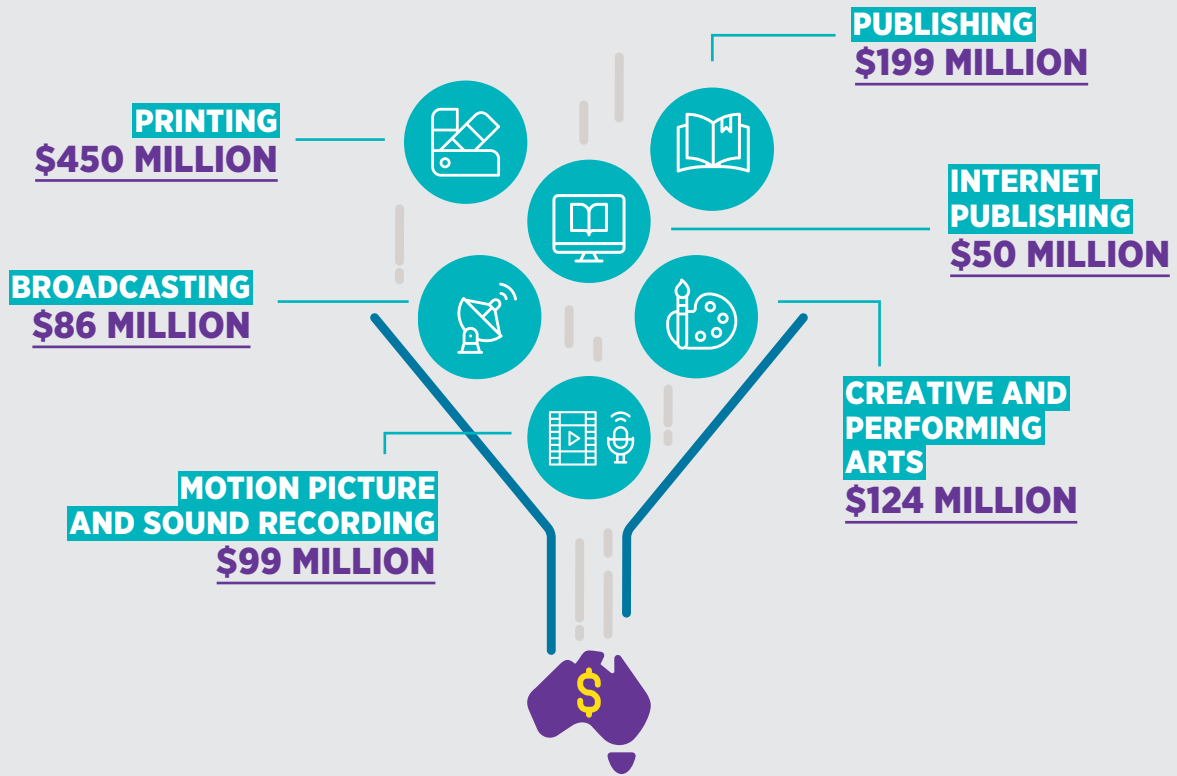
- ▶ Investing in creative practitioners, developing sector leadership and ensuring essential support such as affordable housing and cost-of-living measures.
- ▶ Establishing creative clusters, repurposing underutilised spaces and promoting collaboration will be critical to building a sustainable creative economy.
- ▶ Leveraging regional expertise and the region's vast cultural knowledges can further enhance Western Sydney's creative landscape.
- ▶ Comprehensive data collection and research are essential for understanding the industry's impact and guiding informed decisions that will drive growth.

With strategic vision and support, Western Sydney's creative industries have the potential to become a cornerstone of the region's economic and cultural future.





# SNAPSHOT



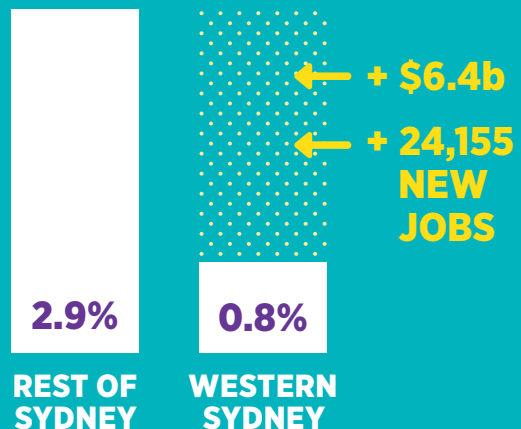
## CURRENT ECONOMIC VALUE ADDED OF WESTERN SYDNEY CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

**TOTAL = 1.008 BILLION**

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), 2021

### FUTURE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL:

Developing Western Sydney's creative industries to be as large in percentage terms as they are in the Rest of Sydney would directly add **\$6.4b** to Western Sydney's economic output and **create 24,155 additional direct jobs** on average.<sup>1</sup>



# EMERGING SPECIALISATIONS IN WESTERN SYDNEY:



**CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS**



**MOTION PICTURE AND SOUND RECORDING**



**INTERNET PUBLISHING**

## RATIO OF IMPORTS TO OUTPUTS IN THE CREATIVE ARTS



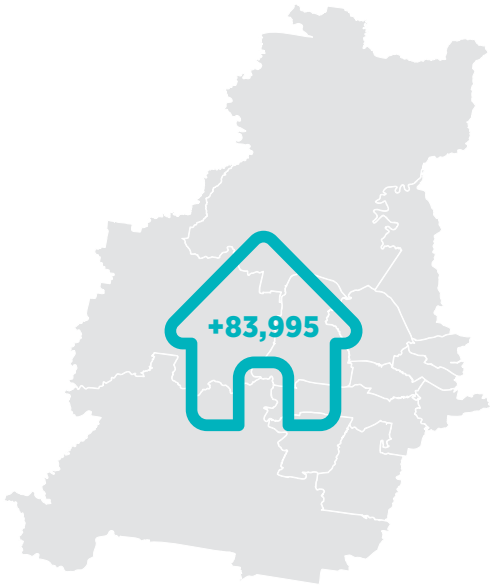
35,495 residents of Western Sydney with **qualifications in the creative industries** (2021), representing an increase of 6,649 more people than in 2016.



**+6,649 INCREASE**

## APPROX 83,995 NEW HOMES

are to be constructed in Western Sydney between 2022 and 2027.



# KEY FINDINGS



## CREATIVE PEOPLE

- 01. Creative workforce disparities:** Western Sydney's creative industries employ a smaller share of the workforce (1.3% vs. 3.4% in the Rest of Sydney) and face lower productivity due to challenges like part-time work and fewer qualifications.
- 02. Beyond creative skills:** Creative careers need more than just artistic talent; proficiency in business, marketing and management is essential. Tailored training and mentorship are crucial for bridging skill gaps and supporting entrepreneurial success.
- 03. Skills shortages in the creative industries:** Western Sydney faces a shortage of skilled creative technicians, particularly in lighting and audio for the performing arts and screen industries. National shortages and competition from higher-paying Eastern Suburbs operations make recruitment and retention challenging.
- 04. Diverse communities and social justice:** With over 40% of residents born overseas and the largest urban Indigenous population, Western Sydney is primed to produce and consume diverse creative content. This diversity fosters creative work often linked to social justice, enhancing inclusivity, equity and community wellbeing.



Art Nights: Culture Alive program at Bankstown Arts Centre.  
Photo: Kyisoe Han



## CREATIVE PLACES

- 01. Development presents opportunity:** New developments in the region, including transport infrastructure projects, housing development projects, the Western Sydney International Airport and Bradfield City, present new opportunities for creative industries to be embedded within and connected to these initiatives.
- 02. Co-location is essential for creative growth:** The lack of adequate creative spaces and limited transport connectivity in Western Sydney necessitates the establishment of multidisciplinary hubs to foster collaboration and innovation. Dedicated spaces for creative industries, particularly music and screen, are needed to overcome regulatory and accessibility challenges.
- 03. Impact of digital technologies:** Digital platforms offer artists greater autonomy but can also lead to exploitation and pressure, highlighting the need for better infrastructure and support. Although digital technology reduces the need for physical location, access to costly equipment remains a barrier, underscoring the importance of providing shared facilities to support local creatives.
- 04. Transport connectivity is a challenge:** Poor transport connectivity in Western Sydney hampers creative industries by limiting workers' access to jobs, reducing consumer reach for creative products and preventing business clustering. This fragmentation hinders collaboration, innovation and the development of a vibrant creative ecosystem, ultimately stifling the region's creative and cultural growth.



## CREATIVE ECONOMIES

- 01. Funding inequities:** Western Sydney's creative industries are constrained by funding disparities and a lack of tertiary education in the visual and performing arts, limiting local innovation and talent development. These inequities hinder the sector's growth and diminish opportunities for cultural expression. Addressing both financial and educational gaps is crucial to unlocking the region's creative potential.
- 02. Local specialisations emerging:** Western Sydney is experiencing rapid local growth in creative and performing arts, motion picture and sound recording and internet publishing and broadcasting, outpacing declines in other parts of Sydney. Addressing barriers like funding inequities and connectivity issues could further enhance these emerging specialisations.
- 03. Strengthening local creative ecosystems:** Western Sydney has the potential to enhance its creative industries by focusing on supply chain strengthening through import replacement, which involves producing locally what is currently imported. By fostering local industries like advertising and supporting related sectors with targeted incentives, the region can build a more resilient creative ecosystem, stimulate economic growth and reduce dependency on external sources.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNLEASHING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

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## 01. Develop a Skilled and Diverse Creative Workforce

- ▶ **Invest in Practitioners:** Provide comprehensive training, mentorship and workshops across all creative disciplines. Include business skills training and the use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to ensure up-to-date expertise.
- ▶ **Develop Micro-Credentials:** Create micro-credentialing programs through partnerships with high schools, universities and industry to address skills shortages and align education with practice.
- ▶ **Expand Local Education:** enhance existing tertiary education infrastructure in Western Sydney to provide more comprehensive, high-quality creative education options and better retain young talent locally.
- ▶ **Develop Leadership:** Foster leadership development within the creative sector by cultivating talent in curatorial practice and cultural production while providing opportunities for mentorship and career growth.



### **FAST MOVE - ENHANCE CAREER AWARENESS**

Deliver a “Western Sydney Creative Careers” speaker series to improve understanding of diverse career paths, including roles such as artist managers and digital product strategists.

## 02. Expand and Improve Creative Spaces and Infrastructure

- ▶ **Embed Creative Spaces in Urban Development:** Leverage government planning mechanisms to ensure affordable creative spaces are included in future commercial and residential property developments to ensure regional growth.
- ▶ **Repurpose Industrial Spaces:** Convert underutilised industrial and commercial spaces into vibrant creative hubs offering affordable workspaces for various creative sectors.
- ▶ **Establish Multidisciplinary Creative Precincts:** Develop multidisciplinary facilities with studios and maker spaces, integrating Western Sydney’s strengths in food production and manufacturing to foster diverse creative practices.



### **FAST MOVE - ENGAGE WESTERN SYDNEY COUNCILS IN CREATIVE LAND TRUST**

Expand and enrich the Creative Lands Trust partnership between Create NSW and the City of Sydney by engaging with Western Sydney Councils on the feasibility study and development of the Trust.

### 03. Leverage Regional Expertise and Specialisations

- ▶ **Promote Western Sydney as a ‘Maker Region’:** Highlight the region’s capabilities in innovative, hands-on creation across disciplines such as art, design, digital fabrication and advanced manufacturing.
- ▶ **Establish a Western Sydney University Creative Hub:** Develop an internationally recognised creative industries hub at Western Sydney University featuring flexible teaching spaces, co-working areas, labs and performance venues to support ongoing skills development and community engagement.
- ▶ **Foster Specialisations at the local government area (LGA) Level:** Local councils in the region should focus on identifying and nurturing their city’s areas of specialisation that align with the council’s strategic cultural and creative goals and are evidence-based.
- ▶ **Incentivise Relocation:** Attract creative businesses to Western Sydney by offering incentives for relocation or establishing branches, including foundries, media agencies and manufacturing. Such relocation can foster specialisations, encourage agglomeration and assist local areas in focusing on growing what they want to be known for.



#### **FAST MOVE: HOLD COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE EVENT**

Western Sydney University to facilitate a roundtable event for councils focused on identifying and fostering creative specialisations at the LGA and regional levels.

### 04. Support Industry Ecosystems and Growth

- ▶ **Develop Creative Industry Incubators:** Develop incubators to support creative startups, linking freelancers to resources such as Western Sydney University’s Launch Pad and other startup hubs.
- ▶ **Advocate for Tax Incentives:** Encourage tax incentives for businesses that offer physical space and partnerships with small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) in the creative industries.
- ▶ **Promote Emerging Business Models:** Document and provide training in new business models and platforms for funding, operating, producing and marketing creative products and services, starting with a speaker series on these topics.
- ▶ **Prioritise Local Procurement:** Encourage Western Sydney organisations to use local creative services and labour in government projects and explore opportunities to replace imported services with local alternatives.



#### **FAST MOVE - ORGANISE A CREATIVE INDUSTRIES EXPO**

Hold a Western Sydney creative industries expo to connect SMEs, universities, industry representatives and government, facilitating access to technology, research and networking opportunities.

### 05. Maximise Positive Impact Through Data and Research

- ▶ **Update Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Categorisations:** Advocate for the ABS to revise classifications to reflect the diverse roles and economic impact of the creative sectors.
- ▶ **Conduct Sector-Based Research:** Focus research on creative activities in Western Sydney to support underrepresented industries and strengthen existing ones.
- ▶ **Collaborate with Industry:** Work with industry stakeholders to gather and analyse comprehensive data to inform strategic growth and policy development in the creative sector.



#### **FAST MOVE - IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY**

Launch a longitudinal survey to capture detailed data on the economic scale and viability of creative industries, focusing on workforce contributions and economic impact.

01

Multimedia artist Tianli Zu installing at the Margaret Whitlam Galleries, WSU.

# INTRODUCTION



# 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The understanding of cultural and creative industries is evolving rapidly. Creativity is a multifaceted interplay between human ingenuity, ideas, intellectual property, knowledge and technology. The creative economy encompasses a wide array of industries reliant on the production and consumption of creative activities. The influence and impact of the creative industries are far-reaching, extending well beyond the bounds of the traditional arts and cultural sectors. As the policy narrative surrounding creative industries evolves and is increasingly included within broader arts and cultural policy, the sector is being recognised as a source of productive and collaborative growth.<sup>2</sup>

The cultural and creative industries play a crucial role in Australia's economy, contributing \$122.3 billion to the national economy in 2019–2020.<sup>3</sup> Recent reports by Deloitte<sup>4</sup> and McCutcheon and Cunningham<sup>5</sup> underline the significant growth of the creative economy both locally and globally, projecting it as a critical driver of sustained long-term economic growth. In Greater Sydney, the creative industries employ 9% of the workforce.<sup>6</sup> These industries have demonstrated resilience and adaptability, notably in response to technological advancements and shifting consumer preferences.

Moreover, the creative industries are pivotal in placemaking and urban regeneration, fostering vibrant, liveable and dynamic communities. By forming strategic partnerships and capitalising on investments in infrastructure, including the new Western Sydney International Airport, as well as precinct development in education, health and the relocation of significant cultural institutions such as the Powerhouse Museum, the creative industries hold great potential to amplify Western Sydney's appeal as a creative and cultural destination.

As the global creative economy continues to thrive, Western Sydney is well-positioned to capitalise on this growth trajectory. The region's vibrant cultural landscape, diverse communities and strategic location make it an ideal hub for creative producers, entrepreneurs, startups and innovative micro-enterprises.

**By investing in and fostering the growth of creative industries, Western Sydney can catalyse economic development, spur job creation and enrich its cultural fabric.**

This research is timely, coinciding with the introduction of the NSW Government's new arts and culture policy, *Creative Communities: NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy 2024–2033*, which encompasses the creative industries for the first time. This report has,

therefore, been prepared in part to facilitate discussions on the opportunities, scale and future growth prospects of the creative industries in Western Sydney. Overall, the growth of the creative sector presents a distinct opportunity for Western Sydney to attract and retain talent, foster entrepreneurship, diversify its economy, enhance global competitiveness and establish itself as a leading centre for creativity, innovation and cultural expression. With the development of the Western Sydney International Airport and the significant investment in NSW's 24-hour economy, the present moment is a ripe time for investing in a polycentric Western Sydney with vibrant city centres and world-class creative facilities.

The CfWS and WSC have partnered to conduct this study, with the support of the City of Parramatta and the City of Canterbury-Bankstown. The study's purpose is to provide the NSW Government and local councils with a critical evidence base to maximise the potential of creative industries and guide strategic decisions about effective and relevant investment in the cultural and creative economy.

This report profiles three selected areas of Western Sydney, while acknowledging the significant creative work occurring across the broader region, including in Campbelltown, Liverpool, Penrith, Blacktown, and beyond. This report is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather presents highlights from specific geographies, with further work required to comprehensively analyse and document the creative industries across the region. More research is needed to explore and amplify other areas within Western Sydney.

## THE STUDY AIMS TO:

1. Document the current state of creative industries in Western Sydney.
2. Determine the requirements for attracting talent and investment in Western Sydney to support the development of thriving creative industries in the region.
3. Provide recommendations on how state and local governments might strategically maximise existing strengths and capitalise on the potential to grow creative industries in Western Sydney.
4. Illuminate the roles of various stakeholders in delivering on the opportunities and needs of creative industries.

## METHODOLOGY

### THIS RESEARCH HAS USED A RANGE OF METHODS TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS:

- 1. Literature and policy review:** this has focused on grey literature as well as NSW Government policies around the creative industries, as well as recent research on creative industries and the arts in Western Sydney.<sup>7</sup>
- 2. Data analysis and mapping:** data has been analysed and mapped from the Creative West dataset<sup>8</sup> as well as from the 2021 ABS Census. A limit of the Census data from 2021 is that it was conducted during COVID-19, which impacted patterns of employment, business and leisure.
- 3. Consultations with creatives and stakeholders:** the research has been guided by a Research Advisory Group (RAG) made up of 11 creatives, industry professionals, academics in creative fields, cultural workers and other stakeholders. Three consultations have been held with this group to workshop the design, findings and recommendations of this report. In addition, 10 conversations were held with individual creative practitioners working in the music industry, screen production, Indigenous art and design, journalism and publishing, marketing, digital products and solutions, entrepreneurial support, creative education providers, creative space management and sound design for film and theatre. Each conversation lasted around 30 minutes.
- 4. Economic analysis of creative industries:** economic analysis has been conducted using data from .id consulting and IBIS World to examine the commercial viability of the creative arts industry in terms of value added, sales, employment and growth areas using a shift-share analysis and time series analysis. This analysis is limited by the categorisation used in government-collected economic data by industry, which makes it difficult to extract data on the creative industries.



Art Nights: Culture Alive program at Bankstown Arts Centre.  
Photo: Alicia Scott

# 1.2 DEFINING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND CREATIVE ECONOMIES

In this report, **“creative industries”** refers to a broad spectrum of activities within the realms of cultural production and creative services.

**CULTURAL PRODUCTION** includes an array of disciplines, but not limited to music, the performing and visual arts, institutions like libraries and museums and sectors such as print, publishing, media production and broadcasting.

**CREATIVE SERVICES** refer to entities that deliver creative outcomes to a diverse clientele, spanning private consumers and businesses. Creative services include internet and digital services, advertising and various design services such as fashion design, graphic design, interior design and jewellery design.<sup>9</sup>

The creative economy includes both the direct impact of creative production and its spillover effects on other parts of the wider economy.<sup>10</sup> The creative economy is an ecosystem comprising a wide range of occupations, distinguished by the generation of wealth and jobs through individual creativity, which drives the generation and use of intellectual property.<sup>11</sup>

Several indicators have been used in existing published studies to understand the economic impact of creative sectors.<sup>12</sup> These include looking at the share of employment, the value added by the industries, total government expenditure on the creative industries, household expenditure on creative activities and creative goods exports and imports. Section 2 of this report presents findings on the creative economies of Western Sydney today, focusing on commercial viability, value added and the scale of the seven identified sectors listed below in Western Sydney.

The report uses several data sources to analyse the current state and potential of creative industries in the region. The first major data source is the Census data published by the ABS. The industry categories are based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC). Under the most current ANZSIC, the sectors relevant to creative industries, with relevant economic data available,<sup>13</sup> are:

1. **Printing**  
(including the reproduction of recorded media)
2. **Publishing**  
(excluding internet and music publishing)
3. **Motion picture and sound recording activities**
4. **Broadcasting**  
(excluding internet)
5. **Internet publishing and broadcasting**
6. **Creative and performing arts activities.**<sup>14</sup>

## BENEFITS AND IMPACTS OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The creative economy has both social and economic benefits to communities and to place. The social impact of the creative sector is well documented, including the sector’s role in promoting cultural diversity, fostering social cohesion, improving wellbeing and empowering communities. Creative industries not only support creative expression and cultural enrichment but also contribute to the economy as a significant source of income and employment opportunities.<sup>15</sup>

According to *Creative Economy Outlook 2022*, released at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,<sup>16</sup> cultural and creative industries provide 6.2% of all employment globally, generate nearly 50 million jobs worldwide and employ more young people (15–29-year-olds) than any other sector. In the broader economy, the creative industries generate positive spillover effects on innovation, tourism, education and urban development.<sup>17</sup> Creative economies are made up of many forms of engagement, including employment and income in the creative industries, participation in different creative activities and events and the consumption of creative services and products.<sup>18</sup>

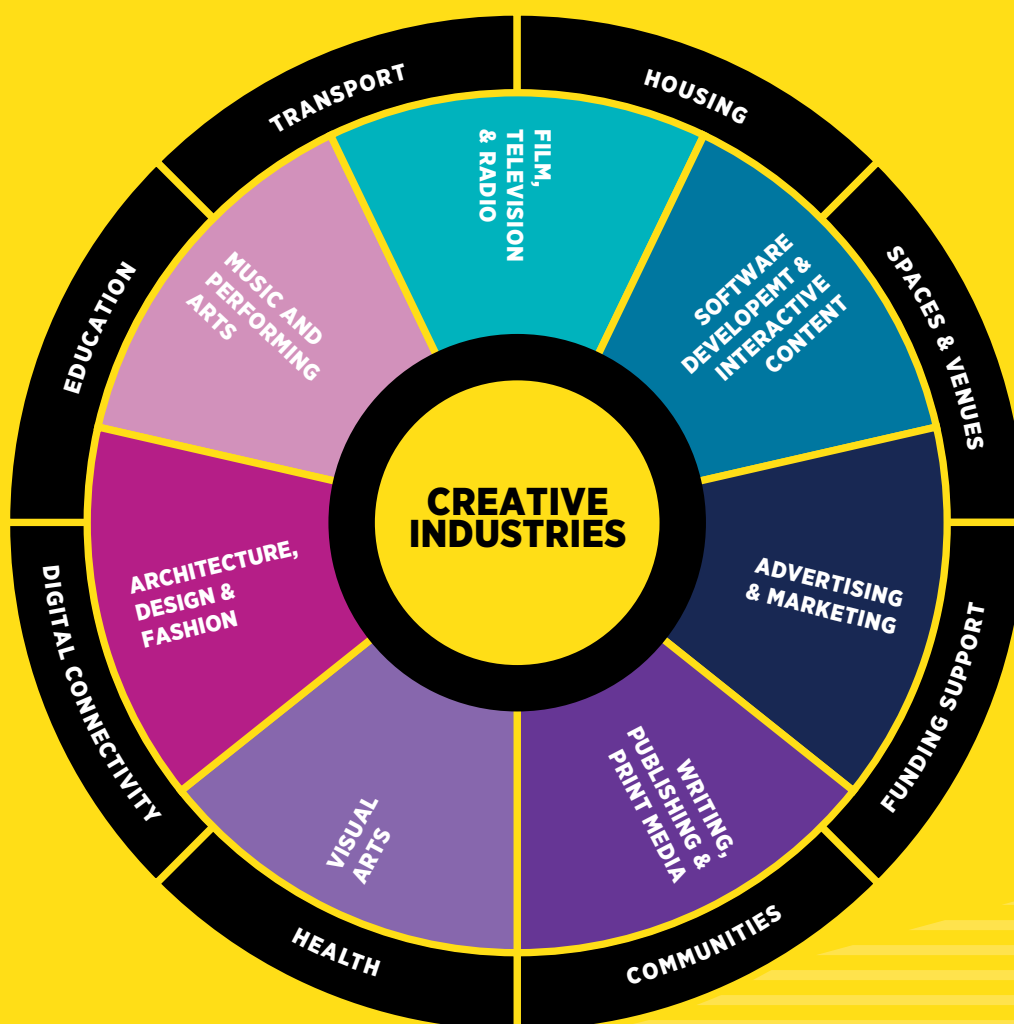
# CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN CONTEXT

To support the development and expansion of creative industries and creative economies, there are a range of external and structural factors that enable and facilitate the flourishing of diverse creative activities and practices.

The framework used for defining and mapping the creative industries in this report visualises diverse creative industries that operate within a broader context of enabling infrastructure. The outer ring captures the range of external factors that contribute to the flourishing of the creative industries. The inner ring represents the various creative industry sectors that exist within the broader built environment, social fabric and policy framework.

