PAC AUSTRALIA
BENCHMARK REPORT

VENUE ACTIVITY 2025

ANALYSIS OF THE 2025 AUSTRALIAN VENUE BENCHMARKING SURVEY

The PAC Australia office is located on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar. Our staff and members live and work across Australia and we acknowledge all the Traditional Owners of Country, recognising the continuous connection to lands, waters, and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past and present.

Performing Arts Connections Australia
Level 2, 533 Hay Street, Perth WA 6000
www.paca.org.au
admin@paca.org.au

© PAC Australia 2026

Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Jordan Gibbs and Kristine Royall of Culture Counts™ and PAC Australia. We would like to thank PAC Australia for their support through the development and delivery of this research project. We would also like to thank respondents for their participation in this project.

Date of Preparation: September 2026

HIGHLIGHTS

Performance Attendance

1.9 million
Regional venues

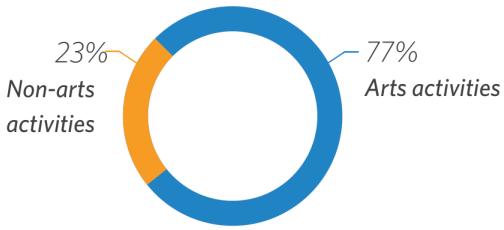
836k
Metropolitan venues

540k
Outer metropolitan venues

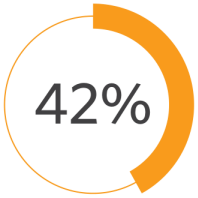
3.27 million
Total Performance Attendance

*Reported across 56 venues, with a median of **38,291** overall.*

Arts vs Non-Arts Activity



Local Production Representation



Of venue arts activities come from the venue's local area

Staff Employed

3.3k

Total staff employed across 58 venues, with a median of 39 per venue

Median Utilisation

Of available days being utilised in primary performance spaces

Aggregate Total Turnover

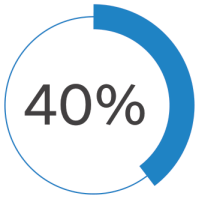
$114 million
Regional venues

$72 million
Metropolitan venues

$17 million
Outer metropolitan venues

$203 million
Total Turnover

Contemporary Music, Theatre and Comedy



The three most frequently reported production genres, together making up 40% of all reported productions.

Workshops, Schools and Talks

26

The three most common community activity types, with venues reporting an average of 26 workshops, talks and school events combined.

CONTENTS

Highlights 3

1 Background & Methodology 5

1.1 Background 5

1.2 Acknowledgements 8

2 Respondent Profile 9

2.1 Location, Management and Spaces 9

2.2 Capacities 10

2.3 Staff 12

3 Financial Snapshot 13

4 Activity and Attendance 17

4.1 Organisation Activity 17

4.2 Utilisation 18

4.3 Attendance and Visitation 22

5 Programming & Production Origin 28

5.1 Production Origin & Programming Methods 28

5.2 Financial Arrangements & Risk 30

5.3 Community Engagement 33

1 BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

1.1 Background

Performing arts centres are vital cultural infrastructure. They bring people together, support artists and producers, and connect communities across Australia with live performance in all its forms.

As the national peak body for the performing arts presenting sector, PAC Australia supports the presenters, producers, venues and creators who make this work possible. Through advocacy, leadership, professional development, sector intelligence and relationship-building, PAC Australia strengthens the national network that enables diverse, high-quality arts experiences to reach audiences in metropolitan, regional and remote communities.

PAC Australia's members are more than venues for hire. They are gathering places, creative partners, cultural leaders and active programmers. They present, curate, commission and support work across artforms including theatre, music, dance, comedy, circus, cabaret, opera and contemporary performance. Together, they form an essential national platform for artistic development, cultural participation and audience connection.

"Presenting organisations are central to activating the performing arts sector. Not only are they fundamental to the delivery of performance work, but the investment these organisations make in arts programs stimulates the employment of arts workers across all sizes, scales and artforms and delivers on the promise of the power of the performing arts for artists and audiences everywhere."

Katherine Connor, Executive Director, PAC Australia

Every two years, PAC Australia's Benchmarking Survey captures the operational, financial, workforce and programming characteristics of performing arts centres. The survey gives members a practical evidence base for comparison and planning, while supporting stronger advocacy and a clearer national understanding of the sector's scale, value and impact. An example of this is the National Presenter Outlook, where we used some data from this benchmarking report, combined with additional data from presenters to build a broader and nuanced picture of programming and audience behaviours.

The data is also used more broadly by local government, planners and sector stakeholders considering the development, renewal or operation of performing arts infrastructure. It provides a rare national reference point for informed decision-making and helps tell the story of a sector that is central to Australia's cultural life.

In this report, "performing arts centre" is used broadly to describe venues of different sizes, models and purposes — from single-auditorium theatres to multi-space arts precincts.

Full access to all benchmarking information is available to PAC Australia members through the PAC Australia website.

Non-members can access the *Venue Activity Report* free of charge, providing insight into the collective impact of Australia's performing arts centres on the national performing arts ecology.

Methodology & Respondent Profile

This report is based on the *2025 PAC Australia Benchmarking Survey*, which was distributed to PAC Australia members, government-subsidised non-member venues, and members of other state-based presenter associations. The biennial survey has been conducted since 2003 and is published as two separate reports: the *Venue Charges and Salaries Report* and the *Venue Activity Report (previously known as the Economic Activity Report)*.

Report scope

The *Venue Charges and Salaries Report* is provided as part of PAC Australia's member benefits (non-members may access this report for a fee). It gives performing arts centres access to detailed industry information to help them review salaries, venue charges, economic activity and operational settings, and benchmark their organisation against others nationally.

The *Venue Activity Report* is available to the broader sector. It measures the scale of operations, staffing, turnover, attendance and programming sources across performing arts centres nationally, supporting venue management, planning for new performance spaces and programs, and PAC Australia's advocacy work.

Where appropriate or of notable interest, comparisons have been made with previous survey results.

Additional data

PAC Australia members can access a spreadsheet of individual survey responses to support more direct, like-for-like venue comparisons. Responses for annual turnover and attendance from organisations that requested anonymity have been removed from this spreadsheet. The survey response data is not available for sale outside the PAC Australia membership.

Survey changes in 2025

Two changes were made to the 2025 survey:

- The "Attendance and Activity" questions were updated to better reflect current practices in Producer/Presenter partnerships when seeking to program works.
- To avoid replication in questioning, the "Policies" section was moved to PAC Australia's soon to be released Presenter Classification Guide, which will report the policies, frameworks and guides that relate to their programming and operations.

Terminology used in this report

For clarity, this report uses the term "performing arts centres" interchangeably with "centres" and "venues". When referring specifically to a theatre or performance area within a venue, the report uses the term "spaces".

This terminology allows the report to include the different types of spaces housed within performing arts centres, including theatres, studios, rehearsal rooms, multipurpose spaces and outdoor areas. When the term "venue" is used, it generally refers to the overall physical facility.

Reporting periods and analysis approach

Centres collect data according to their own reporting requirements and timeframes. PAC Australia's biennial benchmarking therefore uses each respondent's individual reporting year. For some centres, the reporting period is the financial year from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025; for others, it is the calendar or operational year

from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025. This approach maintains consistency with previous benchmarking while recognising the varied reporting cycles used across the sector.

Responses to each section were voluntary and the number of responses relating to the analysis of each question is noted against the tables and figures in this report.

The analysis seeks to include respondents from venues appropriate to the different types and sizes. Segmentation is applied where meaningful differences between responses are identified. Where segmentation is not possible, the report notes the relevant limitation. Comparisons with previous surveys have been included where appropriate to identify emerging trends and changes over time.

Respondent Overview

Data is displayed in this report largely segmented by venue turnover, venue capacity or venue regionality. Members wishing to directly compare their venue with respondents can download the full response data spreadsheet through their PAC Australia membership login. Annual turnover and attendance responses have been removed from the member spreadsheet where the respondent requested that they remain anonymous. This means that the analysis presented here may differ from analysis generated from the data spreadsheet, where responses have been excluded.

Response Rate

A total of 59 surveys were returned for the *2025 PAC Australia Benchmarking Survey.* This response level is broadly consistent with recent survey rounds, with 58 responses recorded in 2023 and 57 responses recorded in 2021. None of the large capital city, state government venues responded to the 2025 survey. As a result, total sector activity is likely to be higher than reported here (refer the National Presenter Outlook). However, their absence also means the results are not skewed by larger venues, which can significantly lift measures such as staffing and turnover.

1.2 Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the following venues for providing responses to the 2025 questionnaire.

ACT

Belco Arts

Canberra Theatre Centre

Tuggeranong Community Arts

NSW

Albury Entertainment Centre

Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre

Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub

Central Coast Arts Ltd ,The Art House Wyong

Central Coast Council

City of Coffs Harbour

Civic Theatre Newcastle

Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre

Entertainment Venues, Tamworth Regional Council

Glasshouse Arts Conference and Entertainment Centre

Glen Street Theatre

Goulburn Mulwaree Council (Goulburn Performing Arts Centre)

Griffith Regional Theatre

Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

Manning Entertainment Centre

Orange Civic Theatre

Seymour Centre, University of Sydney

Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre

The Pavilion Performing Arts Centre Sutherland

The Twyford Hall Complex Ltd

Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre

NT

Araluen Arts Centre

AANT Centre

QLD

Brisbane Powerhouse

Brolga Theatre

Empire Theatres Pty Ltd

Logan Entertainment Centre

Kingston Butter Factory

Rockhampton Regional Council

Townsville City

SA

Australian Dance Theatre

Country Arts SA - Chaffey Theatre

Middleback Arts Centre

Northern Festival Centre

Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre

Vitalstatistix

VIC

Cardinia Cultural Centre

City of Greater Bendigo T/A Bendigo Venues & Events

City of Kingston

Frankston Arts Centre

Geelong Arts Centre

Knox City Council

Monash University Performing Arts Centres (MPAC)

Portland Arts Centre - Glenelg Shire Council

Riverlinks Venues (Greater Shepparton City Council)

The Cube Wodonga

The Round

WA

ARTRAGE INC

Albany Entertainment Centre. Arts Culture Trust

Arts & Culture Trust

Arts Margaret River Incorporated

City of Albany

City of Gosnells

City of Greater Geraldton

City of Karratha

Mandurah Performing Arts Centre

2 RESPONDENT PROFILE

There were 59 responses to the 2025 survey, representing 34% of the 172 PAC Australia venue members (as of July 2026). As responding to each section was voluntary, the number of responses relating to the analysis of each question is noted against the tables and figures in this report.

This section reveals the location and turnover of organisations, number of performance spaces and audience capacities, and looks at their venue ownership, management models and staff numbers.

2.1 Location, Management and Spaces

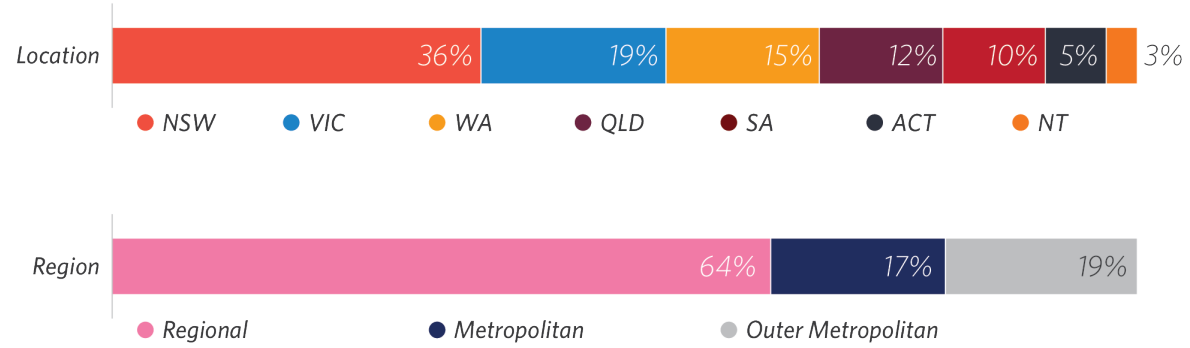
Figure 1. Respondent Location

The survey captured responses from organisations located in almost all Australian states and territories, except for Tasmania. The largest representation of 2025 respondents came from venues in New South Wales (36%), Victoria (19%), Western Australia (15%) and Queensland (12%).

The majority of respondents are located regionally (64%), whilst 36% of responding venues are in either metropolitan (17%) or outer metropolitan (19%) areas.

Regional members accounted for a larger share of the survey sample compared to their proportion of PAC membership, (64% of the survey sample compared to 57% of membership base), demonstrating a higher survey completion rate among this group.

What is the geographical location of your venue?

