

British Council UK/Australia Season Evaluation Final Report



Picture: Getty Images

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The Audience Agency, June 2023

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Season Ambassador: Cate Blanchett



I am thrilled and honoured to be an Ambassador for the UK/AU Season.

Art breaks down the borders and boundaries of our imagination, poses questions, expands reality, and by sharpening our feelings into ideas offers pathways to insight.

Living works of art in performance being shared cross culturally provides a genuine opportunity for audiences and artists alike to expand their horizons at a time when many fear they are closing down.

I am excited that this Season will facilitate a cornucopia of visions which speak to the depth and breadth of the ongoing artistic exploration in contemporary Australia and Britain.



Upswing, Catch Me (2019). Image credit: Matthew Kaltenborn

Executive Summary

The UK/Australia Season 2021-22, led by the British Council and Australia DFAT, fulfilled its main aims and objectives, substantially achieving results and impacts which will have a legacy beyond the initiative itself. There were several notable individual successes, as well as providing benefits for the cultural sector and stakeholders in Australia and the UK.

It was a landmark cultural exchange between the two nations, incorporating live and digital events spanning theatre, film, visual arts, dance, design, architecture, music, literature, higher education, training and a public engagement programme.

“ The AWO was thrilled to receive 4-star reviews and standing ovations for both performances that indicated that the audiences, who are used to seeing the greatest orchestras in the world, acknowledged Australia's musical talent and diaspora. ”

Especially important in its success, was its ‘bilateral’ nature, with Australian work produced in the UK as well as UK work in Australia (the latter being the way that British Council seasons tend to be oriented). As well as providing access to a range of Australian work for UK audiences, it also led to a greater degree of collaboration between the countries, not only between the participants of the project but also at government level and with other cultural and educational arms-length bodies.

There were challenges for the Season, particularly the difficulty of the season taking place at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic was still prevalent. This meant that the calendar of activities became much more extended than originally envisaged and led to it taking place effectively in two stages, with delivery in Australia happening first and the activity in the UK second. It also meant that some projects could not happen as originally envisaged and a few had to be cancelled altogether. On the other hand, the impact of the pandemic also inspired differences of approach, with circumstances leading to innovative solutions that are likely to have long-lasting (positive) effects.

The theme/question - ‘Who Are We Now?’ - encapsulated the Season well, leading to a variety of related questions and ideas. These included the relationship culturally between the UK and Australia in terms of the colonial past, recent and current connections between the countries, and new issues such as climate change, demographic developments, trade and political imperatives. In relation to this, many of the projects

dealt intelligently and interestingly with themes of First Nations, cultural difference, nationhood, globalisation, educational and artistic innovation.

“ We wanted to say that ‘this is the fiercest of friends’. You know, it’s on the pitch. It’s an intense relationship. And we wanted to get that kind of friendly rivalry [between UK and Australia] going. ”

This came at a time when many such issues had a focus in the UK through the Commonwealth Games and related Birmingham 2022 Festival, as well as UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK with some projects taking the opportunity to address themes of nationhood and colonialism.

Strong and enthusiastic leadership by The British Council and Australia DFAT in collaboration with the Australian High Commission and the specially appointed Patron’s Board were important factors in the success of the Season. There were differences of approach, especially given there isn’t a direct equivalent of The British Council in Australia. The work was led by two Artistic Directors, each individually responsible for the programme in one country. They worked with a combination of British Council and DFAT grants, philanthropic and wider government funding, in a mix of open call grant rounds and direct commissions of collaborations and initiatives. There was also a strong educational strand in Australia (an important part of the British Council’s mission) compared to a mainly cultural programme in the UK.

The specially appointed Patron’s Board was an important factor in enabling an extensive range of cultural presentations in the UK. Not only were they able to raise significant resources for the projects but also used their connections and specialisms for this programme, in some cases acting as ‘creative producers’ to ‘make things happen’. It brought an additional entrepreneurial element to the Season, meaning larger and potentially more complex work could take place.

The Season was characterised by enthusiasm and commitment throughout. Project leaders and participants welcomed the opportunity to work in new environments, in a different country and with unfamiliar contexts. This has enabled new partnerships and connections, usually between people and organisations new to each other. Almost all have said they intend to work together again in the future.

Positive legacies are emerging at different levels, with the new National Cultural Policy of Australia citing the UK/Australia Season programme as an example of success in cultural

diplomacy and of the importance of looking ‘outwards’, in this case to the UK, but also more generally in consideration of international collaboration.

“ *It is refreshing to introduce the dynamics of disability-led thinking from the UK to sector professionals in the Australian arts industry.* ”

From the British Council, nearly A\$500,000 has already been committed to Season legacy projects, with around 50 next step projects in development. There has also been further support of British companies and artists at a range of events and festivals in Australia as well as the commissioning of post Season research papers on future UK Australia collaboration in the arts sector and in higher education.

The Season also had many notable individual successes which have led to further legacies. ‘Counting and Cracking’ which had an excellent reception in the UK will return for further tours in Europe. In a different way, the ‘Sync Leadership Programme’, has already had a second iteration in 2022, with plans for more. Both of these are explored in more depth in the Case Studies section of this report.

As noted in the Interim Report (September 2022), the wider impacts of the Season on the public have to be understood in terms of the way the projects are delivered. It is clear from leaders, partners and audiences that where there is direct engagement, the effect of the Season is profound. Those involved mention the impact it has had on their work, helping them to explore new topics, with audiences demonstrating enjoyment and inspiration, and commenting that it has influenced their perceptions of, for example, the culture of the other country.

There was also excellent media coverage of the Season, but it is important to recognise that such an initiative will be limited in its wider public impact due to its scale and temporality. The effect comes from direct engagement, sometimes with small, deep and qualitative elements rather than wholesale changes of views. Whilst those involved in the direction and organisation of the Season understand this, it is useful to be realistic about the way such initiatives are conceived and communicated. Rather, it is in the way in which it has had impact on policy and the cultural and educational partners involved that is more important.

Further impacts which are difficult to quantify but are undoubtedly present, include the contacts and relationships developed in and around the project delivery. Delegations, special VIP events (for example at the Australian High Commission) and a special convention on Australia in Edinburgh are among the ways that this has been achieved.

The affirmative effects of the Season will be seen in the years to come, especially if some of the more significant legacies of policy and practice continue to develop in the promising ways that have been seen so far. The Season has already reinvigorated the concept of the UK and Australia cultural and academic sectors working together and successfully explored the concept of ‘Who Are We Now?’ in a full and dynamic way.

Key figures

- 136 projects
- 277 events
- 1,707 artists/practitioners
- 473,123 in person audience engagements
- 80,974 online audience engagements
- 8,523 in person and 937 online participant engagements
- 987 new connections for project leaders
- 99% of project leads ‘extremely likely’ or ‘likely’ to return to work in either UK or Australia

Evaluation

The Audience Agency (TAA) was commissioned to deliver the programme evaluation of the UK/Australia Season supporting the British Council and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to evaluate the Season as a whole. This included providing guidance and resources for partners to deliver their own evaluation and contribute to the programme evaluation.

This evaluation process consisted of

- An inception report including Evaluation Framework design
- An 'evaluation toolkit' created for the projects which included a timetable of the Season evaluation, reporting requirements, an overview of the evaluation framework and projected outcomes, guidance on designing and delivering evaluation activity - including quantitative and qualitative question banks for audiences or participants and guidance of digital online analytics methods
- Baseline questionnaire for projects
- Completion questionnaire for UK projects in Australia (February-June 2022) and Australia projects in UK (April 2022-January 2023)
- Interviews with selected UK and Australia project leads for case studies
- Interviews with stakeholders (including Patrons' Board)
- Review of available documentation provided by the British Council and DFAT
- Collection, summarising and analysis of data provided by projects and stakeholders

This activity was supplemented by regular liaison with British Council, Australia DFAT and High Commission staff and appointed personnel by the project.

Evaluation has been summarised in these outlines:

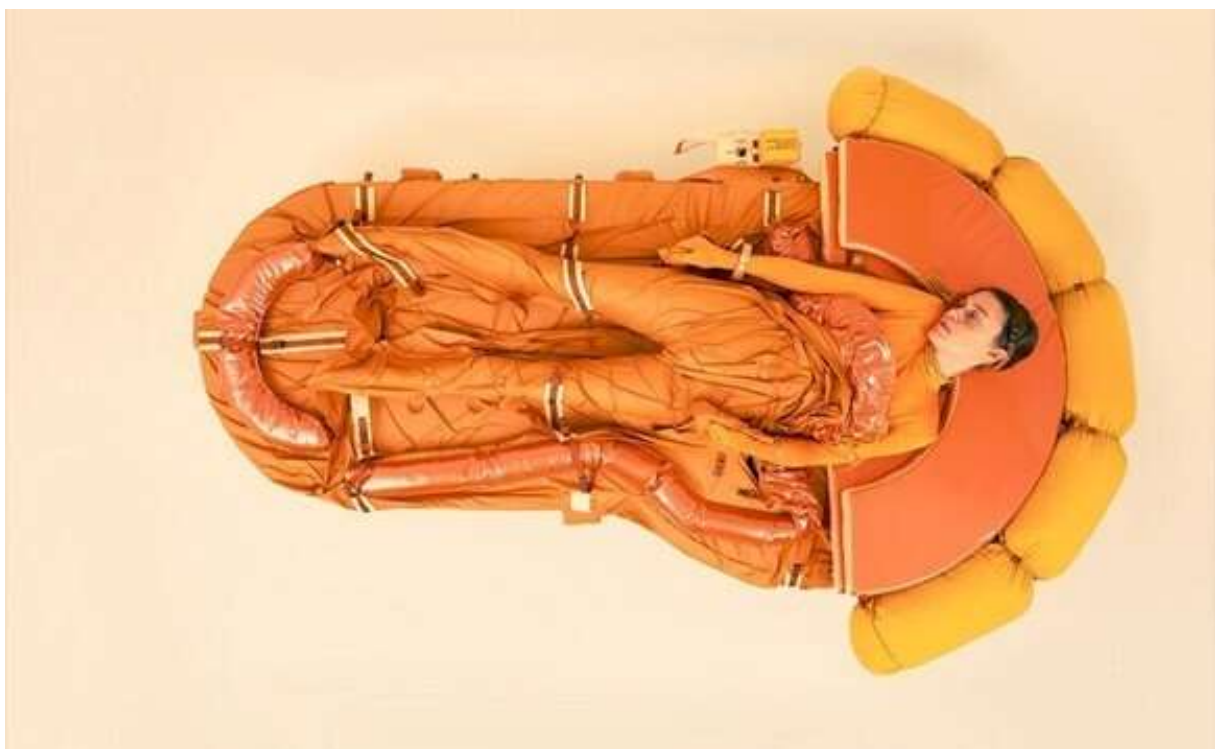
- Baseline/inception report (March 2022)
- Short data overview (July 2022)
- Interim report (September 2022)
- Final report (June 2023)

Data sources

The data in this report is based on that collected up to the end of January 2023. At this point, some projects were still continuing, others were finishing, whilst some were starting legacy projects. These latter activities are not contained in the statistical data of this report but may be included in qualitative reporting on projects and outlining legacy.

The data used therefore was based on:

- 86 baseline survey responses collected from Season participants, with 47 from the UK and 39 from Australia
- 76 end of project survey responses collected from project leads, with 50 coming from the UK in Australia stage and 26 from the Australia in UK stage
- 18 case study interviews with project leads and participants
- 10 interviews with stakeholders, patrons board members and appointed personnel
- Communications and media coverage campaign reports from the British Council, DFAT and Bolton and Quinn



SCCI Architecture and Fashion Hubs at Presented at the Design Museum in London

Overview of the UK/Australia Season 2021-22

The UK/Australia Season 2021-22 aimed to reframe, refresh and re-energise the relationship between Australia and the UK through cultural exchange, celebrating the diverse and innovative artist communities and cultural sectors of each nation. It was based around the key theme/question of ‘Who Are We Now?’ encapsulating the need to investigate both the nature of the different sectors and the connections between countries, as well as relating this to the more global concerns of our time.

After delays due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK/Australia Season began in September 2021 and continued to the end of December 2022. Many projects were collaboratively produced between UK and Australia arts, cultural and higher education partners, but in general, the Season can be conceived as existing in two parts: the UK in Australia from September 2021 to April 2022 and Australia in the UK from May to December 2022.



Marrickville Mermaid Recording Session, Stapleford Gallery, Cambridge, UK. Image credit: Jonathan Goodacre

Programme

Overall, there were 277 events delivered across 136 projects, comprising:

- **UK in Australia Strand: 210 events over 9 months, delivered across 62 projects made up of 188 Arts events and 21 Education events**
 - **Australia in UK Strand: 67 events over 20 months¹, delivered across 74 projects¹**
 - **1,245 artists/practitioners contributing in-person: 579 UK in AU / 666 AU in UK**
 - **427 artists/practitioners contributing online: 395 UK in AU / 32 AU in UK**
 - **1,271 delegates taking part in person: 1,256 UK in AU / 15 AU in UK**
 - **934 delegates taking part online: 934 UK in AU**
 - **85 trainers/facilitators contributing in-person: 77 UK in AU / 8 AU in UK**
 - **24 trainers/facilitators contribution online: 19 UK in AU / 5 AU in UK**
-
- 64% of partners were based in Australia and 36% based in the UK. Of these:
 - 68% classified their organisation in the 'Creative, arts and entertainment activities' sector
 - 15% as 'Cultural education'
 - 9% as 'Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities'
 - 5% in another category
 - 2% as 'Publishing activities'

There were a few cancellations in both stages of the programme, mainly due to issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Some productions also encountered complications in transport and shipping between the two countries which led to a need for adaptation of scale or production, the most significant being the cancellation of the Australian National Academy of Music's 'Quartetthaus' which was to have taken place at the Royal Albert Hall.

This means that there was a slight reduction in the number of events that took place compared to original plans and early reporting.

Public Engagement

All of the projects had some degree of public engagement, some of which would involve large numbers and others focusing on smaller numbers of people with more of a quality involvement. There is a distinction made between audiences, who are people watching, hearing, experiencing events and participants, who are more involved in the event such as in workshops, courses, training events etc.

Estimated numbers based on the responses or data provided by completed projects overall are:

- In person audience engagements **775,523***
- Online audience engagements **80,974**/****
- In person participant engagements **8523**
- Online participant engagements **937**

By strand this was composed of:

UK in Australia Strand

- In person audience engagements **231,481**
- Online audience engagements **42,573***
- In person participant engagements **7,188**
- Online participant engagements **922**

Australia in UK Strand

- In person audience engagements **538,506***
- Online audience engagements **38,401**/****
- In person participant engagements **1,193**
- Online participant engagements **15**

* Figures - Being Human Human Being - which figures of 302,400 - makes up nearly half of in-person audience engagements. This was based on a proportion of footfall passing a large-scale outdoor installation.

** The Australian World Orchestra were unable to retrieve exact audience engagement figures. The BBC Proms performance was audio-broadcast by the BBC to millions of listeners, and multiple broadcasts in Australia by ABC Classic, with between 40,000-50,000 listeners per broadcast. Due to the wide-reaching nature of broadcast these figures have been omitted from the total online audience estimates.

*** This figure excludes data from the Biennale of Sydney which reported online reach of the whole festival of 1,742,704. These figures have been omitted from the total online audience estimates (which include social media and marketing messages) and is instead based on YouTube, representing meaningful engagement.

//**As above, these exclude Being Human Human Being, the AWO broadcast figures and the Biennale of Sydney social media reach figures.*



MACRO by Gravity and Other Myths at Adelaide Festival, also performed at Edinburgh Festival, UK.

Impact

An ‘end of project survey’, answered by 76 of the completed projects (April 2022-January 2023), enabled an assessment of the impact of the activity.

- Asked ‘To what extent did you/your organisation achieve your aims/ambitions for the project?’ 97% answered affirmatively.
- 78% strongly agreed or agreed that the Season had ‘enabled them to understand more about the UK/Australian arts and cultural sector/higher education sector’.
- 78% also strongly agreed or agreed that the Season had ‘enabled them to discover new opportunities to work in the UK/Australia’.
- 96% said that the Season had helped them to ‘develop their existing professional network’ and 81% that it had ‘enabled their organisation to become part of a wider intercultural/international network’.
- 96% said that ‘the skills and knowledge I have/my organisation has learned in this project will have benefits for our work’ and 78% said that it had made them ‘more confident to make connections and build professional relationships / networks with people from cultures different from their own.’
- 99% of respondents said they would be “extremely likely” (78%) or “likely” (21%) to return to work in this country (either the UK or Australia) in the future.

Funding and investment

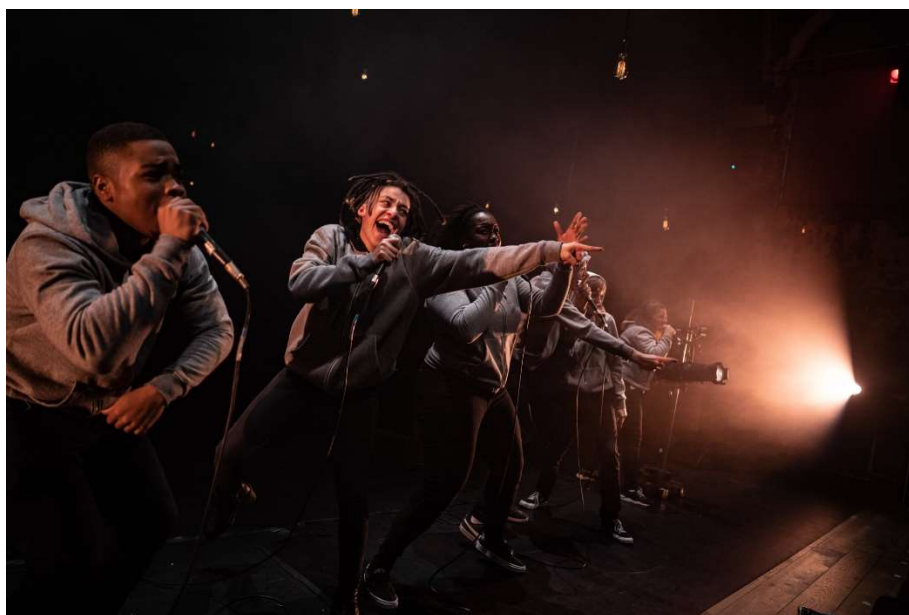
The core funding of the Season was provided through the British Council and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In addition to this core investment, the following investment was leveraged for the Season:

- **A\$1.94 million** in philanthropic support for the core Season programme (combined total from UK and AU donors)
- Over **A\$5.2 million** in philanthropic support directly to individual projects to participate in Season (given directly to the companies/projects).
- Over **A\$1.8 million** from AU state governments, arts bodies, and federal funding outside of the core Season budget (eg. Federal Office of Arts) granted directly to individual companies/projects to participate in the Season.
- Over **A\$277k (£160k)** from GREAT for Season activity focused on climate, education, tech and the free trade agreement.

Based on responses from the organisations in their end of project survey, most were able to secure further funding and income.

Extrapolated results based on those that provided information it can be estimated that:

- for every **£1/A\$1** received in grant contributions, another **£/A\$2.18** was received/generated from other contributions. That is, it is estimated the projects generated **£13.8m (A\$24.7m)** of additional funding/income.



BAC Beatbox Academy in Frankenstein How To Make A Monster. Image credit: Joyce Nicholls

Partner profile and project activity

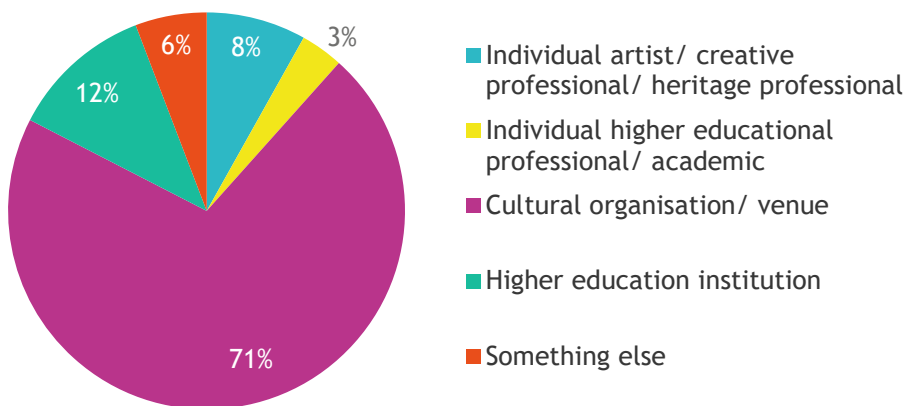
The Season involved projects and organisations of various types and scale. They included arts, cultural and higher education partners as well as training providers, individual creatives and specialists in particular areas of work.

Projects used a range of formats for delivery, offering a wide range of opportunities for interaction and involvement and using a variety of creative tools for engagement.

Partner profile

In the baseline survey, 71% identified as a ‘Cultural organisation/venue’, 12% as a ‘Higher education institution’, 8% as an ‘Individual artist/creative professional/heritage professional’, 3% as an ‘Individual higher educational professional/academic’ and 6% as ‘something else’. Other types of organisation included: a start-up incubator, artist collective and independent consultancy.

Chart: Overall - Partner type



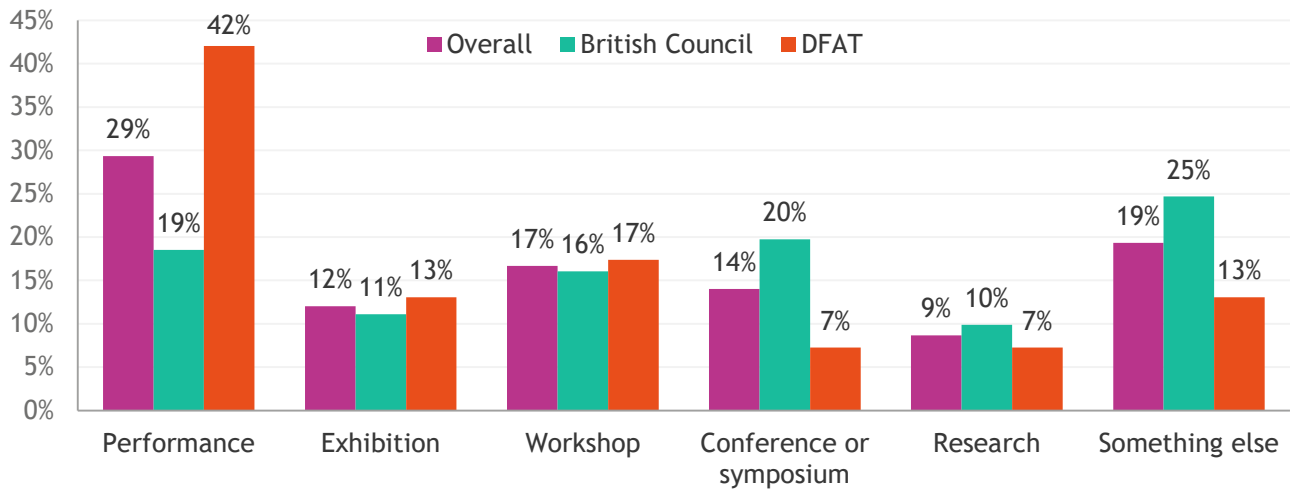
Base - Baseline survey: 86

- 68% classified their organisation in the ‘Creative, arts and entertainment activities’ sector, 15% in ‘Cultural education’, 9% in ‘Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities’, 5% in ‘another category’ and 2% as ‘Publishing activities’.
- 64% were based in Australia and 36% in the UK.