This framework is used in this research to map the current landscape of creative industries in Western Sydney, as well as the social, infrastructural and economic ecosystems in which they are embedded. This diagram represents a broad definition and should not be read as fixed, as artists move between creative disciplines to forge 'portfolio' careers.<sup>19</sup>

## WHAT ARE THE EXTERNAL FACTORS SUPPORTING AND ENABLING THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES?





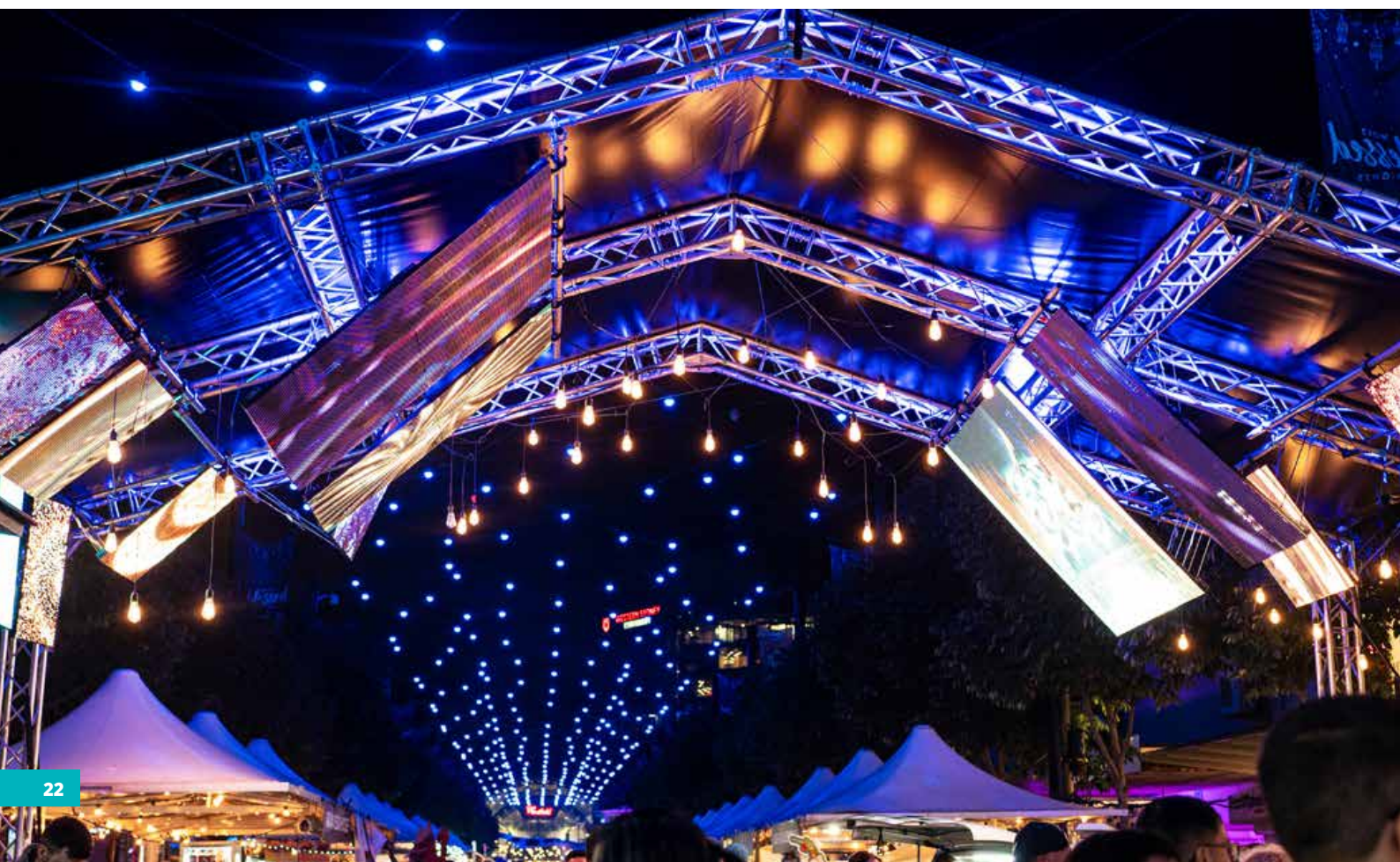
# CREATIVE ECONOMIES IN WESTERN SYDNEY

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This section presents an economic analysis of the current scale of creative economies in Western Sydney and identifies opportunities for growth and specialisation.<sup>20</sup> The analysis reveals a longstanding history of underinvestment in the region's creative sectors. Historically, arts funding in Greater Sydney has been disproportionately concentrated in the central and eastern parts of the city, leaving Western Sydney significantly underserved. This inequity has resulted in cultural stagnation in the area, stifling the development of local artists, creative enterprises and cultural institutions. The lack of resources has hindered the region's ability to fully realise its creative potential, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity for future investment and strategic development.

The lack of investment has exacerbated social inequities in Western Sydney, where residents—often from more culturally diverse and lower socioeconomic backgrounds—have fewer opportunities to engage with and benefit from the creative industries. This underfunding limits access to arts education, creative workshops, performances and diverse artistic expressions while also restricting local creatives' ability to produce and showcase their work, diminishing opportunities for collaboration, networking and professional growth.

As a result, residents face fewer chances to participate in cultural production, stifling career paths and reducing the vibrancy of the region's cultural landscape. While Western Sydney has established creative industries, further developing and strengthening this sector could significantly boost the region's economic benefits, including increased job creation, tourism and investment. Moreover, there is room for significant growth in cultural infrastructure to strengthen social cohesion and regional identity. Addressing this funding gap is crucial for enhancing Western Sydney's cultural vitality, social equity and economic prosperity.



# 1. FUNDING INEQUITY AND PATH DEPENDENCY

Creative economies in Western Sydney are significantly smaller than in the Rest of Sydney, largely due to historical factors such as institutional locations and funding allocations, which have traditionally concentrated these industries in the central and eastern parts of the city, creating path dependency. Path dependence refers to the idea that past decisions shape current outcomes, creating entrenched conditions and behaviours that are resistant to change and are not optimal or desirable in the long term. Due to longstanding inequities in funding, Western Sydney's creative sectors have not developed at the same pace as those in other parts of Sydney.

However, these path dependencies can be disrupted with a conscious effort to recognise and dismantle the historical barriers that have limited growth. By addressing these inequities and fostering a supportive environment, Western Sydney has the potential to unleash its creative talent and significantly grow its creative industries.

**In 2021–22, output in the Western Sydney economy was \$296b, while the value added was \$130b. Of this, the creative industries contributed \$2.2b of the total output and \$1.008b of the total value added.**

This compares to the rest of Sydney, which produced a total value add of \$578b, of which the creative industries constituted \$17b (2.9%). Taking the value added as the true measure of the economy, the creative industries in Western Sydney make up a much smaller share of the

economy (0.8%) compared to the Rest of Sydney (2.9%).

Of course, this neglects potential supply constraints in the Western Sydney economy. Producing \$6.4b more economic output would require more workers and more investment. Workers could be engaged from Western Sydney's low labour force participation rate, higher unemployment rate or by drawing from workers who reside in Western Sydney but work in the creative industries in the Rest of Sydney. This sort of increase requires government involvement and co-funding to invest in creative precincts in existing pockets of strength in Western Sydney, such as Parramatta and Canterbury-Bankstown.

**Investing in creative economies can yield significant benefits. Addressing existing inequities will drive the expansion of creative sectors, fostering innovation and diversification. This growth will lead to substantial job creation, boosting employment opportunities across various industries.**

As the economic contribution of the creative sectors increases, enhanced cultural infrastructure will emerge, improving community engagement and access to the arts. Additionally, a thriving creative economy will attract investment and talent, strengthening the region's global reputation. Ultimately, these outcomes will position the area as a vibrant, competitive hub for creativity and cultural excellence.



*Western Sydney composer Holly Harrison.*

## 2. CREATIVE SPECIALISATIONS IN WESTERN SYDNEY

Based on the theory of comparative advantage, economists use location quotients (LQ)<sup>21</sup> and shift-share analysis<sup>22</sup> to identify local specialisations. The LQs and the shift-share analysis can be combined to identify local strengths. Analysis of data from the National Institute

of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) shows that creative industries in Western Sydney comprise a smaller portion of the economy compared to the Rest of Sydney and Greater Sydney (GS), as shown in Table 1.



*Riverside reimagined under the new redevelopment.  
Image: Cox Architecture, courtesy of Riverside Theatres.*



**Table 1. Key measures of size and performance for the creative industries in Western Sydney and the rest of Sydney, 2021**

ECONOMIC MEASURE	PRINTING		PUBLISHING		MOTION PICTURE		BROADCASTING		INTERNET PUBLISHING		CREATIVE ARTS	
	WS <sup>a</sup>	RoS <sup>b</sup>	WS	RoS	WS	RoS	WS	RoS	WS	RoS	WS	RoS
<b>Employment (Total)</b>	3,882	4,131	802	9,670	1,494	9,853	525	13,179	230	1,732	2,249	9,237
<b>Employment (FTE)<sup>c</sup></b>	3,094	3,309	687	8,747	1,243	9,484	459	12,028	191	1,702	1,516	6,915
<b>Output (Sales) (\$m)</b>	1,041	1,215	327	4,827	307	2,711	212	5,946	106	1,122	242	1,348
<b>Value Added (\$m)</b>	450	525	199	2,933	99	870	86	2,402	50	527	124	691
<b>Imports (\$m)</b>	45	290	856	1,876	153	910	717	615	111	152	276	157
<b>FTE To Total Employment Ratio</b>	0.8	0.8	0.86	0.9	0.83	0.96	0.88	0.91	0.83	0.98	0.67	0.75
<b>Size Relative To Economy (Employment) (%)</b>	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.8	0	0.1	0.2	0.6
<b>Worker Productivity (\$ Per Worker)</b>	115,939	127,176	247,971	303,350	65,977	88,338	163,094	182,225	216,623	304,534	55,216	74,850
<b>Job-To-Worker Ratio</b>	0.99	1.2	0.31	1.34	0.63	1.12	0.14	1.33	0.4	1.29	0.74	1.12

Note: <sup>a</sup> WS = Western Sydney; <sup>b</sup> RoS = Rest of Sydney; <sup>c</sup> FTE = full-time equivalent.

Source: NIEIR (2024).

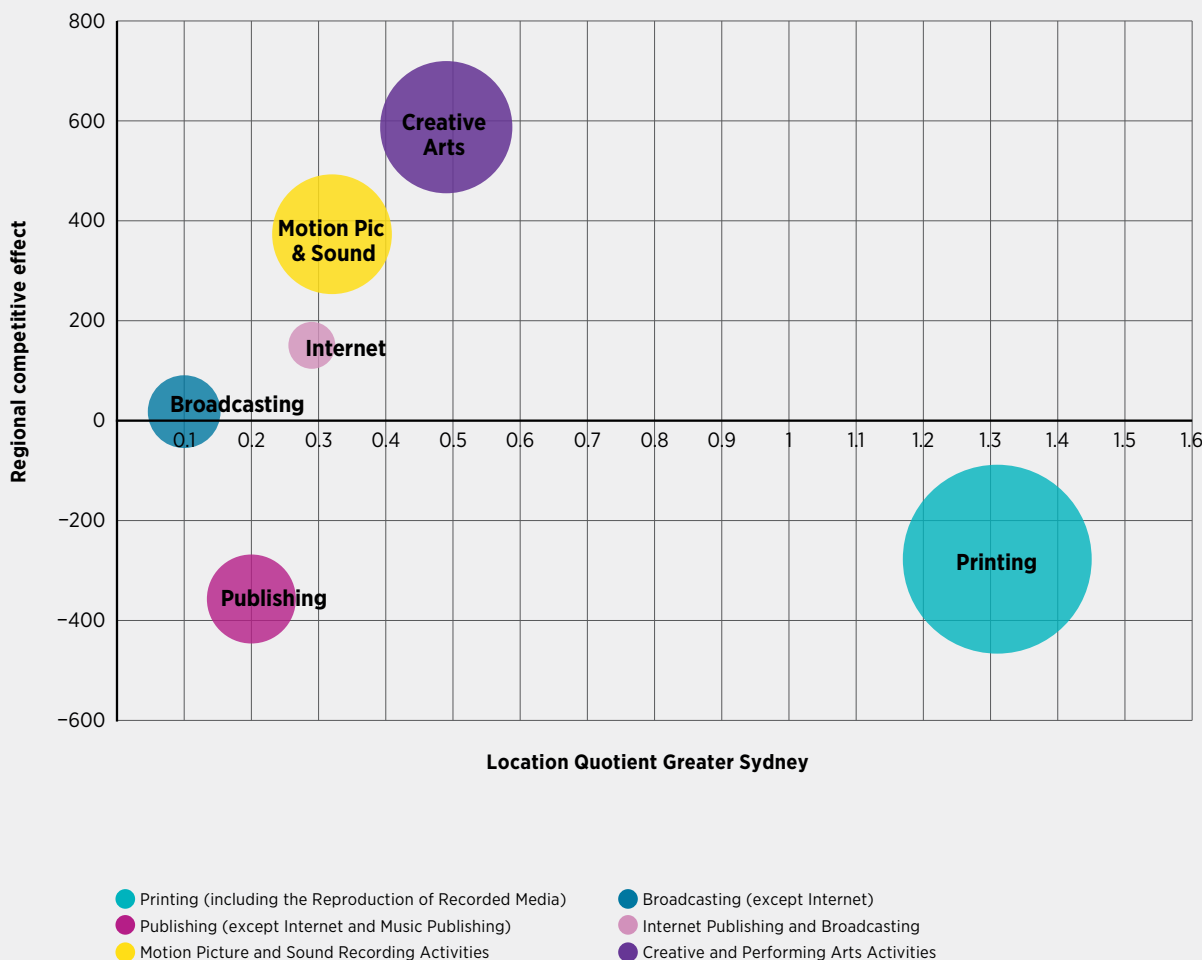
However, while the region’s traditional specialisation in printing—a form of manufacturing—remains stable, three creative sectors are experiencing notable local growth: Creative and Performing Arts, Motion Picture and Sound Recording and Internet Publishing and Broadcasting, as seen in Figure 1. This growth contrasts with declines in these same sectors elsewhere in Sydney, suggesting that Western Sydney has the potential to develop these areas as future specialisations:

- **Motion Picture and Sound Recording:** While this industry has traditionally been stronger in the Rest of Sydney, Western Sydney has seen faster productivity growth, signalling its potential to catch up.
- **Internet Publishing and Broadcasting:** Although starting from a small base, this sector shows strong local growth trends that surpass those in more established markets.
- **Creative and Performing Arts:** Employment and value added in this sector are growing faster in Western Sydney, with productivity trends comparable to the Rest of Sydney.

If barriers to growth (e.g., arts and cultural funding inequities, poor transport connectivity, a lack of supplying industries and limited event spaces) are addressed, these three sectors could become significant strengths for Western Sydney’s economy. Improved connectivity would also enhance community members’ access to cultural and creative events.

**Figure 1. LQ, shift-share analysis and employment size – Western Sydney**

Source: Collated by the CfWS using NIEIR© (2024) data.



# 3. QUALIFICATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT OF CREATIVE WORKERS

## EMPLOYMENT DATA CHALLENGES

Employment data in the creative industries is challenging to obtain because ABS Census data only captures a respondent's main source of income, omitting many creatives who work part-time in creative fields.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the "creative economy" includes not just creatives in creative industries but also creatives in non-creative sectors and non-creatives in creative industries.<sup>24</sup> The Trident Method was developed to address these overlaps, offering a useful framework for understanding the sector's role in Western Sydney's economy.<sup>25</sup> This report incorporates insights from the Trident Method while also considering additional measures like employment modelling, value added and productivity data. Current findings indicate that Western Sydney's creative industries contribute less to employment and the economy compared to the Rest of Sydney.

## EMPLOYMENT IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Western Sydney has far fewer people employed in the creative industries. In total, the creative professions represent 1.3% of the workforce in Western Sydney compared with 3.4% of the workforce in the Rest of Sydney (see Appendix A). Another key measure of economic performance is the productivity of workers—a measure of the value produced per worker. The productivity of workers is lower in Western Sydney than in the Rest of Sydney in all the creative industries.

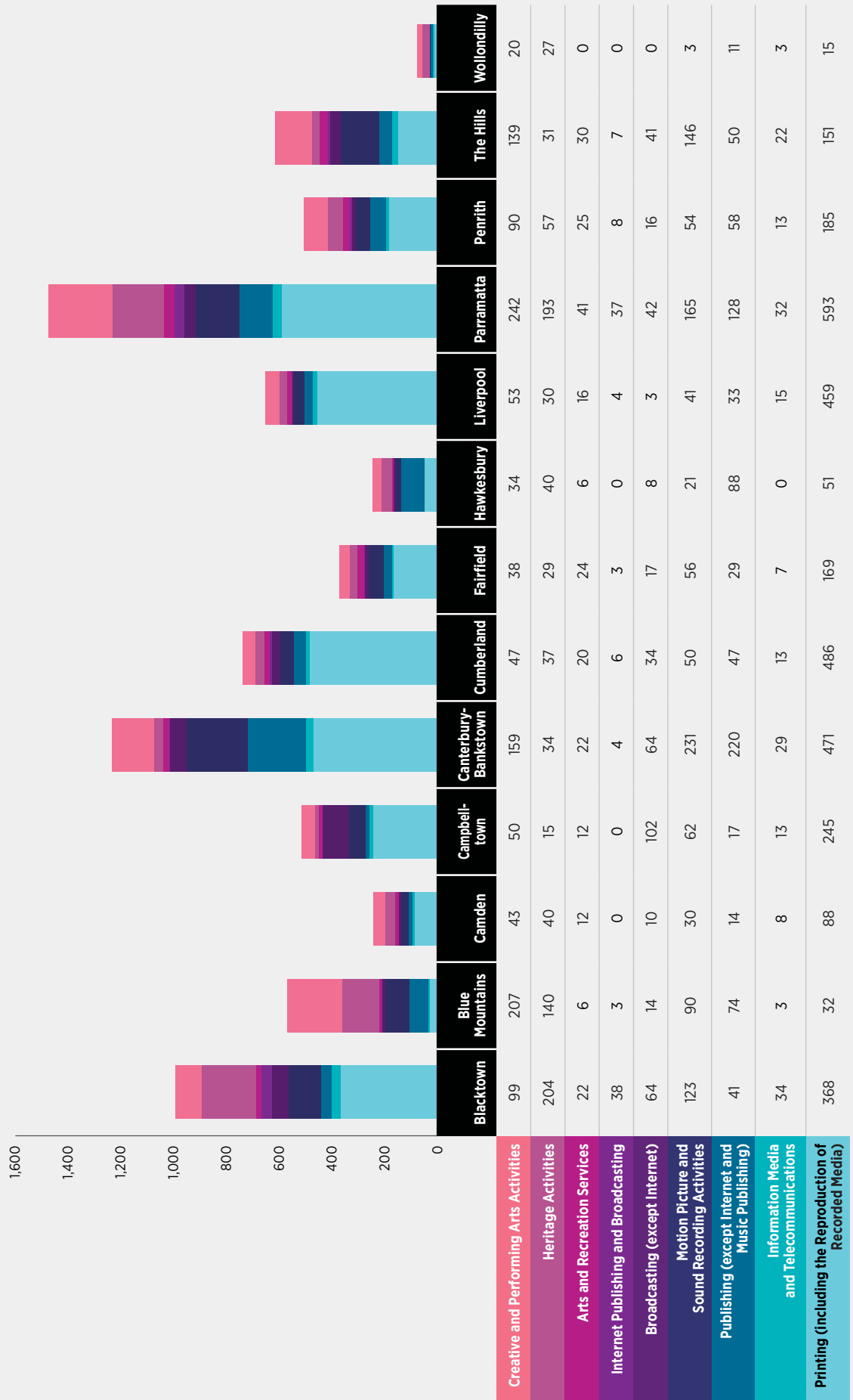
This is typical of almost all industries in Western Sydney and results from various aspects such as lower qualifications and experience, the types of professions and agglomeration or business density. Work in the creative industries is more precarious in Western Sydney, as indicated by the lower ratios of full-time equivalent employment to total employment. This suggests the existence of many part-time jobs. However, the results for productivity, part-time to full-time jobs and the job-to-worker ratios are also evidence that labour markets are segmented and change is needed to enhance the creative industries in Western Sydney.

Census data on employment is less accurate than the economic modelling used in Table 1 above,<sup>26</sup> and struggles to capture the reality of creative careers, where many creatives may have primary paid employment outside the creative industries. This primary employment is often what is registered in Census data, which fails to capture the true creative workforce. Census data does, however, allow for a greater level of industry detail at the 3-digit ANZSIC level and still provides an indication of employment levels in the creative sectors. The diagram below shows the current number of creative industry workers employed in Western Sydney (ABS Table Builder).

**This data shows that Parramatta has the highest number of creative industry employees working in the LGA, followed by Canterbury-Bankstown and then Blacktown.**



Figure 2. Creative industry workers in Western Sydney (by LGA of employment)



## QUALIFICATIONS

The population of Western Sydney possesses fewer qualifications in fields associated with the creative industries. As of 2021, there were 35,495 resident workers with qualifications in the creative industries (see rows 1-7 in Table 2 below), including architecture and librarianship. Focusing on rows 3-7 only (the more specialised creative sectors), there is a total of 26,452 qualified resident workers. This represents 2.4% of all fields of qualification (including no field) compared with 5.7% of the Rest of Sydney workforce. The gap in arts and culture qualifications in Western Sydney is further intensified by limited tertiary education offerings for creative and performing arts in the region.<sup>27</sup> Despite this limitation, the number of people with creative qualifications in Western Sydney is increasing across all creative industries.

**While tertiary attainment rates are generally rising across Western Sydney, there is a notable growth in qualifications across the creative sectors.**

**Table 2. Resident worker qualifications in the creative industries**

FIELD OF QUALIFICATION	2021			CHANGE 2016-2021
	WESTERN SYDNEY (NO.)	WESTERN SYDNEY (%)	REST OF SYDNEY (%)	WESTERN SYDNEY (NO.)
Architecture and Urban Environment	6,844	0.6	1.5	+1,783
Librarianship, Information Management and Curatorial Studies	2,199	0.2	0.2	+76
Communication and Media Studies	9,771	0.9	2.5	+2,498
Graphic and Design Studies	8,121	0.7	1.6	+1,062
Visual Arts and Crafts	3,689	0.3	0.6	+314
Performing Arts	3,619	0.3	0.8	+655
Creative Arts	1,252	0.1	0.3	+261

Compiled and presented in *economy.id* by *id informed decisions consulting*.<sup>28</sup>  
 Source: ABS, *Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0)*.

Creative professions can be lucrative for workers. Researchers working in collaboration with Creative Australia used the 2021 Census to calculate the median annual income of specialist creatives, embedded creatives and support workers.<sup>29</sup> They found that the median income for the creative industries is \$85,600, which is 30% above the median income for all workers in the economy. Support workers in the creative sectors earned the most at \$90,500, followed by embedded creatives at \$87,500 and specialist creatives at \$76,300. Thus, there are financial motives for individuals to gain qualifications and work in the creative industries.



A still from Alex Dona's film "No Film Sets in Bankstown", which screened in the Made in the West Film Festival.

## 4. SUPPLY CHAINS AND IMPORT REPLACEMENT

In Western Sydney, there is a much higher ratio of imports (domestic and international) to outputs compared with the Rest of Sydney in all creative industries apart from printing. For example, in the creative arts, the ratio of imports to output is 1.14 in Western Sydney and 0.12 in the Rest of Sydney. This suggests that demand for the creative industries is not being fulfilled by the production of creative outputs locally in Western Sydney. The high ratio of imports demonstrates that inputs into the creative industries are sourced from the Rest of Sydney and beyond.

Therefore, Western Sydney has a significant opportunity to strengthen its creative industries by embracing import replacement. This strategy involves producing goods and services locally that are currently imported from other regions or countries.

**At present, a substantial portion of the demand for creative services in the region is met through imports, whether from other parts of Sydney, Australia, or internationally, indicating a gap between local demand and production.**

By shifting to local production, Western Sydney can build a more resilient supply chain, reducing dependency on external sources and ensuring quicker, more reliable access to necessary creative inputs.

Encouraging the establishment and growth of industries like advertising in Western Sydney could catalyse the entire creative sector. The advertising industry relies heavily on a diverse range of creative inputs, including music recording, graphic design, screen media production and content distribution. By fostering these related industries through targeted incentives like tax credits, Western Sydney could develop a robust creative ecosystem where businesses choose to locate because their suppliers and partners are nearby. This would not only stimulate local economic growth but also position Western Sydney as a creative hub, reducing the need for companies to source services from outside the region. In turn, this would promote the talent and capabilities of Western Sydney to the Rest of Sydney and beyond, ensuring that local demand for creative services is met with local supply.



*WSU students in creative industries learning environment, Parramatta.*

03



# MAPPING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN WESTERN SYDNEY

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# 3.1 ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

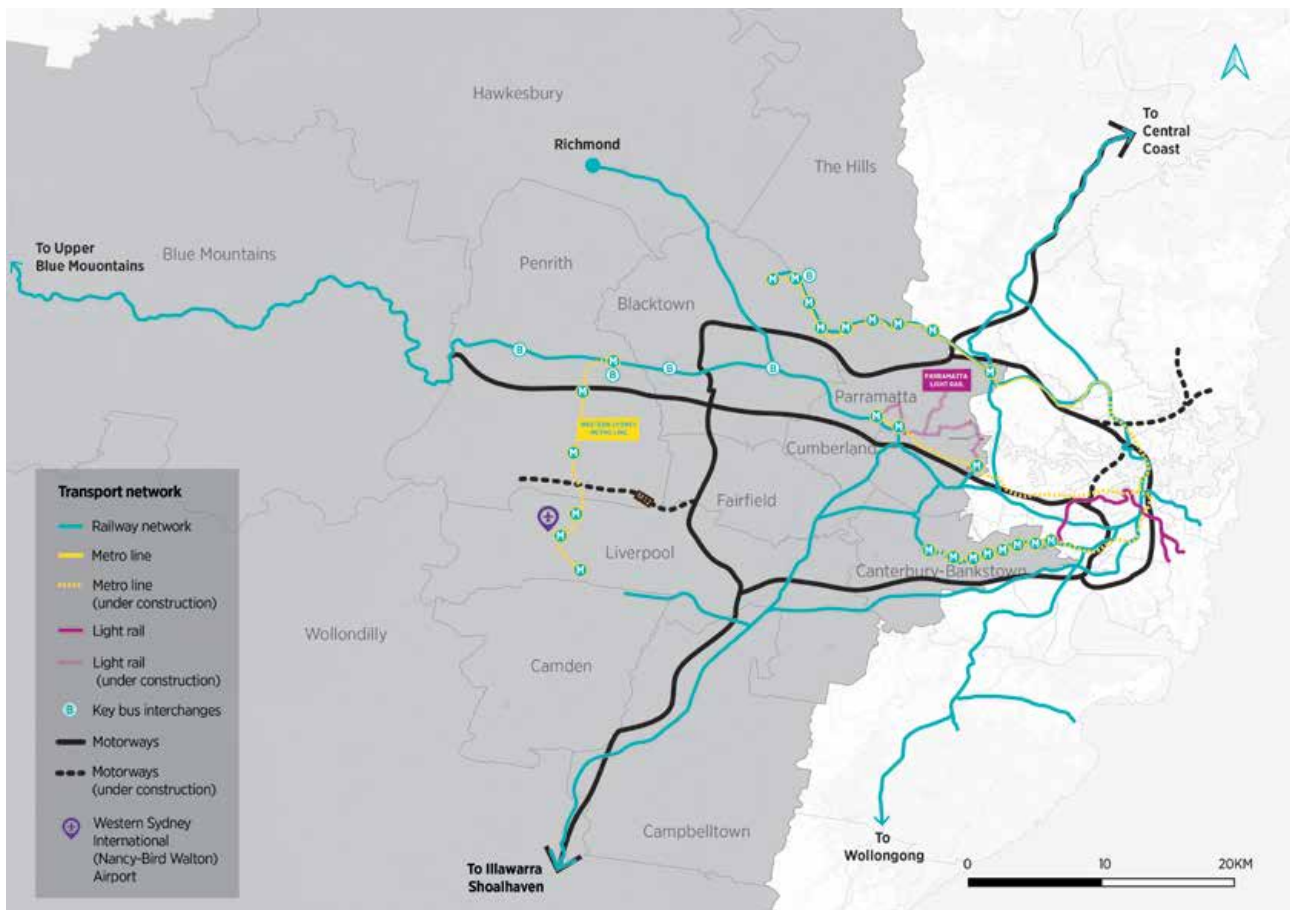
This section provides a mapping of the broader enabling infrastructure, including social infrastructure, which can support the flourishing of existing and potential creative industries in Western Sydney.