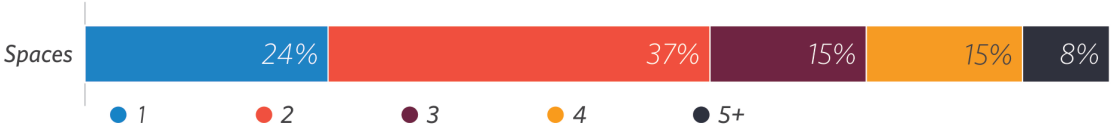


n = 59

Figure 2. Number and Type of Spaces (Percentage of Respondents)

The majority of venues have either one (24%) or two (37%) performance spaces. The remaining 39% of respondents have three or more spaces available to hire.

How many [performance] spaces are available for use or for hire at your venue or centre?



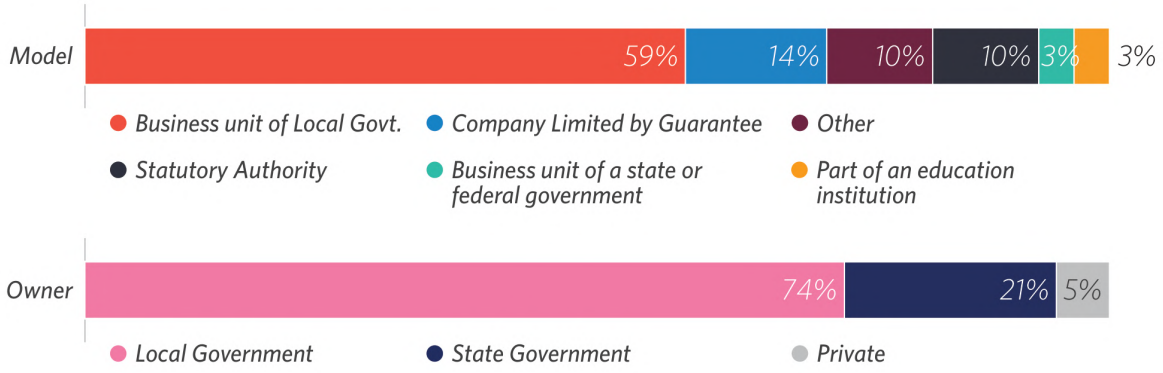
n = 59

Figure 3. Venue Management Model & Owner Structure

Over half of respondents reported their management model as a 'business unit within a local government' (59%), followed by 'company limited by guarantee' (14%) and other forms of incorporation (10%).

Most venues were owned by either local (74%) or state (21%) government, while 5% were privately owned.

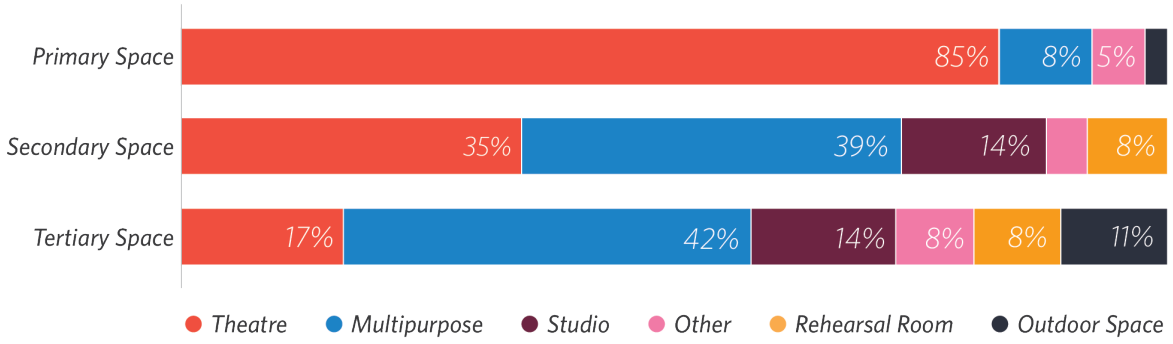
It is worth noting that this classification is self-reported and therefore, some respondents may distinguish between contractor and local government roles differently.



n = 58 (Model); 58 (Owner)

Figure 4. Type of Spaces (Percentage of Respondents)

The primary space of most venues was typically a theatre (85%), whereas secondary spaces were almost equally likely to be a theatre (35%) or multipurpose space (39%). Tertiary spaces were most likely to be classified as 'multipurpose' spaces (42%).



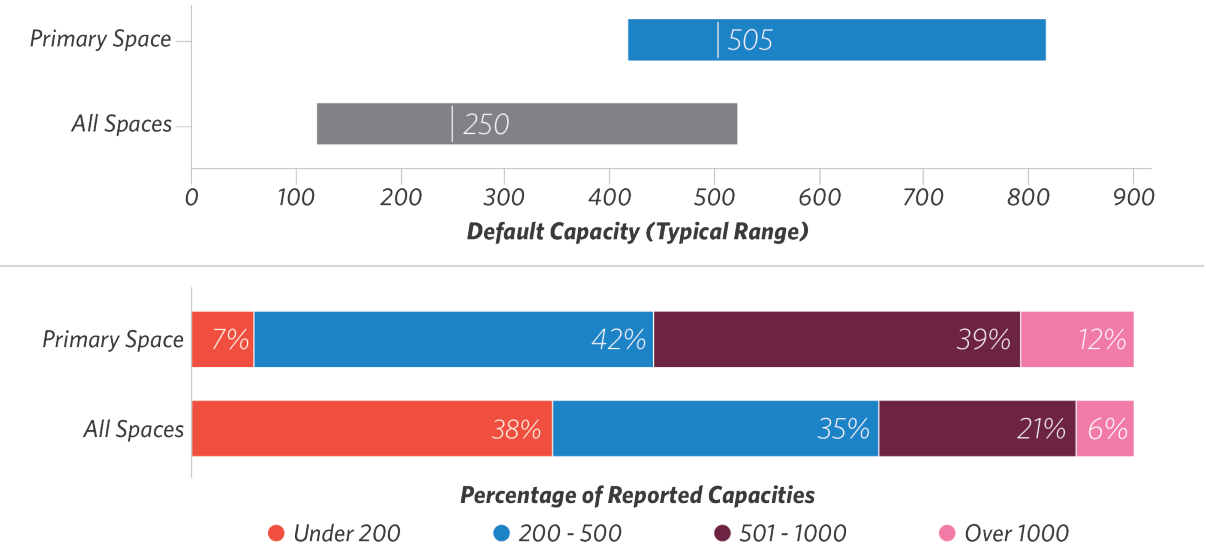
n = 59 (Primary); 49 (Secondary); 36 (Tertiary).

2.2 Capacities

Figure 5. Space Audience Capacity

The capacities of primary spaces typically ranged from 418 to 818, with the median capacity being 505. The typical range has shortened since 2023, where the survey results revealed a typical capacity ranging from 410 to 840, and a median of 559.

Most respondents said that their primary space default capacity was between 200 to 500 (42%) or 501 to 1,000 (39%). When capacities of up to four spaces are aggregated, the overall median capacity is 250, this comes in slightly smaller than the 2023 median of 292.

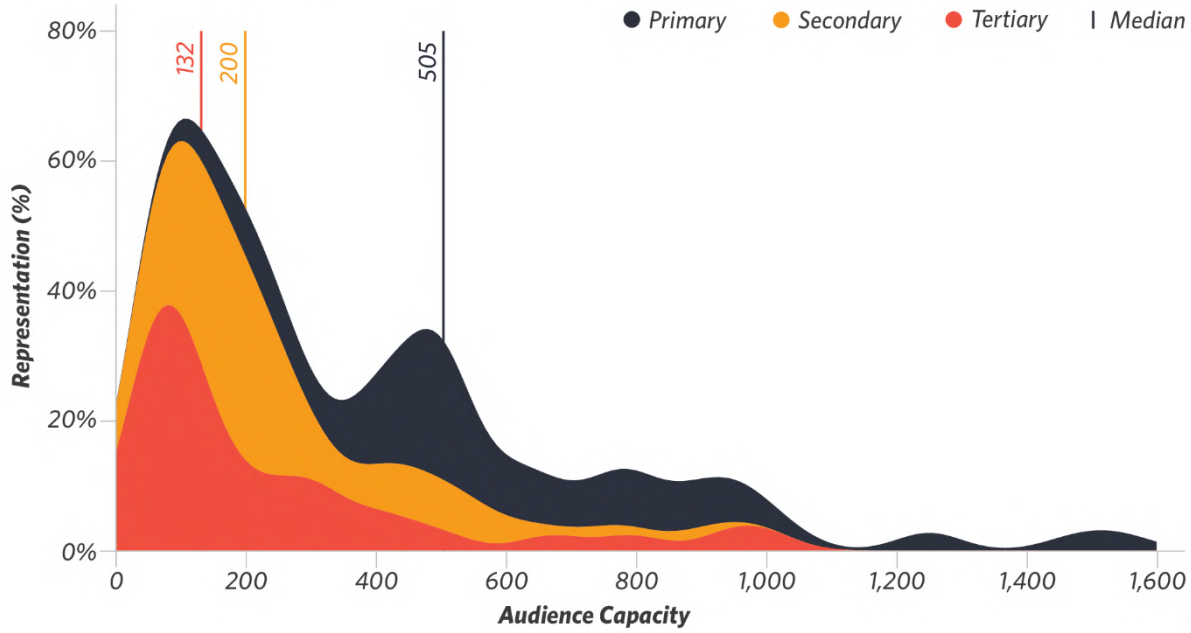


Note: Typical range refers to the interquartile range, or the middle 50% of all responses. n = 59 (Primary Space); 164 (All Spaces)

Figure 6. Audience Capacity by Space (Distribution)

Secondary and tertiary performance spaces were generally smaller than primary spaces. The below distribution chart highlights that many primary, secondary and tertiary performance spaces exist in the 100 to 200 capacity range, with a notable proportion of primary spaces also sitting around the 500 range.

What is default capacity of up to three spaces in your venue?



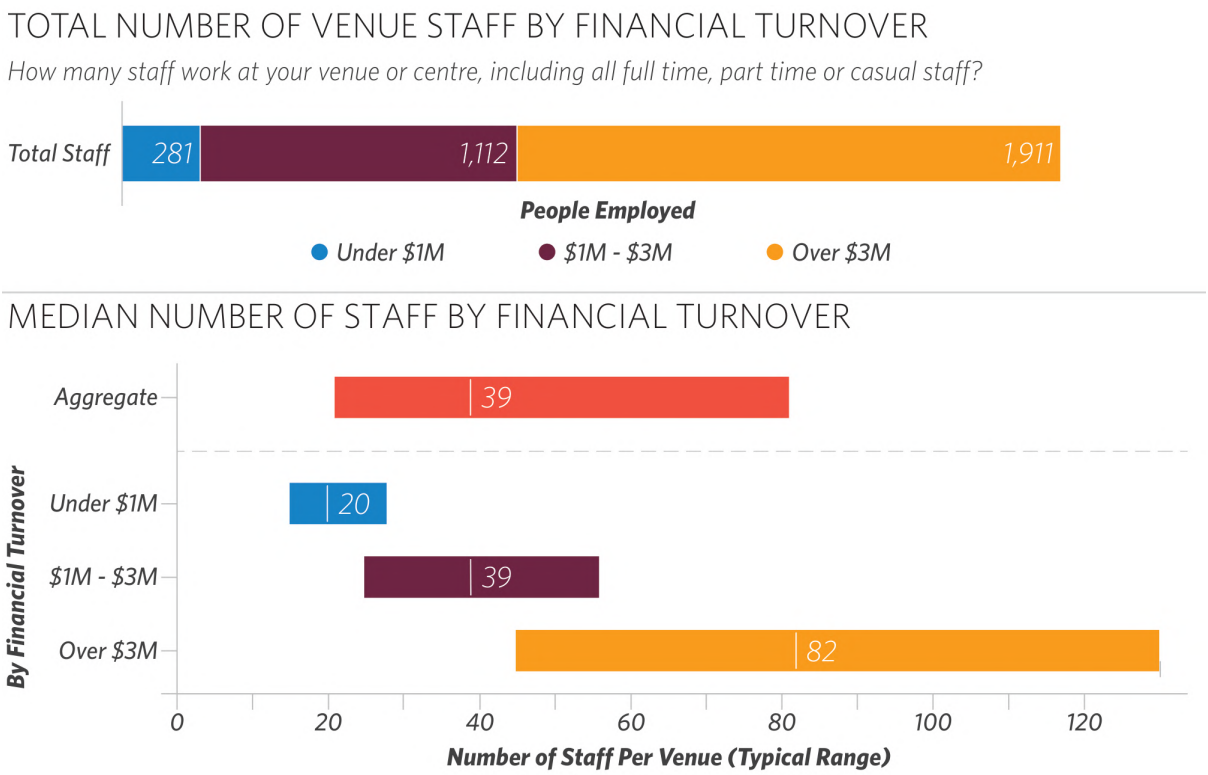
n = 59 (Primary); 49 (Secondary); 36 (Tertiary).

2.3 Staff

Figure 7. Venue Staff by Turnover

Across 58 respondent organisations, the total number of staff employed was 3,332. More than half of total staff (57%) worked at venues with over $3 million in turnover.