Project activity

The types of activity were as follows:

Type of activities

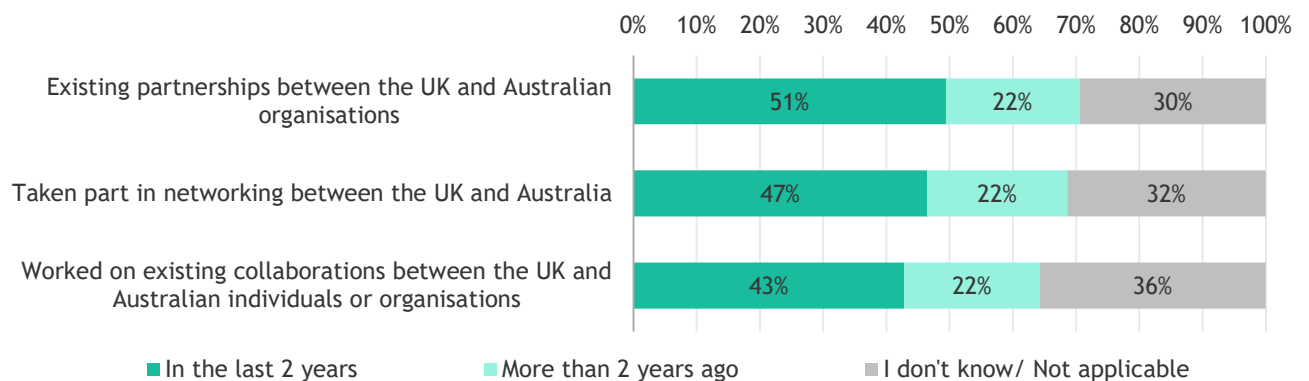


Base - Baseline survey: 150 (multiple answer question)

Partnerships, networking and collaborations

New, renewed or developed collaborative partnerships were one of the elements most valued by project leaders, with **99% of respondents** (end of project survey) **stating they were likely or extremely likely to work in the other country again.**

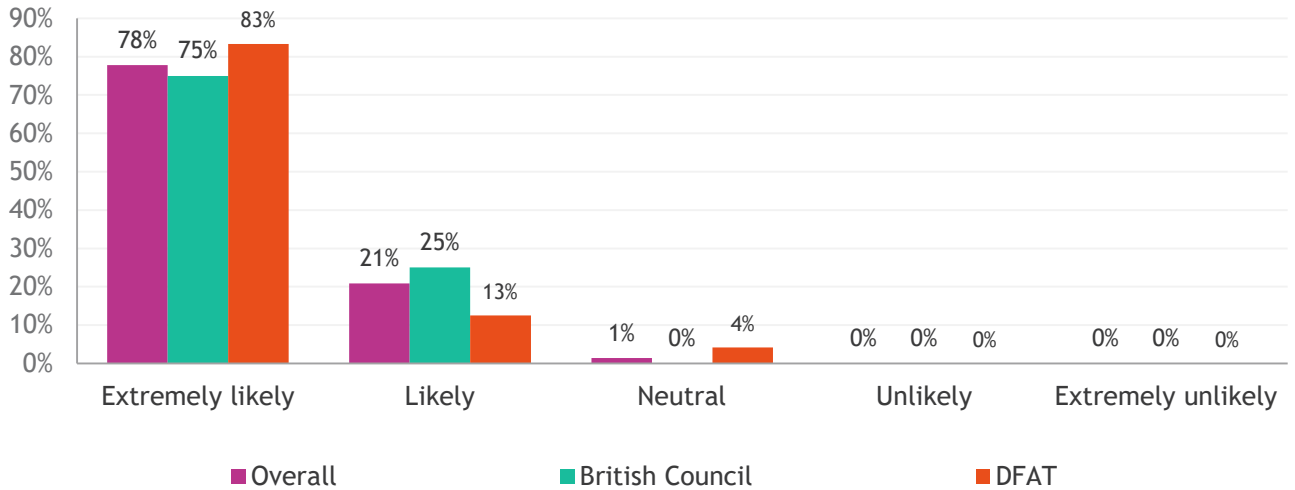
Existing partnerships, collaborations or networking between the UK and Australia



Base - Baseline survey: 83 / 85 / 83

Virtually all project leaders stated that they would be likely to follow-up with work in the other country if they had the opportunity. This was in spite of the challenging collaborative processes and relationships sometimes reported.

What is the likelihood that you/your organisation would return to work in this country (either the UK or Australia) in the future?



Base - End of project survey: 72 / 48 / 24



Difficult Conversations project - Academics, human rights activists and artists came together to discuss ongoing debates and controversial questions at Difficult Conversations, a symposium that took place in March, 2022, online and in Canberra.

Motivations

Over a half of project leaders were strongly motivated by the opportunity to develop new relationships internationally. Likewise, they saw this as an opportunity to find new ways to collaborate. Involvement was considered a strategic opportunity or springboard for future partnerships, funding or opportunities.

This was affirmed through the end of project survey in which project leaders stated that it had been one of the most important outcomes with **97% saying that taking part in the season had helped them/their organisation to develop their professional network.**

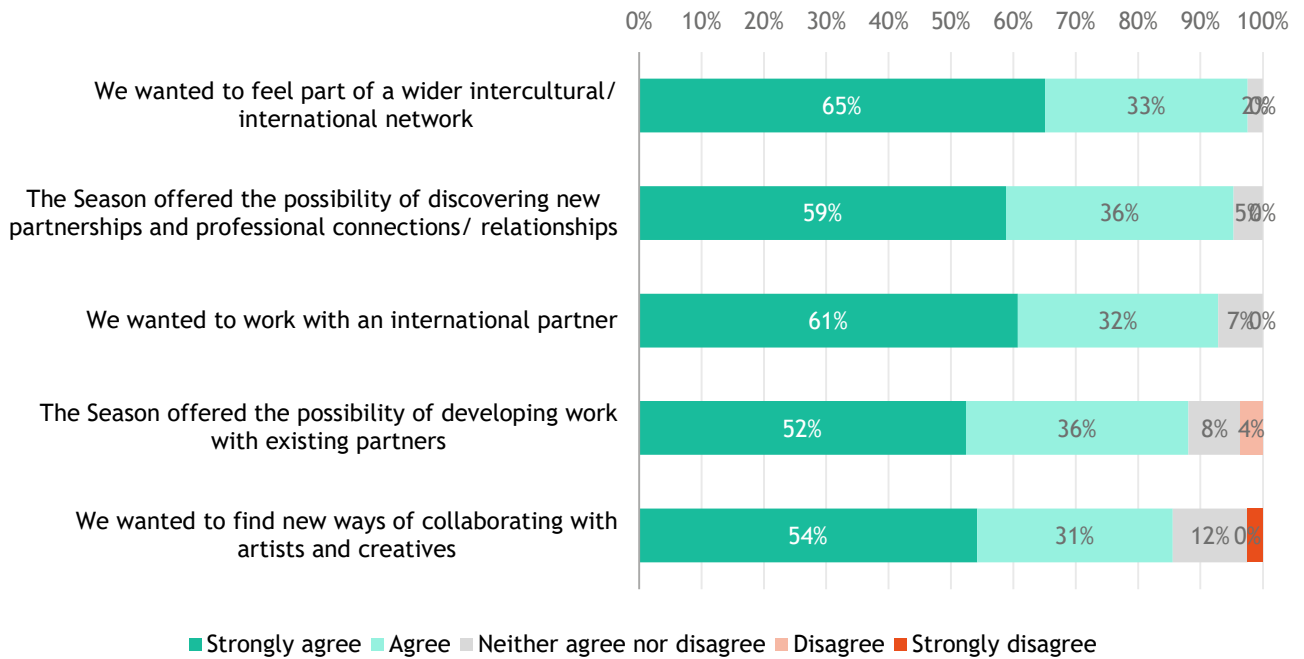
At the beginning of the programme, project leaders were asked why they wanted to take part, looking in particular at partnerships and relationships.

- **95%** of respondents strongly agreed (59%) or agreed (36%) that **‘The Season offered the possibility of discovering new partnerships and professional connections/relationships’**, whilst **88%** agreed that **‘The Season offered the possibility of developing work with existing partners’** (52% strongly agreed, 36% agreed).
- **98%** strongly agreed (65%) or agreed (33%) that they **‘wanted to feel part of a wider intercultural/international network’**, whilst **93%** expressed a desire to **‘work with an international partner’** (61% strongly agreed, 32% agreed).
- **86%** strongly agreed (54%) or agreed (31%) that they **‘wanted to find new ways of collaborating with artists and creatives.’**



Belvoir Theatre - Counting and Cracking. Image credit: Brett Boardman

Motivation priorities for project partners



Base - Baseline survey: 83 / 85 / 84 / 84 / 84 / 83 / 84

When asked about their main motivation for participation in the Season, partnership development was the most significant motivation, with 23% citing ‘the possibility of developing work with new partners’ as their main motivation and a further 18% citing ‘the possibility of developing work with existing partners’. Other important main motivations included a desire ‘to find new and creative ways of engaging with participants/audiences’ (12%) and ‘to feel part of a wider intercultural/international network’ (10%). (73 responses in total).

Outcomes

Important anticipated outcomes for partners included increased or new networking opportunities internationally (with 88% of respondents overall saying this was something they ‘hoped to gain’), partnership projects (86%) and international collaboration (85%).

Outcomes partners hoped to gain from taking part in Season

As a result of taking part in the Season, what are you hoping to gain?	Overall %	British Council %	DFAT %
Increased and/or new networking opportunities internationally	88%	89%	87%
Increased partnerships, projects or activity in the UK/ Australia	86%	83%	90%
Increased and/or new international collaboration i.e. joint projects, events, initiatives	85%	85%	85%
Increased and/or new local collaboration i.e. joint projects, events, initiatives	58%	57%	59%
Increased and/or new networking opportunities locally (anything inside country)	55%	59%	51%
<i>Base - Baseline survey</i>	85	46	39

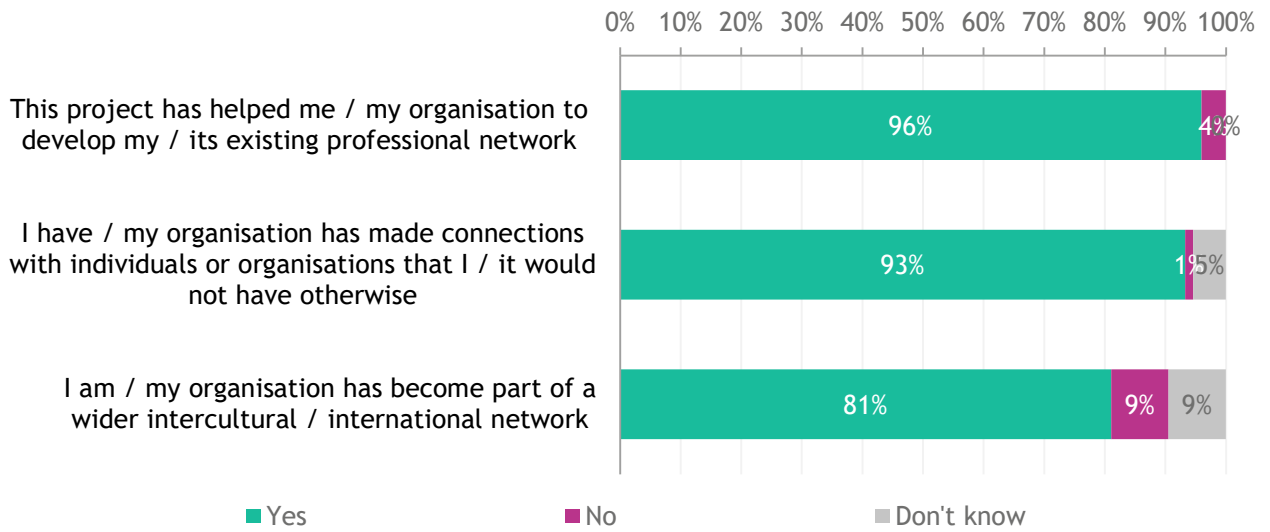
At the end of the programme, there was a strong affirmation for the role the Season had played in the development of partnerships, relationships and networks.

- **96%** said taking part in the season had **helped them/their organisation to develop their professional network**
- **93%** had made connections with **individuals or organisations they otherwise wouldn't have**
- **68%** had **discovered new opportunities to work in UK/Australia.**

Overall, season participants made **987 new connections or relationships as a result of delivering the project**, of which 521 were in the UK and 466 in Australia. Respondents anticipated that of these new connections, 59% of those developed in Australia and 56% of those in the UK were likely to turn into future partnerships or collaborations.

Outcomes - Partnership and collaborations

As a result of taking part in the UK/Australia Season, would you say that:

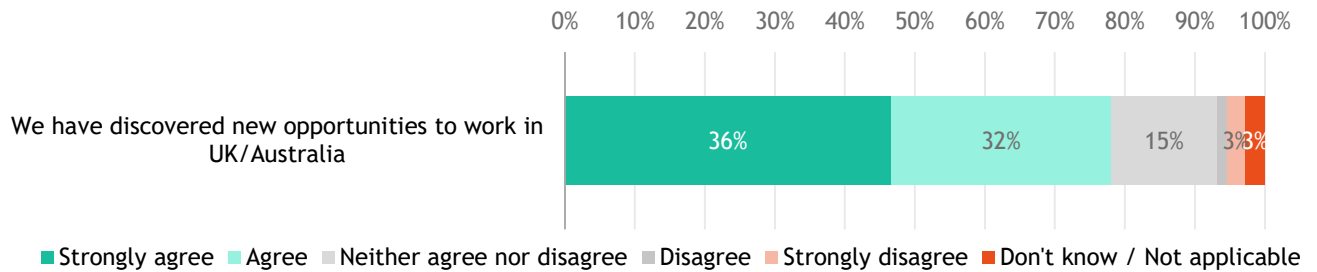


Base - End of project survey: 74



The project involved partnership between Riverside’s National Theatre of Parramatta/Javaad Alipoor Company, leading to the show ‘Things hidden since the foundation of the world’. Image shows Javaad Alipoor Company performing Rich Kids. Image credit: Peter Dibdin.

As a result of taking part in the UK/Australia Season, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement...



Base - End of project survey: 73

Asked about likely future involvement or plans/partnerships/collaborations with professionals or organisations as a result of the project, there were many who identified concrete proposals, offers and plans. This is a selection from both countries:

“... the experience has provided our organisation and team with more confidence in international presentation, particularly in the UK, and we are currently planning a 2023 tour of another work to a UK festival/venue.”

“[Lead performer] has been invited as an international guest speaker at the Edinburgh International Culture Summit in 2024.”

“A new international collaboration that seeks to create a concept touring piece. On themes of seeds/patenting/notions of borders/legislation and colonialism.”

“The Biennale may connect with these new contacts on future exhibitions to continue using sustainable non-polluting materials in exhibition site builds and in the presentation of artworks.”

“We were fortunate to meet with Southbank Centre CEO, Mark Ball to discuss future opportunities for presentations of major works by the company 2024-25 [...] and will maintain contact with Dance Umbrella to share valuable insights, intel, and opportunities for independent artists between our respective communities.”

“Festival Directors and venue programmers from all over the UK as well as Europe and the US saw the shows in Edinburgh so future tour planning has a positive starting base. Many UK casting directors and comedians attended the shows by Australian performers in Edinburgh and London resulting in follow-up meetings and auditions.”

“This project strengthened the existing partnership with the WOW Foundation and established a new relationship with journalist, Hannah Pool, which will provide opportunities for future liaison and support for Australia-based artists.”

“We are exploring bringing a couple of Australian poets to perform at our monthly poetry night if we can secure funding and have good relationships in place with Adelaide Writers Week, Sydney Opera House and the Wheeler Centre.”

“[Artist] has offers from many different AUS based organisations that saw his work in the UK and online that have reached out about performances and collaborations starting as early as March 2023 and is in contact with projects in ASIA and the USA for May-Nov 2023 as a direct result of the UK shows.”

“MFI funds could possibly be applied for the creative development of TOSOM through to the premier at Darwin Festival August 2023 and then to tour other Australian festivals.”

“We are looking to do a follow-up symposium with Symphony Services Australia in 2022.”

“This project has been a useful pilot to determine how galleries across the SG network can share content, work together and connect our key stakeholders (young people) in creatively generative ways.

““ The Conversation has produced two more podcast episodes with support from the British Council: an episode about asylum seekers in immigration detention and another about a site for Indigenous protest in Australia the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. Both episodes featured on location recording. ”

“At any stage, Queensland Ballet would be thrilled to be engaged with international collaborators. We are so grateful to have been enabled on this tour by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.”

“The project enabled staff at both organisations to develop strong professional relationships and seeded the possibility of future collaborative projects.”

“Discussions are already underway to work with the National Youth Choir of Scotland in 2023 for a subsequent season of The Pulse as part of Galway

International Festival and potentially for an additional season in the Roundhouse, London.”

“We are discussing with Michael Naphali, UK/Australia Season Director, the opportunity to present the video artwork at Piccadilly Circus Street LED in London.”

“Our activity was research-based. We plan to keep our research consortium going by seeking for more funding from different sources in the UK, Australia, and Africa.”

“The UK Government in Australia who sponsored the networking drinks at the conference as a direct result of us being involved in this programme are a new contact for us and we are continuing to explore the possibility of further support/partnership.”

“ We have developed a season of Blindness with the Merrigong Theatre Company in Wollongong and this season will be presented in May 2022. ”

“The UK/Australia Season gave the Barbican an opportunity to work with new artists and strengthened some existing relationships. For example, we are already discussing the potential next residency of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and we will keep in touch with the extraordinary theatre makers whose work we presented as a part of the season.”



Rewards for the Tribe is an ambitious collaborative dance work by Chunky Move and Restless Dance Theatre. Image credit: James Wright NON Studio_01

Understanding the infrastructure and participation in wider network

There was a strong sense of a wish to learn and understand more in order to facilitate future work or identify opportunity - and particularly to feel part of a wider/global international or intercultural community. This was a strong motivation for taking part and as a result of the project:

76% said they/their organisation **'has become part of a wider intercultural /international network'**.

81% **'were able to understand more** about the UK/Australian arts and cultural sector/ higher education sector'

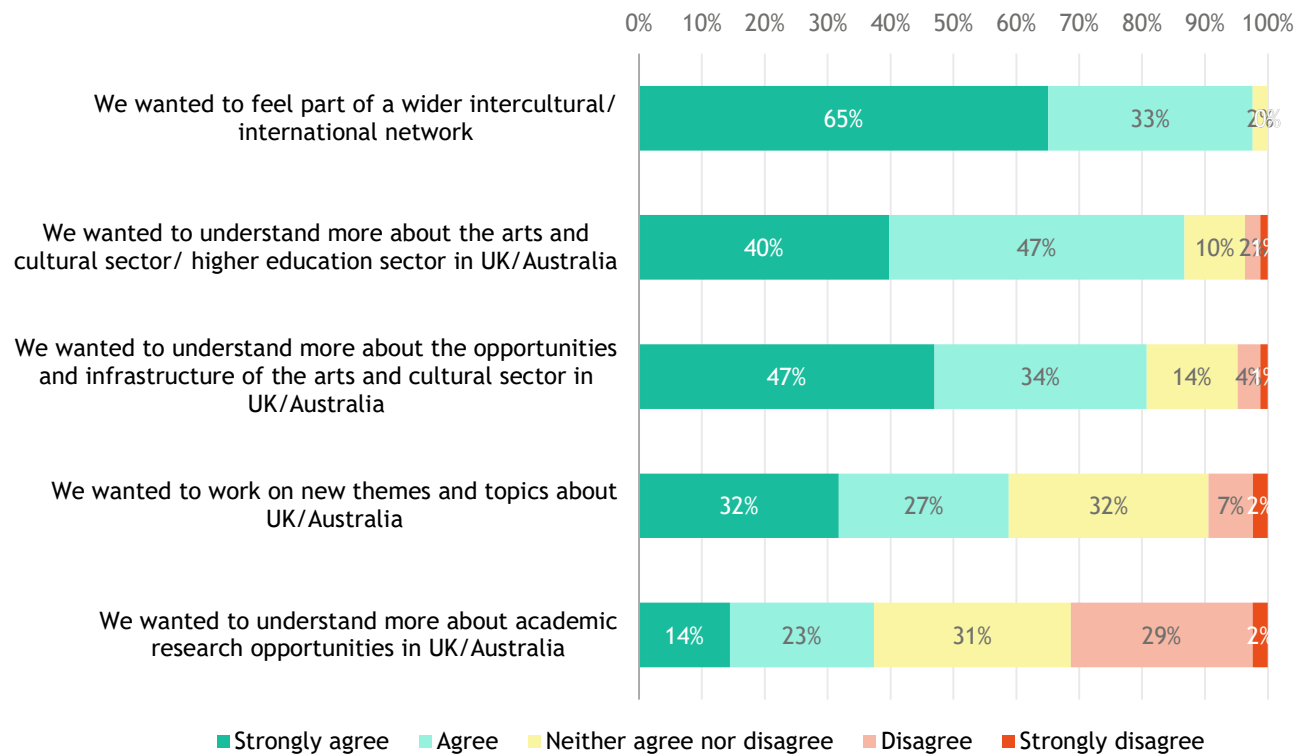
In response to the question in the baseline survey about the motivation to understand the infrastructure (of the other country) and feeling part of a wider network, there was a positive outlook.

- **98%** of respondents agreed they **'wanted to feel part of a wider intercultural/ international network'**, with DFAT season participants being more likely to be motivated by this than the British Council participants (72% of DFAT participants strongly agreed with this statement, compared to 59% of British Council participants). This was also given by 10% of respondents overall as their main motivation for taking part.
- **87%** of respondents agreed they **'wanted to understand more about the arts and cultural sector/higher education sector in UK/Australia'**.
- **81%** agreed they **'wanted to understand more about the opportunities and infrastructure of the arts and cultural sector in UK/Australia'**.
- **59%** of respondents agreed they **'wanted to work on new themes and topics about UK/Australia'**. This was more likely to be a motivation for British Council season participants, with 70% strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement, compared to a lower 46% amongst DFAT participants.
- **37%** of respondents agreed they **'wanted to understand more about academic research opportunities in UK/Australia'**.



Ballarat International Foto Biennale Conversations Online series - exploring the processes of touring exhibitions, curating across borders, working under the impact of the pandemic.

Motivations - Understanding the infrastructure and participation in wider network



Base - Baseline survey: 83 / 83 / 83 / 85 / 83

Feeling part of a wider intercultural/international network and building understanding was seen to align strategically with their strategic aims.