## 3.1.1 TRANSPORT NETWORKS

A public transportation system that is affordable, accessible and interconnected is crucial for driving social and economic transformation in Western Sydney.<sup>30</sup>

**The availability—or lack—of public transport can greatly impact the arts and creative sectors, influencing where people can go, where creative businesses should be located and where creative production can occur.**

Map 1. The transport network in Western Sydney



Data source: Google Maps; Transport NSW.



Map 1 shows Western Sydney's transport network, including the existing and developing main road systems, railway and metro networks and key bus interchanges. As visualised, the Western Sydney region is relatively well-connected via east and west road and rail corridors, providing connectivity to arts, cultural and creative activities in Parramatta, The Hills Shire, Blacktown, Penrith and the Blue Mountains.

**Despite a variety of public transport and road networks in the region, residents in Western Sydney travel longer distances to reach leisure activities compared to those in Eastern Sydney.<sup>31</sup>**

Transport accessibility also affects workers in the creative industries. According to the ABS Census data for 2021, an average of 4.7% of the creative industry workers employed in Western Sydney used public transport to travel to work. Within the region, the highest users of public transport among creative workers were those working in Cumberland, Parramatta and Blacktown, with the least connected areas, such as Wollondilly and Hawkesbury, showing the lowest rates of public transport use by creative workers.

## 3.1.2 EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

In a contemporary environment that values innovation, collaboration, empathy, agility, critical thinking and problem-solving, the arts are critical for cultivating these essential capacities and skills. Creativity and innovation are fundamental to 21st-century economies, underscoring the necessity of fostering an innovative and agile workforce through enhanced visual and performing arts education, particularly in Western Sydney.

**The 2023 report, State of the Arts in Western Sydney,<sup>34</sup> revealed a significant gap in qualifications and skills in the creative arts sector in the region. This deficiency is primarily attributed to the limited availability of performing and visual arts tertiary education courses and facilities.**

Currently, Western Sydney is home to only three institutions offering tertiary education in creative arts, starkly contrasted with 17 institutions in Eastern Sydney. The three institutions are:

1. **Western Sydney University** (Parramatta South Campus, Parramatta City Campus Precinct and Penrith Campus)
2. **TAFE NSW<sup>35</sup>**
3. **Sydney Art School** (Baulkham Hills Art Studio)

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Future road and rail infrastructure is expected to enhance transport connectivity between the north and south. The proposed North South Rail Line, which would run from St Marys to the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and eventually connect to Oran Park and Macarthur, is critical to growth in Liverpool. In addition, the development of the Sydney Metro West linking Sydney City to Parramatta and the Southwest Metro line connecting Bankstown to Sydney City will significantly enhance accessibility and connectivity to various arts and creative activities in LGAs such as Parramatta and Canterbury-Bankstown.

The region is also set to benefit from the development of the Western Sydney International Airport. Set to commence operations in 2026, this airport is expected to play a pivotal role in the region's development. It will not only provide Western Sydney's creative industries with improved access to global markets but also serve as a catalyst for the future urbanisation of Western Sydney.<sup>32</sup> The airport and its surrounding areas, together forming the Western Sydney Aerotropolis, is billed to be an innovation precinct for technology, science and creative industries.<sup>33</sup>

**At Western Sydney University,** the School of Humanities and Communication Arts provides an array of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in arts and creative disciplines, including creative writing, music, graphic design and screen media. The Bachelor of Creative Industries degree focuses on practical skills and real-world experiences, preparing students for success in the creative sector. Advanced degrees such as a Master of Arts in Literature and Creative Writing and a Doctorate of Creative Arts cater to those pursuing higher-level research. Additionally, the Writing and Society Research Centre provides a vibrant centre for scholarly and creative writing research. Complementing these programs, the School of Computer, Data and Mathematical Sciences offers degrees in architecture, industrial design, design and technology and games design entrepreneurship, including a Master of Architecture.

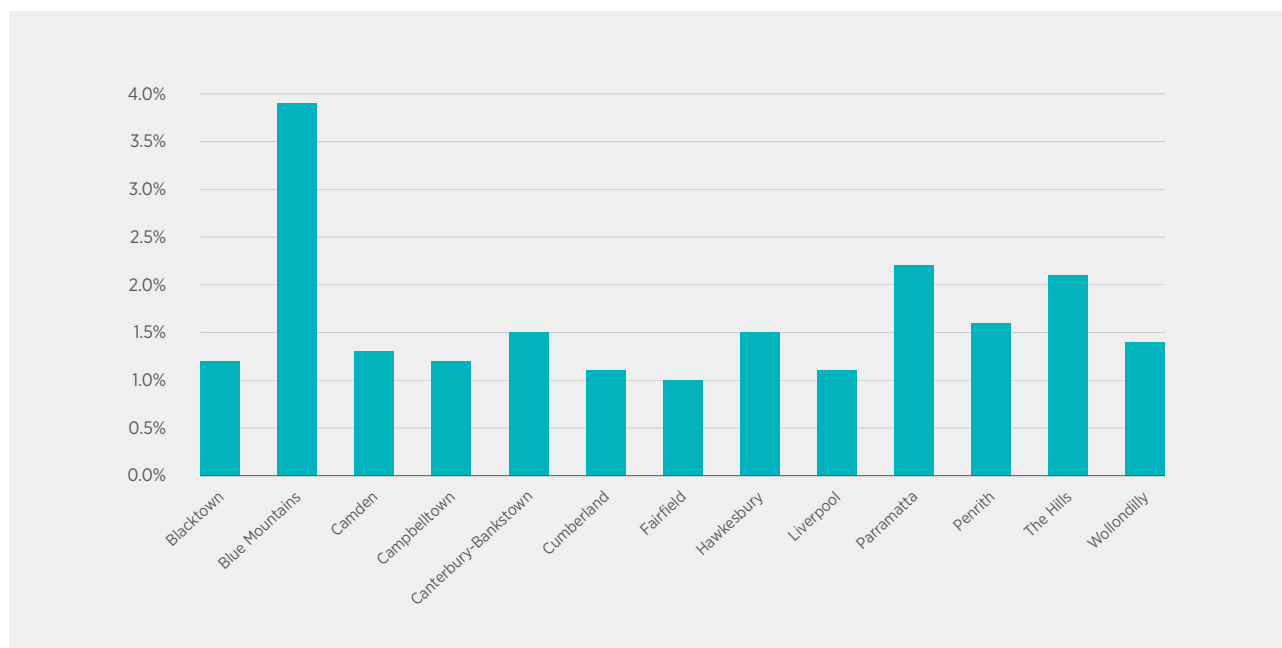
**Western Sydney Creative,** launched by the University in 2019, drives the University's creative strategy and plays a significant role in enriching the arts and cultural landscape in Western Sydney. This ongoing commitment enables the University to continually enhance and expand its educational programs, preparing graduates to join and strengthen the region's creative workforce.

**TAFE NSW** offers a range of courses in the visuals and performing art, design and the creative industries. Attainment level in the various courses ranges from Certificate III or IV, Diploma, Advance Diploma and the Bachelor of creative practice.

**Sydney Art School** in Baulkham Hills offers Certificate III and IV in Visual Arts, Diploma of Visual Arts and an Advanced Diploma of Visual Arts.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of creative industry workers possessing tertiary qualifications in the creative arts. Around 2.4% of the Western Sydney population possesses a tertiary qualification in fields of study relevant to creative industries. As shown, of the 13 LGAs in the region, the Blue Mountains has the highest percentage of creative industry workers with tertiary qualifications in the creative arts.

**Figure 3. The percentage of Western Sydney residents with tertiary qualifications in the creative arts**



**The overall scarcity of institutions providing creative arts education in Western Sydney restricts students' opportunities to pursue formal training, resulting in lower skill levels and limited career opportunities in the region.**

This disparity undermines Western Sydney's efforts to position itself as a centre for growth and economic opportunity—a well-developed creative sector is crucial to attract investment, foster innovation and create jobs. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to expand educational facilities, enhance funding and resources, foster community and industry collaboration and promote awareness and accessibility.

Establishing more institutions, developing targeted funding programs, fostering partnerships with local arts organisations and implementing training programs will help build a vibrant and skilled creative arts sector in Western Sydney, positioning the region as a hub for growth, innovation and economic development.

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

Several significant developments are emerging in the education and training sector in the region:

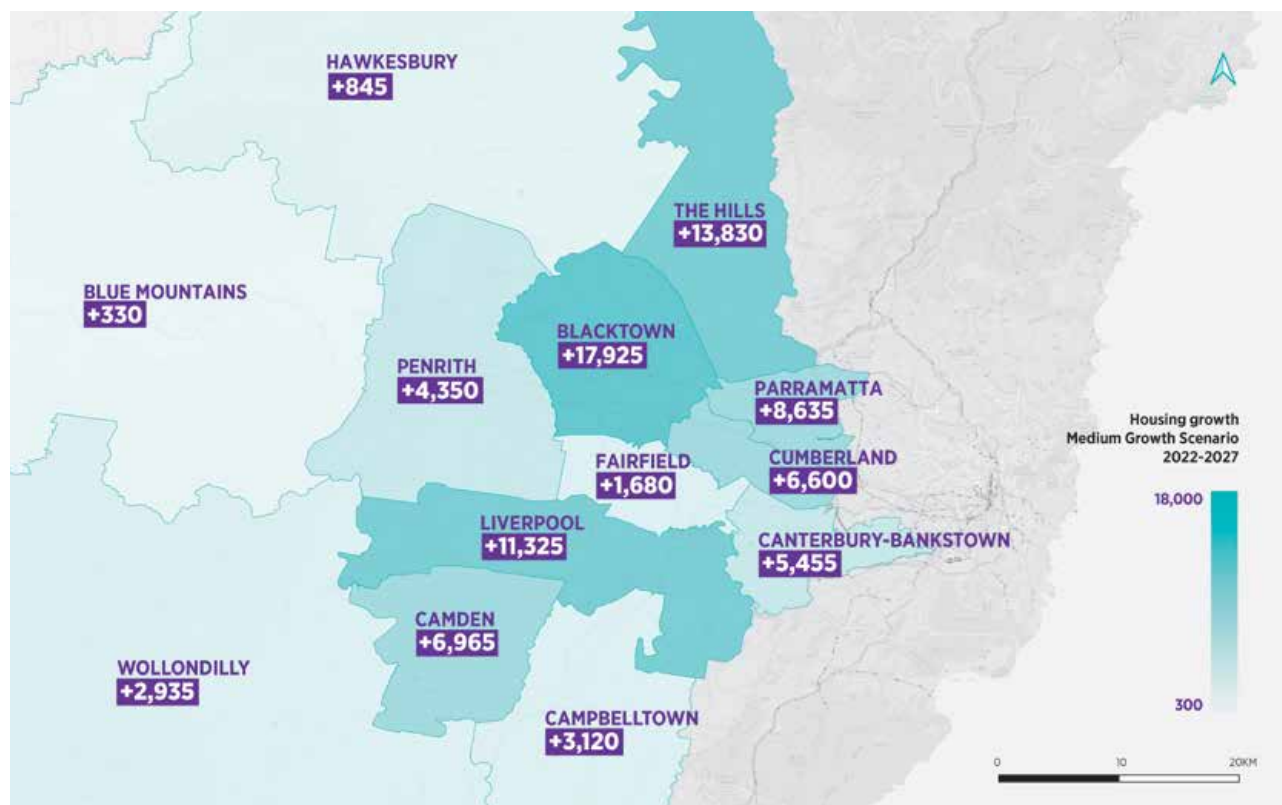
- › Western Sydney University has established Fairfield Connect, a new learning hub located in the Fairfield CBD. This hub aims to remove barriers to study. It will be equipped with computers, high-speed internet and video-conferencing facilities, as well as resources and support services for adult literacy, careers and employability. It is a tech-enabled hub for study and engagement for both students and local community members.
- › The Westmead Health and Innovation District, located in the Parramatta LGA, is one of Australia's largest education, research and training hubs in the health sector.
- › At Badgerys Creek, the Aerotropolis precinct will house the Multiversity, a collaboration between five universities and colleges, expected to attract talented individuals and support the growth of sectors such as engineering, aerospace, advanced manufacturing and defence.
- › The Indigenous Centre of Excellence, under development at WSU, presents an opportunity for educational and cultural development. It is envisioned as a place where Indigenous culture takes centre stage, offering exhibitions, performances and educational activities.

### 3.1.3 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The dynamics of future housing developments are essential for grasping the evolution of new communities and placemaking across the region. These communities are both potential consumers and producers of creative outputs. In recent years, the Western Sydney region has seen a surge in housing development to meet the needs of its growing population.

**According to the NSW Department of Planning's housing supply forecast,<sup>36</sup> approximately 83,995 new homes will be constructed in the region between 2022 and 2027.**

**Map 2. Housing projection in Western Sydney**



Data source: NSW Department of Planning (2022).

This housing boom provides valuable insights into potential population settlement patterns, informing suitable locations for developing the arts and creative sectors. The areas with the highest projected growth in housing in Western Sydney are Blacktown, The Hills Shire, Liverpool and Camden. At the same time, the outer suburbs such as Hawkesbury, the Blue Mountains, Wollondilly and Campbelltown are expected to experience less housing intensification. As shown on Map 2, the population of each LGA is on the rise, along with projected housing growth. This suggests that Blacktown is likely to see a significant increase in both population and dwellings, which could lead to higher demand for creative services, events and festivals, contributing to economic growth.

The rising cost of living and soaring rents are locking many creatives out of Sydney, leading to a decrease in the number of artists living in the city. A long-term approach is essential to provide artists with access to affordable housing and workspaces by identifying creative and cultural workers as “essential workers”.

Future housing developments present an opportunity to integrate places of residence with cultural infrastructure, studios and workplaces. This integration can contribute to large-scale activation initiatives, fostering vibrant, creative communities and significantly enhancing the wellbeing and liveability of the region. Achieving this vision will require collaboration between government entities, private developers, community groups and other stakeholders.

## 3.1.4 DIVERSE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

This section explores the cultural and creative significance of Western Sydney's Indigenous communities, as well as diverse multicultural communities. It also highlights residents' engagement and participation in cultural activities by mapping cultural attendance and participation rates across the region using survey data.

The Western Sydney region is home to one of the most diverse cultural communities in the world.<sup>37</sup> This diverse population drives the demand for arts and cultural activities, enriching creative production in the region.

**The diverse communities of Western Sydney are both producers and consumers of multilingual content, media and arts.**

Audiences are increasingly responding to and seeking content that is more racially and ethnically representative. This growing demand highlights the need for authenticity and inclusivity in media, arts and performances. Cultural diversity provides a vast potential resource for creative development and dedicated strategies are needed to harness its potential.<sup>38</sup> In turn, enhancing diverse representation in creative industries can help mitigate racial and ethnic inequalities<sup>39</sup> and promote social cohesion. Each LGA has its unique cultural features and strengths, which are important considerations for promoting and supporting arts and creative sectors in each locality, allowing local communities to thrive and celebrate the distinct features of their place.

### INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

This report acknowledges and respects the diverse Indigenous communities in Western Sydney and the vital role that art plays in expressing identity, culture, spirituality and connections to Country. The Indigenous visual arts and craft sector offers substantial economic, social and cultural benefits, presenting a significant opportunity to enhance First Peoples' participation in Western Sydney's creative industries. Building strong, autonomous Indigenous creative industries will improve social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes for these communities. Supporting Indigenous artists and creators not only enriches the cultural landscape but also contributes to broader societal benefits, such as increased social cohesion and economic development.

A recent Productivity Commission report has underscored the immense value of Indigenous arts, revealing that the sector generated \$250 million in sales during 2019–2020. To take as an example the Indigenous fashion and textile sector's contribution to

the economy: while comprising a small percentage of the overall fashion industry (3% of \$27.2 billion, at a value of \$816 million), the Indigenous fashion sector has the potential to become a multimillion-dollar industry.<sup>40</sup> It is multidimensional and its growth and activity reflect the diversity of Indigenous culture, art, expertise and experience.

However, the sector faces challenges, including the need for skills development and a shortage of skilled Indigenous personnel in the creative industries. Addressing these challenges is essential for sustaining and expanding the Indigenous arts sector, ensuring its continued vitality and impact on Western Sydney's cultural and economic landscape. *Creative Communities*, the NSW Arts, Cultural and Creative Industries policy for 2024–2033 has recognised the significant role played by Indigenous creatives in Western Sydney, pledging further dedicated support to Indigenous artists, creatives and cultural leaders in the region.<sup>41</sup>

### INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

Western Sydney is home to one of the largest Indigenous populations in the country:

- ▶ **Around 54,510 Indigenous Australians reside in the region, accounting for 2% of Western Sydney's total population.<sup>42</sup> Among the 13 LGAs, Blacktown and Penrith have the largest Indigenous communities.**
- ▶ **The Traditional Owners and Custodians of Western Sydney are the Cabrogal, Darkinjung, D'harawal, Darug and Gundungurra peoples.**

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

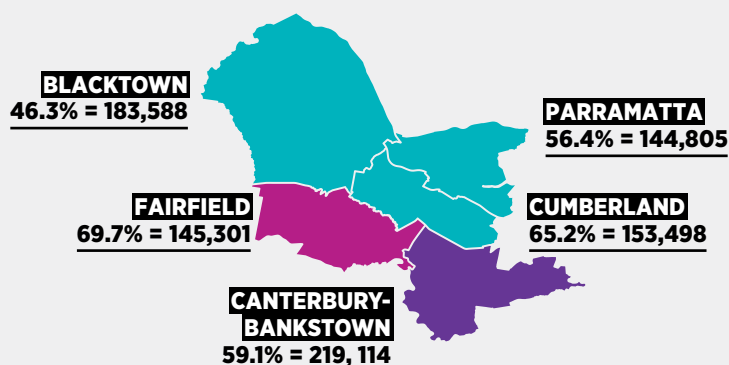
Western Sydney has one of the most diverse cultural communities in the world:



- More than 40% of Western Sydney residents were born overseas. Fairfield (56%), Cumberland (53%) and Parramatta (53%) have the highest proportion, with more than half of residents in these LGAs being overseas-born.



- Approximately 47.5% of Western Sydney residents speak a language other than English at home. Fairfield LGA has the highest proportion of residents who speak a language other than English at home, while Canterbury-Bankstown has the highest number.



## CULTURAL ATTENDANCE RATES (BY SA4)<sup>43</sup>

Key findings<sup>44</sup> on cultural attendance in the Western Sydney region for the years 2020 and 2021:

- Cinemas were the most popular cultural venues attended by residents in 2020 and 2021.
- The highest average cultural attendance rate was observed in Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury and the lowest was in Southwest Sydney.
- Parramatta and Southwest Sydney had the lowest cultural attendance rates for galleries.
- Blacktown and Parramatta had the lowest cultural attendance rate for museums.
- Parramatta had the lowest cultural attendance rate for live music, concerts or performances.

## CULTURAL PARTICIPATION RATES (BY SA4)

Key findings<sup>45</sup> on cultural participation in the Western Sydney region for the years 2020 and 2021:

- Outer West and Blue Mountains (SA4) had the highest cultural participation rate, particularly in craft activities, singing or playing a musical instrument and photography.
- Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury (SA4) had the highest participation rates in designing websites, computer games or interactive software, as well as fashion, interior or graphic design.
- Blacktown (SA4) and Southwest (SA4) had the highest participation rates in visual art activities and writing fiction or non-fiction.

### 3.1.5 PROVISION OF MULTIPURPOSE EVENT VENUES

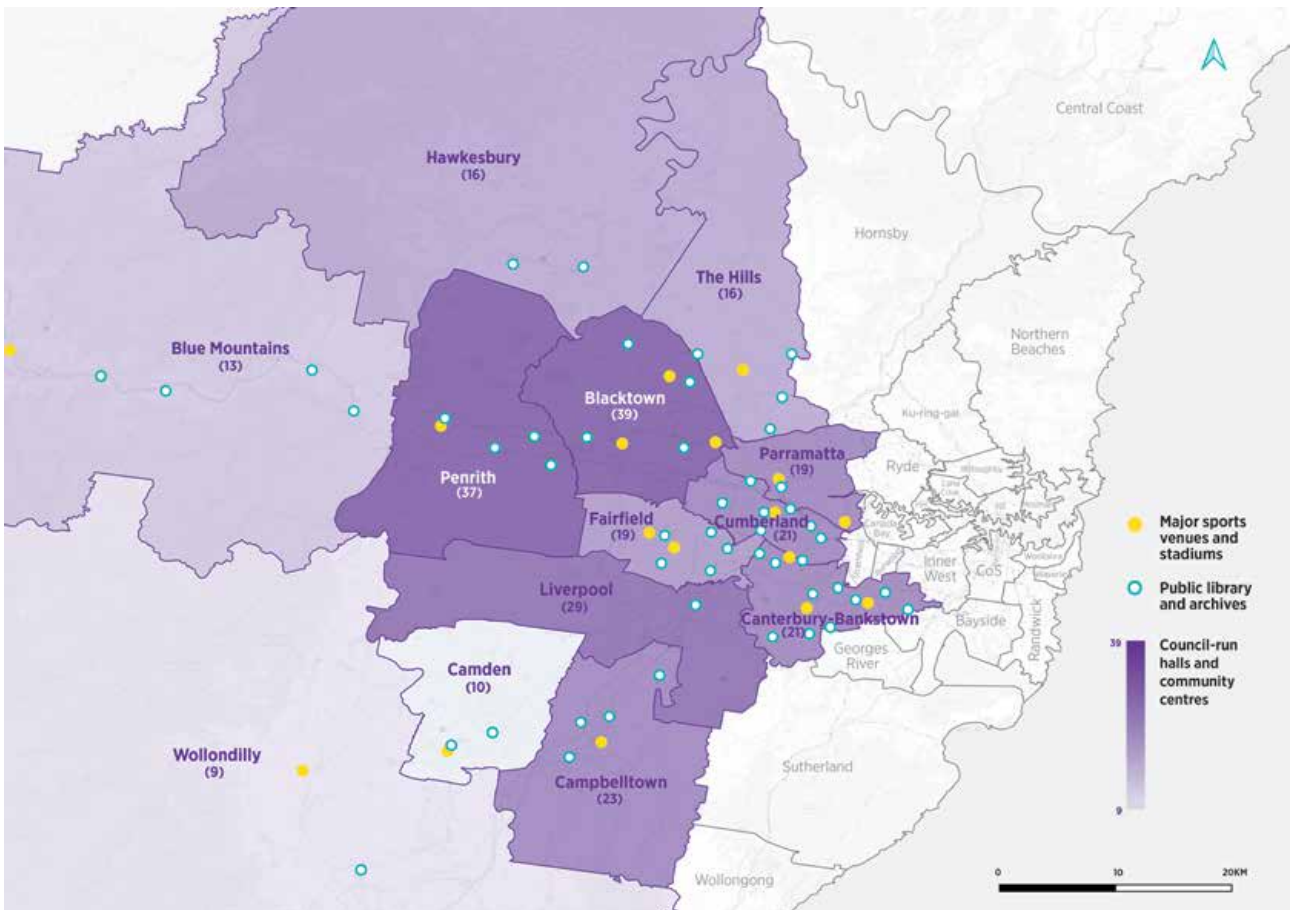
Physical space provides essential infrastructure to support the growth of cultural and creative industries. One effective strategy to increase the availability of space for creative production and events is to utilise multipurpose venues. This approach maximises existing infrastructure and facilitates creative engagement with diverse settings. Making these venues accessible and affordable for creative industries not only supports production and events but also enhances connectivity among interdisciplinary creative practitioners and increases public exposure to creative work.

Map 3 highlights existing multipurpose venues in Western Sydney. These venues include:

1. **Public community halls and town halls**
2. **Major stadiums**
3. **Public libraries and archive centres**

Blacktown leads with the highest number of such venues, with 39 public community and town halls, four public libraries and three major stadiums. Penrith follows with a total of 42 convertible venues for arts and creative activities.

Map 3. The location of multipurpose event venues in the region



Data source: Local council websites, Google Maps.