The median total number of staff (full time, part time and casual) for all organisations was 39 (4 more than the 2023 median). Venues with a turnover greater than $3 million had the greatest number of total staff, with a median of 82 (an increase of 13 compared to the 2023 median of 69), whilst those with a turnover less than $1 million had a median of 20 staff, compared to 14 recorded in 2023. Below is a breakdown of the total number of staffing roles by turnover and employment type.



Note: Typical range refers to the interquartile range, or the middle 50% of all responses. n = 58 (Total staff); 57 (Staff by Turnover). The turnover chart excludes 28 staff at one venue without turnover data.

Figure 8. Median Number of Venue Staff by Financial Turnover and Employment Type

Turnover	Full Time	Part Time	Casual	Total Staff	*N Count*
Under $1m	2	3	14.5	20	13
$1m - $3m	6	4	26	39	25
Over $3m	18	7	52	82	19
Aggregate	**8.5**	**3**	**26**	**39**	57

Note: Employment types are medians of reported E3 roles; Total Staff is the median E1 reported headcount.

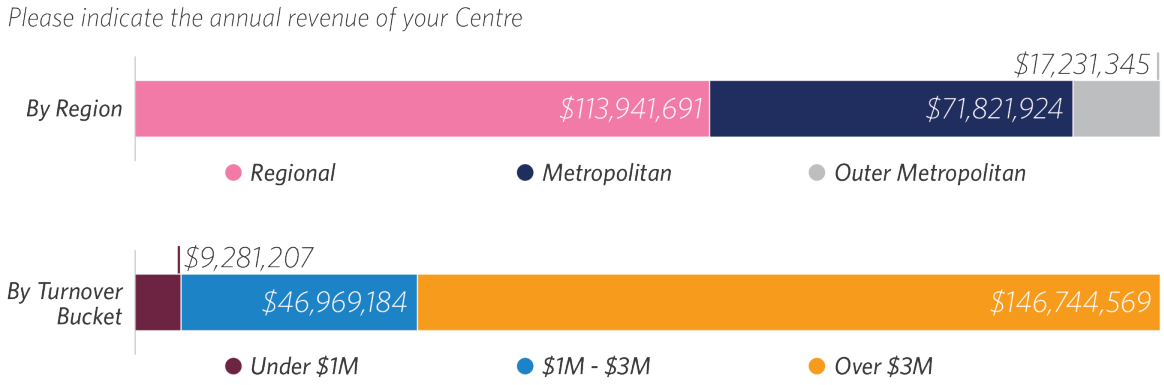
3 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

The following section provides a financial overview based on turnover data collected as part of the survey. The charts below show aggregate total turnover across all surveyed organisations, segmented by venue capacity to explore the relationship between scale and revenue, and broken down by state to highlight regional variation.

Figure 9. Aggregate Total Turnover

Survey respondents reported approximately $203 million in total turnover. Regional venues accounted for more than half of this total, at $114 million, followed by metropolitan venues at $72 million and outer metropolitan venues at $17 million.

Venues that turned over more than $3 million were responsible for 72% of the total turnover recorded from all venues.



n = 57 (By Region); 57 (By Turnover).

Figure 10. Turnover Distribution

When reviewing financial turnover results, three clear groupings emerge. Respondents with a turnover between $1 million to $3 million represented the largest proportion (44%), with those in the 'under $1 million' and 'over $3 million' categories representing 23% and 33% of the sample respectively.

The median turnover was consistent with previous surveys, recorded at $2.1 million in both 2025 and 2023.

The following chart illustrates the distribution of respondents within their turnover buckets (in $500,000 increments). Within these increments, the largest number of respondents (11) had a turnover of $500,000 to $1 million, or $2 million to $2.5 million (9 respondents).

The middle grouping (shown in blue on the chart and representing organisations with between $1 million and $3 million turnover) contains the largest number of respondents. Venues with over $3 million turnover account for the largest share of aggregate turnover.

Given the small number of venues with exceedingly high turnover (above $16 million), the median is the better representation of the overall distribution, as the vast majority of respondents reported turnover of less than $3m (67%).

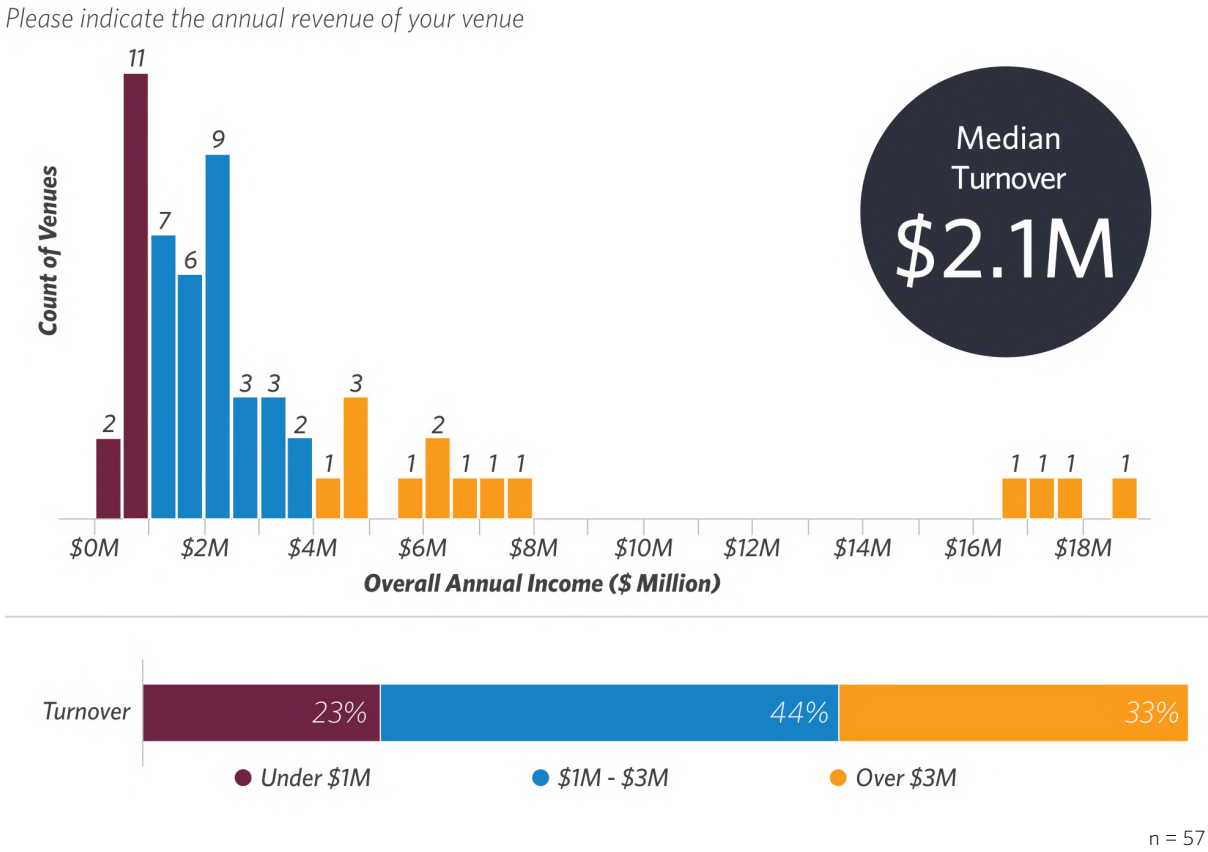
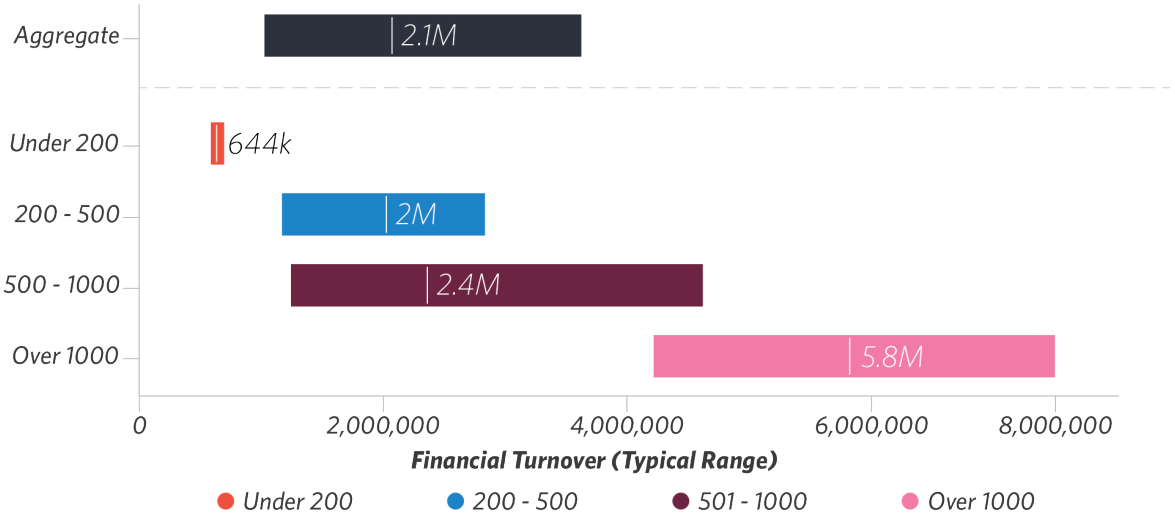


Figure 11. Financial Turnover by Primary Venue Capacity

The median total turnover was just over $2 million, with a typical range of $1.03 million to $3.64 million across all responding venues.

When comparing turnover and capacity of the primary performance space, venues with a capacity between 200 and 500 had a median turnover of just over $2 million. Venues with a capacity between 500 and 1,000 had a similar median of $2.4 million, but a larger range of responses. The largest venues with capacities over 1,000 had a median turnover of $5.8 million.

The table includes 2023 medians for reference.



Note: Typical range refers to the interquartile range, or the middle 50% of all responses. n = 57

Capacity (n Count)	2025			2023
	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	Median
Under 200 (4, 5)	$590,000	$644,083	$698,165	$883,305
200-500 (24, 17)	$1,178,239	$2,035,338	$2,847,104	$1,281,000
500-1000 (23, 28)	$1,245,015	$2,364,680	$4,630,325	$2,567,750
Over 1,000 (6, 4)	$4,218,871	$5,833,037	$7,527,715	$14,492,884
Aggregate (57, 54)	**$1,031,825**	**$2,070,402**	**$3,642,200**	**$2,083,676**

Note: The quartiles represent the start and end of the interquartile range shown in the graph (i.e. 'typical range').

Figure 12. Financial Turnover by State (Median)

This figure presents the median turnover for each state, allowing comparison against the aggregate averages. Because the number of responses per state is relatively small, median results are more sensitive to respondent profile. Even so, they offer a useful indication of the venue sizes that respondents in each state tend to represent.

Respondents from Victoria reported a median turnover of approximately $1.1 million across 10 responses, compared with approximately $2.6 million across 21 responses in New South Wales. This describes the organisations that responded and should not be generalised to all venues in either state.

The table includes 2023 medians for reference.

State (n Count)	2025	2023
NSW (21, 20)	$2,611,955	$2,363,874
ACT (3, 3)	$2,202,448	$1,606,664
QLD (7, 6)	$2,070,402	$4,248,383
WA (9, 6)	$2,052,458	$2,402,094
VIC (10, 15)	$1,075,204	$883,304
SA (6, 0)	$851,557	-

Note: NT results excluded as only one valid response.

Figure 13. Financial Overview – Year on Year Comparison (2019, 2021, 2023, 2025)

The following table aggregates the revenue and expenditure line items, with a response count for each item. In 2025, labour costs accounted for 46% of aggregate expenditure. Self-presentation ticket sales represented 19% of aggregate income, as did local government funding; state and territory funding accounted for 13%. The mix of respondents and response counts varies between survey years, so these figures compare each survey sample rather than a fixed group of venues.

Additional analysis of this figure is available free of charge to members in the *Venue Charges and Salaries Report* that splits by turnover.