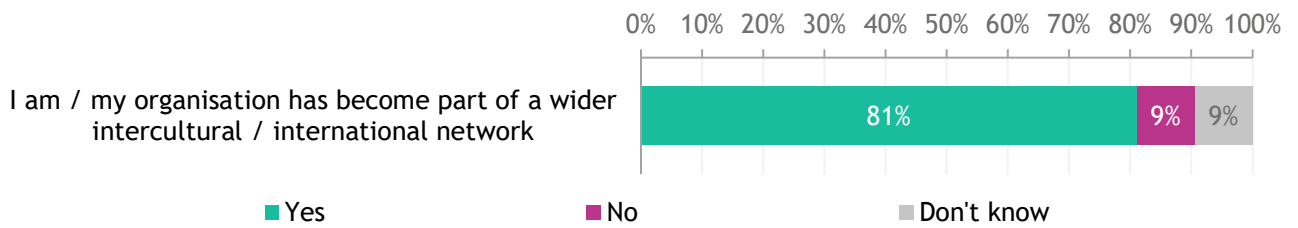
“Gain insight and understanding of different cultures, specifically LGBTQIA histories. Unique opportunity to be part of a global queer artistic community.”
 [Individual artist/creative professional]

Considering motivations to take part versus actual outcomes at the end of the season provides these comparisons:

- 81% said they/their organisation ‘has become part of a wider intercultural /international network’, compared to 98% who were motivated by this.
- 78% ‘were able to understand more about the UK/Australian arts and cultural sector/higher education sector’, compared to 87% who were motivated by this.
- 33% ‘know more about academic research opportunities in the UK/Australia’, compared to 37% who were motivated by this.
- 79% ‘were able to work on new themes and topics’, compared to 59% respondents who ‘wanted to work on new themes and topics about UK/Australia’.

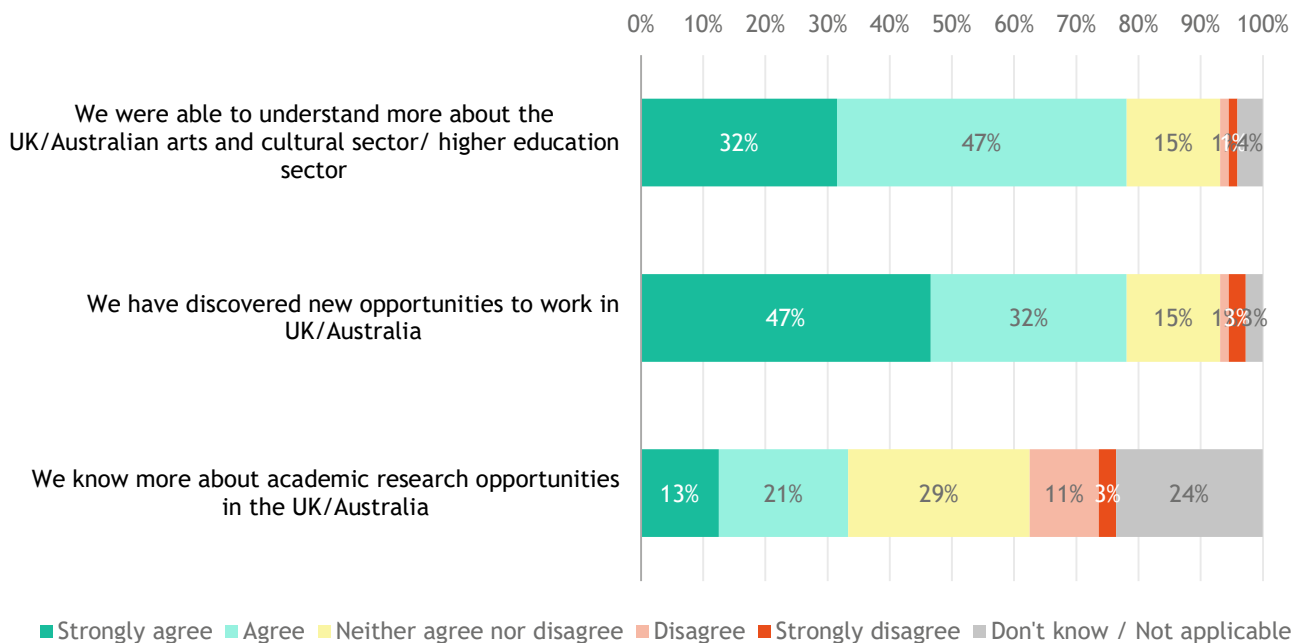
Outcomes - Understanding the infrastructure and participation in wider network

As a result of taking part in the UK/Australia Season, would you say that:



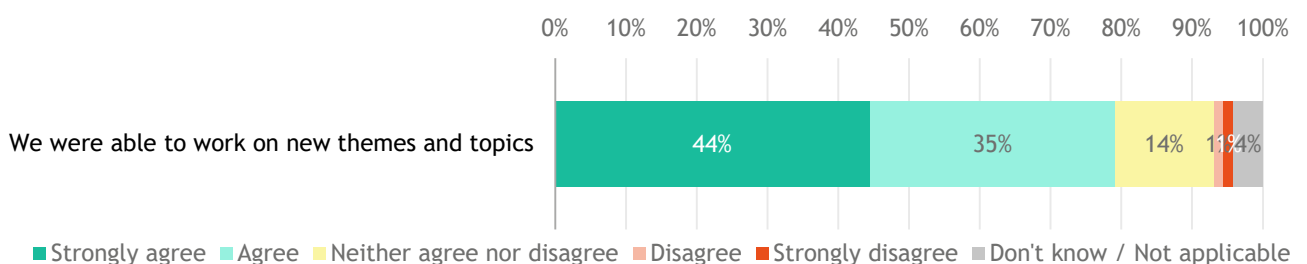
Base - End of project survey: 74

As a result of taking part in the UK/Australia Season, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



Base - End of project survey: 73 / 73 / 72

As a result of taking part in the UK/Australia Season, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



Base - End of project survey: 72

Alignment with organisational strategic objectives

Involvement in the Season was seen by partners to align with their own strategic objectives in various ways, with the partnership element being focal to developing sustainable working relationships, acting as a catalyst for future larger scale collaboration, or supporting future funding and internationalisation. The main challenges identified were mainly based around the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“It has developed our working relationship and provided a great opportunity to present a film and program [only] previously presented to UK audiences. It was a privilege and well received by our audience, to present an entirely distinctive piece of art cinema worthy of high critical praise, in a cinematic landscape littered with superhero movies and endless remakes.”

“This has strengthened the collaboration and provided a platform for us to continue working together towards attracting more funding for research and capacity building of early career researchers.”

“The Australian World Orchestra was thrilled to receive 4-star reviews and standing ovations for both performances that indicated that the audiences, who are used to seeing the greatest orchestras in the world, acknowledged what Australia’s musical talent and diaspora.”

“Involvement in the Season provided opportunities to support our internationalisation strategy to engage in global partnership activity, to strengthen our partnership with the British Council and to enhance and develop our reputation and willingness to deepen our connections with Australia. This is important for Trans-National Education and in particular to help expand our portfolio for reciprocal study abroad exchange, a growing objective for both Nations.”

“Over the course of the Barbican’s Australia season, we presented artists who have rarely been seen in the UK, platforming new perspectives through feature films, theatre performances, and music.”

“We were slightly constrained from achieving our aims, primarily by the continuing disruption of the pandemic. The tour had to be postponed from its original date [...] As a result we lost one presenter from the tour as the new dates did not align with their festival dates [...] We were therefore one of the first Australian companies to tour UK after the opening of our border. We were made welcome by presenters and

audiences, but the prevailing Covid restrictions, and indeed the risk of infection, impacted quite heavily on the tour.”

“The show gained fabulous reviews and had success both with the media and audience members (many communicated as the pick of the Adelaide Festival), however sales unfortunately were slower than expected with the rise of new Covid-19 variants in Australia and case numbers rising rapidly over this period.”

“For a large part of this grant period it seemed that travelling to Australia in-person would not be possible. Therefore not only exceeding the number of tour dates compared to our plan, but also engaging higher profile venues and reaching greater audiences with our work feels like a tangible success.”

“Covid travel restrictions made it difficult to get a methane gun that was to be used to monitor methane emissions from cows during field experiments.”

“Participants felt empowered by their experience. Audience members felt like they learnt more about members of their community and many felt connected in a way that they had not done before. Participants connected with one another both at the event but also forming bonds and connections lasting into the future.”

“From this project, we are in the process of establishing a new 5-year agreement to run this programme with Deakin University and to host their students at our University, virtually or in person in the UK.”

“Through this project we were able to shine a spotlight on British immersive artists and help them to reach audiences in Australia at scale.”



*Joelle Taylor.
Image credit:
Out-Spoken.*

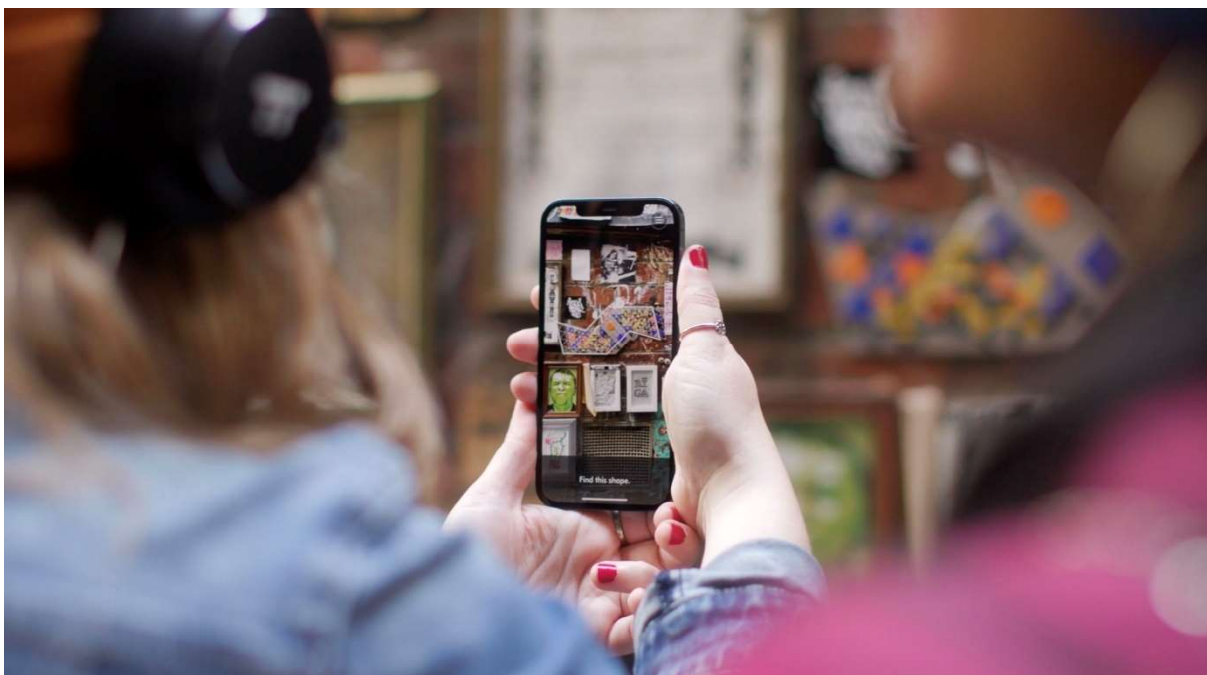
Profile, Covid recovery, skills development, funding

The Season presented an opportunity for funding at a difficult time as well as being an opportunity to address current issues, such as in relation to social or human rights. Recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic was also important, as was the opportunity to raise profile in relation to these ambitions.

Increased reputation or profile locally was more important for those based in Australia while the international profile was more important for UK-based participants.

89% said delivery of their project/activity ‘improved their organisation’s reputation internationally.’

100% strongly agreed or agreed that ‘The skills and knowledge I have/my organisation has learned in this project will have benefits for our work.’



Playable Cities. Presgrave Place. Image credit: Troy Innocent

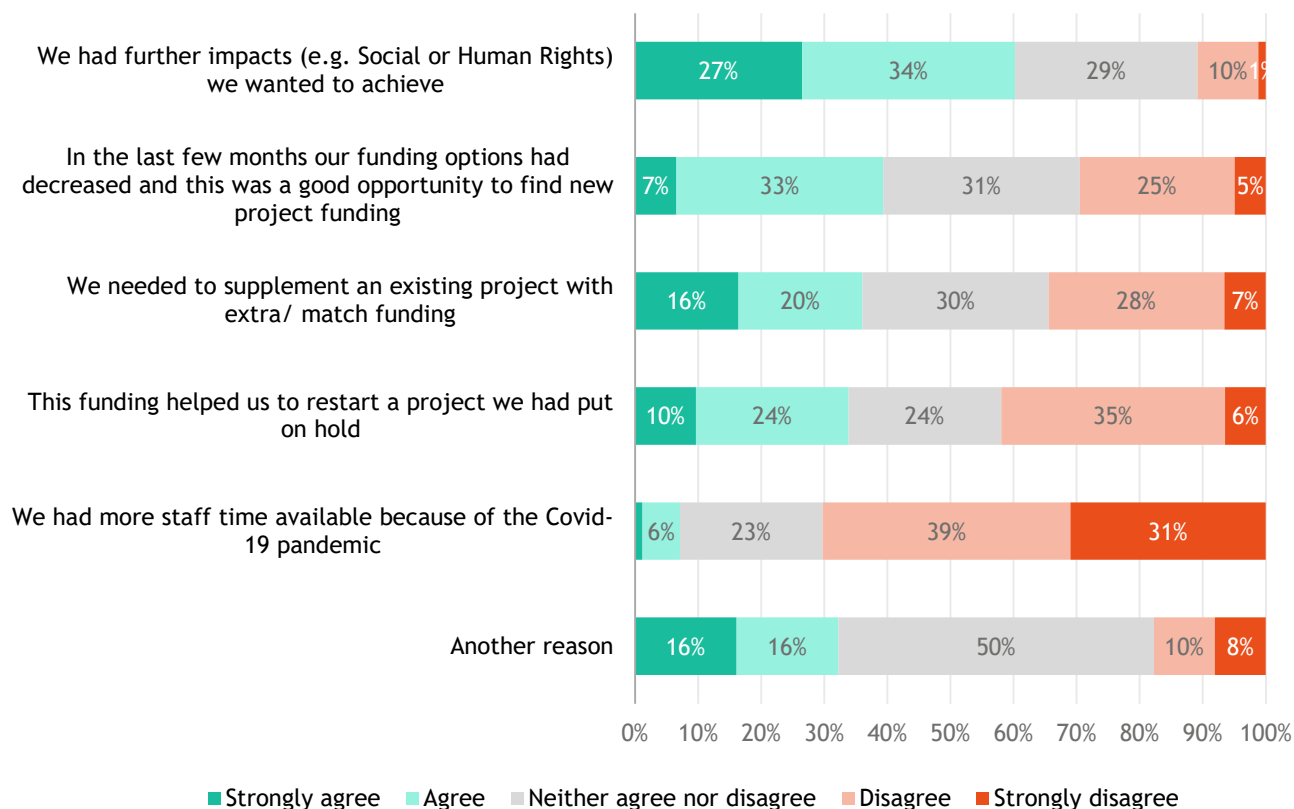
Motivations

The following question from the baseline survey indicated the importance of organisational resilience and development, and funding and support for this activity.

- 61% strongly agreed or agreed they ‘had further impacts (eg. Social or Human Rights) they wanted to achieve’.
- 40% strongly agreed or agreed ‘In the last few months our funding options had decreased, and this was a good opportunity to find new project funding’.
- 36% ‘needed to supplement an existing project with extra/match funding’.
- 34% strongly agreed or agreed ‘This funding helped us to restart a project we had put on hold’.

Other motivations to take part included: sharing work with Australian or under-represented audiences; raising awareness of particular topics such as human rights of indigenous Australians and the climate crisis; knowledge transfer and a platform to open a dialogue on practices in the sector; to develop models of working with international partners and how this might continue and exploring creative opportunities/approaches.

Motivations - Other: profile, Covid recovery, skills development, funding



Base - baseline survey: 83 / 61 / 61 / 62 / 84 / 62

Outcomes

The outcomes which season participants hoped to gain from taking part included ‘an increase in their reputation or profile internationally (85%) or locally (64%)’. Though less frequently cited, building organisational capacity (48%) and skills (39%) were also outcomes they were looking to achieve.

Increased reputation or profile internationally was more important for DFAT season participants, with 92% hoping to gain this from their involvement (compared to 78% of British Council participants), while an increased local reputation or profile was more important for British Council season participants (67%, compared to 59% amongst DFAT participants).

Outcomes partners hope to gain from taking part in Season

As a result of taking part in the Season, what are you hoping to gain?	Overall %	British Council %	DFAT %
Increased reputation or profile internationally	85%	78%	92%
Increased reputation or profile locally	64%	67%	59%
To attract funding for future projects	64%	57%	72%
Increased organisational capacity e.g., knowledge and skills	48%	46%	51%
Skills development	39%	37%	41%
<i>Base - Baseline survey</i>	85	46	39

Raising the profile of their organisation or the artists that they represent was one of the key areas where involvement in the Season aligned with participants’ strategic objectives.

“Our involvement in the Season supports the growth of our audience and brand in Australia and the UK, both within the higher education sector and with the general public.” [Higher Education Institution]

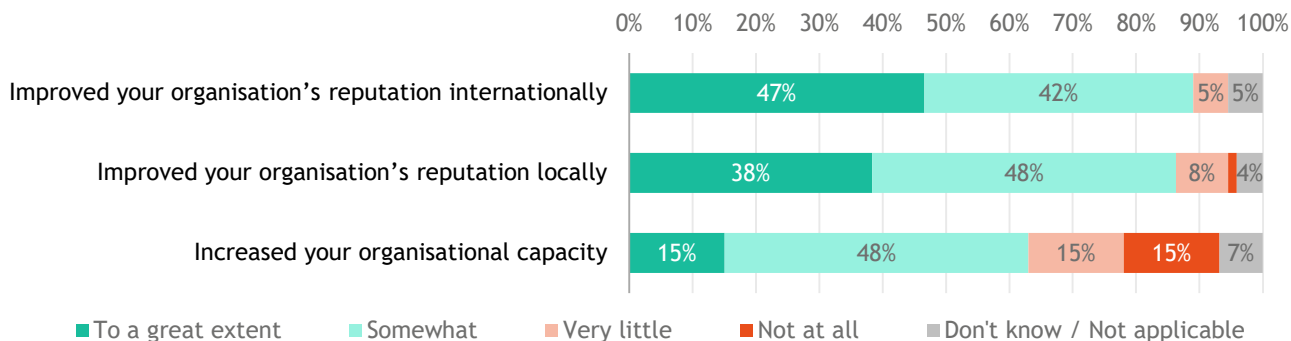
The Season also aligned with organisation aims to be part of and stimulate conversation/ discussion, knowledge sharing and thought leadership and actions of change around specific topics including climate change, systemic inequalities and the role of sport in diplomacy.

Comparing predicted versus actual outcomes at the end of the season for participants overall:

- 86% said delivery of their project/activity ‘improved their organisation’s reputation internationally’ compared to 85% who hoped to gain this outcome from the project.
- 89% said delivery of their project/activity ‘improved their organisation’s reputation locally’ compared to 64% who hoped to gain this outcome from the project.
- 63% said delivery of their project/activity ‘increased their organisational capacity’ compared to 48% who hoped to gain this outcome from the project.
- 96% agreed (43% strongly agree, 53% agreed) ‘The skills and knowledge I have/my organisation has learned in this project will have benefits for our work’, this is compared to 39% who hoped to develop skills from the project.

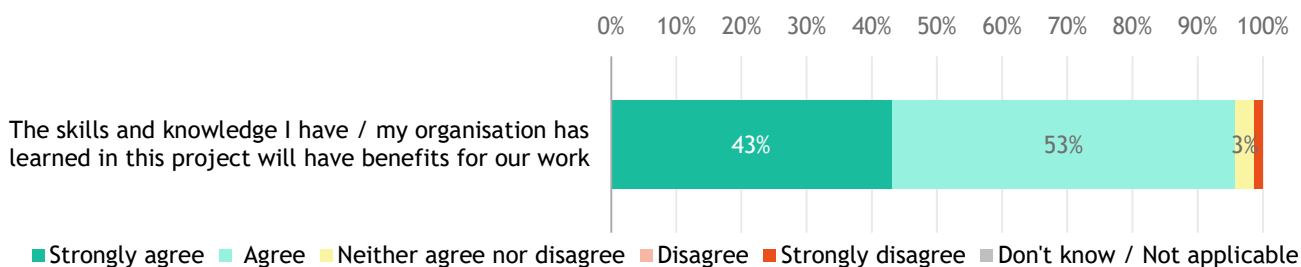
Outcomes - Other: profile, Covid recovery, skills development

To what extent has delivery of your/your organisation's project/activity ...

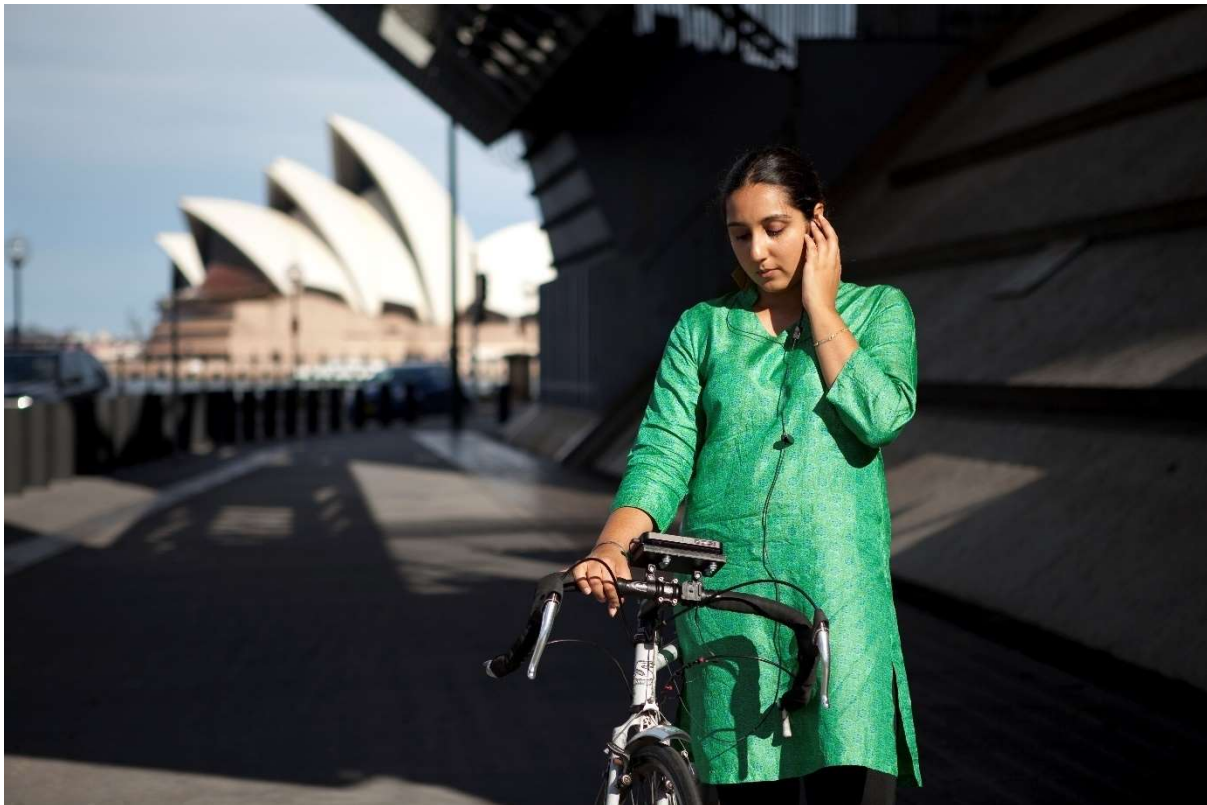


Base - End of project survey: 73 / 73 / 73

As a result of taking part in the UK/Australia Season, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:



Base - End of project survey: 72



Rider Spoke project. Image credit: Alex Kershaw

Some of the responses given when asked for more detail about the way the project increased their confidence and knowledge of working internationally included:

“The whole idea of Ghost Tunes was to explore the idea of what it means to use the term indigenous and use Scotland and Australia in comparative research: Gaelic Speaking/ Scots Speaking versus English. Noongar in West Australia and English and examining the dominance of English and how that affects the perception of landscape and sound. The artists openly discussed these topics and developed work that reflected this.”