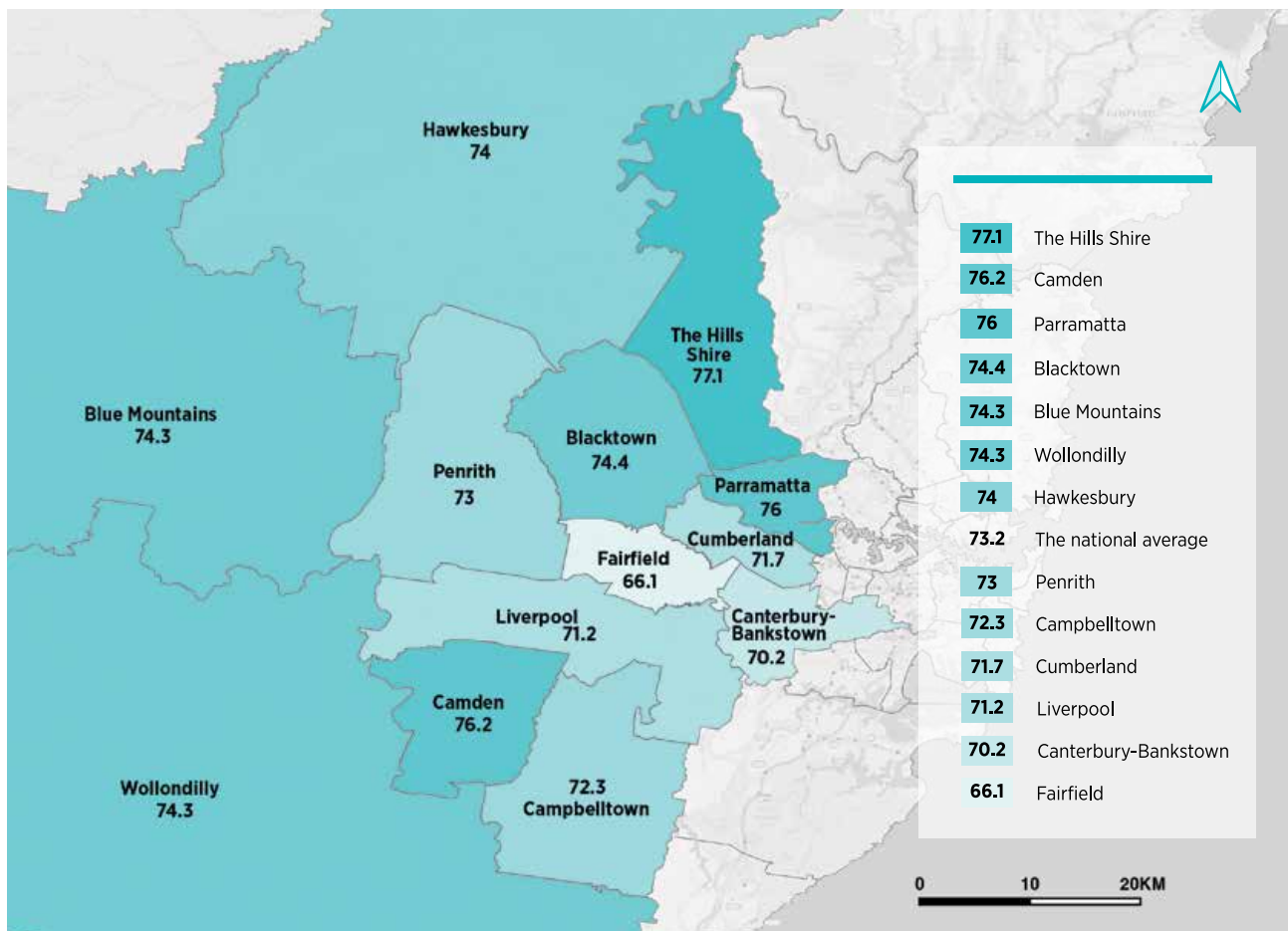
### 3.1.6 DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

The digital economy and technology greatly enhance the growth of creative industries by redefining how creative goods and services are produced, consumed and traded. The integration of digital technologies has revolutionised content creation and distribution, leading to significant changes in the creative economy. Additionally, it has influenced income levels, boosted demand for creative roles and reduced entry barriers in labour markets, bringing both opportunities and challenges to the creative industries. However, not everyone enjoys equal access to these technologies.

The term “digital inclusion” refers to the extent to which people can access and use digital technologies and are integrated into the digital sphere. In Australia, a national index measures digital inclusion by examining access, affordability and digital ability by analysing survey results.<sup>46</sup>

The average national Digital Inclusion Index rate is 73.2. In Western Sydney, LGAs such as The Hills Shire, Camden, Parramatta, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Wollondilly and Hawkesbury surpassed the national average index rate. Conversely, LGAs like Fairfield, Cumberland, Canterbury-Bankstown, Campbelltown, Liverpool and Penrith had Digital Inclusion Index rates below the national average.

**Map 4. Digital Inclusion Index levels of Western Sydney LGAs in 2022**



Data source: Digital Inclusion Index (2022).

### 3.1.7 GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The primary federal funding body for the arts in Australia is Creative Australia, formerly known as the Australia Council for the Arts. Creative Australia distributes funds through key institutions and targeted programs across the country. However, the distribution of federal arts funding in Sydney reveals significant spatial disparities based on population data. These disparities between East and West Sydney include:

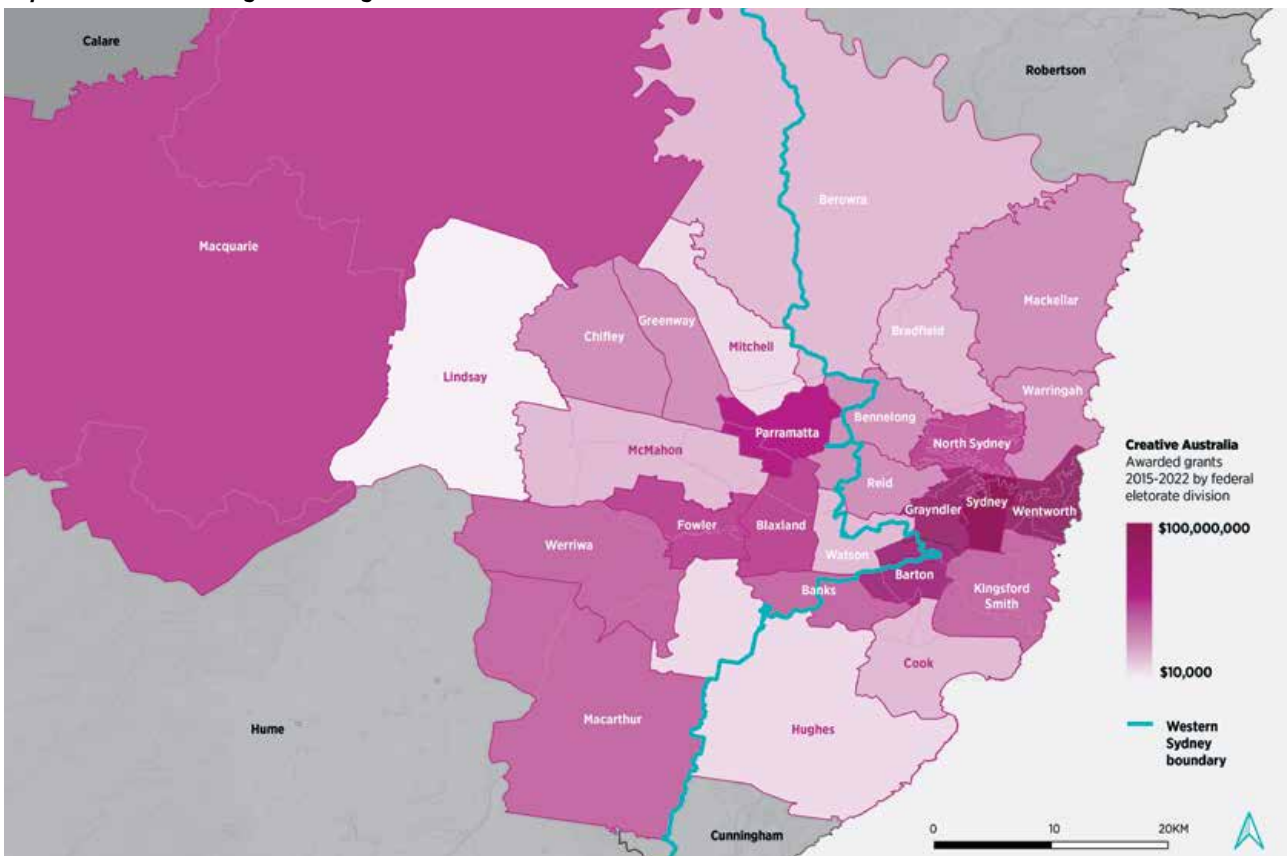
- ▶ **From 2015–2022, Western Sydney, representing 10% of Australia’s population, received 3.4% of federal funding for the arts, while the Rest of Sydney received 23.5% of total funding while representing 8.5% of Australia’s population.<sup>47</sup>**
- ▶ **On a per capita basis, this inequity in federal funding translates to Commonwealth expenditure of \$7.59 per person in Western Sydney, compared to \$54.95 in the Rest of Sydney.**

There are also spatial funding disparities within the Western Sydney region itself. Map 5 illustrates the federal government funding awarded by the Australia Council for the Arts by electoral division between 2015 and 2022. This map shows:

- ▶ Within Western Sydney, the largest amount of federal funding (\$6.4 million) was allocated to Parramatta, equivalent to \$32.05 per person.
- ▶ Conversely, the Lindsay electoral district, where Penrith is situated, received the lowest amount, with only \$0.06 per person.
- ▶ Aside from Sydney City, the Eastern Suburbs electorate of Wentworth received the highest amount per capita, at \$63.26.

At the state level, Create NSW and Destination NSW are the primary government agencies that support cultural and arts activities across NSW.

**Map 5. Creative Australia grant funding distribution between 2015 and 2022**



Data source: Creative Australia/Australia Council for the Arts.

**According to Create NSW data, between 2020–2022, of the funding<sup>48</sup> administered by the agency Western Sydney received 9.75% (\$31.5 million), while Eastern Sydney received 70.39% (\$227.8 million).<sup>49</sup>**

**While Western Sydney and Eastern Sydney have similar-sized populations, this NSW expenditure translates to \$12.08 per person in Western Sydney and \$86.79 per person in Eastern Sydney.**



In *Creative Communities - NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy for 2024-2033*, the state government has committed to reviewing the needs of Western Sydney. The policy also commits to opening new hubs for artists and creatives in the region, investing in the Western Sydney Arts Alliance and developing a major new multi-year initiative for writers and writing in Western Sydney. A dedicated regional strategic plan for Western Sydney is being developed in 2024 to implement the policy, highlighting the significance of this region for the creative and cultural industries of NSW.

Expenditure on the creative and cultural sector is also lower at the local council level in Western Sydney. Western Sydney local councils spend an average of \$217 on recreational and cultural expenditure per capita compared with \$285 in the Rest of Sydney (in 2021-2022), as displayed in Table 3. However, as a share of total expenditure by councils, recreational and cultural expenditure in Western Sydney is only marginally below the Rest of Sydney, suggesting that the differences in dollar expenditures per capita are due to lower budgets rather than a lack of desire. Greater funding is therefore needed from higher levels of government to address these inequities at the LGA level.

**Table 3. Recreational and Cultural Expenditure by Council per Capita, 2021-2022**

LGA	RECREATIONAL & CULTURAL EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA
	(\$)
The Hills District	164
Cumberland	165
Fairfield	173
Liverpool	175
Penrith	182
Blacktown	198
Canterbury-Bankstown	204
Hawkesbury	217
Camden	219
Blue Mountains	231
Campbelltown	256
Parramatta	266
Wollondilly	367
Western Sydney	217
Rest of Sydney	285

Source: Office of Local Government. n.d.

In addition to the state government agencies previously discussed, two other key initiatives have been instrumental in supporting creative activities:

## 1. CULTURE UP LATE WESTERN SYDNEY

The Culture Up Late fund is a program administered by Create NSW as part of a joint effort with the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner under Sydney CBD's revitalisation program. This program supports museums and galleries remaining open until 9pm, allowing a more diverse audience to access various events and activities.

Culture Up Late Western Sydney is a part of this program and supports 11 cultural venues, museums and galleries across Western Sydney to stay open after 5 pm.<sup>50</sup> Parramatta, Canterbury-Bankstown and Fairfield each have two venues supported under this initiative, while Camden, Liverpool, Penrith, Campbelltown and Cumberland each have one supported venue.

## 2. UPTOWN GRANT PROGRAM

The Uptown Program, funded by the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Create NSW, was established to accelerate the development of local business communities and transform them into thriving entertainment hubs. In the first round of the program in 2023, 21 programs were funded and "District Teams" were formed, forging vibrant going-out hubs for Greater Sydney. Most of these are in Eastern Sydney, with only two in Western Sydney. These initiatives have established two vibrant locations in Western Sydney with lively nightlife scenes, one in Blacktown and the other in the Parramatta LGA:

1. The Gathering, Blacktown aims to showcase Blacktown's diverse offerings, which include hip-hop festivals, Afghan and Filipino cuisine, stunning exhibitions and ghost tours.
2. Ujjala Little India, Harris Park, which is renowned for its exceptional Indian cuisine and cultural experiences.

## 3.2 EXISTING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

### REGIONAL NETWORK: WESTERN SYDNEY ARTS ALLIANCE

The Western Sydney Arts Alliance plays a vital role in amplifying the talent, creativity and innovation within the region's arts and cultural organisations. With over 40 members, including independent organisations, artists and collectives, state cultural institutions, local government arts centres, galleries and universities, this regional initiative fosters partnerships and connections among the creative communities in Western Sydney.

According to Creative Communities,<sup>51</sup> the NSW Government will invest in the Western Sydney Arts Alliance and develop a strategic plan in 2024. This investment is expected to support programs and activities for Western Sydney artists, arts organisations and creative communities.

### CULTURAL PRODUCTION

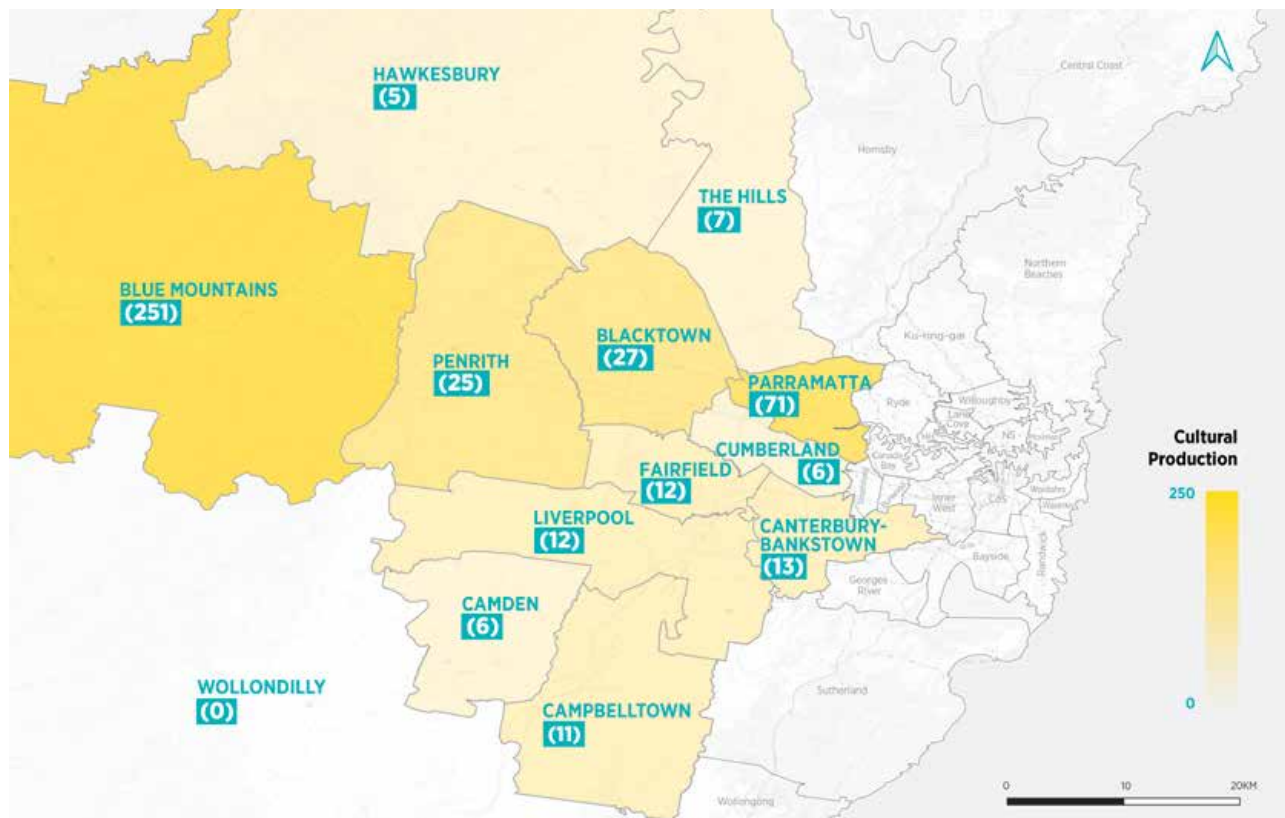
Cultural production encompasses music, performing and visual arts, libraries, museums, print and other publishing and media production and broadcasting.<sup>52</sup> Map 6, using data from the Creative West dataset<sup>53</sup>—a Western Sydney University research project—illustrates the geographic distribution of local creative businesses and organisations involved in cultural production.<sup>54</sup>

#### THE CREATIVE WEST DATASET DEFINES

#### 11 SUB-SECTORS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION:

1. ARTISANAL PRODUCTS
2. CREATIVE PROGRAMS
3. CREATIVE SPACES
4. COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS
5. GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS
6. MAKERS AND CO-WORKING SPACES
7. NETWORKS AND COLLECTIVE HUBS
8. PERFORMING ARTS
9. SCHOOLS
10. PODCAST AND BROADCAST AGENCIES
11. VISUAL ARTS

Map 6. The distribution of organisations engaged in cultural production in Western Sydney



Data source: Creative West database (2023).

## CREATIVE SERVICES

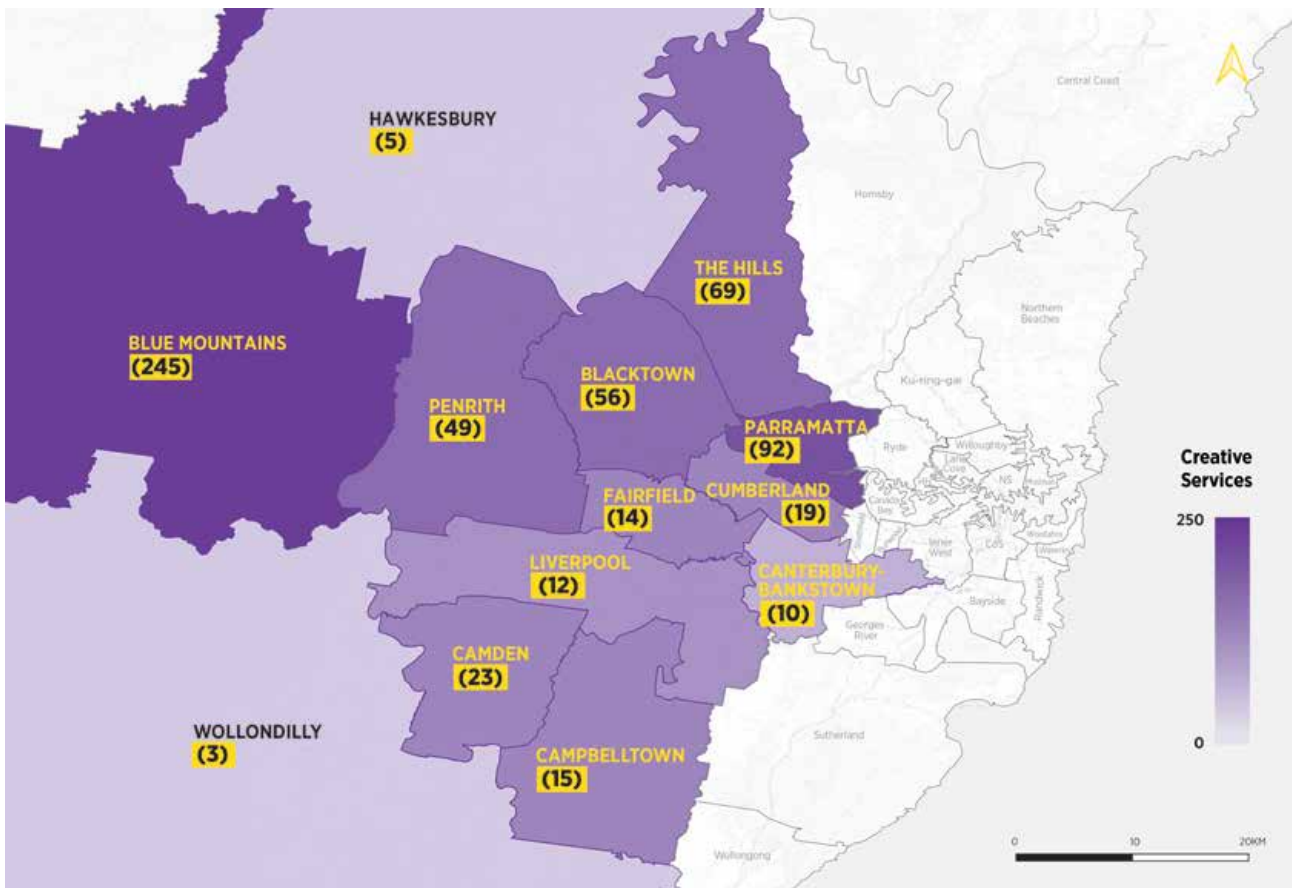
Creative services deliver creative outputs to a mix of consumer and corporate clients, including internet and digital services, advertising services and design. Map 7, based on data from the Creative West datasets, illustrates the geographic distribution of local businesses and organisations involved in creative services.

The map shows that most creative services and activities are concentrated in the Blue Mountains, Parramatta, The Hills Shire, Blacktown and Penrith, located in the northern part of Western Sydney. The southern part of the region has fewer creative services, with Hawkesbury and Wollondilly being the least vibrant in terms of creative services and activities.

**THE CREATIVE WEST DATASET DEFINES 18 SUB-SECTORS OF CREATIVE SERVICES:**

1. ADVERTISING
2. ANIMATION
3. ARCHITECTURE
4. FASHION DESIGN
5. FILMMAKING AND VIDEOGRAPHY
6. GAME DESIGN
7. GRAPHIC DESIGN
8. ILLUSTRATION
9. INTERIOR DESIGN
10. JEWELLERY DESIGN
11. MURALS AND STREET ART
12. MUSIC ARTIST
13. MUSIC MANAGEMENT AND PROMOTION
14. MUSIC PRODUCTION
15. PHOTOGRAPHY
16. TEXTILE DESIGN
17. WEB AND APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT
18. WRITING AND PUBLICATION

Map 7. The distribution of organisations offering creative services in Western Sydney



Data source: Creative West database (2023).

### 3.2.4 RECURRING EVENTS, FESTIVALS AND MARKETS

Festivals offer exciting opportunities to experience art, literature, music, culture and film while also promoting the locations where they are held.<sup>55</sup> They are widely recognised for contributing to the economic development of local areas by promoting tourism, boosting commercial outcomes and increasing investment in host regions.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, festivals help to extend the tourism season and create a positive image of a place.

**Recurring events in Western Sydney have grown in popularity and attracted significant visitor numbers, such as the Parramatta Lanes festival, the Lebanese Film Festival, the Made in the West Film Festival and Ramadan Nights Lakemba.**

Other staple local events in the Western Sydney cultural calendar have been successfully exported to the Sydney CBD, such as the Bankstown Poetry Slam at Sydney Town Hall. The Lebanese Film Festival, now in its 12th year, has expanded Australia wide, holding screenings around the country.

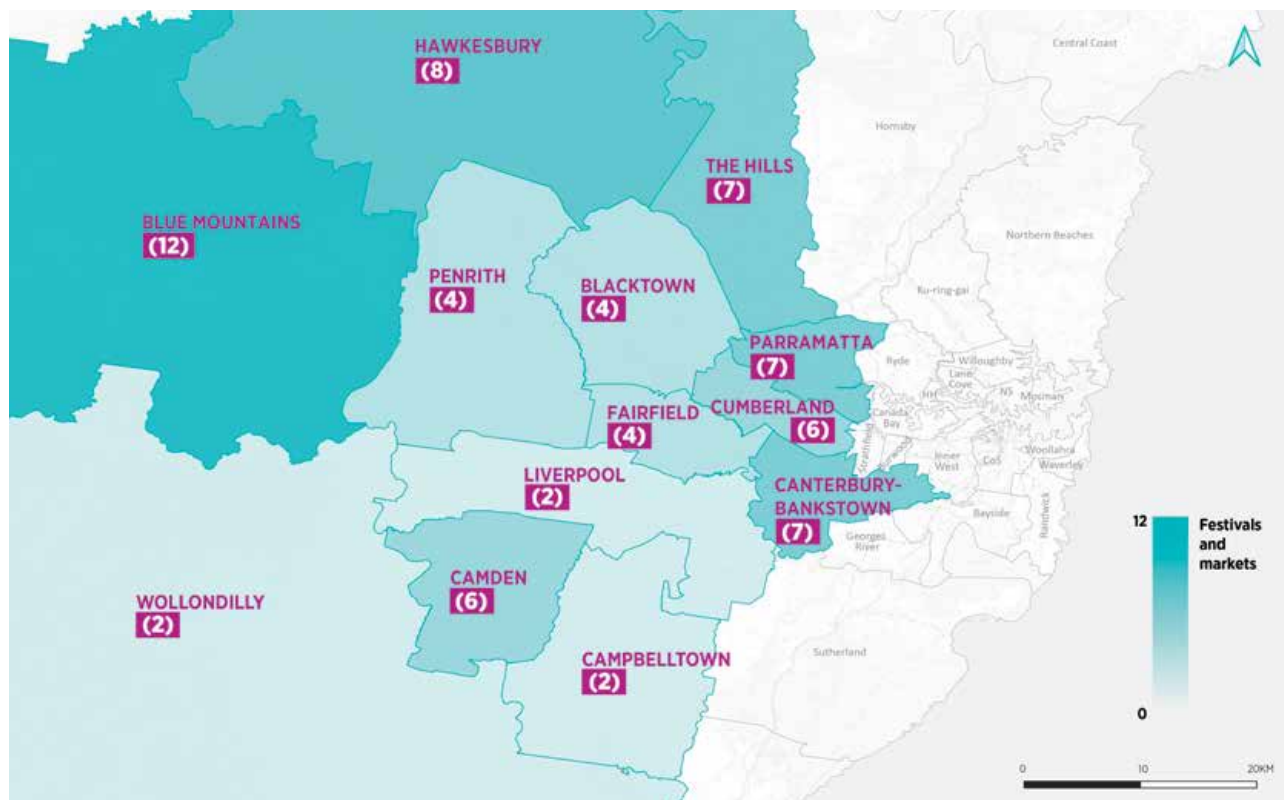
Other festivals, such as the Sydney Festival, the Sydney Writers Festival, Sydney Design Week and the Sydney

Fringe Festival, have expanded their reach to Western Sydney. These events are no longer held exclusively in the city centre, reflecting Western Sydney's emergence as a hub for cultural and artistic institutions, organisations and community initiatives. Despite this progress, some spatial barriers and stigma persist in attracting audiences from central Sydney and the Eastern Suburbs to attend events in Sydney's west.