Profit & Loss Item (n Count)	**Aggregate**	**% of Total**	**2023**	**2021**	**2019**
INCOME					
Federal Funding (6)	$1,770,994	1%	3%	1%	0%
State/Territory Funding (30)	$25,813,130	13%	10%	38%	4%
Local Gov. Funding (35)	$38,847,193	19%	21%	22%	37%
Non-government Grants (11)	$484,373	0%	0%	1%	0%
Private Support (33)	$4,778,392	2%	2%	3%	2%
Venue Hire (56)	$25,568,024	13%	10%	6%	10%
Self-Presentation Ticket Sales (53)	$39,573,578	19%	18%	10%	13%
Recoverables (42)	$19,568,219	10%	12%	6%	10%
Food and Beverage (52)	$18,204,640	9%	12%	7%	8%
Other Income (57)	$18,122,786	9%	7%	3%	6%
Other Earned Income (38)	$10,263,631	5%	6%	3%	11%
Total Revenue (57)	**$202,994,960**				
EXPENDITURE					
Labour Costs (salaries/fees) (56)	$96,837,193	46%	49%	53%	45%
Training / PD (38)	$578,256	0%	0%	0%	
Marketing / Promotions (51)	$6,595,977	3%	4%	2%	4%
Show Purchases (51)	$15,944,421	8%	8%	6%	10%
Programming / Presenter Exp. (42)	$18,072,815	9%	3%	5%	7%
Production / Technical (45)	$7,004,992	3%	3%	2%	
Food and Beverage (48)	$8,102,042	4%	5%	3%	5%
Administration (53)	$17,714,491	8%	8%	7%	12%
Repairs and Maintenance (52)	$7,682,076	4%	3%	6%	3%
Carbon Reduction / Offsets (2)	$104,127	0%	0%		
Other Expenditure (41)	$30,525,072	15%	17%	16%	15%
Total Expenditure (57)	**$209,161,462**				
Net Profit / Loss (57)	**($6,166,503)**				

Note: These are aggregate income and expenditure shares. Historical samples vary; percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

4 ACTIVITY AND ATTENDANCE

Performing arts venues serve many different communities across Australia, and their activities and attendances vary accordingly. This section explores venue activity, utilisation, visitation and attendance.

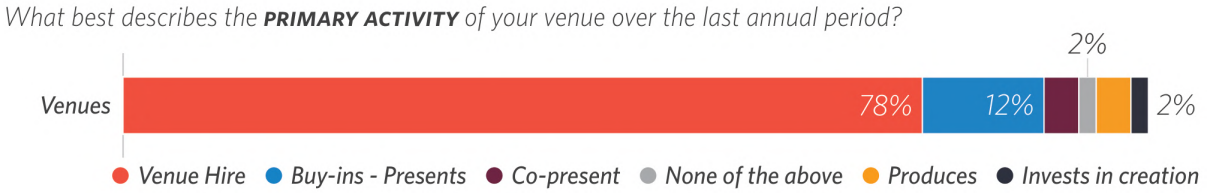
4.1 Organisation Activity

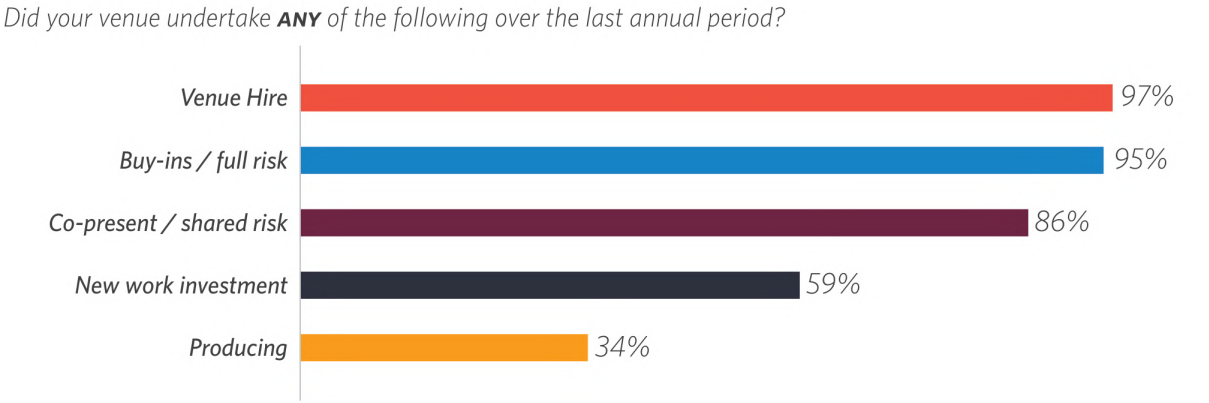
Respondents reported the total number of activities held at their centre annually, including performances, films, lectures, seminars, meetings, conferences, workshops, rehearsals, exhibitions and other events.

Figure 14. Primary Operating Activity

Over three quarters of respondents identified venue hire as their primary activity (78%), followed by buy-in presentations (12%). Whilst this primary activity usage is high, this does not necessarily reflect the purpose of the venue. We can see from the full activity table below that investing in new work, curating and programming works for their communities and producing are also important aspects of a venue's annual activity.

Looking across all activities, almost all respondents offered venue hire (97%), buy-ins/full risk (95%), or co-presentations/shared risk events (86%). Fewer venues invested in new work (59%) or produced their own work (34%).





n = 59.

Note: *Additional options and contemporary language were introduced into this question for 2025 to better reflect the broader range of ways presenters now work with producing companies and local creatives. The effects of COVID lowered activity in 2021, with subsequent changes in booking types post-pandemic, including a reported increase in venues reverting to venue-for-hire only. New options included co-presenting/risk share, investing in new work, and producing work locally. Year-on-year comparison is therefore not available.*

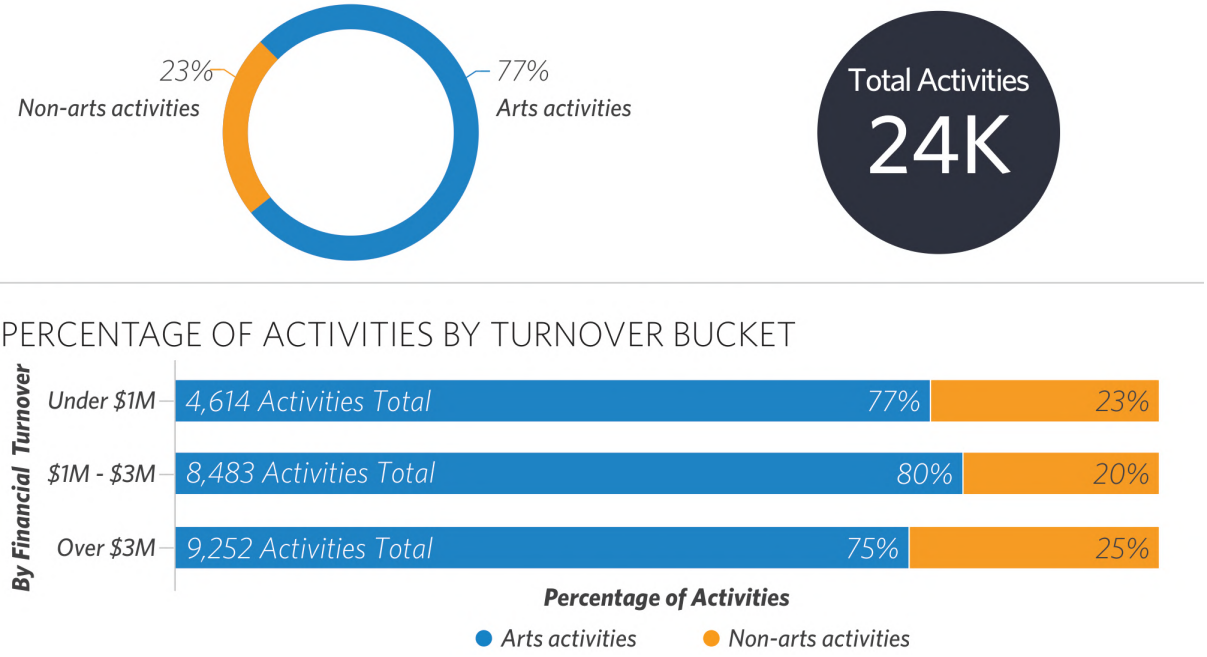
Figure 15. Total Activities

Respondents reported on the total number of activities that were held in their venue, differentiating between performances, events and other types of activities such as conferences or weddings. In aggregate, respondents reported a total of 23,863 activities at their venues. Among the 52 respondents supplying an arts breakdown, 77% of activities were arts activities (17,639 of 22,987).

When comparing results by financial turnover, non-arts activities represented around one quarter of activities in both the smallest and largest turnover groups. For example, 23% of activities in venues with under $1m in turnover were non-arts activities, compared to 25% for venues with over $3m in financial turnover.

The largest share of activities reported by turnover was from venues with over $3m in turnover, reporting 9,252 in aggregate, or 41% of activities with turnover data and an arts breakdown.

What was the total number of activities at your Centre over the last annual period? How many of those were classified as 'arts-related' activities?



Note: Activities represent all forms of venue activity, such as functions, weddings, venue tours, workshops, performances etc. n = 55 (Total Activities); 52 (Arts Breakdown); 50 (By Turnover)

4.2 Utilisation

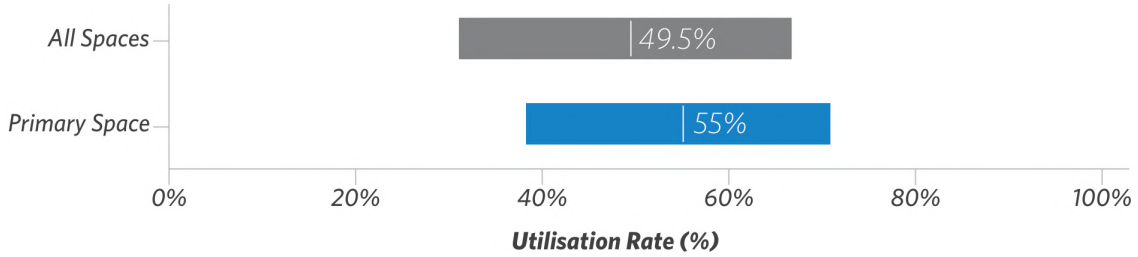
Figure 16. Overall Utilisation (Typical Range)

Utilisation represents the percentage of days a venue was active when compared to the number of days it was available for hire. Primary spaces of venues saw a median utilisation rate of 55%, with a median of 182 active days. This is a decrease from the 2023 result (62%).

Primary spaces are typically more active than secondary or tertiary spaces, but secondary spaces have a wider variety of usage types (i.e. studio or multipurpose compared to primary spaces, which are typically theatres).

The median utilisation across all performance spaces was 49.5%.

Please indicate the total available days and the number of dark days for up to three spaces in your venues.



Note: Typical range refers to the interquartile range, or the middle 50% of all responses. n = 58 (Primary); 141 (All Spaces)

The following table reveals the utilisation rates for venues compared to previous years. Most venues were not available for hire every day of the year, so respondents provided both the number of days their spaces were available and the number of days they were actively used. The 'days available' is calculated by deducting from a full year the days when a performance space is not available for use, or the stage is closed for reasons such as maintenance or holidays. This information is used to calculate the utilisation rate of each space, which are then aggregated to present the median utilisation rate for all respondents.

When comparing utilisation results from previous surveys we see that utilisation is still below the pre-COVID highs of 2019. We note here that 2023 was likely to contain additional presentations originally planned over the 2019-2022 pandemic period and may be cause for inflated utilisation. Notably however, after 2019 the survey methodology was adjusted, increasing the number of responses collected for 'Space 3', which means its 2019 result may be an outlier. Importantly though, the primary space utilisation in 2025 is still 12 percentage points lower than it was in 2019.

Figure 17. Utilisation by Space (Median)

Year		Space 1	Space 2	Space 3	Aggregate
2025	Utilisation	55%	47%	42%	49.5%
	Median # seats	502	200	144	310
	N Count	*58*	*48*	*35*	*141*
2023	Utilisation	62%	49%	45%	53%
	Median # seats	554	180	105	335
	N Count	*56*	*46*	*37*	*139*
2021	Utilisation	35%	31%	27%	34%
	Median # seats	554	200	100	365
	N Count	*55*	*47*	*35*	*137*
2019	Utilisation	67%	44%	61%	61%
	Median # Seats	523	200	148	473
	N Count	*59*	*35*	*19*	*113*

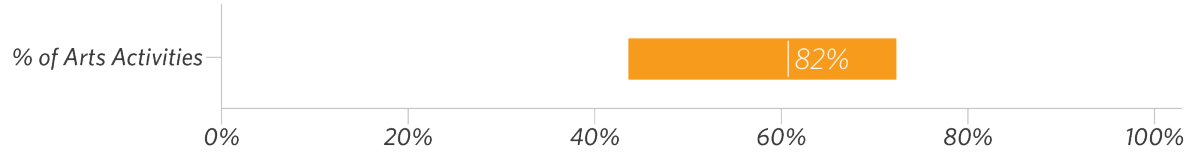
Note: This report calculates the utilisation rate of each space and then presents the median result of all respondents. Utilisation rates for previous years have been recalculated to use this method, which means they differ to the results presented in previous reports. Venues that did not report utilisation are excluded from analysis.

Figure 18. Utilisation Types (Typical Range)

Respondents reported the total number of activities held in their venue, differentiating between performances, events and other activity types. The following analysis reviews the percentage of arts versus non-arts activities and the percentage of performance-based productions considered 'commercial' (as opposed to 'community' productions).

The median percentage of arts activities was 82%, with a typical range of 60% to 97%. This is an increase on the 2023 median of 78% and the 2021 median of 73%, though still below the 2019 median of 88%.