“Running this programme massively increased our knowledge and experience in working with First Nations people. Also, delivering an event as part of a Fringe festival reshapes the context in which immersive work is exhibited and consumed in a very exciting way for us.”

“Our LGBTQ+ mentoring programme ended up linking regional queer communities. In discussion with partners from Writers Republic, Ruckus and Poets Out Loud, we

were able to understand better the nuance of these people's lived experience within these communities."

"We were able to have experience in fostering partnerships in a way we would like to (bespoke, evolving, iterative etc) and through having (mostly) enough time to do so as this project lasted many months and took over a year to plan."

"The ideas we wish to create are mass participatory and inspired by shining a light on the inequalities in society. Developing outdoor artwork in a co-created way which includes diverse voices throughout the process."

"Through this project we were able to further this initiative and continue to develop our organisation's understanding of cultural contexts and our knowledge of different cultures, particularly when working with Australian partners."

"Sustained conversation over an extended period enabled us to build trust and go deeper into understanding each company's context, challenges and cultural protocols in detail. Both UK and AU participants offered a range of different experiences and intersectional identities offering a broad range of diversity of perspectives. Our First Nations participants emerged from Samoa and Australia, different tribes from the country reflecting the diversity of First Nation identity in AU."

"This was the first time that this project had been presented internationally. We discovered that some of the methods we had previously used were not suitable in this context."

"We hadn't toured internationally since 2015 and this was our first time touring to Edinburgh Festival and Birmingham Rep Theatre. Touring in the middle of the pandemic also added a layer of complication but we had robust producing processes in place and were able to build connections in the UK which will undoubtedly aid us in the future. It is also a vastly different touring landscape and getting up to speed with the changes has helped us plan ahead for more international tours."

Perceptions and Engagement

Artistic practice and ways of working

Involvement in the Season provided purposeful new ways of developing artistic work, supporting artists and individuals and exploring new ways of engaging with audiences.

72% 'were able to develop new artistic forms and approaches'.

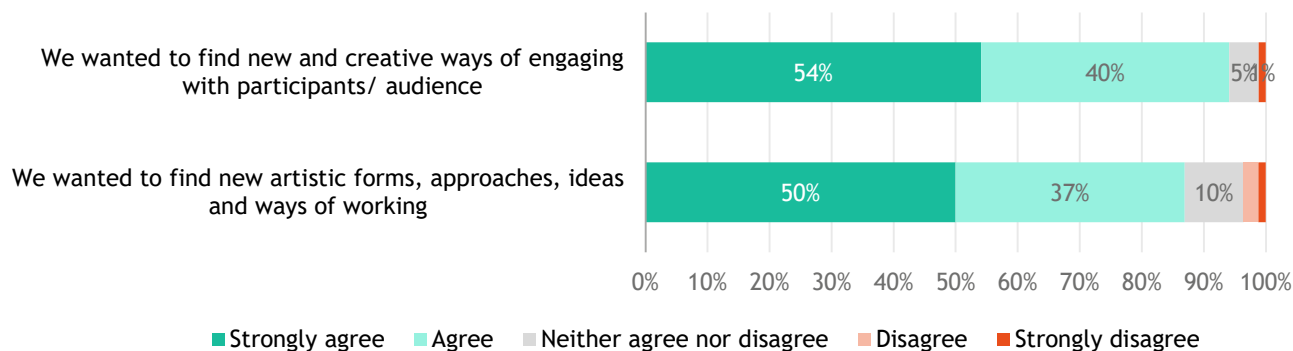
84% 'were able to find new ways of engaging with participants/audiences'.

Project leaders were strongly motivated to take part in order to explore artistic forms and approaches and new ways of engaging audiences/participants as outlined in the Baseline Survey.

- 87% 'wanted to find new artistic forms, approaches, ideas and ways of working' - 50% strongly agreed and 37% agreed. A slightly higher proportion of DFAT season participants compared to British Council participants strongly agreed with this statement (54% vs 47%).
- 94% 'wanted to find new and creative ways of engaging with participants/ audience' - 54% strongly agreed and 40% agreed.

When asked about their main motivation (single answer question), finding 'new artistic forms, approaches, ideas and ways of working' was selected by 8% of season participants.

Motivations - Artistic practice and ways of working



Base - Baseline survey: 84 / 83

This was cited by some to align with their strategic objectives.

“It enables us to generate fees and incomes for artists, specifically artists of colour through a themed programme. It enables us to develop and share transferable skills and to foster employability and professional development.”
[Cultural organisation/venue]

“This season helps us to showcase how digital performance continues to be embraced by the global arts community, creating new experiences for artists, and opportunities for audiences to connect with art, no matter where we are in the world.” [Cultural organisation/venue]

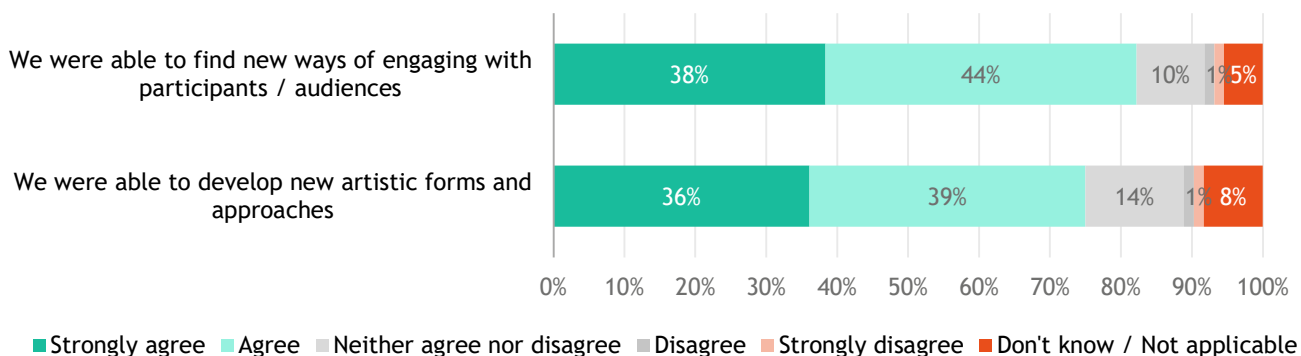
“It supports these key objectives: Place Australian artists in an international context; Champion the ideas and achievements of contemporary artists; Consolidate the [organisation’s] role as an industry leader in creative learning with social impact, led by artists, for diverse groups.” [Cultural organisation/venue]

Comparing motivations to take part versus actual outcomes at the end of the season provides the following results:

- 75% ‘were able to develop new artistic forms and approaches’, compared to 87% who ‘wanted to find new artistic forms, approaches, ideas and ways of working’.
- 82% ‘were able to find new ways of engaging with participants/audiences’, compared to 94% who were motivated by this.

Outcomes - Artistic practice and ways of working

As a result of taking part in the UK/Australia Season, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements...



Base - End of project survey: 72 / 73

Asked to describe elements of the project which were considered to be innovative, including new or developed ways of working, processes, activities, ideas or outputs, some of the responses included:

“The whole project from start to finish was extremely innovative in that we had to collaborate on zoom meeting due to Covid restrictions. We made this part of the innovation of the project and learned to share documents and materials through google.docs and other methods.”

“The collaboration itself is innovative - a conversation between two Higher Education Institutions.”

“Polar Force was created using cutting edge sound recording equipment to record the sounds of Australia’s Antarctic region. The work featured these pristine recordings within a custom created inflatable space. Agglomeration of Measurement pushed the conceptual limits of percussion practice featuring works that showcased new compositional approaches to playing and composing.”

“Focusing on more localised talent and streaming in interstate/international artists, speakers and guest where possible. Reforest QR codes were placed at major AF venues, including Climate Crisis and the Arts. Upon scanning the QR code, Reforest automatically planted trees to remove the carbon emission related to the audience member’s attendance.”

“By focussing on the concept of a transferrable work, rather than a transportable work. This means that the elements of the performance are collected as ‘ingredients’ in a theatrical recipe that can be found, sourced and re-created in the UK, reducing the need for travel & freight.”

“Receiving this grant enabled us to develop and test a fully remote tour model of the work which we haven’t done before. We hired local producers in Australia while we supported them remotely from the UK through online meetings and a series of training videos we created.”

“We were successful in continuing to establish a ticketed model for immersive exhibition as part of a festival. We are keen to continue developing this to eventually create a model by which we do not require grant support in order to show this kind of work to audiences and earn a percentage for the artists involved.”



Polar Force Hero. Image credit: Jeff Busby

“The NGV is committed to offering internationally significant art and experiences for our audiences and this project enabled us to delve deeper into the incredible practice of Cerith Wyn Evans, offer opportunities for local creatives and more widely enrich the relationship between Australia and the UK.”

“We used live dial-in equipment to bring Meg Mason to our audiences on a big screen, in real-time while they were seated in a venue, making the experience feel as if she was there in the room, although in reality she was in Australia.”

“Didj and Dance involved storytelling, collaboration and improv activities with kids in the audience which illustrated and engaged audiences with First Nations stories and culture. First Nations performers sharing culture and stories via the medium of comedy has proved to be a powerful medium for reconciliation and understanding.”

“In addition to providing a richer and more engaging product, this episode has helped grow the prominence of podcasts at The Conversation.”

“The concepts and intentions within the project promote inclusion and challenge the constructs, notions and assumptions of a dominating Imperial power - the British Empire.”

“Due to the topic (sport) the Dialogue attracted a diverse group of stakeholders, with agency. The concept was a world's first, not only the topic but the idea of getting key people from both country's sports diplomacy industries in the room.”

“The season afforded us the opportunity to work with a UK team to recreate the original Australian set design. We hadn't remounted internationally in this way and the result meant that not only could the work be presented as intended but that we also saved considerable funds while also contributing to a lower carbon footprint.”

Just under half (49%) of the projects changed their delivery as a result of the impacts of Covid-19. Of those, 61% converted to delivery using digital tools, 48% converted to other formats and 29% noted some activities could not happen at all (*multiple answer question - base - end of project activity survey: 75 / 31*).

Understanding of culture and cultural context

The main theme of ‘Who Are We Now?’ was strongly reflected in the projects, taking the opportunity to examine a range of issues related to the situation of Britain and Australia in the world today. Especially important was exchange relating to First Nations, diversity and contemporary global concerns.

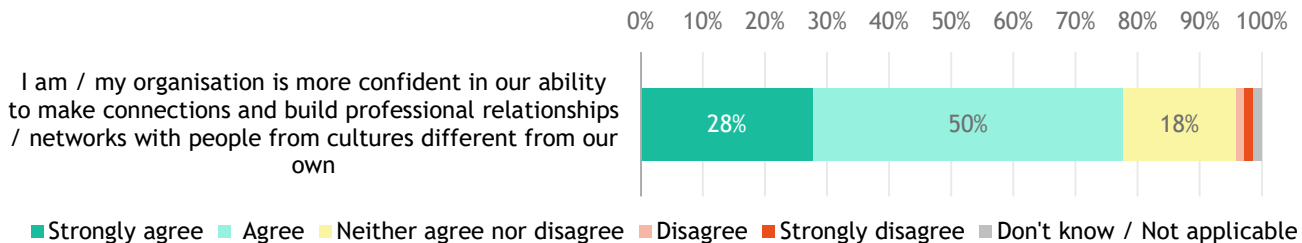
78% agreed ‘I am/my organisation is more confident in our ability to make connections and build professional relationships/networks with people from cultures different from our own’.

These outcomes have been articulated in relation to many of the other elements, for example looking at networks, relationships and innovation. More specifically, at the end of the project, project leaders stated:

- As a result of taking part, 78% agreed ‘I am/my organisation is more confident in our ability to make connections and build professional relationships/networks with people from cultures different from our own’.

Outcome

As a result of taking part in the UK/Australia Season, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement...



Base - End of project survey: 72

Further comments included:

“Richard Frankland's work completely blew away the creatives and the audience in Scotland. We have always been 'aware' of many of the issues but to have an artist of his stature and experience was overwhelming.”

“The exchange of knowledge with companies around local contexts and opportunities has resulted in greater understanding of cultural landscape in AU and UK.”

“Collaborating across continents has opened our eyes to cultural differences and the importance of respecting individual choice.”

“Our collaboration with Screen Australia was an instrumental part of presenting the Homeland film season, which featured films by First Nations directors. In addition to financial support, we benefitted from the curatorial expertise of Screen Australia’s team, who helped us to choose the right films for the season and navigate the cultural conversations addressed by the programme.”

“Both UK and AU participants offered a range of different experiences and intersectional identities offering a broad range of diversity of perspectives.”

“On a more informal note, we had interesting discussions with indigenous poet Evelyn Araluen and with Yvette Holt, chair of the First Nations Australia Writers Network to better understand the history and prominence of indigenous writers within the poetry landscape in Australia.”

“This was the organisation’s first opportunity to present a First Nations artist internationally so was an excellent opportunity to show the importance of showing these stories and voices on a global stage.”

“Storytelling is a powerful tool for connection and education - and one that is increasingly used to bring attention to important issues.”

“In the climate context, consulting with Aboriginal knowledge holders and learning key insights, provided a new lens when looking to understand how humans can successfully engage with natural world.”

“We delivered the first piece of music conducted by an indigenous person in the UK - we think this is very meaningful.”

“Running this programme massively increased our knowledge and experience in working with First Nations people. Also, delivering an event as part of a Fringe festival reshapes the context in which immersive work is exhibited and consumed in a very exciting way for us.”

“The project highlighted the opportunity that cultural exchange between Australia and the UK presents to highlight the cultural diversity of these countries.”



Songlines - Tracking the Seven Sisters project. An Aboriginal-led exhibition that takes visitors on a journey along the epic Seven Sisters Dreaming tracks, through art, Indigenous voices, innovative multimedia and other immersive displays.



The Cultural Leadership Exchange Initiative was a project between Goldsmiths and National Institute of Dramatic Art to build a longer-term partnership between the two institutions to share thinking and work together to support the development of visionary, dynamic and entrepreneurial creative leaders.

Audiences engaged

For almost all projects, audience and participant engagement was a central element of its delivery, with a wide range of different modes employed.

By their nature, there was a difference between Higher Education projects which tended to have a smaller number of higher quality interactions and cultural projects which had higher numbers overall.

The estimated number of in person audience engagements is 775,523 and online is 80,974. There were also 8,523 in-person participant engagements and 937 online.

Overall	Base	Sum	Min	Max	Mean
Estimated number of audience members - IN PERSON	49	775,523*	0	302,400	14,296
Estimated number of audience members - ONLINE	33	80,974**/**	0	1,742,704	54,248
Estimated number of participants - IN PERSON	30	8,523	5	5,310	284

Estimated number of participants - ONLINE	22	937	0	163	43
Estimated number of artists/practitioners - IN PERSON	45	1,250	1	217	28
Estimated number of artists/practitioners - ONLINE	30	427	0	104	14
Estimated number of delegates - IN PERSON	8	1,271	15	549	159
Estimated number of delegates - ONLINE	9	934	2	228	104
Estimated number of trainers/facilitators - IN PERSON	7	85	1	71	12
Estimated number of trainers/facilitators - ONLINE	5	24	2	9	5
Estimated number of others involved - IN PERSON	4	30	0	13	8
Estimated number of others involved - ONLINE	5	5,028	1	5,000	1,006

*These figures of in-person audience engagements include one project - Being Human Human Being - which reported figures of 302,400 which makes up nearly half of the all in-person audience engagements. This event has been included as it is based on the footfall of passing a large-scale outdoor installation. However, some reporting may wish to exclude this figure.

Additional in-person audience engagement figures of 89,301 were reported directly (not via an end of activity survey) by The Box for the Songlines exhibition and have been added onto the total above. On the 1 February 2023 71,381 people had seen the free elements of the Songlines exhibition (including the blades, air lock, introduction panels and APY Lands) and 17,920 had seen it in its entirety.

**The Australian World Orchestra (AWO) were unable to retrieve exact audience engagement figures, the BBC Proms performance was audio-broadcast by BBC 3 to millions of listeners, and multiple broadcasts in Australia by ABC Classic, with between 40,000-50,000 listeners per broadcast. Due to the wide-reaching nature of broadcast these figures have been omitted from the total online audience estimates.

***This figure also excludes some data from the Biennale of Sydney reported on their online audience engagement figures in terms of reach of the whole festival 1,742,704. As reach does not indicate direct engagement, these figures have been omitted from the total online audience estimates besides the YouTube figures which as a play of a video is considered a more meaningful engagement. The following figures were reported: Instagram reach 1,170,249, Facebook reach 546,647, Twitter reach 17,513, LinkedIn reach 614, YouTube 7,681 = Total 1,742,704.

Some of the comments made in relation to audience engagement included:

“Taking part in the UK/Australia Season was hugely beneficial for reaching new audiences and building back our international operations after the pandemic. For example, our conversations with the Australian High Commission were very useful during the time of strict travel restrictions and freight disruption; receiving reliable information fast helped us to plan touring productions with confidence.”

“Our core aim was to share replicable and open-access skills in mapping and social science analysis as to provide young people with the knowledge and capacity to

meaningfully engage in climate change adaptation policy discourse using evidence-based approaches.”

“Arts Centre Melbourne is interested in the transformative power of art - this collaboration between the Families and Access & Inclusion teams as it plans for Alter State 2022 provides ACM with an opportunity to continue the journey it embarked on when previously programming works for children with a disability.”

“Audience response to Aboriginal Comedy Allstars in Edinburgh and London demonstrated great enthusiasm for First Nations humour, stories and perspectives. There was much interest in the artists and season and audiences stayed to engage with the performers after every performance.”

“He is looking at new ways in which he can reach a younger audience to encourage them to learn the Didgeridoo and in turn learn more about Australian First Nations Culture.”

“We learnt that it is important to be held in a frame such as a festival to get traction for audiences. If that is not the case it is very hard to get audience.”

“The audience and media response in London, Edinburgh and Sydney to You Know We Belong Together was equal and sometimes surpassed that of the hometown of Perth, where the play had previously been performed. This validation of the play and the cast has added to everyone’s confidence and gives impetus to future presentations of the play.”



Blindness brought to Adelaide Festival by Arts Projects Australia. Image Credit: Helen Maybanks.



Being Human Human Being by Dr Christian Thompson in Soho photography quarter, London.

Marketing and press reach

Source(s): UK/AU Season MarComms Campaign Report, April 2022, British Council; UK/Australia Season 2021-22, Communications Campaign Report, September 2021-November 2022, DFAT; and UK/Australia Season 2021-22 Media coverage summary report, February 2022.

- **UK & Australia combined 500 million estimated media coverage¹**

Australia in UK (DFAT): Including interviews, features & reviews with The Guardian, Financial Times, The Times, The i, The Daily Telegraph, Scotsman, Metro, Evening Standard; broadcast including: BBC Radio 4 Front Row, BBC 2 Inside Culture, BBC World Service The Cultural Frontline, and specialist coverage including: Mary Beards launch of book *Ancestors*, *Artefacts*, *Empire: Indigenous Australia in British and Irish Museums* in her column in TLS, The Art Newspaper included it in their Book Club roundup and archaeology magazine, British Archaeology included a 6-page spread on Indigenous objects in British museums².

UK in Australia (BC): 21 feature articles, in Weekend Australian, Review, The Australian, Australian Financial Review, Weekend Australia, Life & Times Op-ed, The Age (Spectrum), T Magazine, ABC Radio Sydney, BBC Front Row, Arts Hub, 2GB & 4BC radio and ABC Local Radio Brisbane.
- **UK & Australia combined campaign reach 14.5 million paid & organic.**

Australia in UK (DFAT): 5M paid & organic + **UK in Australia (BC):** 9.5M paid & organic (including 4.9m impressions for paid media reach - outdoor, video & digital and 4.56m impressions on social media)

 - Digital Display campaign
 - Paid YouTube and Search campaigns
 - Trailer and video content
 - Social media -paid and organic
 - Online competition
 - Newsletters
 - Ambassador videos including Cate Blanchett
- **11.5 million estimated global reach #UKAUSseason hashtag**

¹ Estimated media coverage across the whole Season, as calculated by Season Communications and Marketing Manager, using the potential reach of the largest media outlet to cover the Season - BBC News covering Christian Thompson's exhibition at The Photographers' Gallery - quoted as potential estimated reach. This is a common approach as it's not suitable to add up the potential reach of each piece of coverage as this would result in duplicate audiences.

² See appendices for a summary of Australia in the UK coverage from Bolton and Quinn.

- **UK & Australia combined value is 10.65 million outdoor & print media.**
Australia in UK (DFAT): 9m outdoor & print media, **UK in Australia (BC):** 1.65m outdoor & print media.
 - London Underground campaign
 - Bus campaigns in Edinburgh & Birmingham
 - Edinburgh outdoor campaign - Murrayfield Stadium 15,000 people
 - Print partnership with The Times & Metro (Win a Cultural Trip of a lifetime competition)
 - 15,000 copies of Season brochure distributed throughout the UK
 - Out of Home - large format Sydney & Adelaide plus office & café screens in Canberra



Hackney Showroom. Burgerz production. Image credit: Elise Rose

Prosperity

Investment/future funding

It was a key aim of British Council and the DFAT for the Season to have both a direct and indirect impact on investment and funding. This was also an outcome that partners hoped to gain as a result of taking part in the Season.

Most projects reported a positive effect in terms of the project helping them to gain funding with **66%** saying delivery of their project/activity **‘helped my organisation to gain funding for future projects’**.

[This section relates directly to the funds leveraged by the projects. That raised through wider investment and the Patron’s Board is covered in the Stakeholder’s section]

The following question on what partners hoped to gain from the Season, relating to future funding and investment, provides context to the ‘business wins’/Investment/funding/income leveraged that is reported on in the end of project activity reporting.

64% of participants said that attracting funding for future projects was an outcome they hoped to gain from taking part - rising to 72% amongst DFAT participants (57% for British Council participants).