Festivals and markets create a wide variety of offerings, from food to performance, that generate substantial returns. Such events can be hosted in various locations, including streets, pubs, railway arches, houses, boats and doorsteps. They allow residents to explore different ways of belonging in cities, reconnect with the past and imagine the future. Additionally, these events can transform places by creating spaces that celebrate otherwise minoritised people and cultures.<sup>57</sup>

Map 8 highlights a clear north-south divide in event frequency. The Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Blacktown, Parramatta and The Hills Shire have the highest number of events in their respective regions. In contrast, Liverpool, Campbelltown and Wollondilly have the fewest.

Map 8. The distribution of recurring events, festivals and markets in Western Sydney



Data source: Creative West (2023); Markets and Stallholders Australia; Google Maps.

### 3.2.5 SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

Western Sydney is a region rich in history, featuring major cultural heritage destinations that include well-preserved historic buildings, important archaeological sites, monumental sculptures and more. These destinations provide valuable resources for the community to learn about their history and foster a sense of belonging. They are also popular tourist attractions, drawing visitors from around the world to explore the region's past. Notably, these destinations also offer spaces for festivals and events, site-specific artworks, programs and educational activities, further enriching their cultural significance.



# WHAT CREATIVES NEED

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# 4.1 CONVERSATIONS WITH CREATIVES

To better understand individual creative experiences and insights into growing the industry in Western Sydney, in-depth conversations were held with a small sample of creatives from various sectors. The participants were at various career stages, from early to mid-career to executive levels and worked under varied conditions, such as within an organisation or as entrepreneurs.

## THESE CREATIVES WORK ACROSS THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

01. Creative space management
02. Music industry
03. Journalism and publishing
04. Entrepreneurial support
05. Higher education provider
06. Digital products and solutions
07. Screen production
08. Indigenous art and design
09. Marketing and co-working space provider
10. Film and theatre sound design

These consultations uncovered unique challenges faced by these sectors and identified what is needed from different stakeholders to support creative careers and businesses in diverse fields.

Key questions addressed included:

**WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE CREATIVE SUCCESS IN TODAY'S MARKET?**

**WHAT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED?**

**WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF CREATIVE PRODUCTION IN WESTERN SYDNEY?**

While some of the challenges and opportunities identified through these conversations are not unique to Western Sydney, addressing them effectively requires place-based solutions and local engagement. The following section presents a summary of the key findings from conversations with creatives as part of this research.

# 4.2 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVES

## 1. CREATIVE CAREERS REQUIRE MORE THAN JUST CREATIVE SKILLS



### 1.1 BEYOND ARTISTIC TALENT

Creative careers require more than just artistic skills; they demand business, marketing and management proficiency. Creatives must secure funding, manage business functions and seize market opportunities. Tailored training and mentorship are essential for addressing skill gaps and fostering entrepreneurial success.



### 1.2 PRECARIETY AND PORTFOLIO CAREERS

Many creatives now juggle freelance or part-time roles to manage rising costs and a lack of secure jobs. This “portfolio” approach offers flexibility but often leads to reliance on external work, perpetuating inequality and limiting access to those with greater resources and support.<sup>58</sup> Financial burdens and the investment required for formal training exacerbate the challenge, emphasising the importance of personal networks, mentorship and self-education in sustaining creative careers.



### 1.3 LACK OF CLARITY ON CAREER PATHWAYS AND REQUIRED SKILLS

A lack of information on career pathways beyond artistic roles makes navigating the industry difficult. The evolving nature of the creative field underscores the need for clear guidance on career options and skills. Providing career resources and training on emerging skills is crucial for diversifying and supporting the creative workforce.

## 2. WESTERN SYDNEY CREATIVE PRODUCTION SPEAKS TO DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



### 2.1 DIVERSITY IN AUDIENCES, CREATIVES AND CONTENT

Western Sydney’s diversity offers a strong foundation for content reflecting varied cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous perspectives. However, there is an ongoing need for content that accurately represents this diversity.



### 2.2 ART AS AN EXPRESSION OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Creative work in Western Sydney often intersects with social justice and community activism. While these efforts may not yield immediate economic benefits, they offer indirect public advantages, such as improved health and wellbeing.



### 2.3 DIVERSE IDENTITIES: A STRENGTH AND CHALLENGE FOR ARTISTS

Artists from diverse backgrounds face limitations due to stereotyping and typecasting, restricting opportunities. Advocating for artists based on talent rather than background and addressing burnout is essential for sustaining their careers and fostering their continued contributions.

### 3. CO-LOCATION IS NEEDED TO FOSTER CREATIVE COMMUNITIES



#### 3.1 CO-LOCATION BRINGS CREATIVES TOGETHER

The shortage of adequate spaces for creative work in Western Sydney, combined with limited transport connectivity, forces many creatives to use their homes or travel extensively. Geographical clustering of creative disciplines could enhance collaboration and innovation. Establishing multidisciplinary spaces and converting unused commercial areas into creative hubs can facilitate interactions and foster a vibrant creative community.



#### 3.2 INDUSTRIES REQUIRE DEDICATED ONGOING SPACES

Dedicated spaces for creative production, especially in the music and screen industries, are limited. Regulatory challenges and car dependency make access to cultural infrastructure difficult, as does the reliance on alcohol sales for venue profitability. Establishing ongoing entertainment precincts and supporting infrastructure, in collaboration with the private sector and government, is crucial for sustaining local artists and nurturing a vibrant cultural scene.



#### 3.3 DEVELOPMENT IN WESTERN SYDNEY PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY

Western Sydney's development offers a chance to integrate creative and cultural industries into new projects from the planning stage. Investing in purpose-built creative spaces and repurposing existing sites can enhance the region's cultural and creative capacity. Attracting large-scale productions and building suitable venues are crucial for maximising Western Sydney's potential as a creative hub.

### 4. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ARE REDEFINING CREATIVE PRACTICE



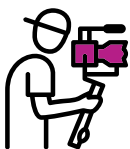
#### 4.1 DIGITAL PLATFORMS CREATE NEW PRESSURES

Digital platforms provide artists with greater autonomy and access to broader audiences, enabling independent management of production, distribution and promotion. However, this shift can also lead to exploitation, as platforms can place immense pressure on content production and undervalue creative work. The strain on limited infrastructure and personnel exacerbates these issues, highlighting the need for improved digital connectivity and better support for creative production spaces.



#### 4.2 EMERGING DIGITAL CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The growth of sectors like gaming and interactive content in Western Sydney offers significant potential for the digital creative industry. However, a clearer understanding of career options and improved support for practitioners is needed. Additionally, updating Australia's data collection methods and employment classifications is crucial to keep pace with these industry changes.



#### 4.3 REDEFINING LOCATION REQUIREMENTS

Digital technology enables creatives to operate on a global scale, reducing the need for a fixed location. However, access to expensive digital equipment remains a barrier. Providing shared, publicly available facilities can support affordability and ensure that physical spaces for production and community-building are available in Western Sydney.





*Musician UBAI performing at the Bankstown Poetry Slam, WSU Bankstown campus.*

IT'S TIME TO  
CHANGE OUR  
BATTERIES

*Powerhouse Late: Climate event, involving WSU students.*



# CREATIVE AREA PROFILES

Western Sydney is a diverse region, with each of its 13 LGAs showcasing unique strengths and values in their arts and creative activities and industries. This section of the report highlights several strategic creative hubs—established, emerging and future—to demonstrate the potential across diverse localities. These examples are not exhaustive but illustrate the variety of opportunities that exist. A tailored place-based approach is essential to developing Western Sydney as a home for world-class creative production and presentation.

**THE FOLLOWING THREE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS HAVE BEEN SELECTED AS CREATIVE AREAS TO PROFILE:**

» **PARRAMATTA CBD**

A vibrant and well-established hub for small-to-medium creative services and cultural production spaces, supporting a vibrant community of commercial and artistic expression.

» **BANKSTOWN TO CAMPSIE CORRIDOR**

An emerging contemporary creative hub with diverse cultural precincts and a growing hospitality and retail sector, fostering creative engagement and collaboration.

» **BRADFIELD CITY CENTRE**

A future creative hub in Southwestern Sydney, set to become a national and international destination. This hub will integrate creative industries into tourism and manufacturing, contributing to the national creative economy and connecting with the global economy via the new airport.

These case studies illustrate the range of features and developmental stages of different areas in Western Sydney regarding the growth of their creative industries. Each location has unique situations and opportunities. These examples are intended to provide insights into the uniqueness of these localities' creative businesses, spaces and communities, offering guidance for future development.



*Painted leaves by Kelsie King.*

# 1. PARRAMATTA CBD

## PARRAMATTA LGA CREATIVE INDUSTRY PROFILE

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF PEOPLE  
WORKING IN  
THE LGA IN  
THE CREATIVE  
INDUSTRIES



**2,487**

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF PEOPLE  
LIVING IN THE  
LGA QUALIFIED  
IN THE CREATIVE  
INDUSTRIES



**5,185**



GROWTH IN NUMBER OF CREATIVE INDUSTRY  
WORKERS (2016–2021): **+551**

### TOP 3 INDUSTRIES OF SPECIALISATION:



**PRINTING**  
(including reproduction  
of recorded media)



**CREATIVE AND  
PERFORMING  
ARTS**



**MOTION PICTURE  
AND SOUND  
RECORDING**



LGA CREATIVE  
INDUSTRIES  
VALUE ADDED TO  
THE ECONOMY:

**\$180 MILLION**

RECREATIONAL  
AND CULTURAL  
SPEND PER  
CAPITA BY  
COUNCIL  
(FY 2021–2022):



**\$266**

Source: Office of Local Government

# OVERVIEW

Parramatta CBD has established itself as a hub of cultural and creative industries, with significant opportunities for further growth and development. Parramatta is a vibrant and culturally diverse region with a rich history. Parramatta stands on the lands of the Burramattagal people of the Darag nation and Indigenous cultural knowledges and practices are integral to Parramatta's identity. Parramatta is also a significant historical site of first contact between Indigenous people and European colonists. As a growing hub of culture and creativity, Parramatta CBD boasts a dynamic mix of established cultural institutions, emerging creative enterprises, burgeoning nightlife and innovative public spaces.

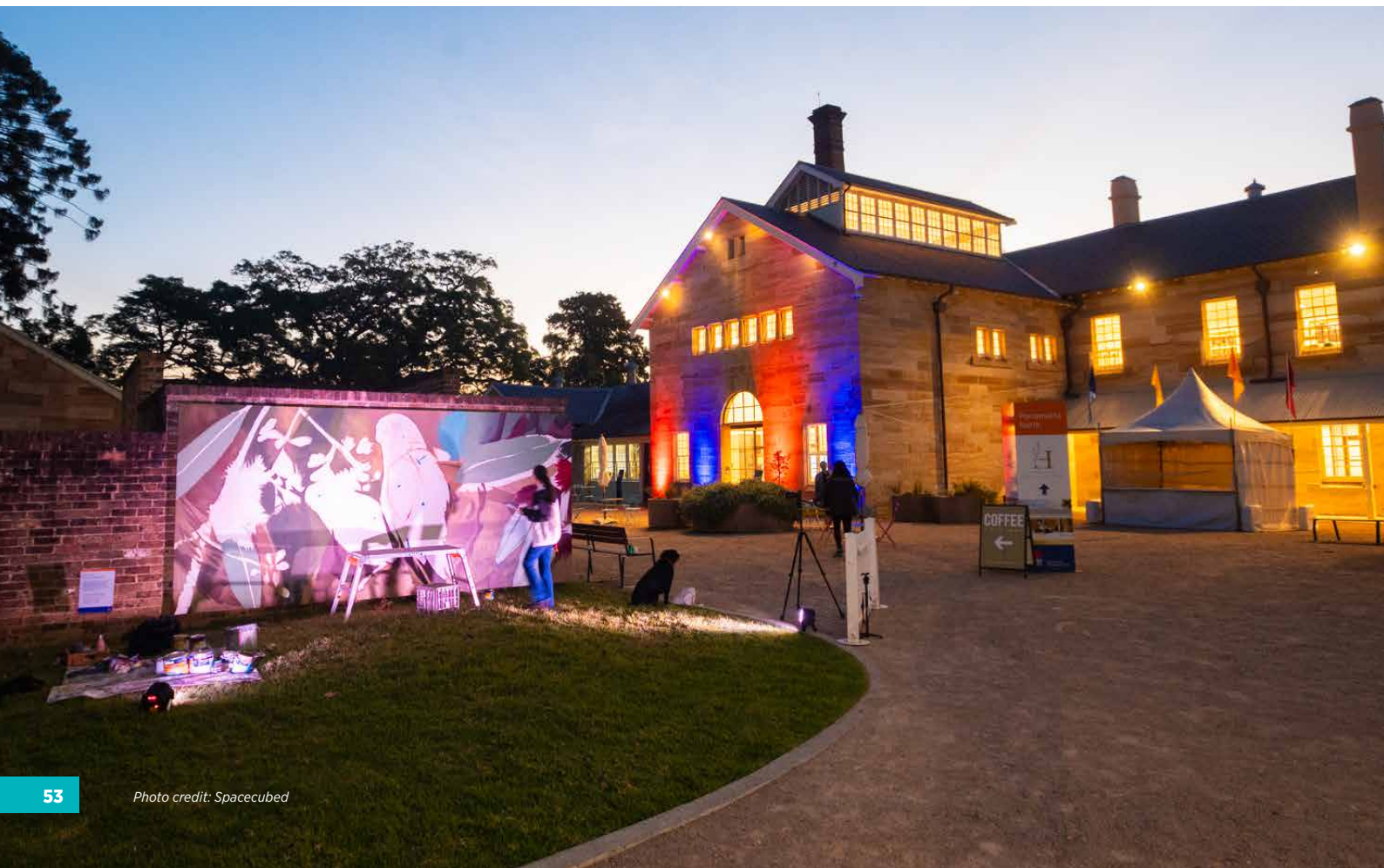
Under the *Parramatta 2050* vision, the City of Parramatta Council envisions Parramatta as a global city with a thriving ecosystem for creative industries, where culture and innovation are integral to the city's identity and future growth.

**The council aims to establish Parramatta as a world-class destination for arts and culture, leveraging its well-connected riverside location, cultural institutions and diverse communities.**

This bold vision includes transforming Parramatta into an epicentre of culture and creativity that offers opportunities for local artists and creative professionals to grow and contribute to the city's vibrant cultural life. *Parramatta 2050* also aims to position the city as a world leader in partnering with Indigenous communities. As part of the *Parramatta 2050* vision, the city will focus on cultural and heritage tourism, ensuring enabling policies and planning, housing for creatives, literature, and a new contemporary art gallery.

Council has invested significantly in developing prominent creative organisations, including Riverside Theatres, National Theatre of Parramatta, and Parramatta Artists Studios. The establishment of Powerhouse Parramatta and the redevelopment of the Riverside Theatres represent major leaps forward in the city's cultural and creative scene.

Parramatta serves as a critical link between Western Sydney and central Sydney, acting as a bridge for cultural exchange and economic activity. With its strategic location, strong transport connectivity and forward-thinking approach to urban development, Parramatta is uniquely poised to take charge in establishing Western Sydney as a cultural and creative powerhouse.



# CULTURAL AND CREATIVE FEATURES

Parramatta CBD is an established creative hub with a variety of cultural assets and initiatives that include commercial activity as well as publicly funded programming. Key features include:

- **CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS:** Home to the Riverside Theatres, Powerhouse Parramatta, Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) and the PHIVE community hub, which provides a public library as well as innovative programming, recording studios and spaces for creative expression. Parramatta also has a strong university presence, with six universities having a presence in the LGA. Western Sydney University's new Indigenous Centre for Excellence will be located at Rydalmere and will include a cinema, theatre, gallery and performance spaces.
- **FESTIVALS AND EVENTS:** Parramatta hosts a range of festivals and cultural events throughout the year, such as the Parramatta Lanes festival, Spot On festival at Riverside, Diwali festival, Lets Go Greek festival, Ngana Birrung First Nations hip-hop event, New Year's Eve celebrations and the Parramatta Farmers Market, as well as other festivals such as children's festivals and Sydney Science Festival. These festivals not only celebrate the city's diversity but also provide a platform for local artists and creatives to showcase their work. External festivals, such as the Sydney Festival and Sydney Writers Festival, also hold events in Parramatta CBD.
- **PUBLIC ART AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** The city has a strong focus on public art, adding to its identity as a cultural destination. The city's infrastructure supports not only traditional art forms but also digital and experiential works. The city's award-winning architecture, including the PHIVE building and Riverside Theatre developments, contributes to this infrastructure.
- **OPPORTUNITIES AND GRANTS FOR CREATIVES:** Parramatta Artists Studios develops and presents a range of studio programs and opportunities to provide longitudinal support to artists of all disciplines and at all stages of their careers and foster interdisciplinary collaboration. The National Theatre of Parramatta also undertakes capacity building work to nurture the talent of theatre practitioners.
- **SUPPORT FOR CREATIVES AS ESSENTIAL WORKERS:** The Parramatta 2050 strategy describes the establishment of the Creators Quarter, offering fixed-term subsidised accommodation for artists and creatives. This highlights the city's commitment to the essential role of artists in developing the city as a creative and cultural epicentre.
- **USE OF OUTDOOR SPACE:** A lack of suitable presentation spaces has meant that often creative work in Parramatta is presented in outdoor spaces, which has become a strength of the city, even if born out of a lack of alternatives. The Crescent in Parramatta Park is one example of an outdoor music performance space.



Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta presents "Choir Boy".  
Photo: Phil Erbacher.



Photo: City of Parramatta Council.

# CULTURAL AND CREATIVE BEST PRACTICES

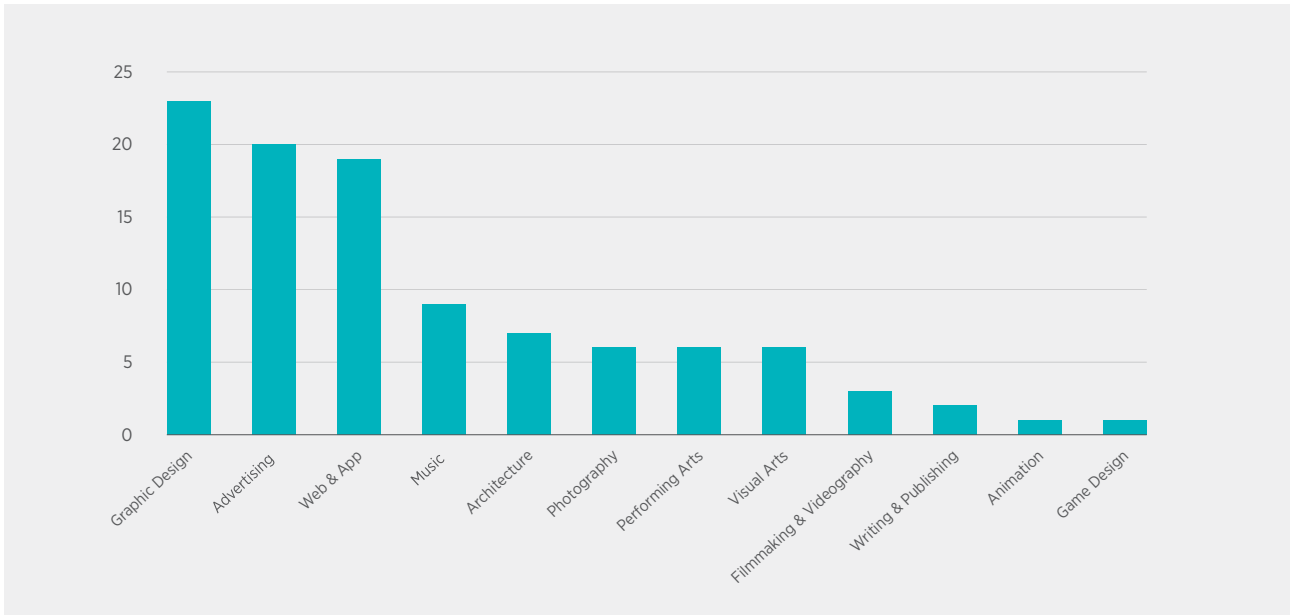
- ▶ **INTEGRATED STRATEGIES:** Parramatta's cultural and creative strategy is closely aligned with other city priorities, such as the strategic vision for the night-time economy, innovation and smart cities and the broader Parramatta 2050 vision. Fundamental to this is the understanding that diversifying and strengthening the night-time economy relies upon the creative industries.
- ▶ **INCLUSIVITY, DIVERSITY AND BELONGING:** Across Parramatta's strategies, there is an emphasis on diversity, inclusion and belonging, as well as being led by a commitment to Indigenous peoples and knowledges.
- ▶ **INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY:** The city has invested in dedicated resourcing that supports the integration of technology with art, as articulated in the Parramatta Smart City and Innovation Strategy.<sup>59</sup> This strategy promotes digital participation and experiences for community members amid a wider thriving innovation ecosystem. The city is also committed to innovation in environmentally sustainable design, as seen in PHIVE (6 Green Star certification) and Parramatta Square public domain, which has carbon neutral certification.
- ▶ **NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY:** Parramatta presents best practice in ensuring that the development of the city's night-time economy strategy — *Parramatta Night City Framework 2020-2024*<sup>60</sup> — is interwoven with its forthcoming cultural strategy, promoting live music, performance arts and other creative activities that enliven the city after dark. The multi-million dollar redevelopment of Riverside Theatres, with its enhanced capacity will also significantly contribute to the night-time economy in the area. Plans have been developed for an adaptive reuse makeover of the historic Roxy Theatre, providing a venue for live performance, music, comedy and dining. The council has also created a Late Night Trading Development Control Plan to encourage a wide range of night-time activities and promote Parramatta as a safe and vibrant 24-hour city.<sup>61</sup> Parramatta's CBD was awarded Purple Flag accreditation in 2023, recognising it as a safe, vibrant and well-managed night scene.
- ▶ **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The council has held community consultations to develop its forthcoming cultural strategy. The desire for cultural and creative industries is a consistent finding in the council's community consultations and a large range of community organisations already make use of key assets like the Riverside Theatres.
- ▶ **FESTIVAL GROWTH:** The city has expanded existing festivals and created new ones that reflect the city's cultural diversity and innovative spirit, ensuring that they become key attractions within the Sydney metropolitan area.



# CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN PARRAMATTA

The Creative West database shows a concentration of small- to medium-sized creative services and several major cultural production spaces in and around the CBD area.

Figure 4. Creative services in Parramatta LGA



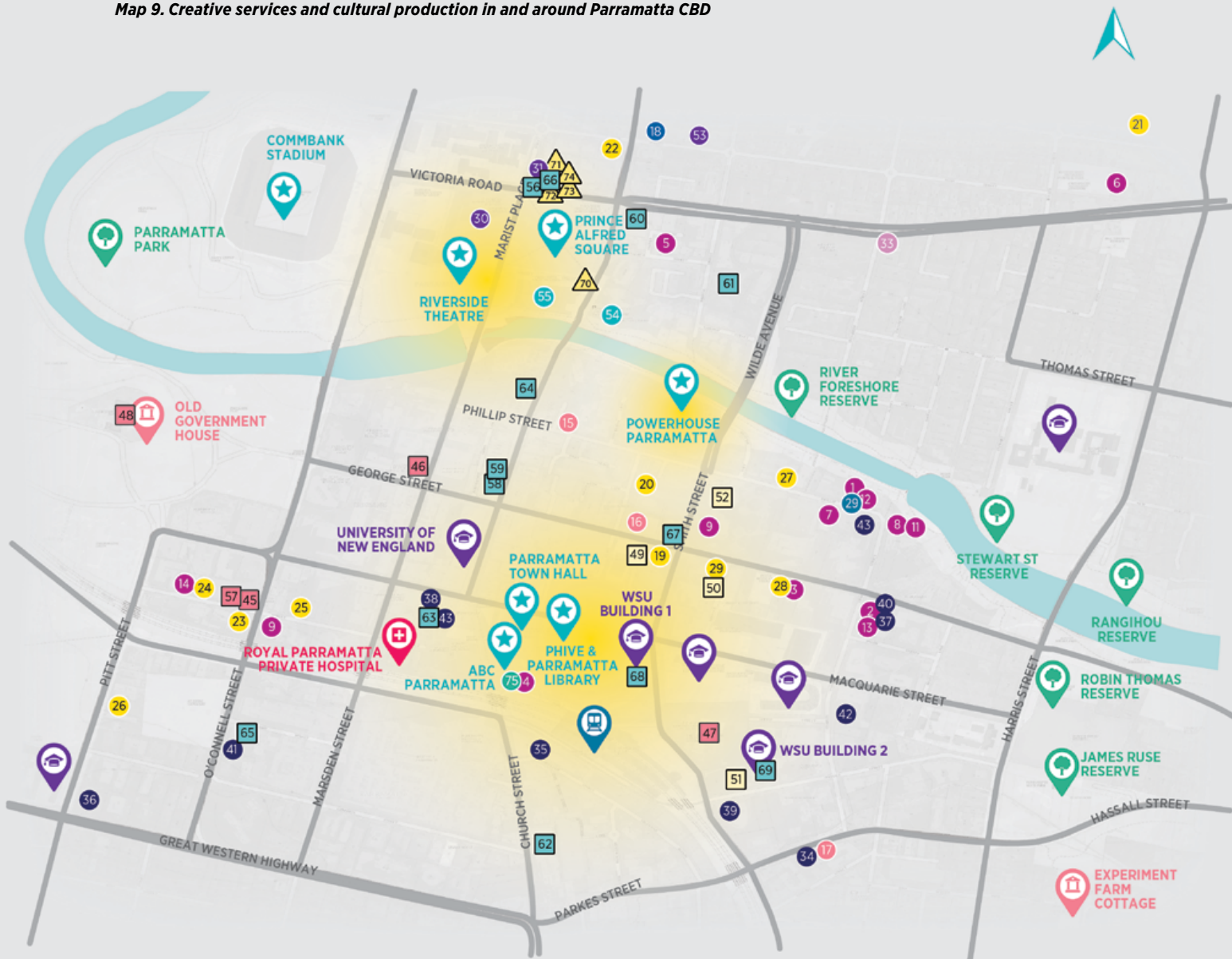
Source: Creative West (2023).