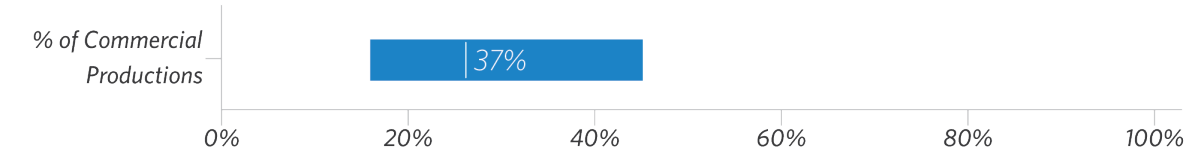
What percentage of your overall activities are arts activities?



Note: Typical range refers to the interquartile range, or the middle 50% of all responses. n = 52

Commercial production hires include a mix of arts and non-arts related activity, for example, theatre productions and conferences. The median percentage of commercial production hires (productions charged a non-discounted rate for venue hire) was 37%, with a typical range of 24% to 62%. This is a decrease on the 2023 median of 58%, the 2021 median of 50%, and the 2019 median of 46%.

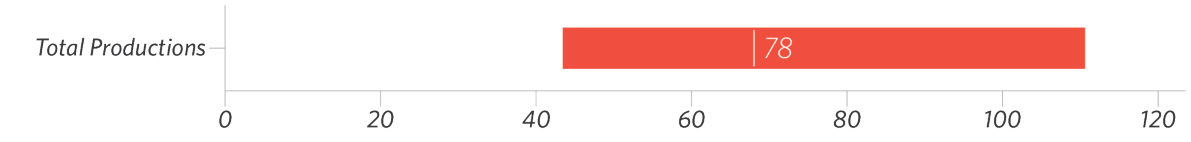
What percentage of the productions your venue hosted were commercial (i.e. did not receive a discounted rate)?



Note: Typical range refers to the interquartile range, or the middle 50% of all responses. n = 47

The median number of total performance-based productions (whether hired or programmed by the venue) was 78, four more than the 2023 median of 74. The typical number of productions hosted ranged from 51 to 124. By comparison, the typical range was 45 to 116 in 2023, 17 to 62 in 2021, and 31 to 103 in 2019.

How many productions has your venue hosted?



Note: Typical range refers to the interquartile range, or the middle 50% of all responses. n = 54

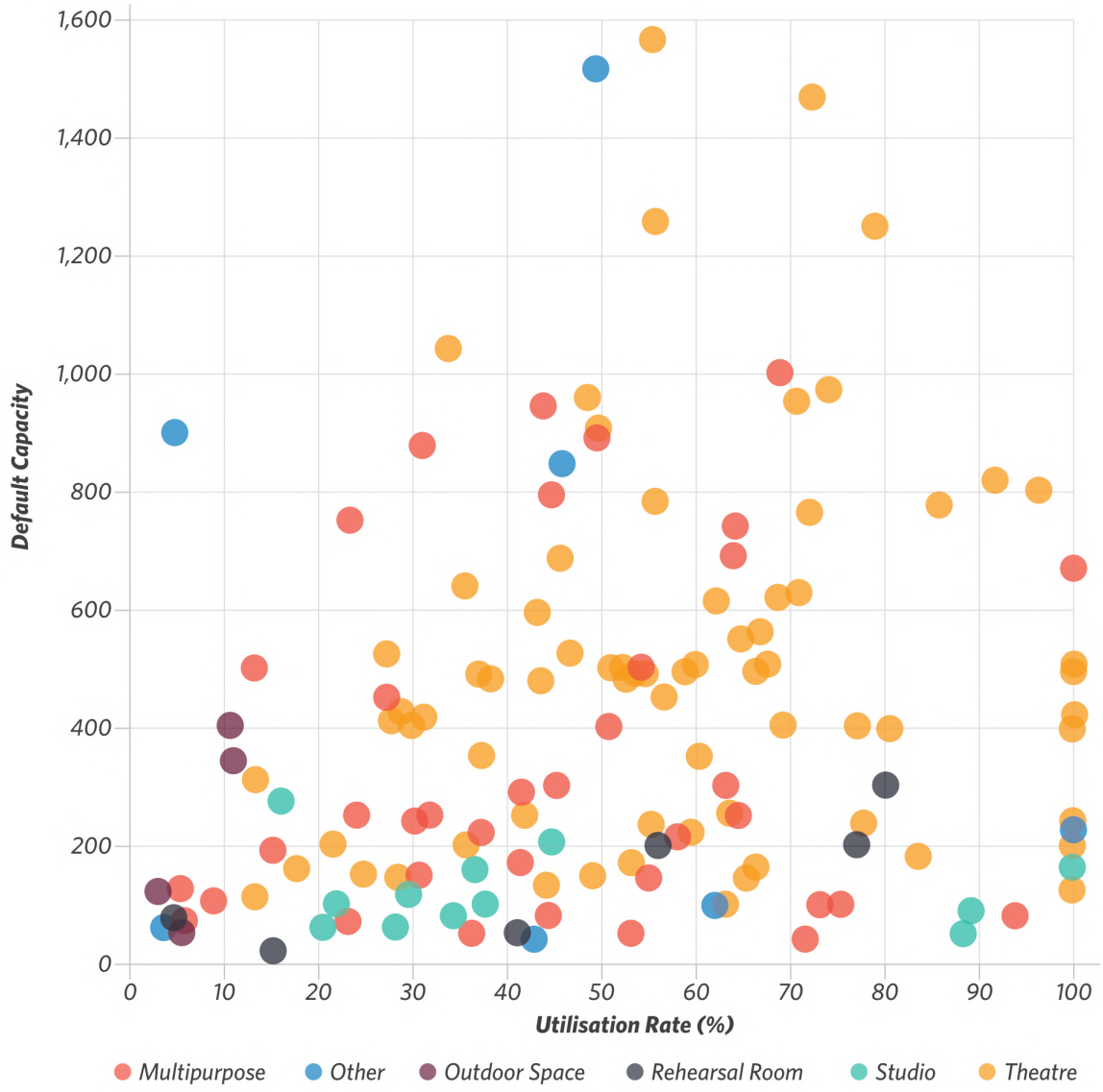
Figure 19. Space Utilisation (Scatter Plot)

This scatterplot reveals the data in greater detail. It plots the audience capacity and utilisation for every performance space within the survey results, with the colours used to indicate what type of space it is.

This plot reveals a mild correlation between audience capacity, venue type and utilisation. Larger capacity performance spaces that were classified as 'theatre' reported higher levels of utilisation when compared to other venues. Comparatively, larger 'multipurpose' venues reported less utilisation.

SPACE UTILISATION (SCATTER PLOT)

Please indicate the default capacity, venue type, total available days and the number of dark days for up to three spaces in your venue.



n = 72 (Theatre); 37 (Multipurpose); 12 (Studio); 7 (Other); 7 (Rehearsal Room): 4 (Outdoor Space). Two spaces with a capacity greater than 1,600 were removed from this visualisation.

4.3 Attendance and Visitation

Respondents provided their performance attendance and venue visitation figures for the previous year. 'Attendance' here refers to visits related to performances in the venue, whereas 'visitation' captures all visits to the venue, including functions, events, galleries and bars. These figures are broken down both by organisation turnover and geographic location.

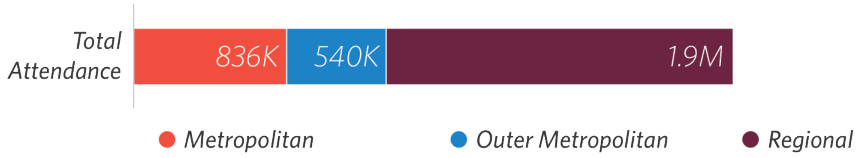
Figure 20. Total Attendance & Visitation

Performance attendance totalled 3.27 million across 56 responses, and total visitation was 5.01 million across 55 responses. The corresponding 2023 totals were 3.26 million and 4.86 million. These are aggregate survey results from different respondent groups, so the changes do not measure growth at the same venues.

Regional venues contributed 1.9 million to performance attendance and 3.1 million to visitation, making up 58% of the overall attendance and 62% of total visitation.

What was the total visitation at your Centre? (including performance and events attendance, plus additional visitation for non event/performance related activities.

What was the total attendance of all performances at your Centre? (excluding non-performance event types - i.e. wedding / functions)



Year		Metropolitan	Outer Metro	Regional	Total
2025	Total Attendance	835,799	540,430	1,892,818	3,269,047
	Total Visitation	1,116,050	790,826	3,102,374	5,009,250
	N Count	*9 / 7*	*11 / 11*	*36 / 37*	*56 / 55*
2023	Total Attendance	1,137,833	443,829	1,676,046	3,257,708
	Total Visitation	1,411,629	657,351	2,795,490	4,864,470
	N Count	*14 / 14*	*11 / 11*	*31 / 31*	*56 / 56*
2021	Total Attendance	835,541	158,752	671,219	1,665,512
	Total Visitation	1,152,148	396,332	894,143	2,442,623
	N Count	*9 / 9*	*12 / 12*	*32 / 32*	*53 / 53*
2019	Total Attendance	944,529	-	1,969,615	2,914,144
	N Count	*12*	*-*	*41*	*53*

Note: In 2025, each measure includes all available responses; the 2023 and 2021 totals include respondents with both measures and a reported geographic location. Non-event visitation and Outer Metro were not separately collected in 2019.

Figure 21. Attendance & Visitation by Turnover (Median)

The aggregate median performance attendance in 2025 was 38,291, and median visitation was 72,547. The corresponding 2023 figures were 39,776 and 62,000. Median performance attendance was 15,667 in 2021 and 43,404 in 2019.

These figures describe the respondents in each survey year. Changes in the mix of participating venues mean they should not be interpreted as a measure of recovery at the same venues. A matched comparison of 12 organisations is provided below.

Turnover groups are based on annual revenue. Organisations can move between groups over time, and respondents without turnover data are excluded from the turnover groups. The 2025 aggregate includes all valid responses, including those without turnover data. Historical aggregates follow the eligibility rules used in the earlier reports.

Year		Under $1M	$1M - $3M	Over $3M	Aggregate
2025	Median Attendance	17,553	31,481	93,311	38,291
	Median Visitation	30,558	50,486	150,565	72,547
	N Count	*13 / 13*	*24 / 24*	*17 / 16*	*56 / 55*
2023	Median Attendance	21,575	43,233	78,283	39,776
	Median Visitation	28,742	62,277	107,943	62,000
	N Count	*16 / 15*	*20 / 20*	*18 / 16*	*54 / 51*
2021	Median Attendance	13,217	15,534	56,526	15,667
	Median Visitation	16,814	27,837	83,974	26,025
	N Count	*21 / 21*	*18 / 18*	*12 / 12*	*54 / 54*
2019	Median Attendance	20,682	44,507	125,379	43,404
	N Count	*20*	*20*	*11*	*51*

Figure 22. Attendance & Visitation by State (Median)

Among respondents in 2025, Queensland recorded the highest median performance attendance at 74,090, while Victoria recorded the highest median visitation at 138,508, almost twice the aggregate median of 72,547. These results reflect small respondent groups—seven in Queensland and 11 in Victoria—and should be interpreted cautiously.

Compared with 2023, median attendance and visitation were higher among respondents in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, but lower in Western Australia. Victoria recorded the largest difference in median visitation, from 59,782 in 2023 to 138,508 in 2025. These comparisons reflect changing respondent groups rather than changes at the same venues.

Median performance attendance in 2025 was above the published 2019 figure in New South Wales and Queensland, but below it in South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. Small samples and missing data

limit comparisons across jurisdictions and years. In 2025, ACT/NT, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia each had only five to seven responses per measure.

Western Australia illustrates the importance of this caution: its median visitation fell from 101,156 in 2021 (three responses) to 33,899 in 2025 (six responses), but the respondents underlying those two medians differ. The result cannot be interpreted as a decline at the same venues, or attributed to pandemic restrictions from these data alone.

Median Attendance by State/Territory

Year	ACT / NT	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aggregate
2025	22,024	50,934	74,090	12,237	–	37,881	28,958	**38,291**
2023	30,577	47,780	39,776	–	67,361	27,120	32,331	**39,776**
2021	59,925	18,936	18,603	13,217	53,677	6,915	87,553	**15,667**
2019	–	43,746	41,129	41,104	39,539	42,141	87,525	**43,404**

Median Visitation by State/Territory

Year	ACT / NT	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Aggregate
2025	93,994	72,547	81,279	26,000	–	138,508	33,899	**72,547**
2023	62,391	64,773	71,864	–	68,157	59,782	37,952	**62,000**
2021	76,315	26,510	32,116	14,000	55,448	14,875	101,156	**26,025**

2025 n counts (attendance / visitation): ACT/NT 5 / 5; NSW 20 / 21; QLD 7 / 7; SA 6 / 5; VIC 11 / 11; WA 7 / 6; aggregate 56 / 55.