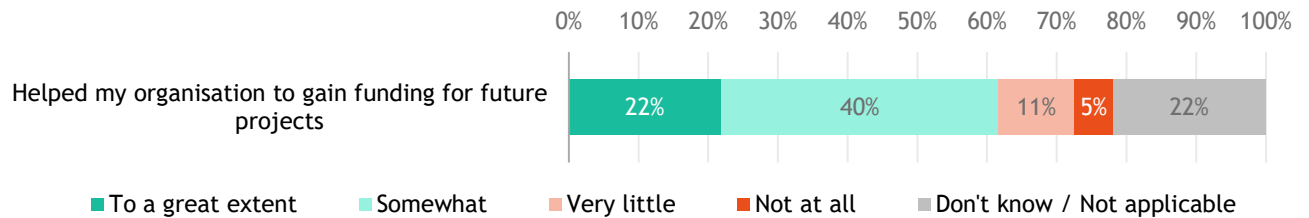
Outcomes partners hope to gain from taking part in the Season

As a result of taking part in the Season, what are you hoping to gain?	Overall %	British Council %	DFAT %
To attract funding for future projects	64%	57%	72%
Other gains or return on investment you expect to have as a result of your involvement in the Season	12%	11%	13%
<i>Base - Baseline survey</i>	85	46	39

Considering outcomes hoped to gain as a result of taking part versus actual outcomes at the end of the Season overall, 62% of participants said delivery of their project/activity ‘helped my organisation to gain funding for future projects’ (22% ‘to a great extent’, 40% ‘somewhat’), compared to 64% who said this was something they hoped to gain.

Outcomes - funding

To what extent has delivery of your/your organisation's project/activity ...

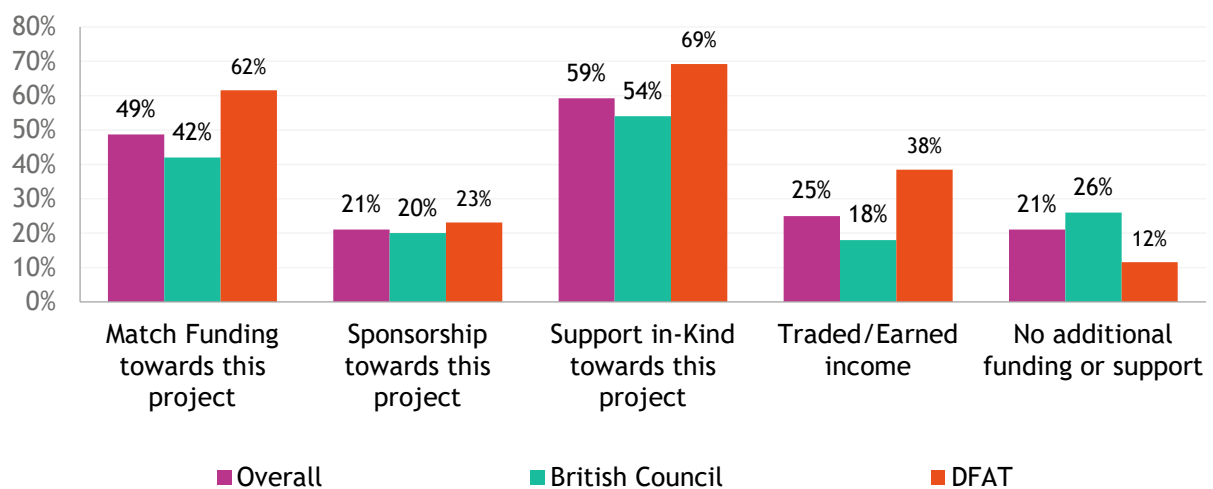


Base - End of project survey: 73

The end of project survey provided an indication of how projects were able to leverage further funding in addition to that received from the British Council or DFAT. According to these responses, those based in Australia receiving DFAT grants were more successful than those based in the UK receiving British Council grants with 88% of Australian organisations receiving additional funding or support compared to 74% of UK organisations.

Did you secure any of the following? (Select all that apply)

Did you secure any of the following? (Select all that apply)	Overall	British Council	DFAT
Match Funding towards this project	49%	42%	62%
Sponsorship towards this project	21%	20%	23%
Support in-Kind towards this project	59%	54%	69%
Traded/Earned income	25%	18%	38%
No additional funding or support	21%	26%	12%
Base	76	50	26



Finance raised

The end of project survey asked for a breakdown of the budget of the organisations. This was not answered by all and on occasion seems to have been based on rough calculations. For the purpose of this report, the mean of those who responded (16 organisations) has been multiplied by the number of lead organisation/projects (76) to produce an estimated overall figure.

Operational	Mean	Total (£)	Total (AUD)
Activity Expenditure	£130,591	£9,924,904	\$17,710,616
Grant contribution	£42,089	£3,198,786	\$5,703,711
Other sources contribution	£95,394	£7,249,919	\$12,939,509
Overheads	Mean	Total (£)	Total (AUD)
Activity Expenditure	£61,829	£4,699,000	\$8,382,508
Grant contribution	£17,632	£1,340,052	\$2,388,380
Other sources contribution	£53,095	£4,035,243	\$7,197,002
Research	Mean	Total (£)	Total (AUD)
Activity Expenditure	£14,823	£1,126,530	\$2,009,852
Grant contribution	£6,690	£508,414	\$907,085
Other sources contribution	£11,030	£838,286	\$1,495,419
Other	Mean	Total (£)	Total (£)
Activity Expenditure	£33,878	£2,574,708	\$4,592,005
Grant contribution	£16,736	£1,271,921	\$2,266,743
Other sources contribution	£22,404	£1,702,740	\$3,037,568

Whilst this is an estimate, it does indicate that for every £1/A\$1 received in grant contributions, another £/A\$ 2.18 was received/generated from other contributions. That is, it is estimated the projects generated £13.8m (A\$24.7m) of additional funding/income.

Further narrative in terms of funding is reported below under Stakeholders.

Raised profile of relationship between UK and Australia and Season partners' role

As noted in other responses, the creation or strengthening of relationships between partners in the UK and Australia was an important outcome for project leaders. The role of DFAT and the British Council was often acknowledged in this context.

95% agreed that they 'were keen to work with the British Council'.

77% of respondents 'were keen to work with DFAT'.

At the end of the project 82% of respondents gave a rating of 8-10 (very high) for the role and support of the British Council in their project and 80% of respondents gave a rating of 8-10 (very high) for the role and support of DFAT in their project.

Involvement in the Season

74% of respondents were Season grant recipients, with the rest receiving in-kind support. This was similar for UK based and Australia based participants, with 76% and 71% respectively having received a Season grant.

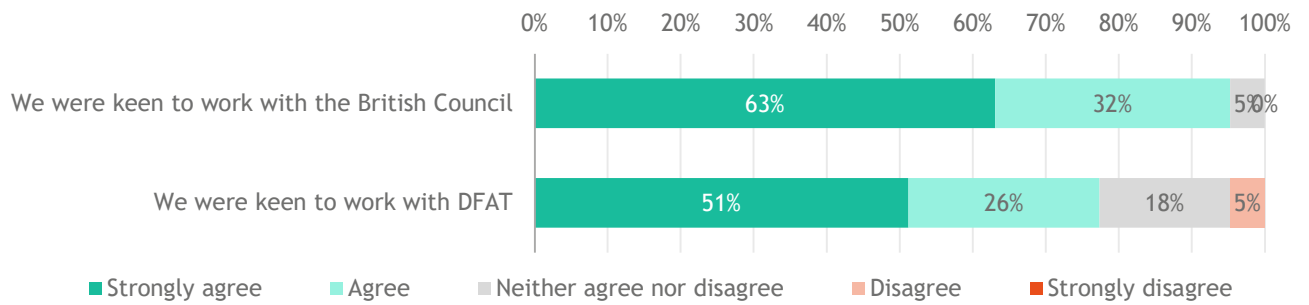
95% agreed that they 'were keen to work with the British Council' - 63% strongly agreed and 32% agreed. As expected, this was slightly higher for British Council season participants at 98% compared to 92% of DFAT season participants.

41% of respondents had worked with the British Council before, a quarter in the past 2 years (25%), a further 8% between two and three years ago, and 8% more than three years ago. This was a higher in proportion amongst British Council season participants, 57% of whom worked with the British Council before compared to 23% of DFAT season participants; in other words, 69% of DFAT season participants were working with the British Council for the first time compared to 41% of British Council season participants.

77% of respondents 'were keen to work with DFAT' - 51% strongly agreed and 26% agreed. As expected, this was higher in proportion for DFAT season participants at 98%, compared to 60% of British Council season participants.

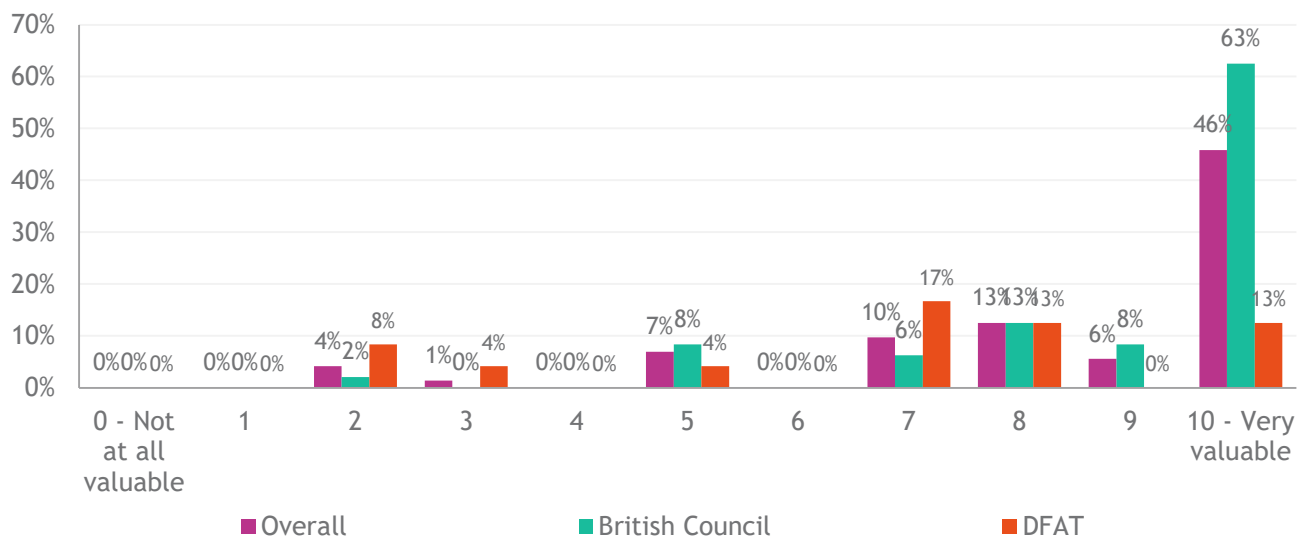
Over a third of the respondents (38%) had worked with DFAT before, a fifth in the past 2 years (19%), a further 6% between two and three years ago, and 13% more than three years ago. This was higher in proportion for DFAT season participants, 54% of whom had worked with the DFAT before compared to 24% of British Council season participants; in other words, 57% of British Council season participants were working with DFAT for the first time compared to 44% of DFAT season participants.

Motivations - Working with the British Council and DFAT



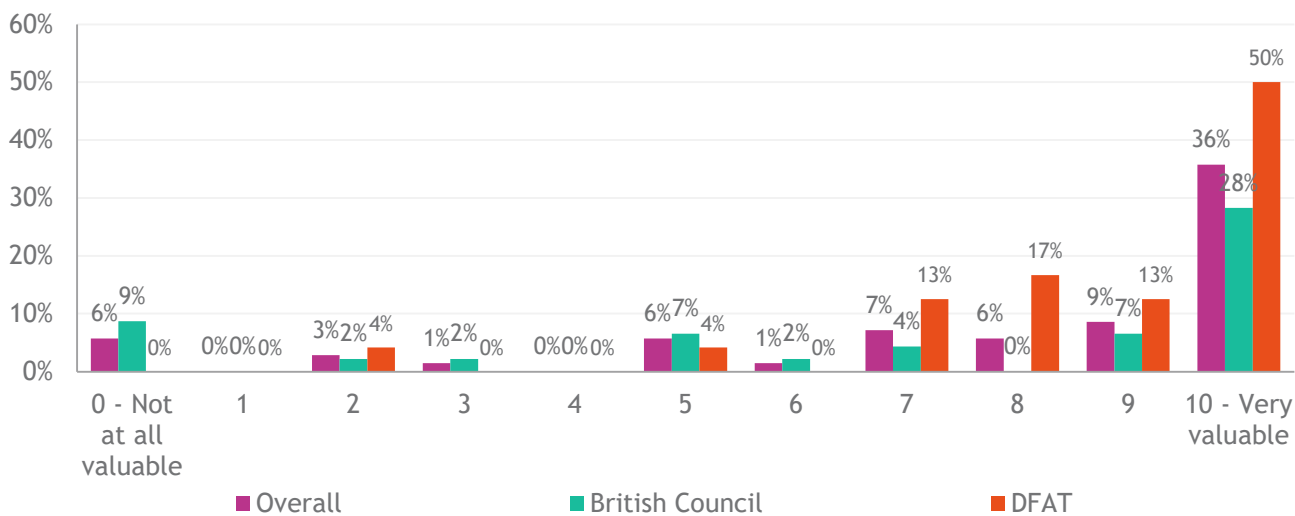
Base - Baseline survey: 84 / 84

How valuable was the role and work of the British Council in supporting you/your organisation through this project?



Base - End of project survey: 72 / 48 / 24

How valuable was the role and work of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in supporting you/your organisation through this project?



Base - End of project survey: 70 / 46 / 24

Stakeholder engagement and wider investment leverage

UK in Australia (British Council)

Source: UK/AU 2021-22 Campaign Report, April 2022, Prepared by Linda Deubel, Senior Communications Manager, British Council Australia

- Objective: Advocacy. Increase demand, positive sentiment and advocacy, Results: Patrons Board contributed A\$1.94m cash and in-kind value.
- Target: Press, Attendance at Events, Results: Three ambassadors participated/ attended event + press.
- Season Celebrations in Melbourne & Sydney, co-hosted by UK Government & GREAT Campaign.

In December [2021], the Season was finally celebrated with Government and Industry partners at two events - at Melbourne Museum and at Sydney Opera House, with performances from the Australian Chamber Orchestra & William Barton. British High Commissioner to Australia, Her Excellency Vicki Treadell CMG MVO, spoke on behalf of UK Government and the former Australian Foreign Minister, Marise Payne MP provided a video message on behalf of the Australian Government, with the former Minister for the Arts, Paul Fletcher MP, attending briefly as did local MP, Gabrielle Upton. Helen Salmon spoke on behalf of British Council and Co-chair David Gonski AC on behalf of the Board of Patrons. Fiona Winning, Director of Programmes for Sydney Opera House, spoke on behalf

of our arts partners. First Nation elder Uncle Allan Murray began proceedings with a Welcome to Country. Artists from the Season performed on the night, the Australian Chamber Orchestra Ensemble as well as William Barton. The UK Government in Australia had guestlist representation including stakeholders of Visit Britain, UK Department for International Trade (DIT), UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), as well as BBC World News and the Australian British Chamber of Commerce.



Neil Armfeld co-director Adelaide Festival; Helen Salmon, Fergus Linehan, director EIF at Adelaide Festival Opening Night



Helen Salmon welcomes attendees at The Fiercest of Friends, Sports Diplomacy between UK/AU, The Gabba, QLD.



British Council AU staff Linda Deubel & Anna Hay explore Adelaide with Rider Spoke.



Welcome to Country Electric Dreams Conference, Adelaide Fringe.



The opening of Climate Crisis & the Arts, Adelaide Festival



Helen Salmon, HE Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, HE Vicki Treadell, High Commissioner to Australia at the Governor's Residence, Adelaide.



Eva di Cesare Artistic Director of Monkey Baa and ARA Darling Quarter Theatre for young people in Sydney, and Anna Hay Arts Manager.



Treasures of the Natural World: Melbourne Museum UK/Australia Season & GREAT event

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- Target: British Council and DIT successfully secured £250,000 funding from GREAT CHALLENGE FUND. Results: 10 business/cultural activations and engagements.

The UK/Australia Season theme provided a central point for collaboration, creative connection & technical innovation. At a pivotal moment for prosperity and future relationship, the Season supported the UK Government's strategic trade ambitions with Australia; supported the Build Back Better Covid-19 recovery plan and aligned with the objectives of the UK's presidency of COP26.



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The High Commission’s summary of their activity reported to the GREAT Challenge Fund for the Season, for trade, alumni and climate focused events led by FCDO, DIT and some jointly with BC.

In summary:

- £167k received from GREAT Challenge Fund (GCF)
- 18 events held across five states.
- Reached 2,200+ people in-person.
- Reached 280,000 people through social media and media partnerships.
- Reached nearly 5.6m people throughout paid for advertising campaign to support the British Council’s Alumni Programme and Trade objectives.
- £16m [organisation redacted] investment linked to GCF events engagement.
- £9.3m [organisation redacted] business win linked to GCF events (and long-term support).
- Engagement with [organisation redacted] led to in-kind sponsorship of £10,000.

Australia in the UK (DFAT)

Source: Notes on key events from Alessandra Pretto, Public Diplomacy Manager, Australian High Commission (AHC) UK

Event	High level stakeholder engagement
<p><i>UK/Australia Season 2021-22 Season launch</i> at the British Museum, 4.30pm for 5pm to 8.30pm, 1 September 2021</p> <p>An in-conversation about the Ancestors, artefacts, empire: Indigenous Australia in British and Irish Museums with editor, Indigenous Australian museum curator and Head of Oceania, The British Museum, Dr Gaye Sculthorpe, followed by a reception to celebrate the commencement of the UK/Australia Season 2021-22.</p>	<p>With the Hon Julia Gillard, former Australian Prime Minister leading the in-conversation and the first major arts event post-Covid, the AHC was able to leverage this event to include and host high level contacts. Also to raise the profile of the issue of Indigenous Cultural heritage in UK institutions. Speakers and guests include Sir Lloyd Dorfman, Minister Nigel Adams (then Minister for Asia - FCDO), former Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne (pre-recorded message) the Hon Paul Fletcher (former Minister for the Arts). High level and high-profile guests included: Mary Beard (BBC presenter), Barry Humphries, Lord Mendoza, Tim Marlow (Sky Arts Presenter and director, London Design Museum), Chi-Chi Nwanoku OBE and Baroness Greenfield.</p>
<p><i>Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters.</i> Onstage interview, convened by the directors of the Menzies Australia Institute at King's College London, Prof Margo Neale explains the fascinating story of how the exhibition came to be. King's College London, The Box, Plymouth & London, 18 November 2021.</p>	<p>Hosted dinner for Prof Margo Neale, Songlines curator and Head of the National Museum of Australia's Indigenous knowledges curatorial centre with high level contacts, including Jennifer Higgie (writer and editor Frieze) and Nigel Hurst (Director of Exhibitions, IMG) to promote ongoing opportunities to present Indigenous Australian culture and art globally.</p>
<p>Barbican Partnership: A selection of screenings of the very best movies by Indigenous Australian filmmakers from the last three decades. Barbican, London, February 2022.</p>	<p>Hosted a high-level opening night reception with the former Australian High Commissioner (Brandis) speaking at the screening. We hosted business contacts, as well as key government contacts. The High Commissioner was able to promote the importance of Indigenous Australian arts and culture.</p>
<p>Terrapin Puppet Theatre present <i>Anthem Anthem Revolution</i>: invites participants to battle a table tennis robot, with each winning point replacing Australia's national</p>	<p>The Australian Governor-General (David Hurley) attended one of the performances which assisted with the profile of the production.</p>

<p>anthem note by note, word by word, with a new anthem written by Tasmanian children. Solihull Town Centre, Smithfield Market Festival site and Queen Elisabeth Olympic Park Festival site, Solihull, Birmingham and London, 21 July-8 August 2022.</p>	
<p><i>Arrivals</i> brings together the work of three artists: Yhonnie Scarce, Salote Tawale and Osman Yousefzada. <i>Made in Birmingham/Made in Sydney</i> presents the work of Fijian-Australian artist Salote Tawale and British-Afghan artist Osman Yousefzada. The exhibition is a groundbreaking collaboration between the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia in Sydney and Ikon in Birmingham, in which Tawale and Yousefzada explore questions of identity and belonging in contemporary Australia and Britain through two new video artworks. Ikon, Birmingham, 10 June-29 August 2022.</p>	<p>The High Commissioner (Brandis) hosted an event in honour of the Governor-General to promote Australia's PacificAus Sports program in parallel with the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Attended by Anna Meares (Australian cyclist), Governor General of New Zealand, representatives from the Cook Island, Fiji, Vanuatu and PNG.</p>
<p>Australian World Orchestra (AWO) and Royal Albert Hall Collaboration: Performances by the AWO with Zubin Mehta as part of the Edinburgh International Festival and The Proms with Brett Dean playing viola. Edinburgh International Festival, Royal Albert Hall, Edinburgh and London, 19, & 23 August 2022.</p>	<p>The High Commissioner (Brandis) hosted high level government, political and cultural contacts at the Royal Albert Hall, including guests the Rt Hon Theresa May, Chief of Air Force, Chief of MI6 and Permanent Sec of FCDO and high profile cultural leaders (Director British Museum, CEO of the Barbican, CEO Royal Albert Hall, CEO of the British Council), along with an array of important working level contacts across business and government. The High Commissioner was able to convey messages about Australia's core foreign policy priorities with the UK (FTA).</p>

Wider leverage

Source: Director of British Council, Australia

In addition to core Season investment from the delivery partners British Council and the Australian Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the following investment was leveraged externally for the Season:

- A\$1.94 million in philanthropic support for the core Season programme (combined total from UK and AU donors)
- Additionally, over A\$5.2 million in philanthropic support directly to individual projects to participate in Season (given directly to the companies/projects).
- Over A\$1.8 million from AU state governments, arts bodies, and Commonwealth funding outside of the core Season budget (eg. Office for the Arts) granted directly to individual companies/projects to participate in the Season.
- Over A\$277k (£160k) from GREAT for Season activity focused on climate, education, tech and the free trade agreement. GREAT pledged £250k but there were returned funds as a number of a number of initiatives couldn't happen.

Reflections from Stakeholders

“During my time as acting High Commissioner I saw firsthand the value of the UK/Australia Season of Culture, including in showcasing Australia’s world class cultural talent and assisting the creative industries sector to recover following the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic.”

Acting High Commissioner Lynette Wood

Those who were part of the direction and funding of the season were interviewed to understand the Season from a stakeholder perspective. This included staff from the British Council, DFAT (including the Australia in the UK Artistic Director) and members of The Patron’s Board. Some of the key themes that emerged are reported below.

Initial conceptions and ideas

The British Council seasons have existed for several years and are seen as a vital and effective way of delivering the British Council’s mission. They are given high level governmental support, providing benefits not just within the cultural and education sectors but also in relation to other diplomatic, economic and social objectives.

“They are meant to be high profile, and ambitious which activate lots of different partners, including governments, major cultural institutions that don’t normally seek much involvement from the British Council because they have established partners already internationally.” [British Council]

The UK/Australia Season was different in that it was purposely much more bilateral and collaborative in scope. There were different accounts of the way in which the project was originally conceived, but there was a desire from both the UK and Australian side for the Season to happen.