PHIVE in Parramatta Square. Photo: City of Parramatta Council.





Map 9. Creative services and cultural production in and around Parramatta CBD



Legend - Creative Industries in Parramatta CBD

<p><b>Enabling contexts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Major stadiums, community venues and green spaces</li> <li> Universities and schools</li> <li> Major heritage sites</li> <li> Green spaces</li> <li> Train stations</li> <li> Hospitals</li> </ul>	<p><b>Creative practice and activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Advertising</li> <li> Architecture</li> <li> Filmmaking and videography</li> <li> Graphic design</li> <li> Game design</li> <li> Web &amp; app</li> <li> Music artists, production and management</li> <li> Photography</li> <li> Writing and publishing</li> <li> Performing arts</li> <li> Visual arts</li> <li> Mural and street art</li> <li> Cultural production - galleries and museums</li> <li> Cultural production - maker and co-working spaces</li> <li> Place to learn</li> <li> Events</li> <li> Cultural precinct and night-time economy</li> </ul>
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See Appendix C for the data informing this map.

# CREATIVE ECONOMIES IN PARRAMATTA

Western Sydney is multifaceted, and by looking at specific areas in more detail, industries of specialisation or growth can be identified. Parramatta is a significant player in terms of the creative industries in Western Sydney and owing to this, Parramatta's economic data is similar to that of Western Sydney as a whole.

**Table 4. Key measures of size and performance for the creative industries in Parramatta and Western Sydney, 2021**

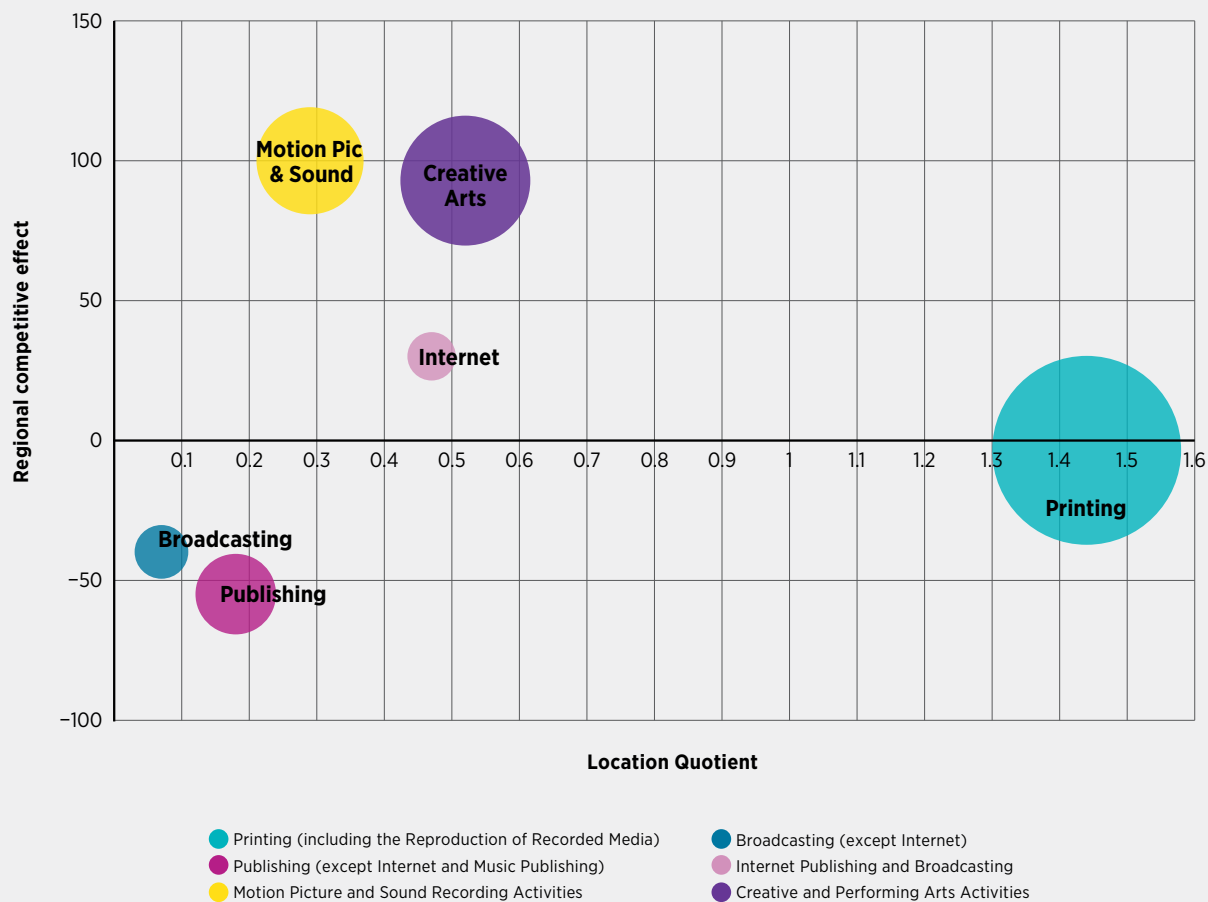
ECONOMIC MEASURE	PRINTING		PUBLISHING		MOTION PICTURE		BROADCASTING		INTERNET PUBLISHING		CREATIVE ARTS	
	PAR. <sup>A</sup>	WS <sup>B</sup>	PAR.	WS	PAR.	WS	PAR.	WS	PAR.	WS	PAR.	WS
Employment (total)	730	3,882	122	802	211	1,494	56	525	57	230	415	2,249
Employment (FTE) <sup>C</sup>	595	3,094	109	687	192	1,243	49	459	39	191	281	1,516
Output (Sales) (\$m)	198	1,041	54	327	52	307	24	212	25	106	45	242
Value added (\$m)	86	450	33	199	16	99	10	86	12	50	23	124
Size relative to economy (employment) (%)	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0	0.1	0	0	0.2	0.2
Worker productivity (\$ per worker)	117,235	115,939	271,787	247,971	79,678	65,977	170,631	163,094	211,119	216,623	55,172	55,216
Job-to-worker ratio	1.7	0.99	0.36	0.31	0.86	0.63	0.11	0.14	0.49	0.4	1.5	0.74

**Note.** <sup>a</sup> PAR. = Parramatta; <sup>b</sup> WS = Western Sydney; <sup>c</sup> FTE = full-time equivalent.

Source: NIEIR© (2024).

**Figure 5. LQ, shift-share analysis and employment size for Parramatta**

Source: Collated by the CfWS using NIEIR© (2024) data.



**Table 5. Local worker occupations in the creative industries in Parramatta**

OCCUPATIONS	2021			CHANGE 2016-2021
	PARRAMATTA (NO.)	PARRAMATTA (%)	WESTERN SYDNEY (%)	PARRAMATTA (NO.)
<b>Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors</b>	1,652	1.1	0.7	+527
<b>Media Professionals</b>	320	0.2	0.2	+37
<b>Arts Professionals</b>	209	0.1	0.2	+44
<b>Arts and Media Professionals</b>	6	0	0	+2
<b>Printing Trades Workers</b>	300	0.2	0.2	-59
<b>Total Persons Working in the LGA (all sectors)</b>	145,509	100.0	100.0	+7,566

**Table 6. Resident worker qualifications in the creative industries in Parramatta**

FIELD OF QUALIFICATION	2021			CHANGE 2016-2021
	PARRAMATTA (NO.)	PARRAMATTA (%)	WESTERN SYDNEY (%)	PARRAMATTA (NO.)
Architecture and Urban Environment	1,149	0.9	0.6	+401
Librarianship, Information Management and Curatorial Studies	258	0.2	0.2	0
Communication and Media Studies	1,471	1.2	0.9	+433
Graphic and Design Studies	1,151	0.9	0.7	+199
Visual Arts and Crafts	426	0.3	0.3	+73
Performing Arts	519	0.4	0.3	+92
Creative Arts	211	0.2	0.1	+60

Parramatta has much higher job-to-worker ratios in all industries except broadcasting, which is a very small part of the economy. This will change rapidly with the ABC recently moving into the Parramatta CBD. Parramatta also has higher worker productivity levels in all industries except internet publishing and the creative arts. Higher worker productivity reflects the business density of Parramatta, which is greater than that of other Western Sydney areas.

**The motion picture and sound recording industry, the creative and performing arts and internet publishing and broadcasting appear to be growing strongly locally, which suggests that they will be specialisations in the area in the future.**

As with most areas in Western Sydney, printing is the largest sector and is neither growing nor reducing in size locally.

In terms of occupations, there is a larger proportion of architects in Parramatta than in Western Sydney. Similarly, the proportion of residents with architecture qualifications is higher in Parramatta than in Western Sydney. Parramatta has a higher proportion of residents with qualifications in communication and media studies, graphic and design studies and the performing and creative arts.



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

There are significant opportunities to further develop Parramatta's creative industries:

## 01. Invest in cultural infrastructure:

Parramatta is already undergoing significant cultural infrastructure development. The redeveloped Riverside Theatres, with its iconic design and more than doubled capacity, will establish itself as a world-class performing arts centre, attracting over 400,000 visitors annually. Complementing this development, there is a need for building more venues for live music, galleries and flexible, creative spaces to address current gaps. Funding is needed for mid-sized live music venues (with a capacity of 4,000–5,000 people), more public art spaces and to further develop the cultural and creative infrastructure of North Parramatta. Parramatta also lacks a small format multipurpose entertainment arena that could be used for sports and music concerts.

## 02. Grow the creative ecosystem:

Advocating for the establishment or expansion of national cultural institutions and agencies in Parramatta could strengthen the local creative ecosystem. Additionally, tax breaks or other financial incentives could stimulate the growth of creative industries by attracting key industry players to set up operations in Parramatta.

## 03. Develop the cross-platform writing and publishing sector:

*Parramatta 2050* envisions the city as being immersed in literature. Given the LGA's growing internet publishing sector, the strong university presence in the city and the new writing initiative announced in the *Creative Communities* policy, Parramatta can build on its emerging specialisation in internet publishing and broadcasting with literary initiatives that support cross-platform publishing.

Parramatta's unique position within Western Sydney, combined with its rich cultural heritage and forward-thinking strategies, makes it a leading example of how cities can cultivate and sustain vibrant creative industries. The council's commitment to inclusivity, innovation, community engagement and festival growth is driving the development of a dynamic cultural ecosystem that benefits not only Parramatta but the entire region.



# 2. BANKSTOWN TO CAMPSIE CORRIDOR

## CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN LGA CREATIVE INDUSTRY PROFILE

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WORKING IN THE LGA IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE LGA QUALIFIED IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



GROWTH IN NUMBER OF CREATIVE INDUSTRY WORKERS (2016-2021): **+49**

### TOP 3 INDUSTRIES OF SPECIALISATION:



**PRINTING**  
(including reproduction of recorded media)



**MOTION PICTURE AND SOUND RECORDING**



**PUBLISHING**  
(except internet and music publishing)



LGA CREATIVE INDUSTRIES VALUE ADDED TO THE ECONOMY:

**\$170.26 MILLION**

RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL SPEND PER CAPITA BY COUNCIL (FY 2021-2022):



**\$204**

Source: Office of Local Government

## OVERVIEW

The Canterbury-Bankstown LGA, located on the lands of the Darug and Eora Nations in Sydney's southwest, is emerging as a key site of untapped potential for creative industries, driven by the dynamic growth of its key hubs—Bankstown CBD, Campsie CBD and the culturally rich corridor that links them via Lakemba. While not yet an established creative hub, Canterbury-Bankstown stands out as one of the most culturally diverse LGAs in Sydney, home to a rich tapestry of multicultural communities.

**With its rich cultural heritage and entrepreneurship, as well as significant institutions, it is poised to become a cornerstone of Western Sydney's creative landscape.**

Canterbury-Bankstown residents have initiated significant successful events in Sydney's cultural calendar—the Bankstown Poetry Slam, Lakemba Ramadan Night Markets, Campsie Lantern Festival and the Lebanese Film Festival. Lakemba's Ramadan Nights has since been managed by Council and continues to grow.

Bankstown CBD stands as a major urban centre with a strong foundation in cultural diversity, offering a vibrant mix of retail, dining and entertainment. It is home to the Bankstown Arts Centre (BAC) and the Bryan Brown Theatre, both pivotal in fostering a growing local arts scene, as well as a new campus of Western Sydney University. The Bankstown Arts Centre generates creative value through both its in-house programming in visual and multi-art forms, as well as housing resident arts organisations, providing them with space to develop and present creative work. Bankstown Biennale, a festival of contemporary art funded by Create NSW will be launching its third edition. Featuring Sydney

and interstate artists, the exhibition and its public program will be part of the 2025 Sydney Festival. The area's well-established infrastructure, diverse food scene and ongoing urban renewal projects make it an attractive location for creative ventures, offering potential for innovative developments in arts, culture and digital media.

Campsie CBD, known for its bustling commercial activity and multicultural community, is on the cusp of significant urban renewal under the Campsie Master Plan. The ongoing uplift and development of new residential and commercial spaces will create a supportive environment for creative industries. Community consultations have found a shortfall in creative and cultural facilities in Campsie for its projected resident and worker populations.

The LGA's strategic location, well-connected to the Sydney CBD, coupled with the availability of affordable spaces, provides fertile ground for emerging artists and creative entrepreneurs. The corridor connecting these two urban centres, passing through the culturally vibrant suburb of Lakemba, is highlighted by events like Ramadan Nights Lakemba. This stretch exemplifies the area's strong community spirit and diversity, offering unique opportunities for creative expressions rooted in local culture.

To fully realise its potential, Canterbury-Bankstown will need strategic investment and a focused approach to developing its creative industries in tandem with other strategic areas, such as the night collaboration between local government, businesses and creative practitioners. The LGA can transform into a vibrant centre for arts, culture and innovation, contributing to the broader economic and cultural vitality of the region.



Bankstown Arts Centre.  
Photo: City of Canterbury-Bankstown Council.

# CULTURAL AND CREATIVE FEATURES

- **GRASSROOTS INDEPENDENT ACTION:** Bankstown has a strong grassroots culture with community-led initiatives like the longstanding Lebanese Film Festival, the Bankstown Poetry Slam and Ramadan Nights Lakemba. Despite this, there is a need for more formal and structured programming to harness and expand these grassroots efforts.
- **BANKSTOWN ARTS CENTRE:** A programming-led multi-art form centre that champions contemporary experimental arts for social impact and placemaking through its annual curated program of exhibitions and events. Its new strategic direction of transdisciplinary and transcultural creative practice is embedded in the community and builds upon the Arts Centre's achievement in community engagement. Since July 2023, BAC has emphasised programming collaboration with resident companies in the Arts Centre, in particular Urban Theatre Projects (Utp) and Outloud. BAC provides a platform for the development and presentation of contemporary artworks while providing learning opportunities for local residents through term art classes, school holiday workshops and youth support initiatives. It hosts the Bankstown Poetry Slam, Indigenous hip-hop group Southwest Syndicate, the short films segment of the Lebanese Film Festival and is a program and presenting partner of Boundless Writers' Festival.
- **DIVERSE DEMOGRAPHICS:** The area boasts a diverse population, which enriches the cultural fabric and provides a broad audience for various artistic and creative initiatives. This diversity is a strength for developing vibrant cultural hubs that can cater to multiple interests and cultural expressions.
- **CULTURAL AND CREATIVE STRATEGY:** The current strategy includes a Creative Cities Strategic Plan, a Night-time Action Plan and an Economic Development Strategy. These plans aim to bolster creative activities and integrate them into the broader economic and cultural fabric of Bankstown and Campsie.
- **LACK OF ARTIST-RUN SPACES:** There is a notable absence of dedicated artist-run spaces and facilities in the LGA compared to neighbouring Inner West suburbs. This limits opportunities for artists to develop and showcase their work within the community and is one area that can be strengthened to benefit local creatives.
- **EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE:** Currently, Campsie has a mix of commercial and residential spaces, with notable public amenities like libraries and community centres. However, there is a clear opportunity to upgrade and repurpose existing facilities to better support creative industries.



Art Nights: Culture Alive, Bankstown Arts Centre.  
Photo: Alicia Scott.



Bankstown Arts Centre.  
Photo: Destination NSW.



# CULTURAL AND CREATIVE BEST PRACTICES

- ▶ **DEVELOPING THE CITY AS A DESTINATION:** The city has recently launched its destination website, Where Interesting Happens, to promote the city's event calendar. As part of this strategy, the city is committed to retaining the soul and flavour of the LGA while promoting and developing it as a destination. The council is concentrating on enhancing the night-time economy with an emphasis on dining and entertainment. There is a drive to extend outdoor dining options and implement activation events like movies under the stars and outdoor concerts to create a vibrant evening environment. Lakemba's town centre has achieved Purple Flag accreditation and the LGA was awarded a Culture Up Late (Western Sydney) grant to activate Bankstown's night-time creative economy. Under this grant, the Bankstown Arts Centre programmed and produced "Art Nights: Culture Alive", featuring a temporary outdoor art trail combining physical and AR artworks, along with three nights of late-night arts programming, including night-time arts, design and craft markets.
- ▶ **CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE PROGRAMMING:** Canterbury-Bankstown is home to culturally and linguistically diverse creative initiatives, from Bankstown Poetry Slam to the Lebanese Film Festival and Bankstown Biennale, arts organisations such as Utp, Outloud, Bankstown Theatre Company and music and dance acts like Indigenous hip-hop group Southwest Syndicate, punk-band the Hard-Ons and breaking collective HybridFormz.
- ▶ **PROVISION OF DIGITAL FACILITIES BY COUNCIL:** Launched by Canterbury-Bankstown Council, Studioventure is a full-service commercial studio offering local businesses and non-profits access to high-quality digital services, including photography, videography and podcast production. This initiative aims to support businesses by providing affordable content creation resources. The studio includes advanced features like a recording studio, editing suite and cyclorama walls, available at discounted rates for the local community.
- ▶ **CULTURAL HUB DEVELOPMENT IN CAMPSIE:** The council's plans include the establishment of a new Cultural Hub in Campsie, set to feature a 4,500 sqm floor space incorporating a library, multipurpose meeting rooms, a multimedia and cultural space, a music hub and a re-adapted Orion Theatre. This facility aims to address the identified need for increased cultural infrastructure and provide a central venue for creative activities and performances.
- ▶ **INNOVATIVE ZONING PROVISIONS:** Campsie is designated as a mixed-use zone, which allows for a blend of residential, commercial and creative uses. This zoning flexibility is advantageous for integrating creative industries into the fabric of the town centre, making it an attractive location for artists, cultural events and creative businesses. The Campsie Master Plan includes provisions for additional floor space underground, which can be used for various purposes, including creative spaces such as theatres or performance venues. This innovative use of underground space can help address the shortage of affordable and versatile venues for creative activities.

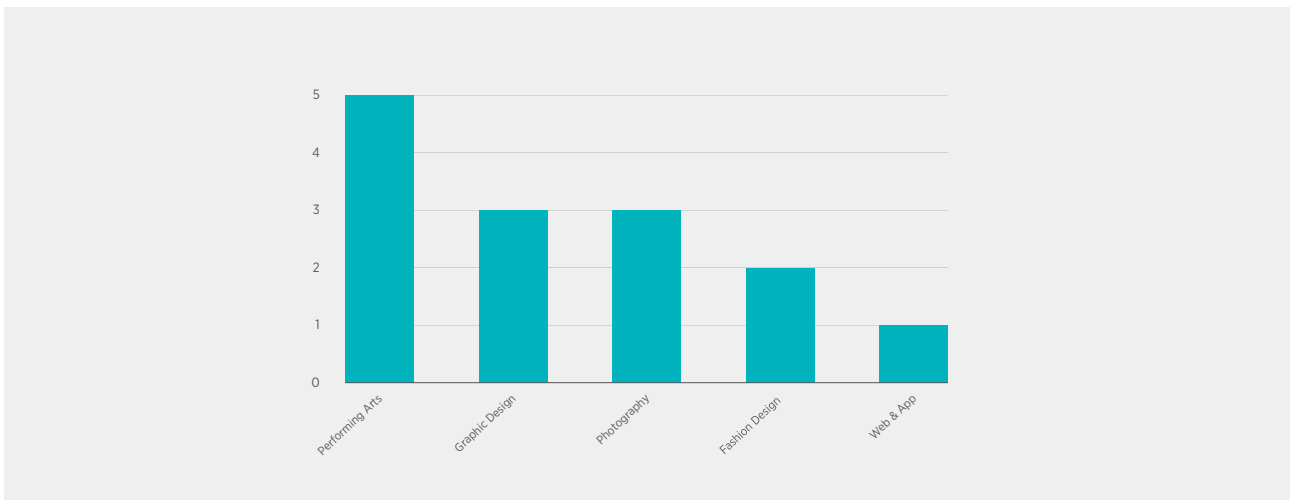


*The Red Star, 2020/2024  
Alia Ali  
Site-specific, mixed media installation in the  
exhibition MultiFutures, Bankstown Arts Centre.  
Photo: Destination NSW*

# CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN

The Creative West database shows a small number of creative services located in the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA, which is in line with the relatively small number of people who work in the creative industries in the LGA.

Figure 6. Creative services in Canterbury-Bankstown LGA



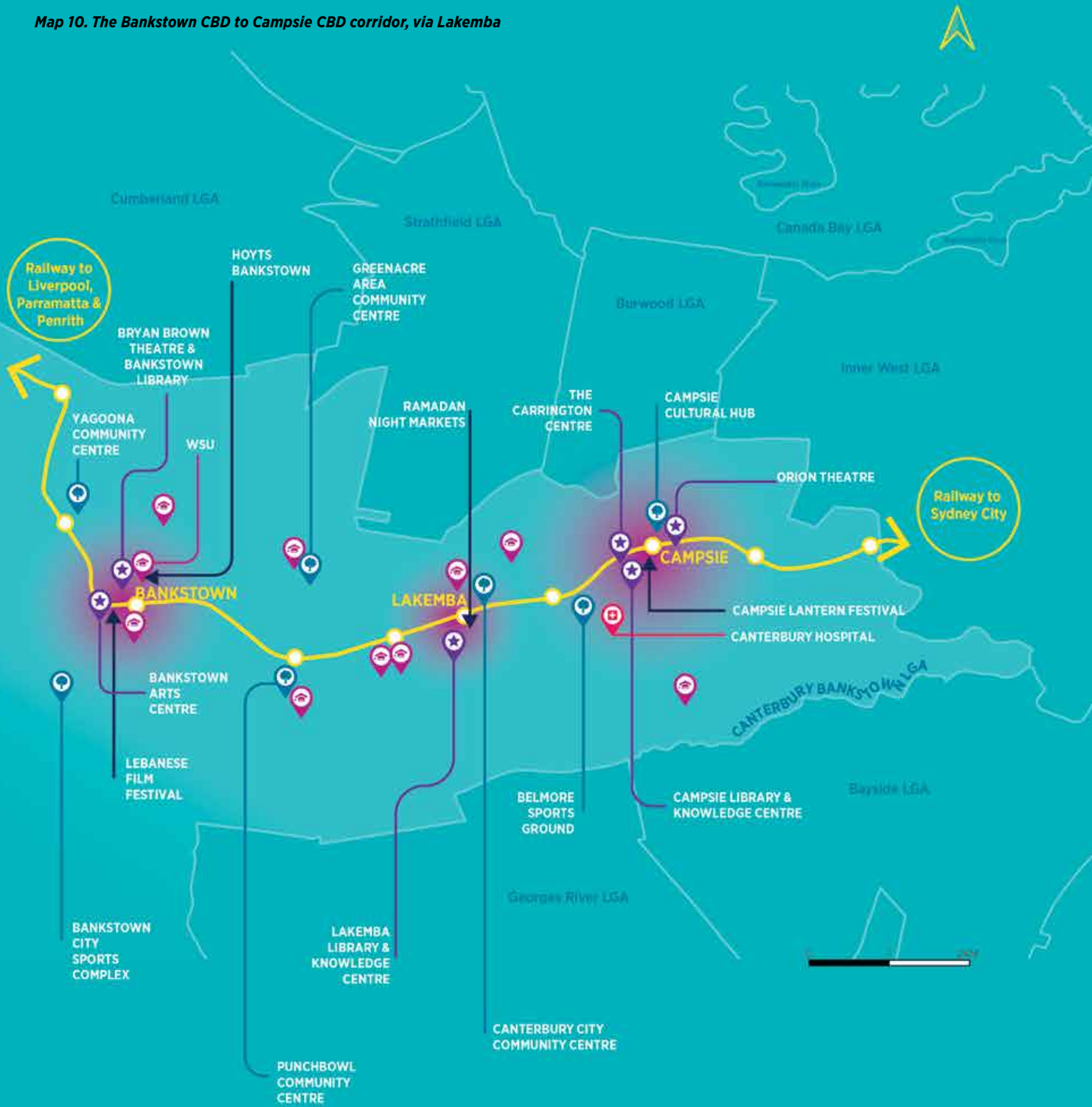
Source: Creative West (2023).



Bryan Brown Theatre Bankstown.

Photo: City of Canterbury-Bankstown Council.

Map 10. The Bankstown CBD to Campsie CBD corridor, via Lakemba



**Legend - Creative Industries in Bankstown and Campsie Precinct**

-  Major Creative Venues
-  Hospitals
-  Train stations
-  Cultural precinct and night time economy
-  Universities and schools
-  Community venues and green spaces
-  Events and festivals

# CREATIVE ECONOMIES IN CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN

Canterbury-Bankstown has a high number of residents qualified in the creative industries compared to the number of people working locally in the creative industries. Therefore, it appears that the region is not taking advantage of the qualifications of its residents, leaving many creatives to work outside of the LGA in which they live. Qualifications are well above the level of qualifications in Western Sydney as a whole and qualifications are growing. Qualification levels are particularly strong in communication and media studies and graphic and design studies.

While printing has historically been a specialisation in Canterbury-Bankstown and in Western Sydney overall, this sector is not growing at the local level. The motion picture and sound recording industry is growing locally, as are the broadcasting and internet publishing sectors, although these remain small in the LGA. Productivity in Canterbury-Bankstown is higher than in Western Sydney in all industries except printing. Canterbury-Bankstown has a higher job-to-worker ratio for printing and publishing than Western Sydney as a whole but a lower job-to-worker ratio in all other creative industries.