Median Visitation by Year (Matched Paired)

For the 12 venues in the matched sample, median visitation was 47,071 in 2025, slightly above 46,085 in 2023 and up from 16,792 in 2021.

This provides a more consistent comparison of the same venues over time, although the small sample (seven venues in New South Wales, two in Queensland and three in Victoria) limits broader conclusions, the results show an encouraging recovery in visitation since 2021, with those gains sustained through 2025.

Year	Aggregate
2025	47,071
2023	46,085
2021	16,792
2019	35,388

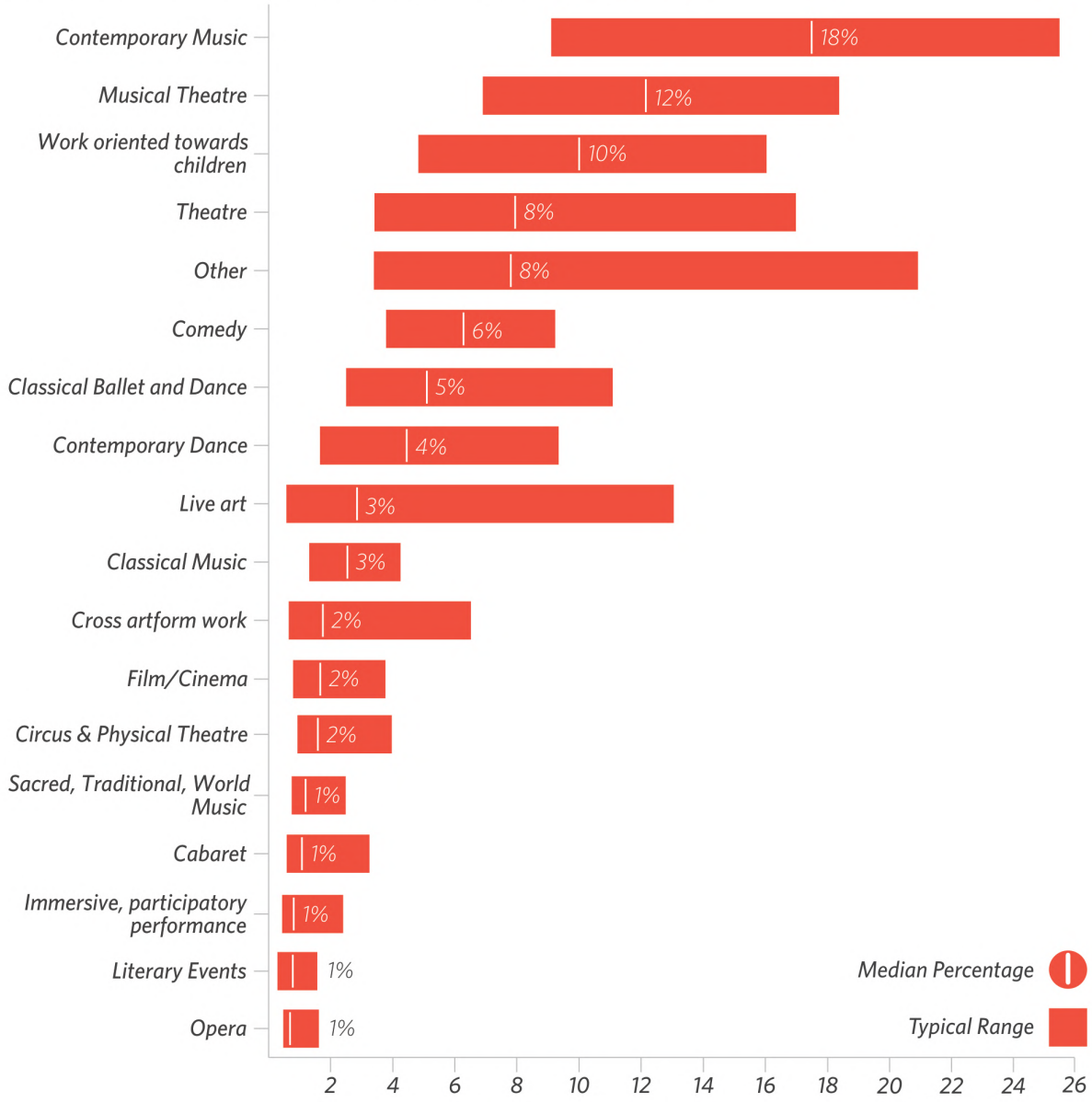
n = 12 (NSW, 7; QLD, 2; Victoria, 3)

Figure 23. Percentage of Attendance by Artform (Typical Range)

Figures here show the percentage of the total performance attendance that each artform represented for the typical venue. This covers attendances for all venue performances, including community, touring and professional productions. For example, 'contemporary dance' captures a range of sub-types, from large-scale touring productions to dance schools and community productions.

The median share of attendance was highest for contemporary music (18%), followed by musical theatre (12%) and work oriented towards children and families (10%). Each venue contributes one percentage to each artform's median, so one or two very large attendance totals do not dominate this measure. The wide typical ranges show that the mix still differs substantially between venues.

Please indicate the attendance at your venue for the following artform types.



n = 50 (Contemporary Music); 37 (Musical Theatre (Commercial)); 50 (Work oriented towards children & families); 53 (Theatre); 35 (Other); 46 (Comedy); 40 (Contemporary Dance); 44 (Classical Ballet and Dance); 6 (Live art); 14 (Cross artform work); 45 (Classical Music); 39 (Film / Cinema); 41 (Circus and Physical Theatre); 33 (Sacred, Traditional, World Music); 31 (Cabaret); 15 (Immersive, participatory performance); 20 (Literary Events); 24 (Opera)

Note

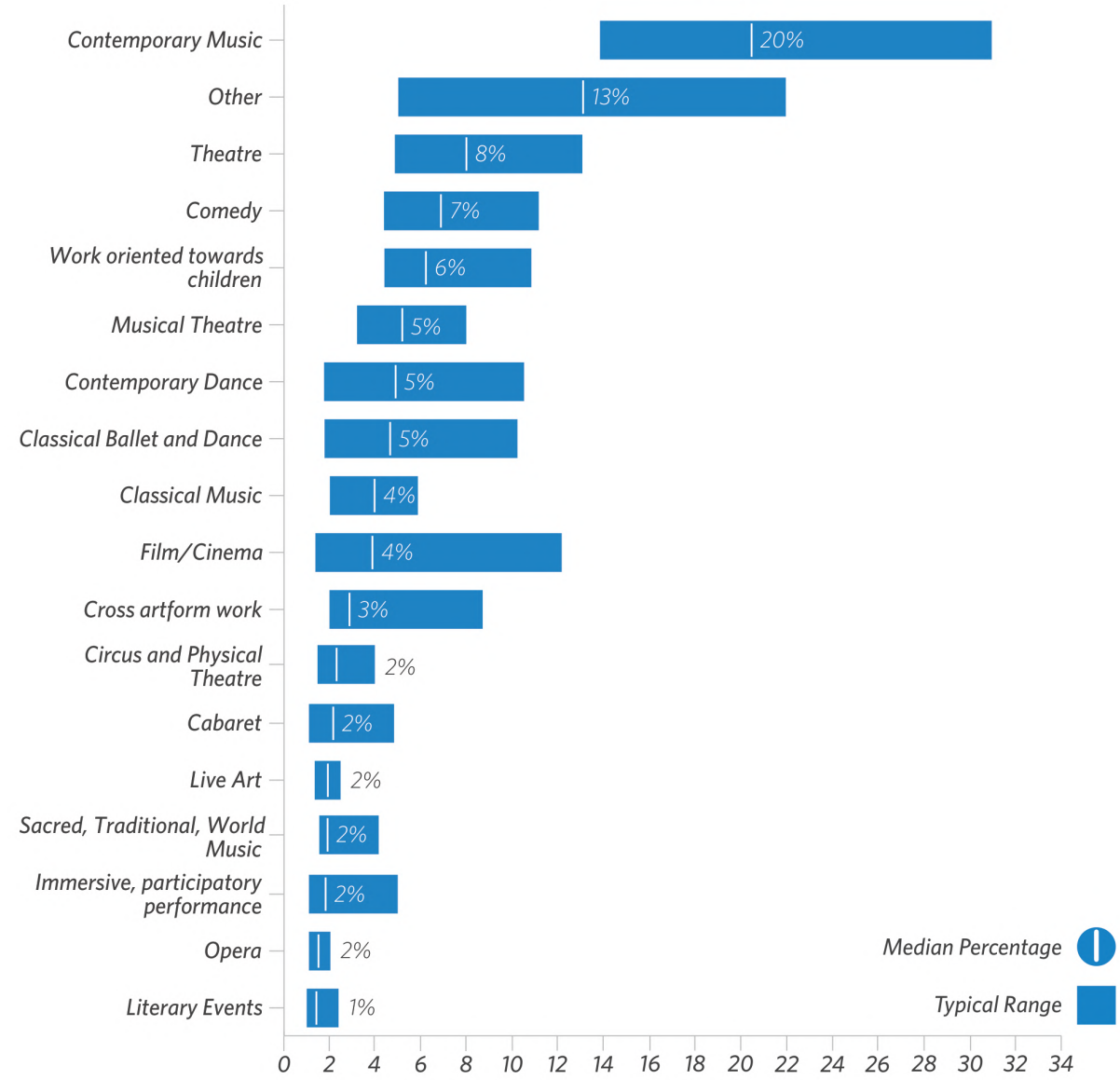
From 2023, this chart reports venue-level medians and interquartile ranges rather than shares of aggregate attendance. This reduces the influence of large venues and productions. Comparisons with earlier reports are not like-for-like, and results still depend on the respondent sample.

Figure 24. Percentage of Productions by Artform (Typical Range)

The figures show the share of each venue's annual production program represented by each artform. They include community, touring and professional productions of all sizes, from small local productions to major tours.

'Contemporary music' was the artform that saw the greatest representation for the typical venue's program, representing a median value of 20%. Among the named artforms, the next highest median shares were theatre (8%) and comedy (7%).

Please indicate the number of productions at your venue for the following artform types.



n = 50 (Contemporary Music); 33 (Other); 53 (Theatre); 45 (Comedy); 50 (Work oriented towards children & families); 37 (Musical Theatre (Commercial)); 40 (Contemporary Dance); 44 (Classical Ballet and Dance); 44 (Classical Music); 38 (Film / Cinema); 14 (Cross artform work); 41 (Circus and Physical Theatre); 30 (Cabaret); 6 (Live art); 33 (Sacred, Traditional, World Music); 15 (Immersive, participatory performance); 24 (Opera); 20 (Literary Events)

Note for Figure 24:

This chart is calculated by asking venues how many productions they hosted based on the listed genre types. This determines the percentage that each genre represented in respect to the total number of productions hosted. The variety in ranges indicates that many venues host a widely different set of production types; for example 'Film', which has a small median percentage but a very wide range – meaning some venues are heavily reliant on this in respect to their overall activity.

5 PROGRAMMING & PRODUCTION ORIGIN

Venues and centres across the country activate their spaces through a variety of means. They may actively curate an annual program of works that are artistically relevant, investing to procure or co-produce, or present internally developed works. They can also incentivise certain types of productions, by offering discounted hiring rates or financial arrangements to hirers.

This section reviews the geographical origin of all productions hosted by a venue, how venues are most likely to source and program productions within their curated program, and the type of financial and funding agreements for venue hire and presentations.

5.1 Production Origin & Programming Methods

Centres host productions from a range of geographical sources across the country and in some cases internationally, whether through a hire arrangement or their own programming. Respondents were asked to indicate where these productions originated from. They were also asked about the methods they use when sourcing work they actively program. This figure represents performance-based productions (whether it is a commercial or community 'hire', or a production programmed by the venue). It does not however include non-arts events or non-performance events, such as functions, workshops, dance classes, etc.

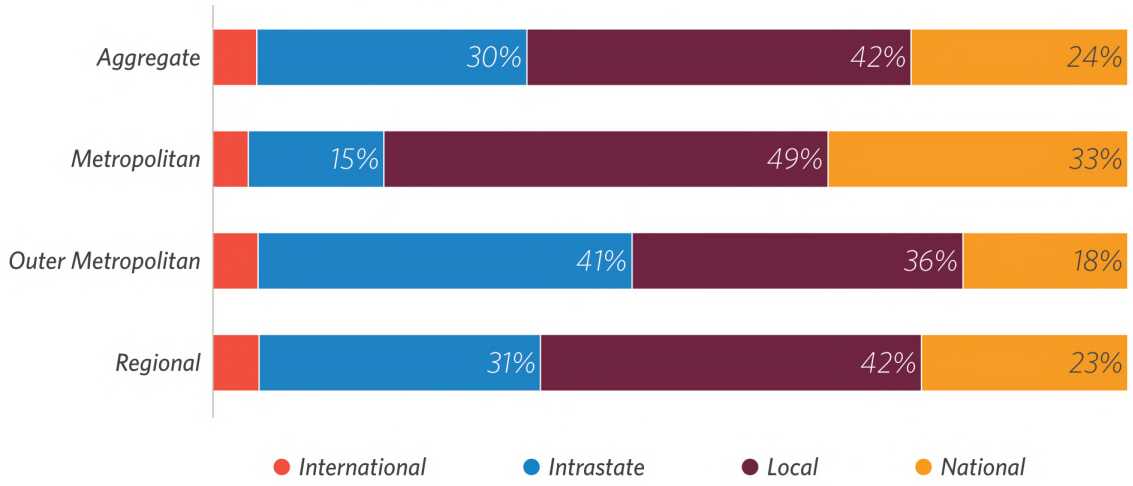
Figure 25. Origin of Productions

Across all venues, the largest share of productions came from the local area (i.e. their resident city or town), making up 42% of the aggregate result. This could include community led or professional productions.