“We spoke a lot about this and we thought, Look, let’s, let’s give it a go and see if people are interested.” [DFAT]

In this way, The Australian High Commission was involved from the beginning, as they saw the Season as being a good way of delivering several benefits.

“They [an arts philanthropist] were introduced to the CEO [of the British Council] in London and that began a whole conversation. Simultaneously, the British

Council and the two high commissions were alerted to the free trade agreements coming, being a potential really pivotal point in our relationship. The philanthropist really admired the British Council publications, and they've been talking about that, and thought that it would be an interesting thing to do. So that's how it started.” [British Council]

It was also felt that this was a good time to renew the relationship between the UK and Australia and provide a new focus for cultural partnerships between the two countries.

Whilst the British Council has its ongoing Seasons, the DFAT also runs a flagship public diplomacy initiative called ‘Australia now’.

“It's very basic promotion of Australian Australia's assets overseas, but also our international policies and programmes and supports our foreign trade and development policy objectives.” [DFAT]

This Season was therefore a departure from previous initiatives in both countries.

“We collaborated in a number of ways, in a more in-depth way than we have done before. There's lots of reasons for that. But I suspect a lot of them to do with culture, it has some very unique characteristics.” [British Council]

Funding and finance

Whilst this was a large, complex and sophisticated programme, in practice it was managed by a relatively small team using a mixture of open grant processes and directly curated work with discretionary funding. This was led by Michael Naphthali for the DFAT and Helen Salmon for the British Council.

“If it was going to be equitable and reach new artists and new audiences and better reflect contemporary UK, I did not want the grant selection process to end up with being usual suspects. So, there were two things in operation. We have some discretionary grant. And we had open call.” [British Council]

The core DFAT and British Council funding was supplemented by significant further finance from the Patron’s Board.

“But basically, the patrons board raised funds that went into the core of the season, donations made prior to the open call were allocated on both sides by independent panels ... that's why the Patron support was put together bilaterally, and it captured that enthusiasm for collaboration.” [British Council]

As well as being able directly to provide funding, the Patron’s Board had further influence.

“So we were able to leverage their goodwill and contacts in that way as well for our programme.” [DFAT]

“There were things I was very happy to just jump in and do because nobody else was and I could see that there was stuff that could be done ... for things I believe in.” [Patron’s Board]

Production

As a result of Covid-19, the Season had a longer period of planning and preparation than had been envisaged. It also had to change to be delivered in two stages rather than one.

“The original plan was that it was going to be one season all happening simultaneously. And then Covid meant it was impossible to do it in the UK. So, there was a lot of tension. But you know, difficulty in deciding on that.” [DFAT]

“I think that it was really noticeable that we retained our ambition, in some of the most incredibly challenging circumstances. Covid, first in the UK, and then hitting Australia, which we did not expect – nobody did.” [DFAT]

“It was just like a constant process of keeping the plates spinning. And that plate spinning wasn’t in delivery, as one ordinarily is as a producer or delivery of a festival. The plate spinning was in just keeping people’s spirits up.” [DFAT]

In relation to this, there was a great deal of appreciation of the commitment and work of a relatively small group of people to deliver the Season over two years.

“I do think that the leadership of the country director in Australia, and also the High Commissioner in the UK, was very, very strong and significant.” [British Council]

“I thought we were incredibly fortunate to have a really strong and ambitious leadership and team in the Australian High Commission, fantastic patrons. I think they did a fantastic job for advocacy and giving us profile.” [DFAT]

There were different views of the way that having a range of types of body and organisation had on the capacity to make things happen, with some believing bureaucratic obstacles sometimes hindered progress. However, it seems that the relatively small teams working together did enable risks to be taken.

“That extraordinary play Counting and Cracking, which was the biggest thing in Edinburgh Festival this year. Right? It was a complete smash success. A hugely risky venture, a cast of 30 people, the oldest of whom was in his 80s. I mean, what

were we thinking, the middle of a pandemic, but there was no doubt that we weren't going to try and get that play there.” [DFAT]

“The simple truth is there was a tiny team of five and six of us who delivered the festival for which in ordinary circumstances, this is an international festival for which you'd have 50, 60, 70 people. And we're just insane.” [DFAT]

The impact and legacy

There was general commendation for the whole Season, with a feeling that it had surpassed what had originally been hoped for. This was especially evident in the way that the projects were received by audiences, critics, the press and policy makers.

“We had a really fantastic reception at the British Museum and there was a similar one at the Sydney Opera House. There were many events and receptions around the openings of the larger cultural events; Edinburgh Festival, Adelaide Festival and these were quite effective ways of bringing people together, and also creating stronger awareness amongst audiences locally, of the new Australia, the new UK, both countries having changed so much.” [British Council]

“It's actually worked extremely well. I mean, you've seen from your own evaluation, how many people are working on their next stage projects, and how many people are leveraging money because of the season. So all of that long-term impact element of it that I wanted, is absolutely happening”. [British Council]

There have been significant effects on policy development, with ambitions for follow-up years, bilateral initiatives and cultural programmes.

“The Australian Government Arts Minister (the Hon Tony Burke MP) when he was speaking at the Edinburgh cultural summit in Scotland, said that he would like to see more collaboration in Australia's public diplomacy. And that was just music to my ears, because that's what we were doing with the season.” [British Council]

“There's the cultural policy, and the fact you know, that we did a lot of work with working closely with the Australia Council for the Arts, who will be distributing this funding and the ministries and the various government people. I had a meeting with Create New South Wales, the adviser to the state minister, about two weeks ago who was just waxing lyrical about how fantastic it was, and all the opportunities there.” [British Council]

“I find now that DFAT is very supportive of the model that was used, and often uses it as an example of a campaign or programme that has worked really well.”

[DFAT]

“What we hopefully will be lobbying for as a group of patrons is something like the British Council on the Australian side.” [Patron’s Board]

“They need to be supporting more cultural projects abroad, they need to be treating it like sport and putting in money into showing off our culture. And then they will reap the benefits because they get it back in GDP, and they get it back in some cultural diplomacy and places of relationships with countries.” [Patron’s Board]

In terms of other types of legacy from the Season, it was felt that it had also been able to turn around thinking within the respective cultural and education sectors on the quality and range of work.

“What is coming through in the season is that shift in how the UK can understand Australia and where we could work. So, it’s all part of a bigger picture. And it’s not a standalone thing.” [British Council]

“The opportunity to even just have the dialogue and discussions and push thinking forward. You know, in a very slow way, but I think it will assist the work that Australia is doing and I think also our relationships with, you know, Edinburgh International Festival, Barbican. I think that it’ll have a long time to play out.”

[DFAT]

“I feel really proud that we could capture this moment that was a real pivotal moment for the UK/Australia relationship.” [British Council]

“...And I think we broke a lot of ground. Well, I know we broke a lot of ground.”

[DFAT]

Case Studies

This Is Who We Are Programme

Lead organisation Renaissance One, UK

Partners British Library, UK; Diversity Arts Australia and Lena Nahlous, Australia; Kath Melbourne, Australia; University of Melbourne, Australia; Dr Paula Abood and Third Space, Australia; Nur Shkempi, Australia; alongside individuals/artists and publishers led by people of colour, including Maya Chowdhry and Hope Road Publishing

Grant/Fund British Council Grant for UK/Australia Season

Location Online, Melbourne, Australia and Manchester, UK

Timescale October 2021-March 2022

Sector/Artform Literature and at the festival: visual arts, tech, films, spoken word, music

Themes Knowledge sharing, mentoring, women of colour, social justice, creativity, wellbeing, intersectionality



Kin by Lyndon Douglas courtesy of Renaissance One

Project

This Is Who We Are (TIWWA) is a UK-Australian movement of intergenerational and intersectional women of colour artists and producers “*who came together to share knowledge, foster mentoring opportunities and be stronger together*” [Renaissance One]. It was Initiated by Melanie Abrahams who came up with the idea when on the [British Council’s Intersect programme](#) in Australia in 2020. Following this project, partners were approached including Diversity Arts Australia, British Library, Dr Paula Abood etc.

Reflecting their diverse heritages including African, Caribbean, First Nations, West, South and South East Asian origins, they amplified their collective power through an online and face-to-face programme:

- Arts events including a four-day online festival with socials, performances, a house party, screenings and talks, featuring over thirty women of colour artists, performers, activists and thinkers.
- Two walks of solidarity in Australia (Melbourne) and the UK (Manchester)
- Online gatherings championing values of social justice, creativity and care - with Salons covering themes including progress, resilience, mental health and working internationally and a video broadcast/recording talk with the British Library on Self Help fusing conversation, comedy and live art.
- Mentoring: Melanie Abrahams and Kath Melbourne offered bespoke support to fifty artists, producers and creative professionals. Offering one-to-ones and also solidarity group sessions.
- Four podcasts devised and delivered with Diversity Arts Australia on themes including intersectionality.

Participating artists and creatives also took part in a series of projects exploring the themes of the overall programme. For example:

- A UK version of Ask Asian Aunty, an interactive performance Live on Instagram that melded two cultural matriarchal forms: the Asian Aunty, someone who consistently gives unsolicited and unfiltered but - loving- life advice; and the Agony Aunt, an advice columnist offering solutions to readers’ personal problems.
- Writing Desire and Finding Wellbeing workshop: A workshop exploring and talking attendees through creating the setting for their own desire and relationship stories and finding ways to take care of themselves in the process - by way of creative wellbeing. This was both in person and online, repeated during the festival.

Importance

Women of colour have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, so this network of creative professionals, amplifying their collective voice through the programme of events and exploring themes of wellbeing and care among other elements was particularly pertinent. For the project leads and participants it provided a valuable support network some of which has endured and is leading to other opportunities.

TIWWA brought together a unique network of UK-Australian women artists, producers and creatives of colour who were selected and identified to be transforming sectors, thinking and spaces. It included writers, filmmakers, speakers, comedians, consultants, live artists and speakers, from diverse heritages. Working with a group of women with such diverse heritage allowed the project to draw on their knowledge and expertise.

“... sometimes we would defer to either people's knowledge or their expertise or their lived experience, so in some ways, we mutually agreed certain areas that some people would cover, people who either were a First Nation origin or had worked strongly within those communities, they were the ones that were brokering those things, and we were all brokering or leading on certain things that would play to our strengths.”

[Renaissance One]

Points of note

- The project supported knowledge sharing between the UK and Australia on a variety of themes, with artists from the UK and Australia learning from one another.
- Understanding was developed of Australia's political context and place on its journey in finding their own voice and narratives within the arts as a First Nations person. One participating artist felt they could bring something to what is a highly emotive discussion in Australia, reiterating the importance of including discussion on wellbeing and care around such topics.

“Australian literature is still very much finding its voice, obviously related to culture and society, and they're very young in their current iteration. But there's only now a push to start publishing more indigenous voices...For me, this particular project was really valuable to bridging some of those gaps and being able to share some knowledge from the UK that I've learned, and then hearing where they're at in terms of what it means in the Australian landscape. It was a really nice thing that connected the two. And I felt like I could contribute something” [artist]

- Developing project activity around the themes of the TIWWA project, highlighted the importance and challenges of writing about narratives of colour and the emotionally taxing nature of such work.

“Melbourne University was building a curriculum on decolonizing the curriculum in Australia, and they're in a very different place...in terms of the conversations they have about race and identity and marginalisation... When I created my workshop, I also had that in mind, so it was about writing about desire in, quote, unquote, romantic relationships. But it was also about featuring...characters of colour in these narratives. And being aware of stereotypes or being aware of your own bias in how you're creating characters, especially if you're not from that community...and how do we create really meaningful, real relationships on the page that do justice to the characters that you've created, and equally take care of ourselves in doing that...writing something that is quite emotionally taxing.” [artist]

- For participating artists, drawing on their own heritage and life experience in a different context was empowering, allowing them to express or develop thinking around care and empathy through different and new platforms.

“I really enjoy this, to be able to use my background and to be able to use that in a different [way] because I work as a poet or as a writer and even so there is that element of care and empathy that you have as a facilitator, but actually using this in a different platform was really interesting” [artist]

“... how can we link that [relationships and desire] with well-being? It was a good challenge. It definitely stretched my practice in terms of what I can offer and how I talk about writing and how I pass on the little knowledge that I have about writing different themes” [artist]

- Participating artists learnt not only from the UK-Australian connection but from artists or creatives from different sectors and the way the work was presented, for example, the slick and fast ways production teams' turnaround might work in contrast to the work patterns of a poet or writer and the responsive nature of a live event on Instagram, a platform and a perceived younger audience they had not previously engaged with.

“it's really opened me up to the possibility of using Instagram.” [artist]

- For one participating artist the project/event had been useful in building their profile and developing relationships with relevant partners.

“I made some connections with a couple of the bookshops because of the event and which was really good...it definitely helped foster links with Melbourne University. And it massively helped me in terms of just getting a foothold as an author.” [artist]

- The opportunity to be part of and engage in a diverse community of artists and creatives of a similar heritage was a unique experience for some participating artists.

“it’s really interesting to have those two different communities, one which I identify [TIWWA], and one with poetry [Australian, predominantly white group] and one with similar backgrounds.” [artist]

- For the project lead, Renaissance One, despite the challenges of the pandemic, was able to build and develop existing relationships with artists in the UK and Australia through the online programme. This included relationships previously brokered by the British Council through earlier networking events that took place in-person.

“...it enabled us to explore areas, particularly Australia, you know, it’s expensive to go to Australia, it’s resource heavy to do things in Australia, it’s the other side of the world. So, it enables something that we might not have thought of, and it enabled us to explore and deepen these partnerships and meet new people and meet new artists, and have conversations” [Renaissance One]

Legacy

- The relationships developed through this project will continue afterwards with the continued desire to work together and keep in touch with what is going on in the sector in the UK and Australia a key factor.

“there’s a natural connectivity that’s been fostered in that, there’s potential to continue working with everybody who has either passed through the programme [TIWWA] or been an integral part of the programme or has been a partner.” [Renaissance One]

- Aside from the continuing relationships with the network of mentees and participants in the programme, Renaissance One will continue liaising and sharing recommendations with Diversity Arts Australia on the four podcasts created together, which is part of [the Colour Cycle Podcast](#), an ongoing series created by Diversity Arts Australia that had input from Renaissance One.
- Following the success of this project, Renaissance One and Kath Melbourne applied and have now been successfully funded by the British Council for a second iteration of the UK Australia Mentoring program.

- For participating artists, the project has left them with new skills and assets to take into their practice and has stimulated ideas for future ways of developing projects.

“it'd be quite good to incorporate a similar idea [Instagram live Ask Asian Aunty], or, like Carmel Film Club was saying, some videos on self-care which you need as a writer, or an artist. And also that idea of intergenerational immigrant communities navigating, living in a western society.” [artist]

“... out of that it's now a workshop that I offer.” [artist]

Project lead quotation

“In addition to offering live events, as well as online events, and a lot of provision around professional development, nurture, support, care, and opportunities to talk for women of colour, but also, people who are interested in some of the experiences of women of colour, or who wants to champion women of colour. The other thing we did was, we helped to amplify our respective practices as artists and creative professionals, producers, and other things, which we wouldn't have done. And we wouldn't have had that impact had we been doing it individually.” [Renaissance One]

More information

- About the *This is Who We Are* project and family of artists and creatives:
<http://www.renaissanceone.co.uk/this-is-who-we-are>
- A link to the *Ask Asian Aunty* live Instagram event hosted by Sundra Lawrence:
<https://www.instagram.com/tv/CbUsF7Ahb-Y/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=>
- A link to the *Colour Cycle* podcast can be found here:
<https://diversityarts.org.au/project/the-colour-cycle>

Sync Leadership Australia Online Program

Lead organisation	Access Arts (Australia)
Partners	Sync UK
Grant/Fund	British Council Grant for UK/Australia Season
Location	Australia
Timescale	November 2021
Sector/Artform	All Artforms
Themes	Disability, Leadership, Body Image and Expression, Social Commentary.



Project

Sync Leadership is a disabled-led programme exploring d/Deaf and disabled arts leadership, founded in 2008 by Sarah Pickthall and Jo Verrent, two disabled leaders based in the UK. Access Arts partnered with Sync UK to deliver an online leadership programme for eight disabled or d/Deaf Australian participants.

It used group sessions and one-to-one coaching to encourage participants to reflect on their leadership potential in relation to the diversity of their lived experience of disability. The programme supported their growth to become a network of strong resilient leaders within Australia's cultural sector.

Importance

This was one of the first such programmes to take place in Australia. Access Arts had identified the need for such an initiative in order to advance the status and influence of disabled artists and because many of the associated issues were not sufficiently considered in the Australian cultural sector.

“Artists with disability are underrepresented in leadership roles where decisions about employment, programming and representational practice are made. It is refreshing to introduce the dynamics of disability-led thinking from the UK to sector professionals in the Australian arts industry.” [Project Leader]

The participants, who were mostly unknown to each other before the programme, were selected as representative of a wide range of artforms and types of work and were relatively established in their fields. However, participants reported that before taking part in this programme they hadn't always felt they place themes of disability at the heart of the work.

“I always had a belief about myself as a disabled person that I had to hide my disability to be a leader but now I feel the exact opposite.” [Project Participant]

As well as being empowering for the individuals themselves, an important consequence was the development of a network of artists from the programme who can stay in touch and support each other as well as introducing the possibility of future collaboration.

Afterwards, Access Arts has lobbied strongly for a follow-up programme which has been successful and is to take place in November 2022.

Points of note

- Being ‘Disabled led’ meaning that the programme was produced with knowledge and integrity and made it relevant and useful.

“That was fundamental really to the whole thinking of it [...] I didn't actually really understand what leadership was until I did the leadership course.” [Participant]

- The programme of workshops and coaching was based on established leadership theory, being participatory in nature and utilizing peer-learning. It encouraged those involved to explore their own individual leadership styles in an active context.
- As well as including ‘practical’ or ‘hard’ skills, Sync Leadership also helped the cohort to explore their *emotional, mental, and psychological selves* [participant] as part of a holistic sense of their development.

- Access needs were properly addressed; in this case it included providing Auslan interpretation, remote captioning, notetaking, and recorded sessions for people to refer back to. An ICT consultant was on hand at each session to attend to technical access needs. The organisers and participants pointed out that basic access needs are frequently not considered or implemented properly meaning that disabled artists find ‘mainstream’ cultural programmes not conducive to their learning and therefore are exclusive by their nature.
- Being oriented around leadership, meant that the participants were encouraged to have an influence and advocate in wider sectors. In this way, such a programme has an effect beyond that of the cohort members themselves.

“I came to appreciate the many forms of true leadership in action. Coming to the realisation that leadership in advocacy does not necessarily need to be played out through the trope of ‘passionately aggressive protestor’, empowered me further, to see where my work in this realm fits.” [from a ‘Think Sync’ Blog by one of the participants]

- Through inspiring peer connections and networking which continued afterwards, the programme builds a legacy and a community that is mutually supportive and stimulating.

“Being part of such an amazing cohort” [Participant]

“My group...made me feel part of the community” [Participant]

“It wasn’t just the individual coaching in Sync that shifted me, it was being together with this incredible group of people, the way Sarah and Jo approached the group. It was conversation which centred on disabled artistic leadership - and the way it was modelled showed us, through the workshop, in the way they inhabited the space, just how easily it can be done.” [from a ‘Think Sync’ Blog by one of the participants]

- The international context provided a different perspective on the work, with the Australian organisers and participants valuing the experience that ‘change can happen’ by being able to learn from similar contexts in which advancement had been made.

Legacy

- For the cohort participants themselves, it has been beneficial for their professional development and empowering for their role as leaders. They anticipated that it will have an impact immediately and in the longer term. The project leader reported:

“As they absorb learnings over time and in greater depth and apply them, Sync’s impact on these individuals will deepen, those working around these leaders in NSW, SA and Qld will experience the ripple effect.”

- For Access Arts, it has proved the need for such a programme on an ongoing basis and has helped to establish and enhance the profile of the organisation in the Australian cultural sector.

“We built closer links nationally with Australia Council colleagues, connected with UK British Council colleagues, forged strong relations with UK Sync Leadership colleagues, tested our Deaf Connect relations.” [Project Leader]

Access Arts has been able to lobby successfully for the programme to continue, working together with the Sync Leadership in the UK in further initiatives.

- For Sync Leadership it has been valuable in establishing a new partnership and extending the reach of the programme. Working together with Access Arts, it is also now possible to explore how it might be scaled up to reach more people in Australia.
- A new community (or network) of artists d/Deaf and disabled artists now exists in Australia which can provide the basis for further work and initiatives.

“I was able to connect with the participating peers in the program, and hopefully we will build stronger friendships that would lead to collaborations in the near future.”

[Participant]

Project lead quotation

“While >18% of Australia’s population identify as having disability, only 9% of professional artists in Australia identify as having disability. These artists earn 42% less than their non-disabled peers. Artists with disability are underrepresented in leadership roles where decisions about employment, programming and representational practice are made. It is refreshing to introduce the dynamics of disability-led thinking from the UK to sector professionals in the Australian arts industry.” [Project Leader, Access Arts].

More information

- About the 2021 Sync Australia Cohort (with links to blogs):
<https://syncleadership.com/programmes/sync-australia-2021>
- Sync Leadership Programme: <https://syncleadership.com/about>
- Access Arts: <https://accessarts.org.au>

Climate Crisis and the Arts



Amber Brock-Fabel was a guest speaker in the opening address of the Adelaide Festival's inaugural Climate Crisis and the Arts. Amber was awarded the Young Citizen of the Year 2022 for her local council. Credit: Julia McNab

- Lead organisation** Adelaide Festival (Australia)
- Partners** Julie's Bicycle (UK); Australia Council for the Arts; Green Industries SA (Australia); and City of Adelaide (Australia).
- Grant/Fund** British Council Grant for UK/Australia Season
- Location** Pioneer Women's Memorial Gardens, King William Street, Adelaide, Australia and online.
- Timescale** 9.30am-5.00pm, 11 March 2022
- Sector/Artform** Festival, arts, science
- Themes** Climate change, creativity, sustainability, storytelling, education
- Project**

Climate Crisis and the Arts was a free one-day event bringing together the arts and sciences to discuss climate action, storytelling and sustainability. Held on 11 March 2022 as part of the Adelaide Festival, the event explored the roles that creativity and the arts play in inspiring change and how artistic communities can create cultural movements. Conversations with leading

voices explored future challenges and the opportunities afforded by championing creativity to educate, inspire and mobilise positive climate action. The event was attended by 314 people and engaged with the South Australian arts and cultural sector, the wider community in Adelaide and audiences.

Importance

The climate crisis is one of the largest global challenges of our time. Identifying the benefits of collaborating on an event focussed on this important issue, Adelaide Festival and Julie's Bicycle created Climate Crisis and the Arts to support sharing of successful initiatives and approaches to the climate crisis. The event was also a way to create a movement and a desire to create change across sectors and between the UK and Australia.