Table 7. Key measures of size and performance for the creative industries in Canterbury-Bankstown and Western Sydney, 2021

ECONOMIC MEASURE	PRINTING		PUBLISHING		MOTION PICTURE		BROAD-CASTING		INTERNET PUBLISHING		CREATIVE ARTS	
	C-B <sup>a</sup>	WS <sup>b</sup>	C-B	WS	C-B	WS	C-B	WS	C-B	WS	C-B	WS
<b>Employment (total)</b>	526	3,882	250	802	268	1,494	58	525	5	230	185	2,249
<b>Employment (FTE)<sup>c</sup></b>	416	3,094	218	687	240	1,243	50	459	6	191	114	1,516
<b>Output (Sales) (\$m)</b>	137.24	1,041	107.3	327	85.3	307	21.65	212	4.25	106	22.86	242
<b>Value added (\$m)</b>	59.33	450	65.2	199	22.35	99	10.36	86	2.08	50	10.94	124
<b>Size relative to economy (employment) (%)</b>	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0	0	0.1	0.2
<b>Worker productivity (\$ per worker)</b>	112,752	115,939	260,669	247,971	83,510	65,977	179,996	163,094	395,238	216,623	58,998	55,216
<b>Job-to-worker ratio</b>	1.4	0.99	0.55	0.31	0.56	0.63	0.1	0.14	0.11	0.4	0.4	0.74

Note. <sup>a</sup> C-B = Canterbury-Bankstown; <sup>b</sup> WS = Western Sydney; <sup>c</sup> FTE = full-time equivalent.

Figure 7. LQ, shift-share analysis and employment size for Canterbury-Bankstown

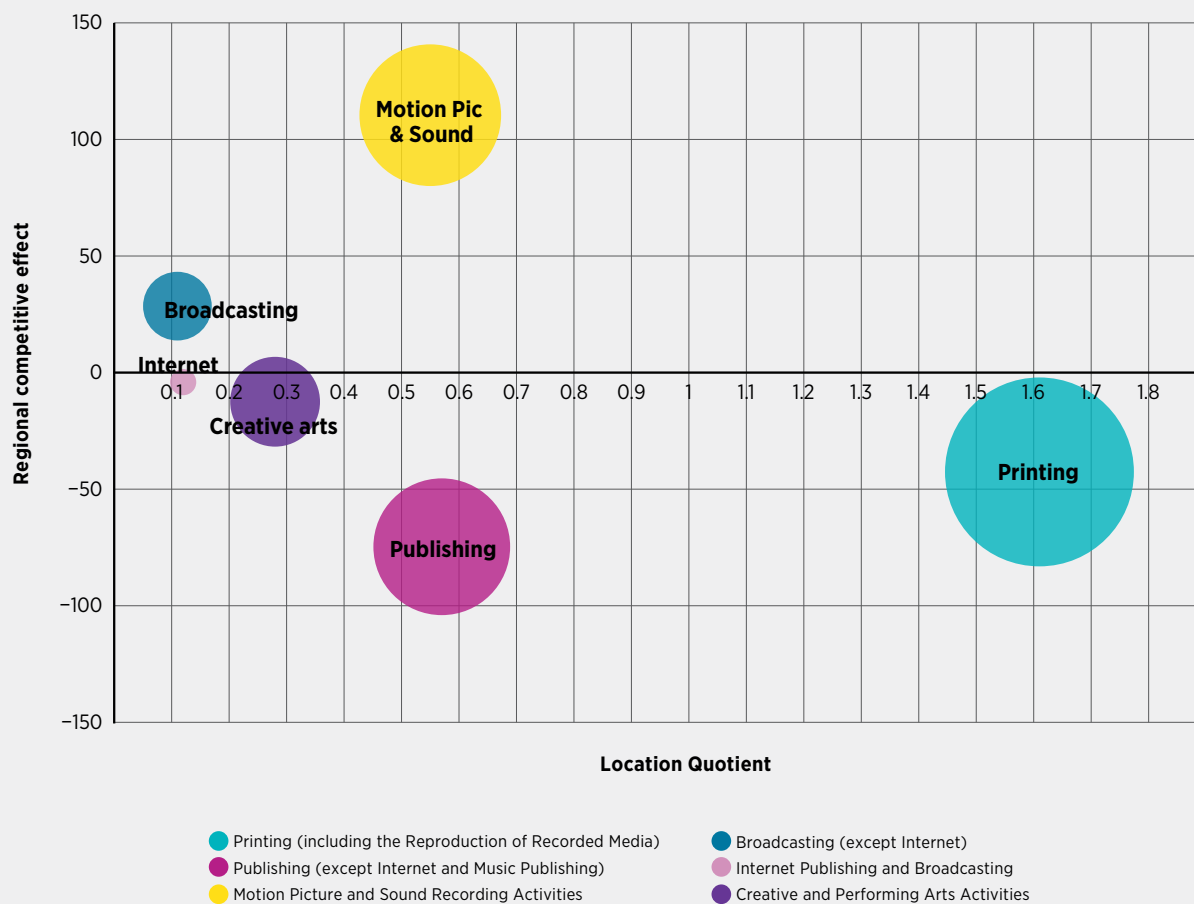


Table 8. Local worker occupations in the creative industries in Canterbury-Bankstown

OCCUPATIONS	2021			CHANGE 2016-2021
	CANT.-BANK. (NO.)	CANT.-BANK. (%)	WESTERN SYDNEY (%)	CANT.-BANK. (NO.)
Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors	670	0.7	0.7	+88
Media Professionals	210	0.2	0.2	+56
Arts Professionals	157	0.2	0.2	-4
Arts and Media Professionals	13	0	0	+0
Printing Trades Workers	265	0.3	0.2	-99
<b>Total Persons Working in the LGA (all sectors)</b>	<b>99,302</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>+4,516</b>

**Table 9. Resident worker qualifications in the creative industries in Canterbury-Bankstown**

FIELD OF QUALIFICATION	2021			CHANGE 2016-2021
	CANT.-BANK. (NO.)	CANT.-BANK. (%)	WESTERN SYDNEY (%)	CANT.-BANK. (NO.)
Architecture and Urban Environment	995	1	1	+172
Librarianship, Information Management and Curatorial Studies	268	0	0	+1
Communication and Media Studies	1,549	1	1	+440
Graphic and Design Studies	1,198	1	1	+97
Visual Arts and Crafts	519	0	0	0
Performing Arts	486	0	0	+58
Creative Arts	190	0	0	+23



Opening night Lebanese Film Festival at Bryan Brown Theatre Bankstown. Photo: Lebanese Film Festival.

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

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## **01. Foster the emerging specialisation in motion picture and sound recording:**

The economic data presented here suggests that the LGA is already showing sizeable growth in this area. This could be fostered and capitalised upon further. Building further upon Studioventure, the council could explore ways to incentivise businesses in this sector to have a presence in the LGA. Local libraries or the new cultural hub at Campsie could provide recording equipment as well as software for music, game and film production, like The Edge facility at the Brisbane State Library. In addition, there is currently an absence of cinema screening rooms that local filmmakers can hire to do screenings in Western Sydney. The council could look to partner with Hoyts Bankstown to provide a cinema screening room to hire to local filmmakers during quiet times of the day.

## **02. Improve night-time economy activation in Bankstown CBD:**

In collaboration with local businesses, there is much to take advantage of in activating the night-time economy in Bankstown's CBD. A bustling daytime dining scene can be incentivised to trade later at night, integrated with offerings from the cultural and creative sector. This should include activating the square around Paul Keating Park for more night-time activity and dining options. The redevelopment of Burwood's Chinatown into a vibrant dining and shopping precinct could inspire this area of Bankstown's CBD, as could the lighting features of Sydney's Darling Square. This square is currently underutilised as a destination and is well placed given its proximity to the Bryan Brown Theatre, Western Sydney University and Hoyts Cinema.

## **03. Host markets to support local creative industries and food industries:**

Given the entrepreneurialism of local creatives, the Bankstown CBD could further utilise its public space to host occasional weekend makers' markets at Paul Keating Park. Building upon the success of markets organised by Bankstown Arts Centre, as part of their Open Day adjacent to Bankstown Bites and also as part of Art Nights programming. There are opportunities to continue creative arts markets within the Arts Centre as part of its programming, as well as throughout the Bankstown CBD and in Campsie once its cultural hub development is completed. Markets could include food and makers stalls, as well as support performances by local musicians and performance artists. This would help to create a vibrant local creative scene for makers and community members.

## **04. Support creative business development:**

Offer grants, funding and financial incentives to support the development and expansion of creative businesses in Bankstown. Funding can be used for project development, equipment purchases, marketing initiatives and other business needs. These venues can also host business incubation programs that provide mentorship, training and resources to emerging creative entrepreneurs, offering guidance on business planning, marketing, finance and other aspects of running a successful creative business.

## **05. Develop artist-run and multipurpose spaces:**

Investing in artist-run spaces is crucial for fostering local creativity and providing platforms for artists to collaborate and showcase their work. This includes creating spaces for visual arts, dance and music. There's a need for more artist-run spaces and multipurpose venues that can be used for various activities, especially during the night. Expanding and repurposing existing spaces to support diverse creative activities, such as pop-up art events, could drive growth.

## **06. Enhance digital media infrastructure:**

There is a need to invest in digital media, including online platforms, for creative production, distribution and consumption. Establishing a digital arts agency could help integrate digital media into the local creative scene and attract talent.

## **07. Creative and cultural leadership:**

The LGA has a great deal of potential in the creative and cultural sector but needs stronger collaboration with the creative industries to deliver cohesive advocacy messages to state and federal funding bodies. Utilising current council systems, the focus should be on supporting and delivering the Creative City Strategic Plan.

# 3. BRADFIELD CITY CENTRE

## CREATIVE AREA PROFILE: BRADFIELD CITY

### OVERVIEW

Adjoining the Western Sydney International Airport, Bradfield City Centre is poised to raise the profile of existing creative industries in Western Sydney with the potential for national and international impact. The Bradfield Development Authority (BDA) is responsible for overseeing the planning and development of the Bradfield City Centre, Australia's newest city. Bradfield is envisioned as a hub for advanced manufacturing, which will act as a magnet for innovation across Western Sydney.

The Bradfield City Centre Master Plan sets the framework for the city, laying foundations for how it will develop as a thriving 24/7 ecosystem of culture, creativity and innovation immersed in a parkland environment.

Fitting for a new city on the doorstep of Western Sydney's new airport, the Master Plan lays out a strong focus on places for culture, creativity and entertainment, including four civic centres, major event and dedicated cultural spaces. There is an opportunity to:

- › build creative industries into the Bradfield City development from day one to ensure a rounded and liveable city for residents
- › leverage access to and from the Western Sydney International Airport and subsequent international markets.

Creative industries play a crucial role in facilitating two-way cultural exchange, fostering international connections and strengthening international relations for Australia. As a contributor of tourism, Bradfield City will serve as a gateway for international and interstate visitors to the Western Sydney region, making a strong first impression.

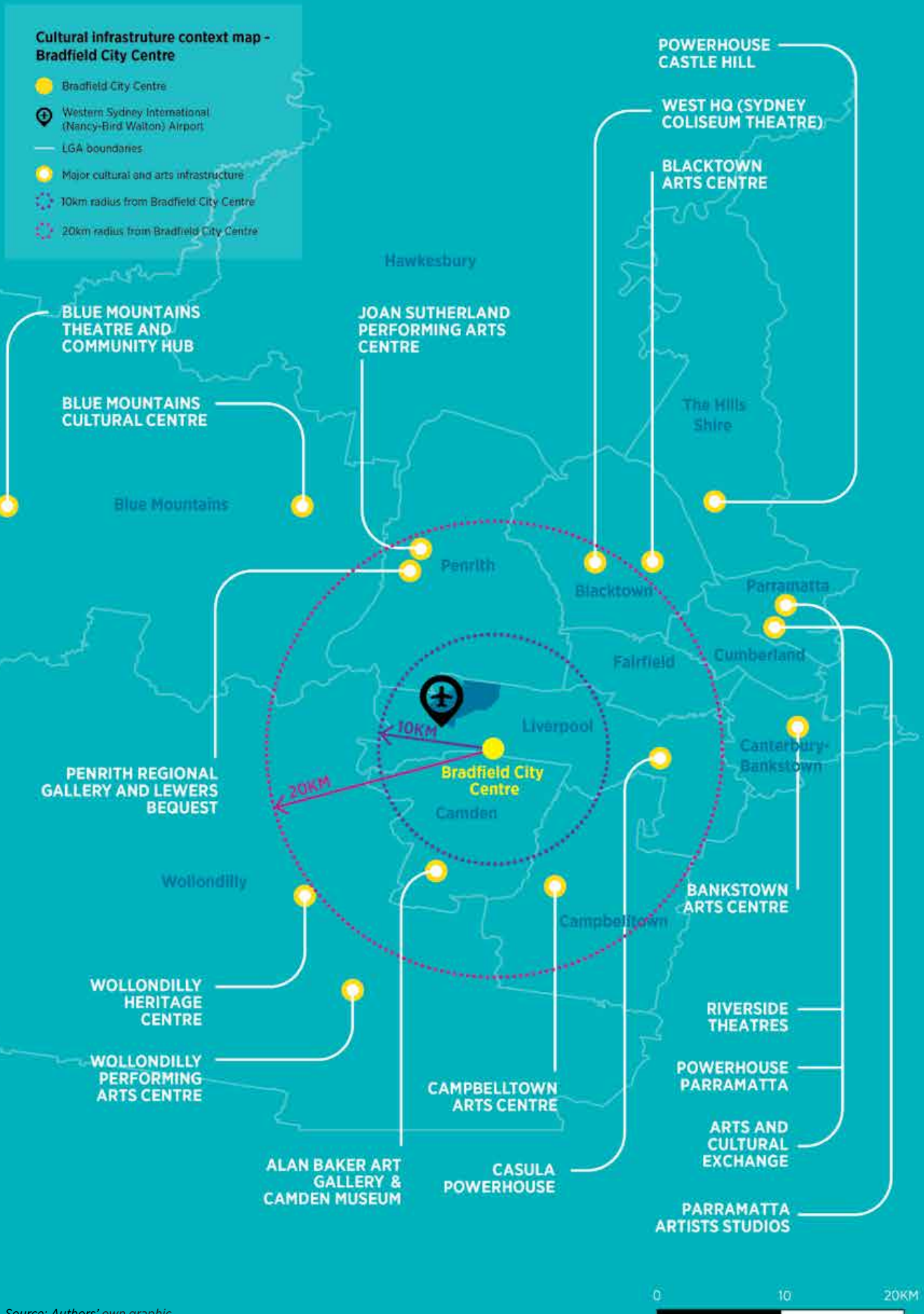
A short metro ride from the new 24/7 Western Sydney International Airport, Bradfield City Centre's Central Park will welcome visitors from across the globe. The 2-hectare city centre landmark will be a beautiful and functional space for community members to gather, rest and play. The park will feature integrated public art, encouraging curiosity and discovery of the landscape.

With its strategic location and ambitious vision, Bradfield is poised to become a thriving, resilient urban centre. There is a significant opportunity to build creative industries into the Bradfield development from the start to ensure not only a rounded and liveable city for residents but also to improve access to international markets via the new airport.

Through enhanced public transport connections, Bradfield has great potential to raise the profile of existing creative industries in Western Sydney and contribute to the national creative economy by embedding creative services within the manufacturing sector. Given the strategic importance of the Bradfield development, it is important to consider not just the local creative industries, but its potential role in leveraging and bolstering the creative and cultural sector on a global stage.



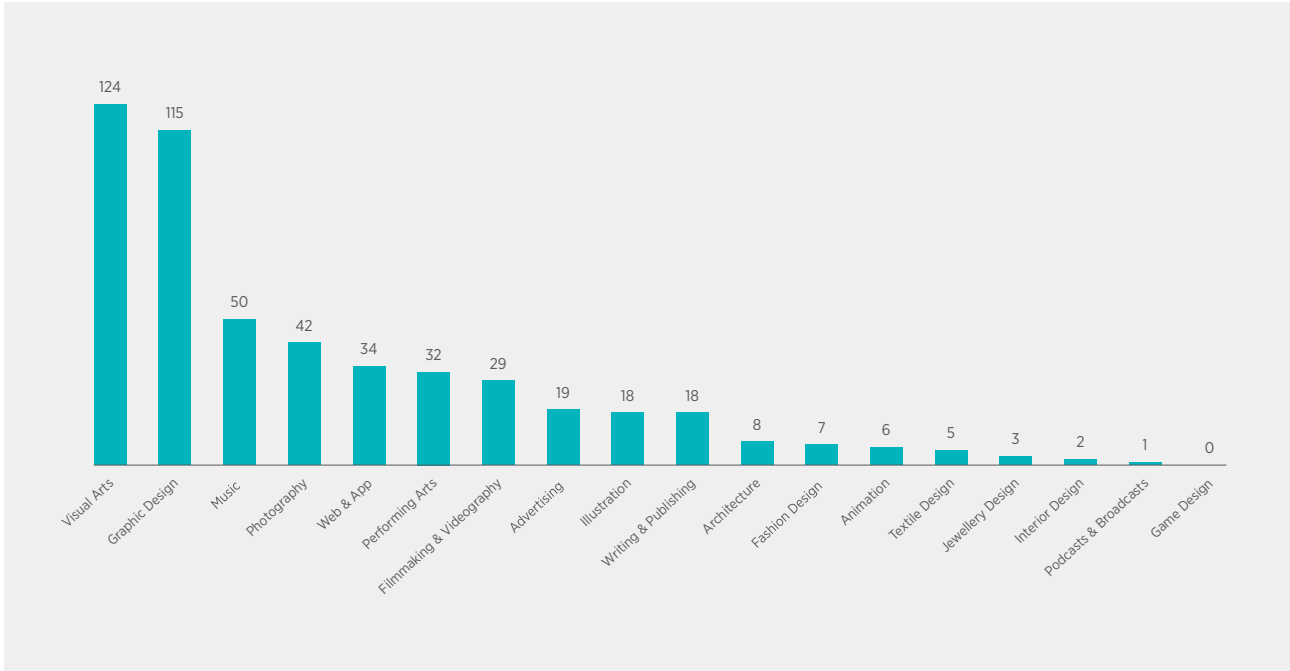
**Map 11. Bradfield City Centre in relation to major cultural production venues and institutions within a 10 km and 20 km radius**



Source: Authors' own graphic.

# EXISTING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SURROUNDING BRADFIELD CITY

Figure 8. Creative services in the eight LGAs surrounding the Bradfield development



Source: Creative West (2023).

## CASE STUDY

### TONSLEY INNOVATION DISTRICT

[TONSLEY.COM.AU](https://www.tonsley.com.au)

The Tonsley Innovation District in Adelaide, South Australia, is a dynamic hub for advanced manufacturing, technology, innovation and creative industries. Located on the site of a former Mitsubishi car manufacturing plant, Tonsley has been transformed into a mixed-use precinct that blends industry, research, education and creative enterprises with residential and retail spaces. Home to over 30 businesses, including Siemens, SAGE Automation, Tesla and various design and digital media firms, Tonsley fosters collaboration across sectors. Educational institutions like Flinders University are also part of this ecosystem, promoting industry-academia partnerships. The district's design emphasises sustainability, featuring green spaces, renewable energy systems and adaptive reuse of existing structures. Tonsley supports innovation through initiatives like the Tonsley Manufacturing Innovation Hub and co-working spaces for startups, including those in the creative sector—this blend of creative and industrial activities positions Tonsley as a model for urban regeneration and economic growth.

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

## 01. Cultivate a coordinated vision:

Given that Bradfield City is under construction, a clear and coordinated approach to developing creative industries is essential. Creative industries and activities should be actively accounted for in the vision. This vision will ensure that investments and initiatives are aligned towards common goals, maximising the potential of creative industries in Bradfield and Western Sydney more broadly.

## 02. Explore manufacturing and creative industry intersections:

Initiatives like the Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility (AMRF) are key sites for collaboration between the manufacturing and creative sectors, fostering innovation and economic development.

## 03. Utilise public spaces for cultural storytelling:

Use the public realm as a canvas for cultural storytelling through public art to communicate narratives, values and experiences that resonate with residents and visitors alike.

## 04. Centre and promote Indigenous cultural and creative output:

Attract international and interstate visitors by emphasising the significance of Country and Indigenous cultural knowledge and creative output. Support performances and festivals that showcase local talent, fostering both local community engagement and tourism.

## 05. Foster international relations through creative exports:

Promote Australian creativity on the global stage to build tourism and export markets and foster international opportunities for Australian creatives. Provide dedicated spaces for creative tourism, inviting Australian artists to showcase their products and performances, thereby promoting cultural exchange and economic growth.



*Guests at the launch of a book by Kate Fagan, held at WSU.*

# PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Supporting the Bradfield City Centre Master Plan, an Art Strategy has been prepared to ensure that during the years of construction and development, there is a consistent approach to decision-making around the city's activation. The strategy aims to enhance the quality of public spaces, including parks, streetscapes and buildings. It identifies a distinctive local character for Bradfield. Additionally, the strategy notes potential projects across cultural facilities, public art and cultural programs.

The Authority has selected priority projects to support the early stages of Bradfield City Centre's development and which align with the staging of the city. As part of the strategic planning for public art and cultural initiatives, an Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel has been established. The panel comprises representatives from Western Sydney arts organisations and government with an intimate knowledge of the local cultural sector. The panel provides expert advice on planned projects and connects the Authority with the local cultural sector.

In August 2024, "Entangled Gardens", a public art commission in Central Park, was designed as a collaboration between artist Janet Laurence and Darug creative practitioners and knowledge holders Leanne Tobin, Jamie Eastwood and Kylie Colemane. The Central Park commission will set a strong precedent for Bradfield City Centre, demonstrating the Authority's commitment to establish Bradfield City Centre as a gathering place for arts, culture and entertainment, drawing on the continuous knowledge of local Indigenous practice.

To enhance the launch of Bradfield's First Building, a creative producer will be embedded within the Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility. The creative producer's presence will ensure a diversity of activity and promote key elements of Bradfield's narrative to a public audience.

The Authority is committed to delivering Bradfield City Centre, Australia's first new city in 100 years, unlocking and accelerating creative and cultural opportunities in Western Sydney for businesses and communities.



First Building housing the initial AMRF where a creative producer will be embedded.  
Image: Bradfield Development Authority.



Central Park will provide Bradfield City Centre's main civic space during the early stages of development.  
Image: Bradfield Development Authority.



Central Park is envisioned as a key community gathering site.  
Image: Bradfield Development Authority.

## Bradfield City Centre construction progress underway





Future events space identified in the Bradfield City Centre Master Plan, for later stage development.  
Image: Bradfield Development Authority.

06

# INNOVATION CASE STUDIES

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This section presents a range of positive examples of multidisciplinary infrastructures and innovative initiatives designed to support and foster creative industries.

## LAUNCH PAD

LAUNCHPADLIVE.COM.AU

**Designed to develop entrepreneurs and startups, Launch Pad offers a range of programs focused on building knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial mindset, alongside incubation and acceleration support.**

It strengthens industry–university connections through translation and commercialisation partnerships and fosters technology-enabled SMEs with enhanced supply chain collaboration. Launch Pad provides mentorship and practical advice through engaging events and programs aimed at lowering barriers for emerging entrepreneurs and facilitating the testing of business ideas and market concepts. This initiative nurtures local talent while significantly contributing to the growth and diversification of the regional innovation sector.



Above: Launch Pad Demo Day. Below: Launch Pad Ignition Cohort 3. Photo by Nataly Thomson.

## INDIGENOUS CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

[WWW.WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU/WESTERN-GROWTH/ICOE](http://WWW.WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU/WESTERN-GROWTH/ICOE)

**The Indigenous Centre of Excellence at Western Sydney University, located on Darug land at the Parramatta South Campus, is set to become a significant cultural and creative hub in Western Sydney.**

This Indigenous-led project will celebrate and promote Indigenous histories, fostering cultural exchange, resilience and understanding through an array of dynamic facilities and programs.

Key features of the centre will include an art gallery and artist studios, a performance theatre, a cinema, an Indigenous library and community spaces, all designed to showcase contemporary Indigenous expression.

The Indigenous Centre of Excellence will also house the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education, an Indigenous Research Institute, media and language labs, a social enterprise café, and outdoor spaces such as the Indigenous garden and amphitheatre.

By working closely with Indigenous designers, elders and community members, the Indigenous Centre of Excellence will honour the rich traditions and knowledges of Indigenous peoples and play a pivotal role in the creative and cultural landscape of Western Sydney.



*Images courtesy of the winning design team: Sarah Lynn Rees, Jackson Clements Burrows Architects, Peter Stutchbury Architecture, Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture, Uncle Dean Kelly, Hills Thalix, and Flux consultants.*

## SMART (SOCIÉTÉ MUTUELLE DES ARTISTES)

[SMART.COOP](https://www.smart.coop)

**Smart is a cooperative production house that supports creatives by offering employment security while allowing them to run independent projects.**

With 1,700 members and a network of over 6,000 freelancers, Smart empowers cultural and creative professionals across Europe. The cooperative provides social security, insurance and fair contracts, fostering economic and organisational growth. By promoting co-ownership and member influence, Smart enhances collaboration and visibility for creatives, enabling them to focus on their work without the burdens of running a business. Smart's decentralised platform strengthens the creative community, fostering collaboration and self-organisation across Europe.