Across all venues, 30% of productions were from within their same state (intrastate), 24% were national and the remaining 5% was international. These results were relatively consistent with 2023.

For venues located in the outer metropolitan, 36% of productions came from the local area and 41% from intrastate. Regional venues were also likely to host intrastate productions (31%) however this was much less likely at metropolitan venues (15%). Metropolitan venues were more likely to feature national productions, which made up one third of their program (33%).

Please estimate the percentage of productions based on their origin



n = 36-52 (Aggregate); 6-9 (Metro); 9-10 (Outer Metro); 21-33 (Regional), varying by origin.

Figure 26. Programming Methods

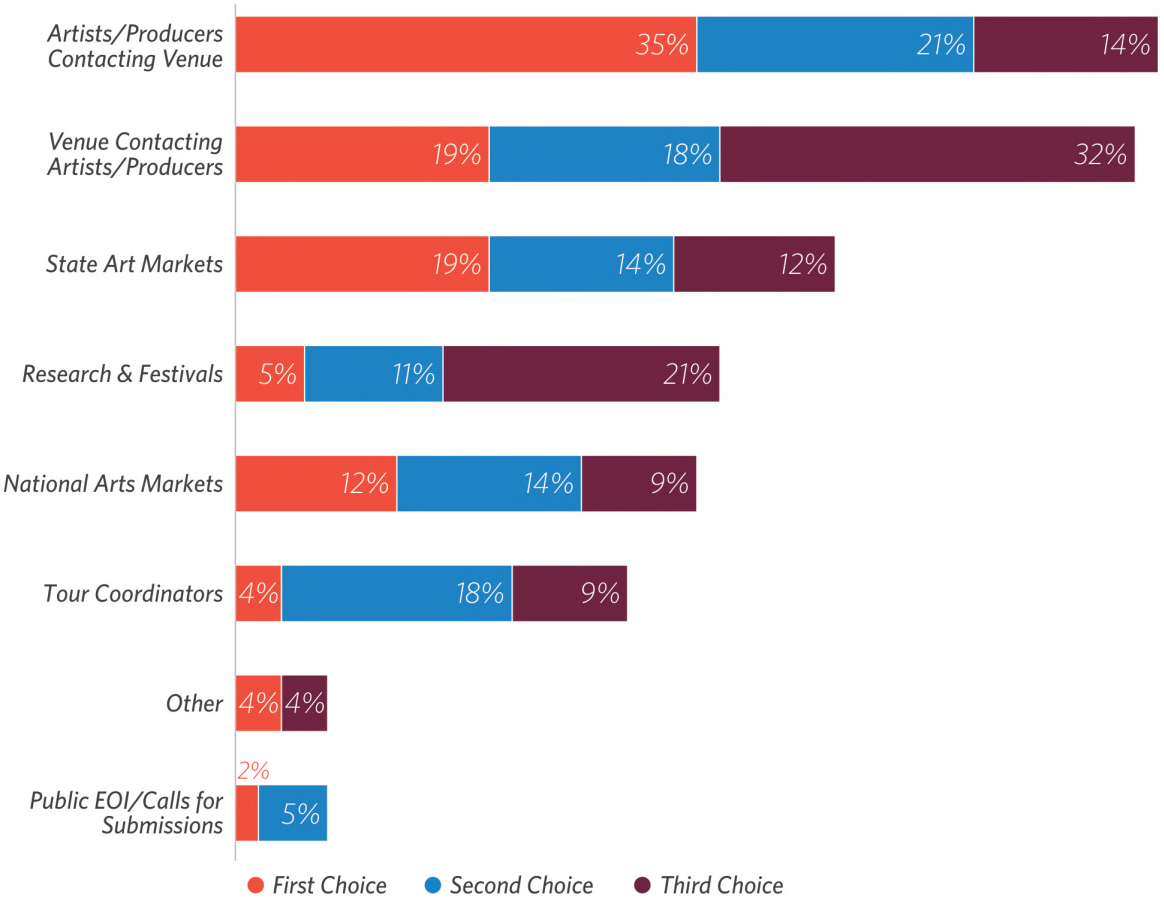
Venues have a range of agreements to manage an overall annual program of events. Some of these are external hires, and some are actively programmed by venue management staff. In the survey, respondents were able to select their top three options from a list of common programming methods, in order of first choice, second choice and third choice.

The top three programming mechanisms recorded were, 'artists/producers contacting the venue' selected by 70% of respondents in total, 'venue contacting artists/producers' (68%) and 'state arts markets' (46%).

Established relationships remain central to programming decisions. The strong result for "artists/producers contacting venues" reflects ongoing connections between producers and venues, often built over multiple seasons and strengthened through arts markets. It should not be interpreted as cold approaches from artists with no prior relationship. This finding reinforces the importance of relationship-building across the sector and aligns with feedback from arts-market events such as APAX and APAM.

Over one third of first choice responses were for 'artists/producers contacting the venue' (35%). A close second for the first-choice options were equally attending state arts markets, and venues contacting artists/producers (19%). Second choice responses were distributed more evenly across the response options, and 32% of third choice responses went to 'venue contacting artists/producers'.

What are your top three mechanisms for programming your venue?



Note: Each choice sums to 100% each, or 300% in aggregate before rounding. n = 57

5.2 Financial Arrangements & Risk

Respondents were asked how many total productions they hosted in 2025, and then to break these down by the type of 'financial arrangement' each production fell under. This question mixes financial risk types with financial agreement types, which means a single production can sit within multiple categories (for example, a 'full hire' can also be a 'commercial hire').

This multi-type format was first used in 2021. The previous format asked about only three categories — 'full risk', 'shared risk' and 'no risk' — with 'in kind', 'commissioned' and 'other funding sources' added in 2023.

The types of financial arrangements vary widely. Some relate to financial investment, reflecting the level of box-office exposure a venue takes on. Others relate to funding, where productions receive government support. Others again concern contract type, such as commissioned works or 'in-kind' venue use where no hire costs are incurred.

The analysis is presented in two parts, calculated differently:

- **Figure 27** reports the **aggregate** split of all productions across three core 'risk' categories, consistent with previous reports — counting every production reported as a single pool.
- **Figure 28** reports the **venue-level median**, showing the typical share each arrangement represents within an individual venue's program.

The two figures will not match: Figure 27 is weighted towards venues that host more productions, while Figure 28 shows the median share at venue level.

Figure 27. Percentage of Program by Risk Category (Year on Year)

'No risk' means a full venue hire, where the hirer takes on all financial risk. *'Shared risk'* covers the various box-office split arrangements, where the company and venue share both the risk and the reward. *'Full risk'* is where the venue buys in a performance and is fully responsible for recouping costs at the box office.

Results in 2025 trended similarly to 2023. Of the 4,523 productions reported in total, over two-thirds were 'no risk' (69%), showing that for most productions the venue was hired by a producer or promoter. The proportion of 'shared risk' productions rose for the first time, to 7% (up from the 6% recorded in each of the three previous surveys), suggesting more venues are working in partnership with producers to share the box office risk than in the past.

Year	No Risk	Shared Risk	Full Risk	# of Productions
2025	69%	7%	24%	4,523
2023	71%	6%	23%	5,021
2021	56%	6%	38%	1,929
2019	69%	6%	25%	4,069

n = 54 (2025), 52 (2023); 53 (2021); 52 (2019)

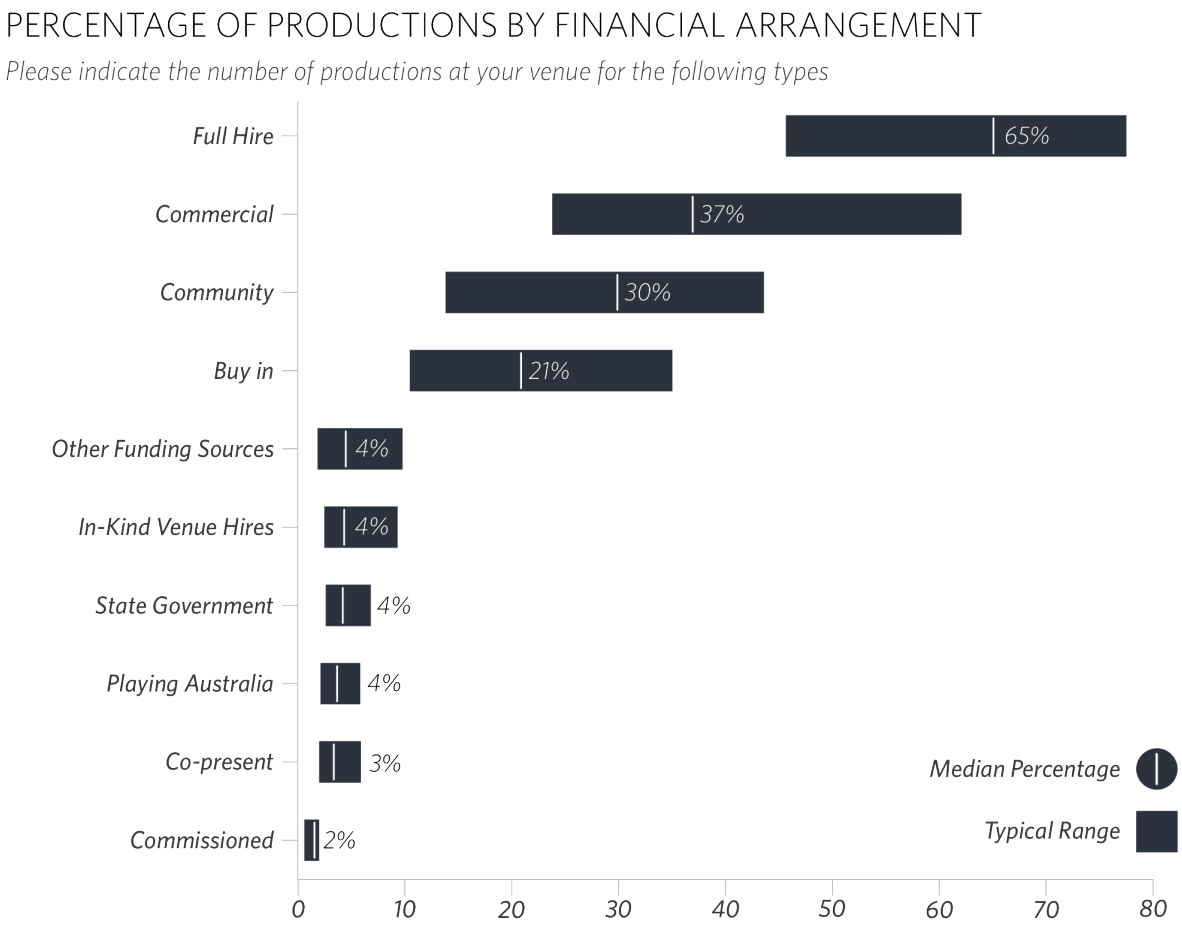
Figure 28. Percentage of Productions by Financial Arrangement (Typical Range)

This figure calculates each arrangement as a share of an individual venue's total productions, then plots the typical (median) share across the cohort.

The most common arrangement was 'full hire', where the venue assumes no financial risk – the same grouping shown as 'no risk' in Figure 27. The median share of full hires was 65% of a venue's activity, an increase of 7 percentage points on 2023 (58%), with overall results trending similarly year-on-year.

Commercial and community productions represented 37% and 30% of a typical venue's activity respectively. Productions where venues were financially invested in the box-office outcome were less common; among these, it was more typical for venues to 'buy in' productions (21%).

Commissioned works were the least common arrangement (2%), despite 59% of venues reporting that they invest in new work (see Figure 14). This suggests that while commissioning is a common activity, it represents only a small portion of a venue's overall production activity – and commissioning often occurs early in a work's life cycle and doesn't always result in a staged production. Other arrangements included productions supported by Creative Australia's Playing Australia national touring fund or State Government funding, each typically accounting for 4% of venue activity.