“The UK has such a focus on climate action policy within organisations, and Australia can really learn from that... seeing how these initiatives and solutions work in the UK, and how they can be reimaged or applied in the Australian context...there's no need to reinvent the wheel, and it's important to foster collaboration and resource sharing towards collective climate action. For example, Julie's Bicycle's IG carbon accounting tools are a brilliant industry-specific and free resource that can definitely be used in Australia.” [Producer and Project Leader]

Another important element of the event was championing the role of artists in communicating climate action in a *“more inspiring, optimistic, solutions-based way... what can we do? Where's the hope? Where are the solutions? [with] artists really highlighting that and telling those stories through their work.”* [Producer and Project Leader].

Adelaide Festival included creative responses from artists, musicians, producers and theatre-makers. A local artists collective worked with Green Industries SA to develop an artwork made of upcycled plastics as part of South Australia's Replace the Waste campaign, which turned into a performative music piece at the event.

Points of note

- In February 2022, Adelaide Festival hosted Adelaide's first Culture and Environment Roundtable, which was convened alongside Julie's Bicycle in the UK. The roundtable brought together key representatives from the South Australian arts and cultural sector to discuss current culture/climate trends, challenges and solutions with a focus on First Nations and youth voices. The Roundtable, which was held prior to Climate Crisis and the Arts, also built connections between the Australian and UK sectors, with the latter

specifically providing a networking opportunity for groups that otherwise wouldn't have come together, sharing project ideas and potential future collaborations.

- Several artist commissions illustrated the role of artists in communicating and educating audiences around positive climate action and sustainability. For example, a local artist collective created the main signage for the event from upcycled single use plastic. Outfits created from upcycled waste materials were worn by roaming performers who interacted with the audience and provided waste education. This turned into a performative installation and music/dance piece to round off the day.
- The event provided audiences with various easy and accessible ways of participating in positive climate action in their community. Some examples of avenues for participation included **printed QR codes linking to resources** related to the event and hosted on an ongoing [‘Sustainability’ page](#) on the Festival’s website, and [the Reforest app](#), which invited people to take tangible action on their carbon emissions by planting trees locally, encouraging audiences to think further about their daily carbon footprint. During the Festival, 596 participants engaged in the Reforest app and 95 trees were planted, removing 4,305kg CO2 from attendee participation.

“The Adelaide City Council is making a new climate action plan which will require as much of the community’s input, ideas and feedback as possible. As part of programming for the day, QR codes provided the opportunity for members of the community to actively participate in that conversation and the larger decisions that will be made down the track. They can provide their opinion and suggestions around things such as new bike paths or which suburb needs more green spaces. As a resident of Adelaide, being able to take part and be heard during the decision-making process that affects your local area is, I think, super important. We need to see more participatory voting, budgeting, juries etc. and find creatively ways of engaging more people in these conversations.” [Producer and Project Leader]

- There were clear impacts for audiences (23 responses) as a result of attending the event. 100% of respondents would consider attending other climate crisis-related events in the future, learned something new at this event, were inspired by this event to tackle climate crisis challenges in their community, wanted to learn more about the climate crisis and what we can do, believed the event was an opportunity for different cultures to share their perspectives and now know more about the arts’ capacity to inspire collective climate action. Over 82% of attendees, artists and speakers believe the inclusion of the Climate Crisis and The Arts event is very important for the Adelaide Festival and South Australia.

Legacy

- The conversation on sustainability continues within the Festival, with the commitment illustrated through the creation of a 0.2FTE Sustainability Coordinator position as a result of the Climate Crisis and the Arts project. This has put the phasing out of single use plastics into focus and is reflected in the wider Festival management, with a formalised climate action and emissions reduction strategy currently being developed.
- One of the learnings from this event was how a programme can be successfully curated without flying in speakers, minimising the event’s carbon footprint. With the exception of one person, all of the speakers for the event drove instead of flying to Adelaide with most coming from Victoria. The majority of speakers stayed in Adelaide for more than a week to maximise the impacts of travel and coupled their attendance at Climate Crisis with other commitments, as well as enjoying March in Adelaide full of festive buzz. All UK speakers were streamed or provided pre-recorded content, which worked really well for all panel discussions and did not take away from the overall experience. For other artforms on the day, such as the performative piece, this wasn’t an option, which is where local talent was prioritised, both reducing the environmental impact and supporting South Australia artists.
- The catalyst production by Complicité was an inspiring project and partnership brokered by the British Council and it was a key illustration of *“how we can bring art from, you know, across the pond, from overseas and without flying people in and still have a really positive impact”* [Producer and Project Leader].
- Minimal signage can be successful to avoid additional waste, especially for a one-day event. The Festival didn’t print any new Corflutes³, avoided laminating signs and reused key essential signage from other Festival events (such as emergency entry/exit).
- The event and earlier roundtable supported the development of relationships between the UK and Australia and within the local community in Adelaide. These are relationships that will live on beyond the project with continuing discussions on the challenge of moving organisations away from the use of fossil fuels.
- The relationships forged during the Season have now evolved into a collaboration between British Council, Australia Council of Arts and Julie’s Bicycle to develop for the first time in Australia the sector development programme Creative Climate Leadership. Applications have opened for the first iteration later this year at Bundanon, NSW.

³ *Corflute*: a temporary sign or poster made of corrugated plastic sheeting.

Project lead quotation

“Almost all arts and cultural organisations [in the UK] have their own climate action plan and/or sustainability management plan. I think a lot of that comes from the British Council’s support there [in the UK]. I hope to see a similar trajectory in formalised climate action within the Australian sector soon and feel there is so much we can also share with our UK colleagues. It was an absolute dream to work with the entire Julie’s Bicycle and Complicité team, as well as all the incredible speakers, activists and artists who were involved in the day.” [Project Leader]

More information

Resources layout on Adelaide Festival’s sustainability webpage:

<https://www.adelaidefestival.com.au/about/sustainability/>

https://www.adelaidefestival.com.au/media/10275/af22_climate_crisis_report_final_wv.pdf

Things hidden since the foundation of the world

Lead organisation(s) Riverside’s National Theatre of Parramatta/Javaad Alipoor Company

Partners Sydney Festival, Home (Manchester)

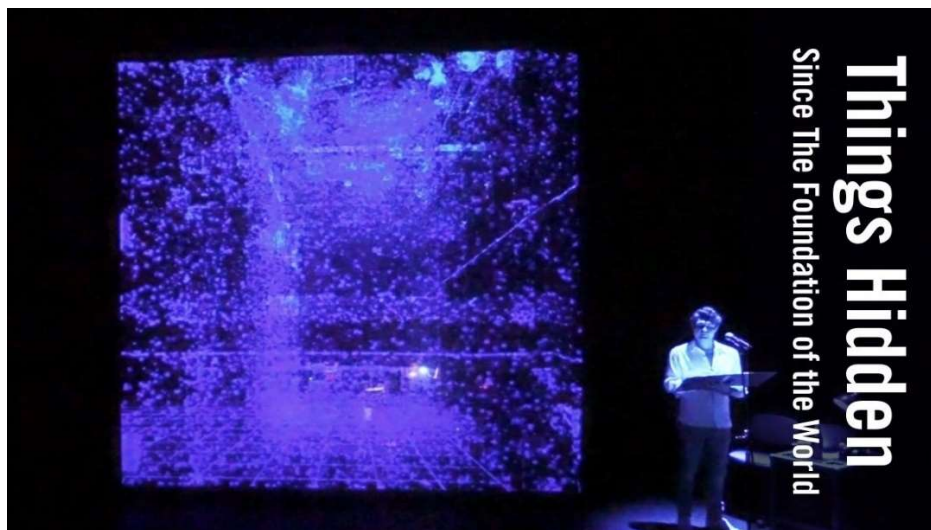
Grant/Fund British Council Grant for UK/Australia Season

Location Australia

Timescale January 2022

Sector/Artform Theatre / Multi-platform

Themes Diversity, Colonialism, Censorship, Violence, Digital.



Project

In 1992 Iranian popstar and refugee Fereydoun Farrokhzad was found brutally murdered. The case was never solved. This is the starting point of the play by Javaad Alipoor Company which was presented at Riverside’s National Theatre of Parramatta as a preview snapshot exploring the nature of violence, digital culture and the post-colonial world. It was the culmination of a creative exchange programme between artists in the UK, Australia and further afield taking stories beyond the stage through powerful multi-platform creations that explore the intersection of politics and technology in the contemporary world.

It was developed during December 2021 and January 2022 in residency at the National Theatre of Parramatta. This was also accompanied by time spent presenting the first ever digital/live hybrid version of Rich Kids: A History of Shopping Malls in Tehran. The full production was also performed at Home Manchester and BAC London in the UK in the autumn of 2022.

Importance

Things Hidden deals with many significant issues relevant for both the UK and Australia, looking at the (in)justice of why it is that some deaths or disappearances have great attention whilst others are ‘hidden’. Based on the real case of a murdered Iranian pop star, it had real relevance both to people from with an Iranian and Middle Eastern background as well as providing an opportunity to explore a range of wider issues.

“On one level we were creating this piece, collaboratively at 1000 miles apart. But at the same time, Javaad had the opportunity to really connect with the Iranian and Middle Eastern community in Parramatta, so both on an artistic diversity, collaborative level, but also on a real participant and all audience engagement level it was a brilliant continuation and signal towards future collaborations.” [Project Leader, UK]

The original connection had been made at a British Council Edinburgh Showcase in 2017 which led to one of Javaad Alipoor’s first productions, ‘The Believers Are But Brothers’ being presented at the National Theatre of Parramatta. After that success, the dialogue continued between the company and the theatre, and with the opportunity of the UK/Australia Season, it was possible to create and mount the production as a first iteration in Australia followed by a full refined production in the UK.

The subject’s historical and contemporary relevance is brought to the stage using artforms which draw on theatre as well as using modern digital forms. Furthermore, these methods of presentation were also matched by digital methods of collaboration, working thousands of miles apart using online communication to co-produce the show.

Points of note

- The production had many collaborative and co-produced elements, beginning in the UK, being developed in Australia in the community of the National Theatre of Parramatta, presented as part of the Sydney Festival and then re-developed and mounted in the UK.

“We were really interested in Javaad as an artist and wanted to provide an opportunity for a genuine collaboration to take place between Australia and artists from the UK.” [Project Leader, Australia].

It was the opportunity for us to extend our relationship with the National Theatre of Parramatta in a collaborative project and the beginnings of our next show, in a true collaboration with diverse Australian artists.” [Project Leader, UK].

- Things Hidden could be developed with relevance and connection to a diverse audience and community of the National Theatre of Parramatta. As well as working in that

community for this production, the company additionally spent some time presenting the first ever digital/live hybrid version of ‘Rich Kids: A History of Shopping Malls in Tehran’.

“The community that the theatre is sitting in, is really diverse, there is a really strong Middle Eastern Heritage segment to that community that Javaad over the two visits has really engaged with.” [Producer]

“We spent three weeks in a rehearsal studio and presented the first iteration in front of a vibrant, diverse audience filled with many people from Iranian and Middle Eastern heritage who represent the community in Parramatta, west Sydney where the show was made.” [Artist]

- The production is ‘multi-platform’ and is rooted in contemporary ways of looking at the world, using digital technological elements alongside dramatic and poetical forms and originally composed music to produce a modern work that finds resonance with a contemporary audience.

“We showed the digital version but we had Javaad in person, so people came to a theatre and watched it as a communal event with their phones, which is part of the whole thing. This completely new approach will hopefully not just tour in Australia, but around the rest of the world in the UK and further afield.” [Project Leader, UK]

Things Hidden was presented both as a live show at the National Theatre and also streamed live on the internet, giving it wider exposure.

Legacy

Things Hidden is a project which has continued to evolve. After the initial ‘draft production’ it is being further developed and after presentations at Home and BAC in the UK is available for further touring in the UK and elsewhere.

Having worked on two (effectively three) projects together, ‘The Believers Are But Brothers’ and ‘Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World’, Javaad Alipoor Company and the National Theatre of Parramatta are already considering how they might work again on future projects.

The British Council has been approached to support the return of the work in full production to Australia in 2024, possibly a national tour.

Project lead quotation

“This project is great for us going forward because it’s not just about how do we tour work internationally, but how we co-create work internationally.” [Producer, UK]

“I know it’s actually set people in different ways of thinking, because he’s a unique voice and in the way he’s creating work at this point of time, it’s really special for us to be able to showcase that but also for him to have that deeper level engagement with artists over here...with all three levels, the artists, the audience, but then actually the community as well, providing them with a focal point they might not have had.”

[Project Leader, Australia].

More information

- Javaad Alipoor Company: <https://javaadalipoor.co.uk>
- Riverside’s National Theatre of Parramatta: <https://riversideparramatta.com.au/NTofP>

The Fiercest of Friends Sports Diplomacy in the Australia-UK relationship

Lead organisation(s) Sports Diplomacy Alliance

Partners The Griffith Asia Institute Griffith University, the UK Government’s GREAT campaign and Department of Trade and Industry.

Grant/Fund British Council Grant for UK/Australia Season + the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia

Location Australia and UK

Timescale March 2022

Sector/Artform Sport/Education

Themes Diplomacy, Conflict, Spectators, Gender, Mega Events



Project

This project centred on an event called the AUK Sports Diplomacy Dialogue held on 21st March 2022, in Brisbane, Queensland. It addressed the role sport plays in the UK/Australia relationship and explored how sport can be used to develop good relationships between countries. It also highlighted other relevant opportunities for sport to advance particular values such as diversity or the role of women in society.

The day had a mixed format based around several panels discussing particular topics linked to the theme:

- The Fiercest of Friends: Building Communities through Sport
- Sports Technology Diplomacy between the UK and Australia
- Women and Sports Diplomacy
- Mega Sporting Events (MSEs) and the Green and Gold Decade
- City-to-City Sports Diplomacy with Commonwealth Games Theme
- The Kangaroo Route (the potential to exchange ideas and share lessons learned from major events hosted by the UK and Australia in the past, present and future).

Importance

This was the first major initiative on this topic, bringing together the pioneering work done in recent years by [Sports Diplomacy Alliance](#) and leading academics from around the world. It came at a time when the role of sport and its relationship to diplomacy and political commentary had received great attention, coming soon after the Winter Olympics in Beijing, issues around the vaccination of tennis players and the Australian Tennis Open, the first tour by the Australian Cricket Team to Pakistan in nearly two decades and the subsequent Commonwealth Games in the UK.

“The concept was a world's first, not only the topic but the idea of getting key people from both country's sports diplomacy industries in the room. - many of the concepts - such as Women and Sports Diplomacy, or city-to-city Sports Diplomacy were new. - and the event was so popular, SD is currently in discussion with several partners for a return, 2023 'leg' of the Dialogue. - beyond this, there is talk of the event becoming a regular annual Dialogue to alternate between the UK and Australia.” [Project Leader]

The project brought together three Australian and three UK universities and represented one of the most important education collaborations of the UK/Australia Season. The forum presented research and case studies alongside high-level debate with the top experts on this subject in the world.

Other important elements included:

- Trialling a bilateral SD model that can be applied to Australia and the UK's other key strategic relationships such as with India, the US, Japan, and China.

- Amplifying the reputations of Australia and the UK as connected, trusted, and culturally innovative countries.
- Supporting, celebrating and engaging a network of champions and role models and showcasing the insights gained from studies and programmes in sports diplomacy.

By all accounts, the feedback from participants and stakeholders was very positive, with many commenting that it should become a regular event.

“It has become one of the most fascinating, enjoyable and potentially impactful projects of the UK/Australia Season [...] SDA bring a sporting playfulness that sits naturally alongside deep expertise. I and my colleagues have found collaborating with them a delight.” [British Council]

The programme also involved a local First Nations group delivering the ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremony and included diverse participation overall, with Paralympians, women and lesser-known students and sportspeople sharing their views.

Points of note

- The project demonstrated the value of a bilateral season such as UK/Australia as it brought together people who were in dialogue but had not been able to collaborate directly on a specific initiative. The AUK SD Dialogue consolidated these relationships and this thinking, with ideas and activity continuing beyond the year. The organisers praised the role of the British Council and DFAT in helping this to happen.

“We formed such a nice working group and team that if we don't work together again soon (which is unlikely), we'll remain friends for a lot longer.” [Project Leader about The British Council and DFAT].

- The project illuminated the need to look at the role sport plays in other relationships with other countries. From an Australian point of view, for example, it examined relations across the Pacific as part of a programme from DFAT called PacificAus Sports. In a review of that initiative, SDA is explaining and showcasing the AUK SD Dialogue as a model that could be followed. Australia is also keen to boost relations and influence with India, France, and the US, and by bringing everyone together at least once a year this can inspire relationships and stimulate ideas. This therefore leads to the possibility of an annual, possibly global event where these themes can be assessed, actioned and debated.

- Through proper consideration of the issues and learning about how Sports Diplomacy can work, it has also become clear that there are many untapped opportunities for politicians and diplomats, who could take note of its advantages in policy development.
- Amongst the important discussions that took place during the day was one about the connection between sport and the arts which are usually separated areas. However, sometimes, as with mega events such as the Olympics Games, they come together in a cultural moment. It highlighted the way these two dimensions of cultural life can become connected to diplomacy and have an impact on wider society.
- As well as focusing on its main subject of Sports Diplomacy, the Dialogue also enabled consideration of known topics in a new way, for example looking at the role of women in sport:

“The idea of talking about women in sports is very important, but in a domestic sense it’s kind of done and dusted. It’s a bit cliched. And whereas you talk about it in an international sense and it becomes just much more fascinating. So we have an ultra-marathon runner just back from Mongolia talking to the chair of Australian Sport, for example. Just fascinating.” [Project Leader]

Legacy

Emanating from the Dialogue were a series of recommendations for Sports Diplomacy and for future initiatives on this topic:

- Advance shared bilateral interests and opportunities
- Articulate the foundations for success
- Support, celebrate and engage the network of champions and role models
- Invest in the sports technology ecosystem
- Plan for shared legacy and track outcomes
- Write the world’s first bilateral Sports Diplomacy Strategy
- Broaden the playing field - due to the success of the first Dialogue, there is a possibility to consider tri or multi-lateral Dialogues

The project has led to the publication of an academic peer-reviewed journal article on: ‘What role has, does and should sports play in the Australia-UK relationship?’ for the journal Sport in Society Journal (June 2023).

A 'Return leg' of the AU/UK SD Dialogue, was held in Edinburgh, March 2023, cementing the ambition for this to become an annual event.

Project lead quotation

"We wanted to say that 'this is the fiercest of friends'. You know, it's on the pitch. It's an intense relationship. And we wanted to get that kind of friendly rivalry [between UK and Australia] going. So that's why we did it at The Gabba [cricket ground]. The graveyard of many an England opener and so we wanted to do it there, just after the Ashes."

"And everyone that was involved has been emailed, thanked, engaged. Our new website was launched on the day as well. So the event itself generated a massive amount of opportunity through that dialogue model."

"Every single person involved in the Dialogue was full of praise and very keen to work together in the future to make it an annual event, that grows each year."

More information

- Sports Diplomacy Alliance: <https://www.sportsdiplomacy.com>

UK/AU Digital Season ‘On Stream’

Lead organisation	Sydney Opera House (Australia)
Partners	Curated in collaboration with the British Council by Stuart Buchanan, Head of Digital Programming at Sydney Opera House. Supported by the UK/Australia Season Patrons Board, the British Council and the Australian Government as part of the UK/Australia Season.
Grant/Fund	British Council Grant for UK/Australia Season
Location	Online, streamed through the Sydney Opera House digital channel
Timescale	December 2021 to March 2022
Sector/Artform	Digital, film
Themes	Identity and community



Mandla Rae: as British as a watermelon. Image credit: Graham Clayton-Chance

Project

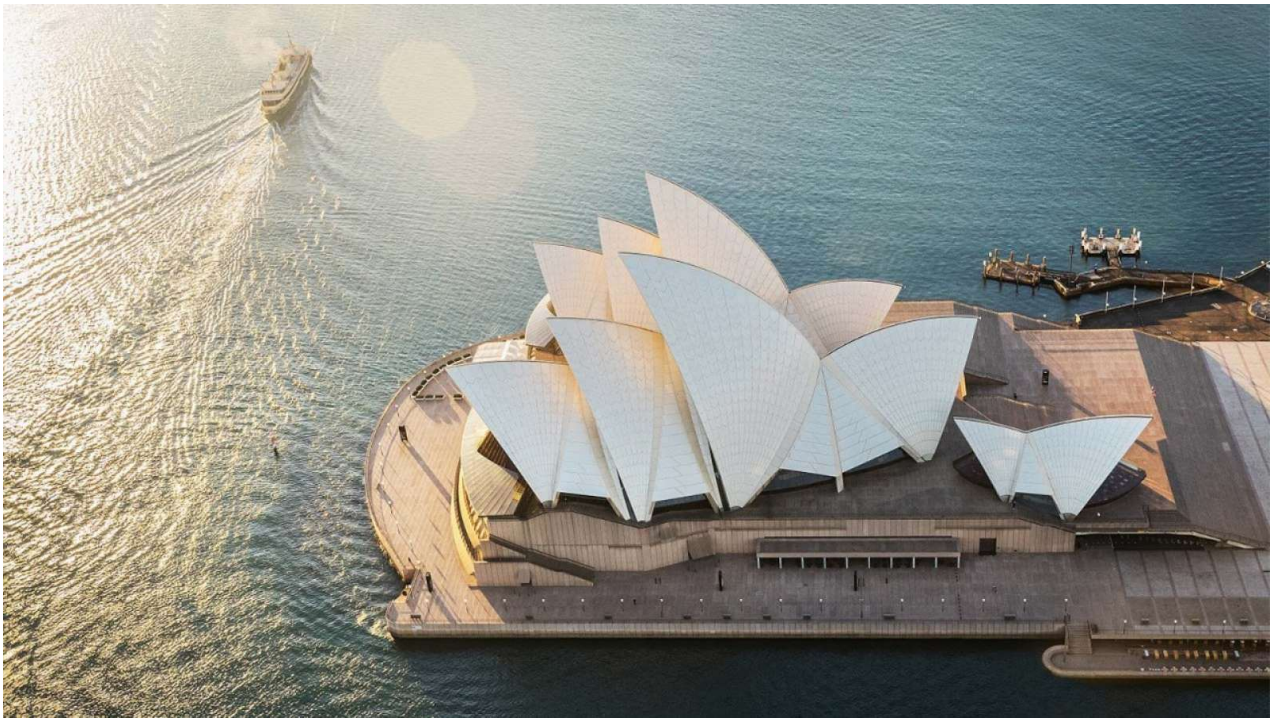
Sydney Opera House and The British Council presented an invigorating season of new digital performances by artists and arts organisations from across the UK, exploring the question ‘Who Are We Now?’. Tackling themes of identity and community, the UK/Australia Digital Season provided a unique insight into the ways in which artists are responding to unprecedented

global challenges. Available to watch for free on Stream4, the season featured new works from diverse voices across a range of artforms and formats.