*"Cosmetic demons: a choreographic salon" by Sindri Runudde. Photo credit: Robin Jonsson.*

## FARADAY HOUSE, MELBOURNE

[FARADAYHOUSE.COM.AU](https://www.faradayhouse.com.au)

**Faraday House, originally built as a recording studio for 3XY in the 1960s, has been reimaged as a creative hub in Melbourne's Carlton.**

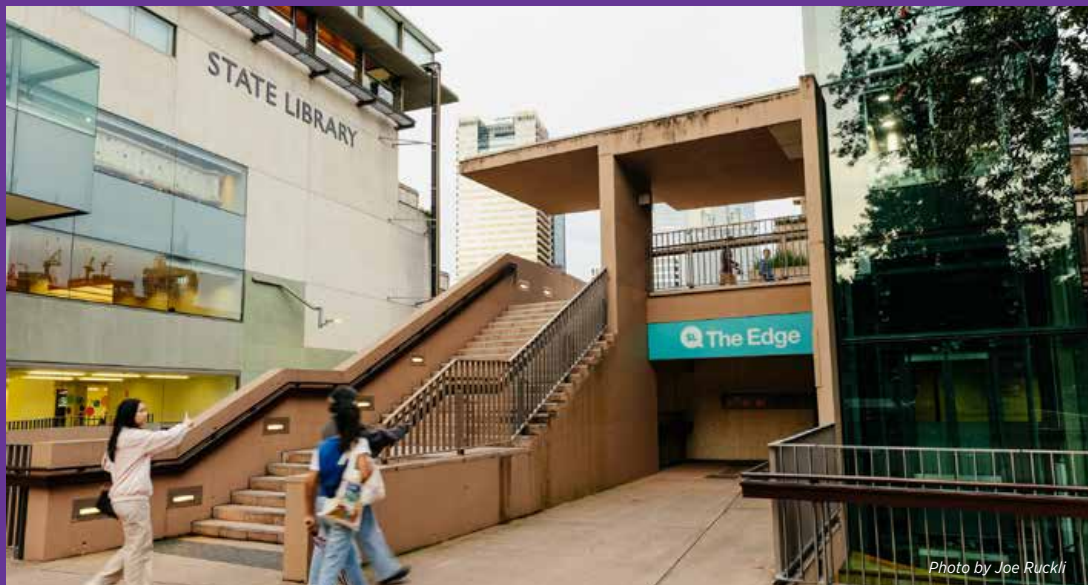
Now home to a diverse range of professionals, including record producers, music promoters, graphic designers and architects, it fosters a dynamic environment for collaboration and innovation. This redevelopment not only preserves the building's historical essence but also provides contemporary, adaptable workspaces that cater to the needs of today's creative professionals. By housing a variety of creative industries under one roof, Faraday House facilitates networking and collaboration while enhancing Melbourne's vibrant cultural scene. Its blend of functionality and community spirit makes it a key asset in the city's creative economy.

## THE EDGE, BRISBANE STATE LIBRARY

[SLQ.QLD.GOV.AU/VISIT/SPACES/EDGE](http://SLQ.QLD.GOV.AU/VISIT/SPACES/EDGE)

**The Edge at Brisbane's State Library is a vibrant hub for makers and creatives, offering access to state-of-the-art resources and technology.**

The space includes a fabrication lab, recording studios and collaborative workspaces, which provide tools for artists, designers and innovators to bring their projects to life. The Edge hosts a wide range of events and workshops, such as DSLR photography classes, laser cutter training and sewing courses, fostering skill development and collaboration. This dynamic environment empowers Brisbane's creative community to experiment, innovate and grow in a supportive, resource-rich setting.



*Photo by Joe Ruckli*



*Patrons using the Digital Media Lab. Photo: Joe Ruckli.*

## BRAND X, SYDNEY

BRANDX.ORG.AU

**Brand X is a non-profit arts organisation that supports independent artists by operating creative spaces with affordable pricing, artist programs and residencies to stimulate the development of boundary-pushing, Sydney-based work.**

Brand X partners with property developers, landlords and local governments to support artists from various disciplines, including performing, recording, experimental and visual arts. Their approach includes offering subsidised workspaces, creative development opportunities and site-specific projects that foster artistic innovation and community engagement. The organisation focuses on sustainability and entrepreneurial skills, helping artists generate income and build resilient practices beyond traditional funding. Brand X's commitment to providing high-quality, accessible spaces plays a crucial role in revitalising local communities and enhancing Sydney's cultural landscape. Their model not only supports artistic creation but also contributes to the broader cultural and social fabric of the city.



*Image top left: Performance at the event 'Akavata, a Brand X end-of-year activation at the City of Sydney Creative Studios. Photo: Christina Mishell.  
Image top right: Audience members interacting with immersive experience 'Spoons' by Saskia Ellis and Witchings as part of The Flying Nun Season 8, a performance residency program by Brand X. Photo: Jacquie Manning.  
Image bottom: Band Rehearsal at the City of Sydney Creative Studios (CoSCS) operated by Brand X. Photo: Jacquie Manning.*

## TWT CREATIVE PRECINCT

[TWTPROPERTY.COM.AU/CREATIVE-COMMUNITY](http://TWTPROPERTY.COM.AU/CREATIVE-COMMUNITY)

**The TWT Creative Precinct, located in St Leonards, Sydney, is a prime example of integrating creative industries into urban redevelopment. This precinct offers a range of versatile spaces, including studios, galleries and collaborative areas designed to support artists and creative businesses.**

By providing affordable, purpose-built facilities, it addresses the demand for dedicated creative infrastructure in a highly accessible location.

The precinct facilitates interaction and collaboration among creatives, contributing to the broader cultural landscape of Sydney. Its strategic positioning and facilities not only support local artists but also attract new creative enterprises, enhancing the area's role as a dynamic hub for artistic and cultural activity. The TWT Creative Precinct thus plays a crucial role in fostering a thriving creative community within the city.



## ENMORE ROAD SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

**Enmore Road has been established as NSW's first permanent special entertainment precinct (SEP) following a successful two-year trial.**

This designation has revitalised the area, which is known for its vibrant arts scene and renowned bars, venues and restaurants in Sydney's Inner West. The SEP status allows hospitality venues to trade an additional hour for live entertainment and extend outdoor dining until 11.00 pm, contributing to a thriving nightlife and supporting local businesses and artists. The Inner West Council's decision to make the SEP status permanent reflects the precinct's role in enhancing Sydney's live music scene and revitalising the night-time economy. The success of Enmore Road is now serving as a model for future nightlife precincts across NSW, showcasing the potential for rebuilding and energising night-time economies in other regions.

## SYDNEY CREATIVE LAND TRUST

**A Creative Land Trust is currently being explored in Sydney through a collaboration between the City of Sydney and Create NSW, with a feasibility study being led by the Committee for Sydney, to be supported by an advisory group of key stakeholders.**

A Creative Land Trust is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to securing land and property for creative industries. This could include spaces such as artist studios, rehearsal rooms, recording studios and other creative production spaces, ensuring they are affordable and accessible to creatives. Depending on the outcomes of the study, this may operate by acquiring or leasing properties. The model, which has been successfully implemented in cities like San Francisco and London, is being considered to address the affordability crisis faced by Sydney's creative community. With seed funding from the City of Sydney and the NSW Government, the new entity would operate independently to create and sustain creative workspaces. The aim is to prevent further loss of creative spaces, fostering a vibrant cultural economy in the context of shrinking creative infrastructure and rising costs for creatives.

# RESEARCH TEAM

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## **DR VERA XIA**

Dr Vera Xia is a Lecturer in Design and Urban Technologies at the University of Sydney's School of Architecture, Design and Planning. She holds a PhD in urban planning, focusing on the impacts of smart technologies in urban open spaces and their relationship to loneliness among young adults. A creative visual storyteller, she has produced a film that received high commendation at The Festival of 'Endangered' Urbanism 2021. Vera co-founded the 'Estate Happy Hour' podcast, where she discusses colours, art, and cities in her mother tongue. With prior professional experience in strategic planning and urban design, she is dedicated to researching and contributing to sustainable and equitable cities.



## **DR ANGELA SMITH**

Dr Angela Smith is an interdisciplinary social researcher with expertise in political and human geography, focusing on the relationship between people and their spatial contexts. With a background in design and documentary film, as well as a Masters in Migration Studies, Angela is interested in the intersection between migration, politics and creative production. Angela brings over a decade of experience working with diverse communities and international organisations. Her consultancy work includes collaborations with the Centre for Migration and Refugee Studies, UNHCR, IOM, and Forensic Architecture. Her research skills include qualitative and quantitative methods, monitoring and evaluation, research design and research project management. Her research interests span human mobility, colonial histories, and border dynamics, offering nuanced insights into contemporary global challenges.



## **DR KATRINA SANDBACH**

Dr Katrina Sandbach is an academic at Western Sydney University. Drawing on her experience as a designer and educator, her practice-led research uses visual and digital methods to study place, identity and creative communities. She investigates the social, cultural and economic impacts of creative industries, with a focus on supporting current and future creative practitioners through education and community initiatives. Her work aims to build creative capacity in under-represented communities and open new opportunities for diverse voices in the field. Through interdisciplinary approaches, Katrina seeks to create tangible change in the creative landscape and foster innovation in education and practice.



# RESEARCH TEAM

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## **DOLLA MERRILLEES**

Dolla Merrillees is the Director Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University and was previously the Director and CEO of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney and the Associate Director, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation. She is a member of the Sydney Review of Books Advisory Board, the Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel - Western Sydney Parklands Authority, and sits on the board of FORM Dance Projects and Varuna, the National Writers' House and the working group of Western Sydney Arts Alliance.



## **PROFESSOR NEIL PERRY**

Professor Neil Perry is Chief Economist at the Centre for Western Sydney and the School of Business at Western Sydney University. He specialises in ecological and environmental economics, focusing on cost-benefit analysis and transitioning economies. His work includes advising on the future economy of regions like the Hunter and Lithgow under climate change policies and contributing to the NSW Government's Regional Expert Panel. At the Centre, he leads major projects such as Unlimited Potential: An Economic Plan for Western Sydney and Unlocking Green Infrastructure. Perry's research integrates social, cultural, and ecological values into economic modelling and policy development.



## **DR RHONDA ITAOU**

Dr Rhonda Itaoui is a social researcher with expertise in human geography, and the geographies of diversity and multiculturalism. As Director of the Centre for Western Sydney, she is committed to amplifying community voices and collaboratively working with various stakeholders, including researchers, industry professionals and government, to develop policies that meet community needs and foster the success of the Western Sydney region. Her research approach is community-centric, prioritising the needs and aspirations of the people in Western Sydney, a community characterised by its youth, cultural diversity and opportunities.



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# ENDNOTES

1. The number of additional jobs depends on the industry. For example, \$6.4 billion extra output in the creative arts creates 53,827 jobs. For internet publishing and broadcasting, \$6.4 billion extra output creates 11,993 extra jobs. The figure of 24,155 additional direct jobs was calculated by averaging the direct jobs that would arise from \$6.4 billion extra output in each of the creative industries.
2. Creative Australia (2023); Newbigin, (2015).
3. Creative Australia (2023).
4. Deloitte (2021).
5. McCutcheon & Cunningham (2022).
6. Creative Australia (2023).
7. Itaoui et al. (2023).
8. Sandbach (2021).
9. Sandbach (2021).
10. Hartley et al. (2012, p. 56).
11. Deloitte (2021).
12. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021).
13. Note that economic data is only available at the level of 2-digit codes. There is no economic data for 4-digit codes. For example, sub-category 6924, "Other Specialised Design Services", includes graphic design, fashion design, interior design, textile design, etc. However, the economic data is only available at the level of the overall category 69, "Professional, Scientific and Technical Services", which includes many sub-categories that are not relevant to the creative industries.
14. Printing (including the reproduction of recorded media) ANZSIC code 16; Publishing (excluding internet and music publishing) ANZSIC code 54; Motion picture and sound recording activities ANZSIC code 55; Broadcasting (excluding internet) ANZSIC code 56; Internet publishing and broadcasting ANZSIC code 57; Creative and performing arts activities ANZSIC code 90.
15. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021).
16. United Nations (2022).
17. Drishti IAS Foundation (2023).
18. Kalitova et al. (2016).
19. Stevenson et al., 2017: 6
20. This analysis was prepared by CfWS's Chief Economist, Professor Neil Perry.
21. An LQ is the share of employment in an industry in a region such as Western Sydney divided by the share of employment in the industry in a broader region such as Greater Sydney. If an industry has a higher level of employment share in Western Sydney than in Greater Sydney, Western Sydney has a degree of specialisation in that industry. This may be the result of factors such as policy and historical institutions but in a free and open environment, the specialisation is due to a comparative advantage, which should be exploited.
22. A shift-share analysis identifies the extent to which the growth or decline in an industry is due to local comparative advantages. Some local employment growth in an industry can be due to overall national or state trends in employment or national industry trends. The shift-share analysis removes these national or state effects and industry effects from the local growth to derive the "local effect" or the "regional competitive effect". If the local effect is positive, the industry has comparative advantages in the region that are not attributable to industry trends or the economic trends in the broader region (Greater Sydney).
23. McCutcheon & Cunningham (2023).
24. McCutcheon & Cunningham (2023).
25. Bakhshi et al. (2013); Higgs & Lennon (2014).
26. Census employment figures are known to undercount employment by varying amounts depending on the Census year. All Census counts are an undercount of total population and in addition, some people do not state their workforce status or industry. Counts by place of work also exclude those with no fixed workplace address. For this reason, it is recommended that for total job numbers, users look at the "Employment by industry (Total)" estimates on economy.id, which are updated on an annual basis using the ABS Labour Force survey and are less prone to undercounting.
27. Itaoui et al. (2023).
28. .Id (Informed Decisions) (n.d).
29. McCutcheon & Cunningham (2022, 2023).
30. Marks (2023).
31. Itaoui et al. (2023).
32. NSW Government (2023).
33. NSW Government (2023).
34. Itaoui et al. (2023).
35. TAFE campuses in Western Sydney: Blacktown (Nirimba, Blacktown, Mount Druitt); Blue Mountains (Katoomba, Wentworth Falls); Campbelltown (Campbelltown, Macquarie Fields); Canterbury-Bankstown (Padstow, Bankstown); Cumberland (Granville, Lidcombe); Fairfield (Wetherill Park); Hawkesbury (Richmond); Liverpool (Miller, Liverpool); Penrith (Nepean, Kingswood) and The Hills (Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill).
36. NSW Department of Planning (2022).
37. Marks et al. (2022).
38. Dunne (2023); Hoffert (n.d).
39. Ali (2023).
40. Cook (n.d.).
41. (NSW Government, 2023, p. 25).
42. According to ABS 2021 Census data.
43. Statistical Areas Level 4 (SA4s) provide a sub-state socioeconomic breakdown in government statistics. Most SA4s have a population above 100,000 people to provide sufficient sample size for labour force estimates. In regional areas, SA4s tend to have smaller populations of 100,000 to 300,000 people. In cities, SA4s tend to have larger populations of 300,000 to 500,000 people.
44. See Appendix B – Supplementary Data.
45. See Appendix B – Supplementary Data.
46. Thomas et al. (2023).
47. Itaoui et al. (2023).
48. This includes funding for the following programs: Create NSW Arts and Cultural Funding, Create NSW Covid Relief Funding, Create NSW Film Festival Fund, the Culture Up Late program and the NSW Government Creative Capital Fund.
49. Itaoui et al. (2023).
50. Department of Creative Industries (2023).
51. NSW Government (2023).
52. Trembath & Fielding (2020).
53. Sandbach (2021).
54. While the dataset has tried to capture all relevant businesses and organisations, it may be that some have been unintentionally omitted.
55. Zherdev (2014).
56. European University Foundation (n.d.).
57. Perry & Sitas (2019).
58. Stevenson et al., 2017: 28-36
59. City of Parramatta Council (2024a).
60. City of Parramatta Council (2021).
61. City of Parramatta Council (2024b).

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: ECONOMIC DATA

Table 10. Local worker occupations in the creative industries

OCCUPATIONS	2021			CHANGE 2016-2021
	WESTERN SYDNEY	WESTERN SYDNEY (%)	REST OF SYDNEY (%)	WESTERN SYDNEY
<b>Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors</b>	6,327	0.7	1.9	1,033
<b>Media Professionals</b>	1,511	0.2	1.1	143
<b>Arts Professionals</b>	1,353	0.2	0.3	-29
<b>Arts and Media Professionals</b>	45	0	0	22
<b>Printing Trades Workers</b>	1,644	0.2	0.1	-525
<b>Total Persons</b>	869,688	100	100	77,264

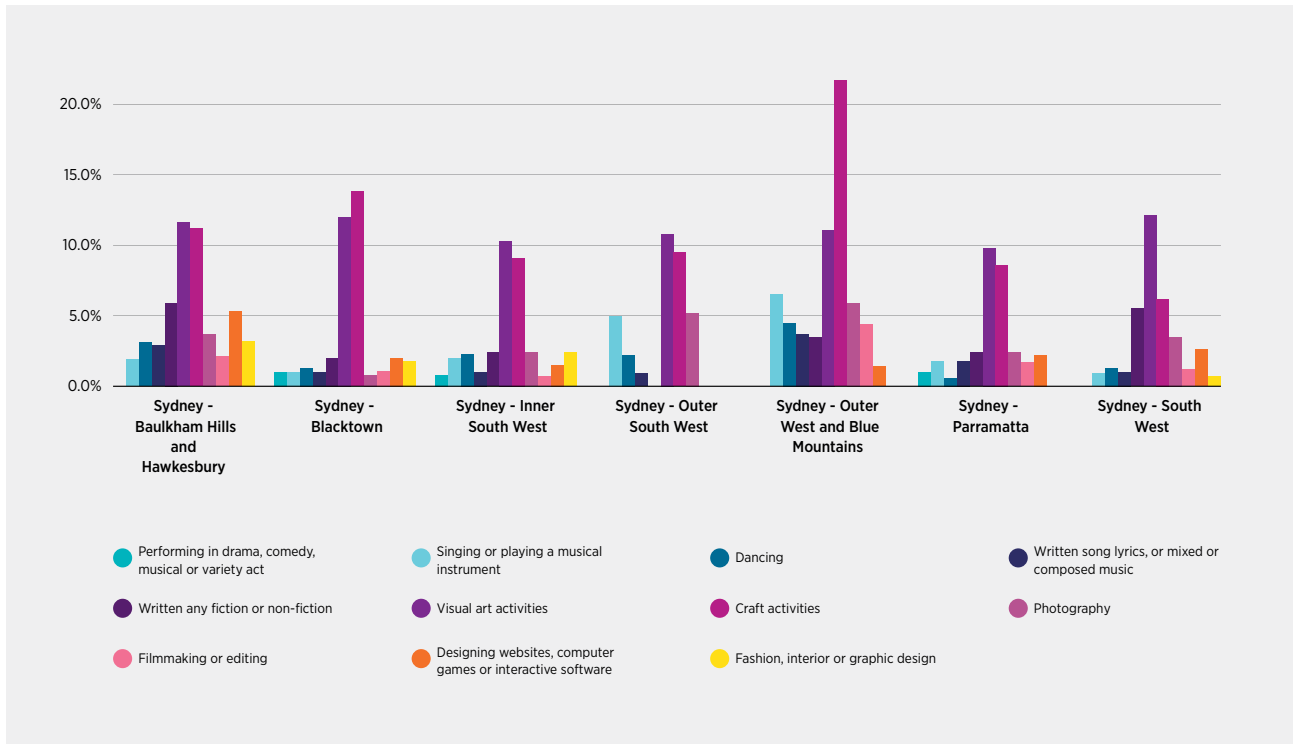
Compiled and presented in *economy.id* by *id informed decisions consulting*.

Source: ABS, *Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0)*.

## APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

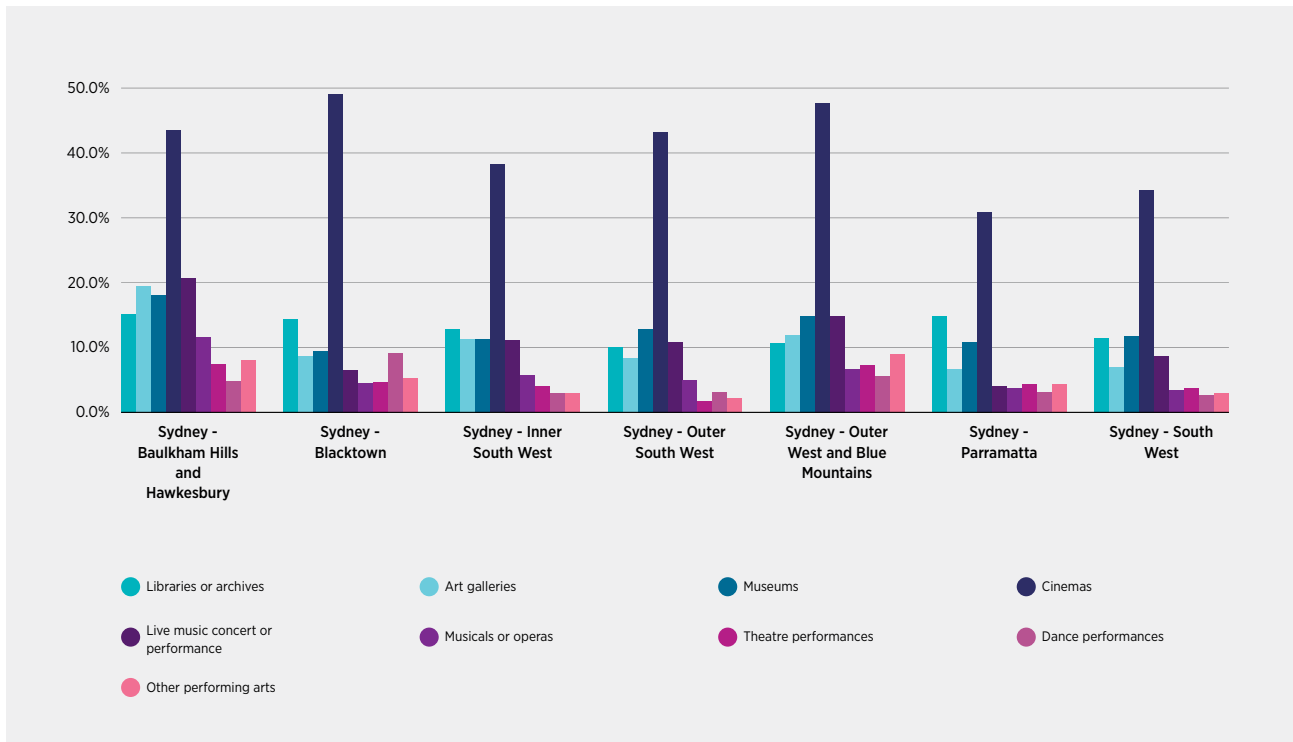
**Figure 9. The cultural participation rate in 2020–2021 in Western Sydney by Statistical Area Level 4**

Data source: Cultural and creative activities, 2021-22 - Adults



**Figure 10. The cultural attendance rate in 2020–2021 in Western Sydney by Statistical Area Level 4**

Data source: Cultural and creative activities, 2021-22 - Adults



## APPENDIX C: DATA INFORMING MAPS

### MAP 9: CREATIVE SERVICES AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION IN PARRAMATTA CBD

The following businesses are drawn from the Creative West database at the time of its last update. This may not be an exhaustive list. These businesses have been mapped on Map 9 of this report. All businesses listed below are located within Parramatta, NSW, 2150, unless otherwise stated.

NUMBER ON MAP	NAME	CREATIVE WEST DATABASE CATEGORY
1	Creades	Advertising
2	DigiPline	Advertising
3	Flagship Communications	Advertising
4	Hardman Communications	Advertising
5	AiiMS	Advertising
6	Minuteman Press	Advertising
7	New Motion Studio	Advertising
8	All About Media	Advertising
9	SIMBAA Digital	Advertising
10	Social Register	Advertising
11	SydWest Media	Advertising
12	The Branding Lab	Advertising
13	WebGlobals	Advertising
14	White Key Marketing	Advertising
15	Dwell Designs	Advertising
16	Nimbus Architecture and Heritage	Architecture
17	RK Designs	Architecture
18	Coloursock Productions	Filmmaking & Videography
19	Beyond the Hedge Creative	Graphic Design
20	Creative Freedom	Graphic Design
21	DBG Creative Agency	Graphic Design
22	Design Room	Graphic Design
23	DesignQ	Graphic Design
24	Digital Montage	Graphic Design
25	DSIGNS	Graphic Design
26	Elite Graphics	Graphic Design
27	Gyrate	Graphic Design
28	Media by Medusa	Graphic Design
29	Muralisto	Mural & Street Art
30	River City Voices	Music
31	Club Weld	Music
33	GPhoto	Photography
34	Brain Stream	Web & App
35	Clixpert	Web & App
36	Digital Atrium	Web & App

NUMBER ON MAP	NAME	CREATIVE WEST DATABASE CATEGORY
37	Move Ahead Media	Web & App
38	Parramatta Web Design   Webdesigncity	Web & App
39	SEO Worx	Web & App
40	Star Config	Web & App
41	Stralia Web	Web & App
42	Vikilinks	Web & App
43	WordPress Developer Sydney	Web & App
44	Zeal Digital	Web & App
45	PARI	Galleries & Museums
46	Brislington Medical and Nursing Museum	Galleries & Museums
47	NSW Lancers Memorial Museum	Galleries & Museums
48	Old Government House	Galleries & Museums
49	Collaboratory	Maker & Co-Working Spaces
50	Grounded Space (George St)	Maker & Co-Working Spaces
51	Launch Pad Parramatta	Maker & Co-Working Spaces
52	Space and Co. Parramatta	Maker & Co-Working Spaces
53	Crossroads Music School	Music
54	Form Dance Projects	Performing Arts
55	Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta	Performing Arts
56	ACE	Places To Learn
57	City of Parramatta Art Society	Galleries & Museums
58	Clement Art School Parramatta	Places To Learn
59	Guitar Factory Parramatta	Places To Learn
60	Madakto Art Centre	Places To Learn
61	Mahan Art Centre	Places To Learn
62	Natwar School Of Arts and Dance	Places To Learn
63	Parramatta Academy Of Music	Places To Learn
64	Parramatta Actors Centre	Places To Learn
65	Shine Music School	Places To Learn
66	Sweatshop	Places To Learn
67	Sydney Story Factory	Places To Learn
68	Western Sydney University (Parramatta City Campus)	Places To Learn
69	Western Sydney University Innovation Hub	Places To Learn
70	Creative Hello: Sahra Salon	Events
71	What the World Needs EP Launch	Events. Music
72	Jam Session @ Barbershop x Biennale: Ensemble Dandana & Friends	Events. Music and Performing Arts
73	Leanne & Shay Tobin in Conversation	Events. Visual Arts
74	Barbershop x Biennale Pop-Up	Events. Cultural Production. Performing Arts
75	ABC Parramatta	Media
76	Powerhouse Parramatta	Cultural Production. Galleries & Museums





*Kate Fagan, Director of The Writing Zone and Director of WSU Writing and Society Research Centre.*



Wendy Chandler of WSU, filmmaker Lurdes Pires and artist Blak Douglas talk art and activism at Casula Powerhouse.



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CREATIVE

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