Note: Production types are non-exclusive, meaning that productions can be assigned to more than one category. Median results for each program type will not sum to 100%. This figure shows the median representation of all productions at the venue level, as opposed to the aggregate. The response option 'Playing Australia' was labelled 'Creative Australia touring funds e.g. Playing Australia' in the survey. n = 49 (Full Hire); 47 (Commercial); 47 (Community); 53 (Buy In); 26 (Other Funding Sources); 29 (In-Kind Venue Hires); 32 (State Government); 34 (Playing Australia); 37 (Co-present); 18 (Commissioned).

Figure 29. Number of Productions & Performances by Risk

The following figure shows the total number of productions and performances reported across all respondents, grouped by the state or territory that each respondent was based in and how those productions were classified; as either 'full risk', 'shared risk' or 'no risk'. Performance counts are rounded to the nearest whole. We compare the percentage of productions that had some form of risk compared to the total number of productions presented.

Location (n Count)	Full Risk #		Shared Risk #		No Risk #		% - Some Risk	
	Perf.	*Prod.*	*Perf.*	*Prod.*	*Perf.*	*Prod.*	*Perf.*	*Prod.*
ACT (3)	267	69	31	3	404	151	42%	32%
NSW (21)	759	392	128	90	5,064	1,337	15%	26%
NT (2)	7	7	13	12	34	29	37%	40%
QLD (7)	437	126	449	158	922	590	49%	32%
SA (6)	43	27	15	6	190	127	23%	21%
VIC (11)	454	321	65	42	1,036	619	33%	37%
WA (9)	160	130	47	12	304	275	41%	34%
Total	**2,127**	**1,072**	**748**	**323**	**7,954**	**3,128**	**27%**	**31%**

Figure 30. Number of Productions & Performances by Government Support

Financial support for touring is a key driver in the programming of "full risk" productions, and the degree to which centres can access subsidised tours often shapes the nature of their programs.

Applicants for touring support — from both state and national sources — are generally the producer or a tour coordinator, rather than the venue itself. These funds typically cover travel costs, ensuring regional (and to a lesser extent metropolitan) centres aren't disadvantaged by their location. So while centres rarely receive touring funding directly, removing the burden of travel costs can be the difference between programming a production or not.

The following table shows productions and performances supported by state or national touring subsidies, as counts and as a percentage of venue 'buys'. Performance counts are rounded to the nearest whole. These are venue-reported totals: the same touring production may be counted at several venues, so the production total does not represent unique works.

Across all respondents, Playing Australia supported 143 productions and 278 performances, equivalent to 13% of buys in each category. State government funding supported a similar share of productions (135 - 13%) but a smaller share of performances, at 206 (10%).

NSW recorded the highest volume of subsidised activity, including 57 productions and 101 performances supported by Playing Australia, and 51 productions and 95 performances supported by state government funding. Proportional reliance was highest in SA, where each funding source supported 30% of production

buys. South Australia also recorded the largest Playing Australia share of performance buys, at 19%, while WA had the largest state-supported share of performances, at 20%.

Location (n Count)	# of Productions (% of 'Buys')				# of Performances (% of 'Buys')			
	Playing Australia		State Government		Playing Australia		State Government	
ACT (3)	12	17%	0	0%	49	18%	3	1%
NSW (21)	57	15%	51	13%	101	13%	95	13%
NT (2)	0	-	0	-	0	0%	0	0%
QLD (7)	18	14%	19	15%	30	7%	26	6%
SA (6)	8	30%	8	30%	8	19%	8	19%
VIC (11)	33	10%	33	10%	70	15%	42	9%
WA (9)	15	12%	24	18%	20	13%	32	20%
TOTAL	143	13%	135	13%	278	13%	206	10%

5.3 Community Engagement

Venues regularly undertake community engagement activities that are independent from traditional performing arts performances or hires. These activities help engage local communities in arts practice and serve to strengthen the social and cultural outcomes that support the community and audience development priorities of the organisation.

Figure 31. Number of Community Activities by Type (Typical Range)

In aggregate, venues reported 2,311 community engagement activities across the year.

It's important to note how this figure is calculated: the median and typical range for each activity reflect only the venues that offered that activity, not all respondents. This means a high median doesn't necessarily mean an activity is widespread – it indicates that venues running that activity tend to run a lot of it. Likewise, a wide typical range points to uneven distribution, where a small number of venues run an activity intensively while most run comparatively few.

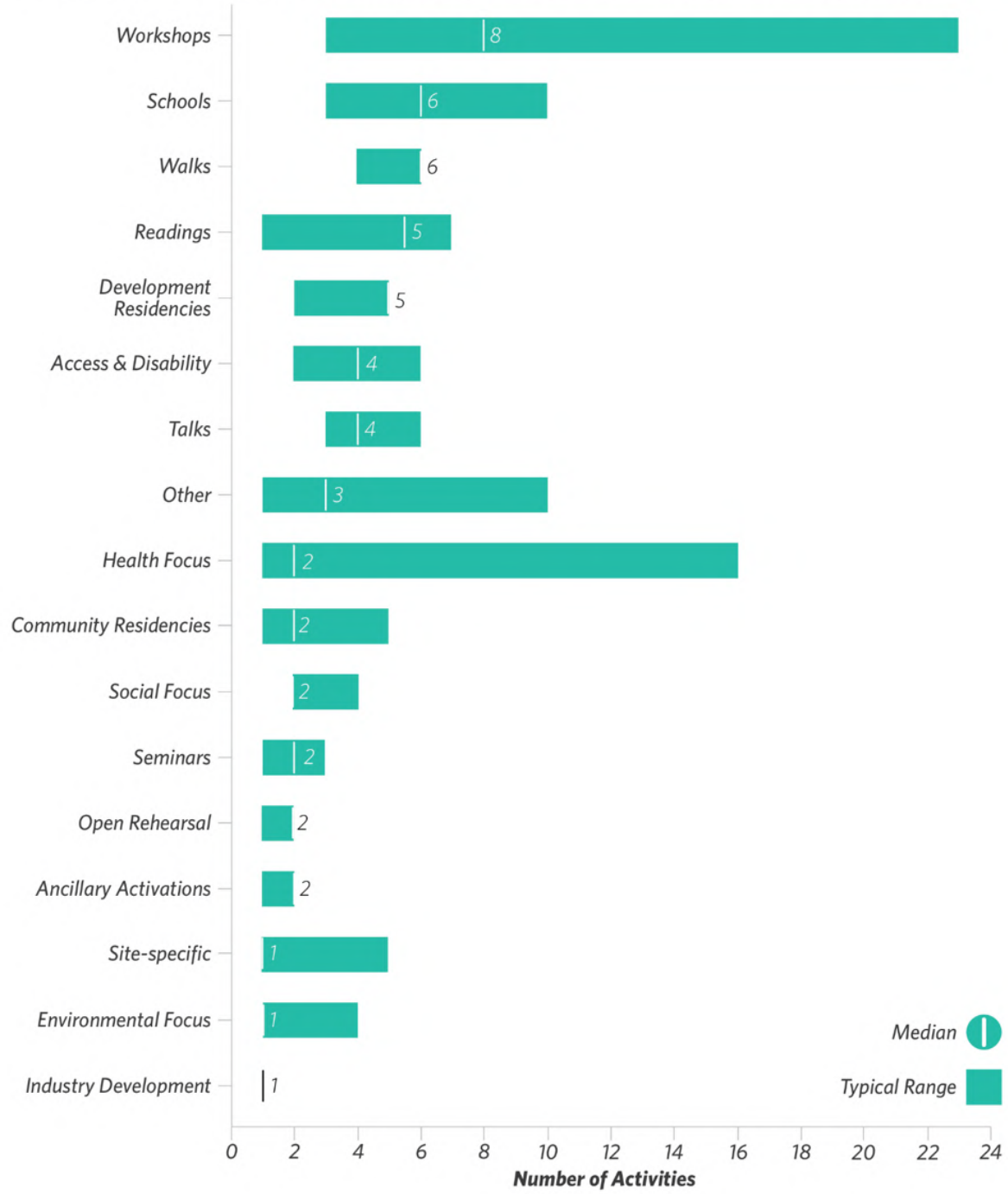
Workshops were the most common type of community activity, with a median of 8. This overtook school-based activities, which were the most popular option in 2023 (median of 8). 'School' activities are defined as presentations and other interventions at/for schools, in 2025 the median for this type of activity was 6, the same median recorded for 'walks'.

'Development residencies', 'access and disability', 'readings' and 'talks' were also relatively common, with a typical venue running 4 to 5 of each per year.

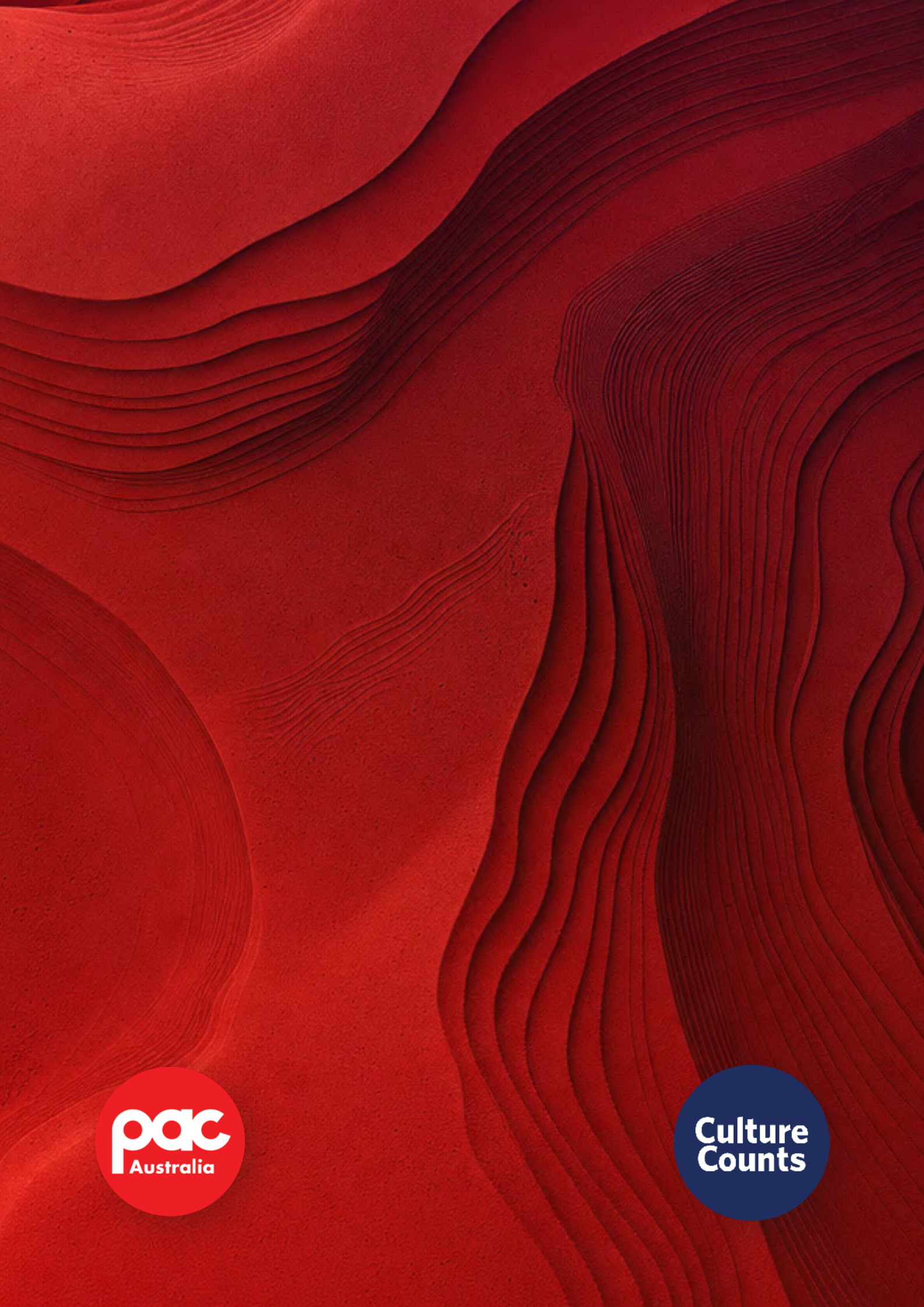
The typical range was notably wide for 'workshops' (3 to 23) and 'health focus' activities (2 to 16). This suggests that a small number of venues are concentrating heavily on these activities within their community programming, even though such activities remain relatively rare across the wider PAC Australia membership. In other words, the high upper end of these ranges is driven by a few highly active venues rather than the cohort as a whole.

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES BY TYPE (TYPICAL RANGE)

Please indicate the number of community engagement activities your Centre had for the following types



n = 43 (Workshops); 7 (Walks); 31 (Schools); 17 (Development Residencies); 27 (Access and Disability); 41 (Talks); 10 (Readings); 8 (Other); 12 (Community Residencies); 19 (Ancillary Activations); 15 (Social Focus); 17 (Seminars); 13 (Open Rehearsal); 9 (Health Focus); 18 (Industry Development); 7 (Site-specific); 14 (Environmental or Climate Change Focus)


pac
Australia
Culture
Counts