Overall, there were 24 digital films streamed through the Sydney Opera House digital channel available throughout the UK/Australia Season between December 2021 and March 2022, with 7 remaining available. The following are a selection of the films presented:

- mandla rae: as British as a watermelon - Weaving poetry and storytelling with destruction and colourful chaos, join Mandla as they rise from the dead and reclaim their misplaced power.
- Boy Blue: R.E.B.E.L. - A rallying call for solidarity in action featuring and created with young London Dancers unable to vote in the EU referendum.
- Theatre Complicité: Can I Live? - Fehinti Balogun presents a vital new digital performance about the climate catastrophe, sharing his personal journey into the biggest challenge of our times.
- Mind the Gap: A Little Space - Devised and performed by five artists with learning disabilities, explore connection and disconnection, whether through choice or isolation.
- Corey Baker: Swan Lake Bath Ballet - Set to Tchaikovsky's famous swan theme, 27 elite ballet dancers perform a modern-day Swan Lake from their own home (filled) baths.
- Rachel Bagshaw & China Plate: Where I Go (When I Can't Be Where I Am) - What must it be like to live with a pain so intense that you can not only feel it, but hear it and see it? A short film about love, isolation and living with chronic pain.
- National Theatre of Scotland: Adam - Adam tells the remarkable story of a young trans man and his struggle across genders and borders to be himself.
- On Par/Mr & Mrs Clark: Louder Is Not Always Clearer - The show is accessible to d/Deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing audiences through the use of English, British Sign language and creative captions. For hearing viewers, it's an illuminating and emotional experience. For d/Deaf viewers, it's a familiar tale of misunderstanding and isolation.
- Battersea Arts Centre Beatbox Academy: Frankenstein, How To Make A Monster - Six talented performers interpret Mary Shelley's novel Frankenstein from their own perspective as young people growing up in 21st-century Britain.

⁴ Stream offers access to free and paid full-length performances from the Opera House stages, livestreams of new performances, highlights from the multi-genre archive, presentations by local and international performing arts companies, and original content created exclusively for the platform.



Sydney Opera House

Importance

This was the first time the Sydney Opera House had presented international artists exclusively on its digital channel, effectively introducing ‘international digital touring’ to Sydney Opera Houses’ programming (as opposed to ‘live’ touring from international companies). It has effectively added a new model of digital presentation expanding the programming from digital engagement with staged work or digital commissions.

It was not only a new way of programming, but also of contractual relations with artists in terms of licences and their duration, fees and rights. The season required a new template agreement to be devised for work which is presented in digital form, which was effective for all parties - Sydney Opera House, the British Council and the artists. Parameters needed to be re-considered, diverging in some instances from the traditional touring agreement. For instance, it is possible to geofence the streaming by city, state, country; however restricting viewing geographically in a digital context does not make the same sense as for live touring.

Points of note

- The investment as a result of the Australia/UK Season offered an opportunity to pilot new approaches to programming with artistic and audience related outcomes.
- Diversifying the digital offering is strategically significant both artistically and for audience development for the Opera House.

- New relationships and opportunities resulted from this cross-national collaboration which have been sustained beyond the Season.
- The program ran during a period of venue closure due to Covid-19 restrictions, and provided valuable new programming for audiences when the stages were dark.

Legacy

- The season was a catalyst for the further development of the Opera House's digital programming, building its capacity in this area, and offering new ways of working with artists.
- The process of programming was truly collaborative with the British Council - between Stuart Buchanan, Head of Digital Programming at the Opera House and Tom Curtis of the British Council and has led to new relationships with a range of artists and organisations such as Sadler's Wells in the UK.
- The programme was diverse in its representation which challenged the traditional perceptions of the Opera House being a place only for opera, ballet and classical music. The season also came at a time when the income for artists and the Opera House was welcome - as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic hit.
- Future digital seasons with an individual curatorial focus have been developed since the initial 'On Stream' season. Integrating digital presentation enables the organisation to work with artists that they might not otherwise be able to and to create a developmental path and visibility for emerging artists towards a stage presentation. This approach to digital programming also provides a wider range of opportunities, in an audience development context, to engage existing with a broader range of work, as well as introducing new audiences to the Opera House.

Project lead quotation

“Digital programming is an integral part of the Sydney Opera House’s strategic approach, offering audiences alternative ways to engage with artists through a diverse range of platforms, genres and formats. It is also a critical method for increasing access to the work of artists, particularly for those audiences who may be prevented from visiting the House due to location, cost or mobility. The British Council UK/AU provided unparalleled access to high quality, new digital work that could otherwise not be seen in Australia, and opened doors for new programming opportunities.” [Project lead, Australia]

More information

<https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/digital/stream/uk-au-digital-season.html>

Electronic Music Conference Presents ‘Cultural Union’ Programme

Lead organisation	Electronic Music Conference (Australia)
Partners	We Out Here Festival, UK; APRA AMCOS, Australia
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for UK/Australia Season
Location	We Out Here Festival, Cambridgeshire (UK)
Timescale	25-28 August 2022
Sector/Artform	Electronic/Jazz/Soul Music
Themes	Songwriting, collaboration



Foreground: Imraan Paleker (Street Rat), Left: Julia Beiers (First Beige), Right: Lewis Moody, Background: Oscar Borschmann (First Beige), Photo by Sampology

Project

Six Australian genre-bending artists were selected to participate in the Electronic Music Conference (EMC) presents ‘Cultural Union’ programme. The programme included three days of songwriting and recording at the iconic RAK Studios in London with a contingent of like-minded

British artists and was followed by performances from each of the Australian artists at Gilles Peterson's international We Out Here festival - a leading summer festival in the UK for this genre.

The artists selected by EMC and Gilles Peterson included First Beige (QLD), DJ JNETT (VIC), Karate Boogaloo (VIC), Middle Name Dance Band (QLD), Natalie Slade (NSW) and Setwun (NSW), who were all considered to be at the forefront of their local scenes in Gadigal/Sydney, Meanjin/Brisbane and Naarm/Melbourne. EMC in partnership with APRA AMCOS hosted the studio sessions, which included 40 musicians creating new work through the collaboration of Australian and British songwriters, producers and instrumentalists.

Importance

This project has enabled EMC to deliver a programme that has been in conception for several years, to support artists to navigate the world of music bringing artists from Australia to the UK, where the sector and market for this genre of music is more developed, with We Out Here Festival considered to be the 'melting pot' of this genre and community. It included a music creation strand alongside a live performance element which was also considered to be key in supporting the selected artists' development of practice and connections within the UK sector.

"... particularly within this world of music, it's still quite a niche within the Australian industry...it's a much bigger market in the UK. And this really is the penultimate festival [We Out Here] for that world ... it's great to get them to the UK in general and do shows but this festival particularly is such a great community networking moment...[and] the experience of doing a couple of days in the studio. That's quite a unique thing." [Project lead]

Points of note

- For EMC the program provided the opportunity to showcase the *"abundance of incredible artists coming out of Australia"*, with the majority of participating artists visiting and performing in the UK for the first time.
- The project supported creative collaboration, and skills and knowledge sharing between the UK and Australia, with the studio sessions format considered unique compared to traditional song hub/writing camps. The facilities, including three live rooms alongside three production rooms, allowed for a daily curated selection of the Australian and British artists and instrumentalists to work on creating and writing music in the morning, which was then downloaded into the production rooms in the afternoon, to be worked on by producers. Some of the production rooms had MC rappers, singer and spoken word artists who worked on either building on what had been created or took stems of the works and

created something new. The approach often encouraged Australian artists to try something new and come out of their comfort zone.

“It was a bit of an experiment. But it absolutely worked. We absolutely got magic coming out of there...a lot of tracks.” [Project lead]

“I’ve learned so many keys playing over those three days and being given random sounds on a random keyboard. So nice to get out of that comfort zone of just knowing your instruments.” [Australian artist]

- For participating artists, developing understanding of the sector and making connections among the Australian artists and with the UK sector, were the key outcomes of taking part. Many took inspiration from the connections made and creative skills and knowledge shared through the process.

“... coming over here and contextualizing the music that we are inspired by ... meeting all of these people... working with my heroes, [and] to actually see the labels ... The drummer reckons his world’s doubled in one week.” [Australian artist]

“... the way the community seems to work here [UK], getting a better insight into that, and linkage to what’s happening for us in Australia ... The cross conversation between us, as well as the other [Australian artist], and the people on the ground in the UK, it’s so special, and taking the inspiration back to Australia.” [Australian artist]

“... people that I just wouldn’t have known to try and meet. So insanely talented and chatting with them ... you learn heaps [about the UK sector/scene].” [Australian artist]

- For several artists, the project/event was useful in understanding their position in the UK market, building their profile and building confidence.

“[our music] definitely has a home over here. It would be awesome to explore that further.” [Australian artist]

“[was this a new audience for you?] 100% some people knew the record, which spun me out whilst I was performing. I’m certainly, for Australia, I’m a niche genre. Totally massive confidence boosting process... it’s the push you need, re inspire yourself, feed yourself with some beautiful music, so that you can put out the next record, the next tour.” [Australian artist]

- The opportunity to be part of We Out Here and perform in renowned venues was a unique experience for some participating artists.

“It’s not that easy to get into this stuff. You don’t just walk into Ronnie Scott’s you don’t just walk into We Out Here as an independent.” [Australian artist]

- For the project lead, EMC, they were able to build and develop existing relationships with partners and artists in the UK and Australia.

Legacy

- Following the success of this project, EMC indicated a desire for the continuation of this project, potentially as a biennial programme including an exchange of UK artists travelling to Australia.
- The studio sessions created an abundance of tracks to be distilled and distributed among the artists.

“... now when we get back to Australia. It’ll now be about reviewing everything. What do we want to do here? What makes sense in terms of complexes? A compilation? Does it make more sense for multiple commercial releases to happen with various artists?”

[Project lead]

- For participating artists, the project has left them with rich content and inspiration to take into their practice, alongside connections to support them in their future career development, with some inspired to return to the UK to perform again in future, recognising the value of coming in the Australian winter (UK summer).

Project lead quotation

“Our purpose [EMC] is to help artists as best as possible navigate the world of music, whether that’s in their own backyard, or whether that’s globally. This is very much in line with that ... the relationships that they make those new creative collaborations ... [has that] butterfly effect where you go.” [Electronic Music Conference]

Queensland Ballet's Young Artist Programme at Next Generation Festival

Lead organisation	Queensland Ballet (Australia)
Partners	Royal Opera House (UK), OAK Foundation
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for UK/Australia Season
Location	Royal Opera House, London (UK)
Timescale	Performances 4-7 June 2022
Sector/Artform	Ballet, Dance
Themes	Young artists, professional development, new works



Image: David Kelly

Project

Queensland Ballet's Jette Parker Young Artist Programme was the first non-European company to feature in The Royal Ballet's Next Generation Festival which celebrates emerging artists from junior companies and dance schools from around the world. The programme included 12 full time young dancers performing a mixed programme of new and contemporary works combining

dynamic contemporary dance with technology, design and music by Australian choreographers Jack Lister, Natalie Weir and Loughlan Prior.

Importance

As the first post-Covid tour, this programme provided newly graduated dancers an opportunity of a lifetime to take part in an international professional development programme. It developed their skills in auditioning, working with choreographers on their new works through 6 weeks of rehearsals, and travelling to the UK to perform on a renowned international stage, supporting them to get into a professional state-of-mind for their future career progression.

Points of note

- Despite challenges faced as a result of the pandemic, delaying the programme from 2020 to 2022, the extended period of contact between the project lead and the Royal Opera House (ROH) contact meant the relationship went beyond a specific project and developed into something unique; a relationship based on knowledge sharing, collaboration and support during a challenging period.
- This supportive relationship was reflected on the ground with ROH arranging the performance and rehearsal spaces and providing physios for the young dancers. The festival model is a common way for Queensland Ballet to approach international touring, compared to having to find venues and arranging all logistics and marketing themselves, considered to hold significantly more risk.
- Though it was not a full house during the performance, due to an unforeseen clash with the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, the performance was well received. Audiences shared comments with the project lead on the unique quality and use of space.
- For the participating young dancers, it was the first time performing and representing the company internationally. Though they had some prior understanding of the UK sector this opportunity increased their awareness of the rich and diverse culture on offer; with 'shows on every corner', and the UK's role in pushing the boundaries in the arts for the world stage.

Legacy

- The security of working on a festival model for international touring is an approach Queensland Ballet would like to do more of in the future as a result of this project.
- There was an interest in understanding the future role of DFAT in brokering conversations with other nations ie. US and China, for cultural exchange programmes and touring

opportunities such as this, which are considered very difficult without the support received from organisations such as DFAT.

- From an organisational and project lead perspective, skills and knowledge were developed in understanding the UK tax system and paperwork requirements to enable payment from ROH for the agreed performance fee, along with working internally across the organisation to create a marketing kit of an international tour.
- From the perspective of the project lead, the young dancers have developed a network of contacts both nationally and internationally by participating in this programme; with dancers within the company, where a unique bond is formed and will likely result in friends for life; and within the sector, through exposure to new international teachers and with several dancers making the most of the opportunity of being in the UK to take part in international auditions.
- For the young dancers, participating in the project developed a range of skills that they can use in their future careers: learning how to hold their own as 12 dancers on the stage, a much bigger role than usual; working and connecting more as a group; performing with unique lighting; managing their bodies during an international tour (conditioning and protecting), all of which developed their confidence, drive and passion to continue in their career which in turn positively impacted the way they perform. Dancers considered the development from the experience to be an important element they can bring back to the company and sector in Australia. For one, this experience prepared them for a future return visit to perform in Europe.

Project quotations

“The opportunity to perform at that age on such a coveted stage is really something that is any dancer’s dream. And particularly at such a young age, it just fills them with that inspiration. Right from the get-go. And I know they’re still talking about it ... it’s once in a lifetime almost for any dancer. So for them to be able to be given it so young is really just a dream come true.”

[Project lead]

“It changes how you dance, being in a different environment, different country, a different audience ... had an impact on how you feel within yourself. And obviously, dance is an art form through your body. So that changes the way you feel and the way you perform.” [Participating artist]

“I think it was crucial to fulfil this project and be a part of the festival and be surrounded by a different culture, we then can bring different things back to our company here and put a light on how it is over in the UK.” [Participating artist]

“I think that’s one thing I just can never get over the fact that I stood there on the Royal Opera House stage and just performed on it...something I’d remember for the rest of my life.”

[Participating artist]

“... that skill of rising to the occasion of the bigger roles, that just adds to our experience. And that comes down to sometimes simply just things going wrong on stage and knowing how to quickly, you know, cover up or fix or adapt and overcome some of those challenges.”

[Participating artist]

“... just incredible for us to feel that connection with the audience.” [Participating artist]

Warriors - Melbourne University Murrup Barak Leaders Programme

Lead organisation	Murrup Barak, Wilin Centre and Museums & Collections, University of Melbourne (Australia)
Partners	Kings College London (UK)
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for UK/Australia Season
Location	University of Melbourne (Australia), Kings College London (UK) and online
Timescale	Spring 2022 (production), 21-29 July 2022 (presentation)
Sector/Artform	Video documentary
Themes	Collaboration, students, First Nations-led, 'Who Are We Now?'

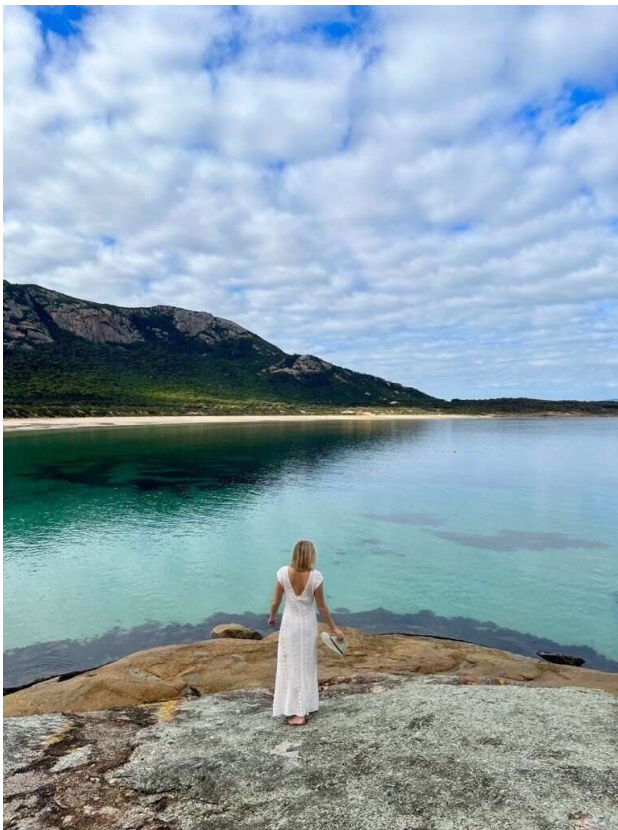


Image credit: University of Melbourne Juris Doctor student Maggie Blanden, Plangermaireener/ palawa, on Country during the creation of the collaborative documentary Warriors, 2022.

Project

The University of Melbourne's UK/AU Season's Project was a First Nations-led, student-centred programme, in which a team of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students of the Murrup Barak, Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development at the University of Melbourne in Australia, were on a journey together through experiences of First Nations exhibitions and collections, including expert conversations with First Nations leaders on Indigenous knowledge, material culture, art and place.

The students - Maggie Blanden, Nicholas Currie, Ethan Savage, Jessica Alderton, and Shanysa McConville - collaborated to create a video documentary, Warriors, on the season theme 'Who Are We Now?'. The premiere of Warriors was shown at Kings College, London, followed by a moderated Q&A with the filmmakers. The film was livestreamed for a limited time post-event.

In July, the five students travel to the UK with Murrup Barak’s Director Inala Cooper and Strategic Projects and Engagement Coordinator Kirsten Hausia, and Museums & Collections Teaching Fellow Ashley Perry for a two-week period.

Importance

This project enabled unique collaborations at the University of Melbourne on two key levels. Firstly, among departments within the university (Murrup Barak Student Centre and the Museums and Collections department) who wouldn’t usually work together. And secondly, among students from different courses; from those studying fine art to a law degree, supporting them to work collaboratively to explore and represent their personal identity and creativity in the final video documentary.

“... this was very unique because we got students that never engaged in the centre, and it’s students that wouldn’t generally do things together.” [Project Lead]

Points of note

- For the Project lead, the 12-week programme was a refreshing cross-departmental approach, which enabled the programme leaders to bring in expertise from indigenous colleagues from across the University to engage with and explore the topics of Indigenous knowledge, material culture, art and place. The project bridged the student wellbeing space (Murrup Barak student centre) and the more academic perspective from the Museums and Collections department.
- For the Murrup Barak student centre this project supported engagement with a target group - fine art students - who aren’t based on the same campus so less frequently engage with the centre.
- Though audience numbers were low due to the pandemic, the launch of *Warriors* in London and online was considered to have an interested and engaged audience, who posed intriguing questions to the students. By hosting this event at King’s College, the University of Melbourne built on an existing relationship supporting broader engagement with the project and institutions visited as part of the students’ two-week visit.

“I will remember the screening the most - at a great venue (Kings College) with some good audience questions.” [Participating student]

- From the project coordinators’ perspective, there were several observed impacts of taking part. Students were articulate in presenting their work both at the premiere in Melbourne and at the event at Kings College in the UK, building their public speaking skills and networking among academics and institutions visited while in the UK. The nature of the

project supported the development of teamwork skills including delegation, collaboration and project management, alongside film-making skills.

- There was a desire from the University and from the student perspective to understand more about the wider UK/AU Season programme - why it exists, past contributions and its aims, along with interacting more with other organisations and individuals participating in the programme.

Legacy

- For the participating students, the video documentary provides a lifelong documentation of representations of their culture, whether family members or elders represented in the videos or landscapes that have significance for their community. Some students expressed interest in using this content for other work in future. The University would like to host the content online to further showcase the outcomes of the project.
- Following the success of this project, the Murrup Barrak centre is considering different approaches to continue cross-departmental working and to engage students to give back to their community. Seed funding was one approach in consideration, including an opportunity to premiere or showcase the outputs of projects. Learnings from the project included the importance of simplicity and clear parameters for a project of this type, an element they would build into seed funding call outs.
- The activity highlighted the importance of international projects and travel in broadening and challenging perspectives, awareness and future career paths, both for the project lead and the participating students. For one student, exposure to collections in the UK highlighted the lack of awareness of history about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the UK and viewing collections that presented stolen or ‘purchased’ objects, fuelled an aspiration to *“improve the way Indigenous collections are catalogued, displayed, and repatriated across the globe”*. For another student studying law, engaging with museums and collections opened their eyes to the possibility of working in repatriation.

“This trip has made me aware just how little accurate history about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is taught in the UK. While we received great feedback to our film, there was a general lack of awareness about the history of frontier violence, the subsequent assimilation and eugenicist practices that resulted in the Stolen Generations, and the impact this has on Indigenous people in the present.” [Participating student]

Project quotations

“One of the [students] is studying law. So academic in the sense, but it was great for [them]. When we went to a couple of museums, [they] were like, wow, I can even like switch, I could do law, but I can look at repatriation...who knows what [they] might end up doing but it just got [them] thinking about different scopes and what [they] could do with [their] degree.” [Project lead]

“It just really opened our eyes of like, how important it is for our students to go abroad, they already are going abroad in different ways at different capacities, but, you know, introducing them to the spaces and finding different ways that they can be creative.” [Project lead]

“It kind of got us thinking as like a student centre ... about ways that we can get our young people engaged, and to work on something, to give back ... [something now in consideration is] seed funding, providing our students with finding some grants, we have A\$10,000, you can do an individual or a group project, and how are you going to give back to your community? They'll have parameters, so then just showcasing leadership, creativity and hopefully doing shows to Premiere or just to showcase what they have done.” [Project lead]

New partnership: Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and London Symphony Orchestra/Australia and UK new bilateral orchestral exchange



During the Australia in the UK strand of the Season the Australia High Commission announced the formation of a new partnership between Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) and London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), the first formal Memorandum of Understanding of this kind between orchestras from Australia and the UK.

The agreement includes reciprocal touring in Australia and the UK, facilitating emerging artist exchanges and co-commissioning performances and activities, including digital innovations, such as LSO Live and MSO.LIVE. The partnership is set to launch in Australia in 2023, with a series of concerts in April and May in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, conducted by LSO's Sir Simon Rattle presented jointly by MSO, Sydney Opera House and Queensland Performing Arts Centre.

Kathryn McDowell, Managing Director of London Symphony Orchestra, said: *"We are thrilled to announce this new partnership with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. This historic agreement brings together our two orchestras, representing our two countries with a shared history. Our aim is to strengthen understanding and exchange through the strong bonds of music for the benefit of the communities we serve."*

Art et al X 2021-2022

Lead organisation Art et al., Arts Project Australia (Australia)

Partners Jennifer Lauren Gallery, Manchester (UK), Slominski projects, London (UK), Cromwell Place, London (UK), Australia Council for the Arts, the Aesop Foundation

Grant/Fund DFAT Grant for UK/Australia Season

Location Online, and in-person exhibition - Cromwell Place, London (UK)

Timescale April 2021 to March 2022

Sector/Artform Visual arts

Themes Collaboration, Neurodivergent, Learning-disabled artists



Image credit: Emily Ferretti, *Fountain Collage (1)*, 2021, Pencil and acrylic paint on paper

Art et al. X 2021-22 is a series of innovative curatorial projects and inclusive programming featuring neurodivergent, intellectually and learning-disabled artists internationally. The series aimed to develop the practices of neurodivergent, intellectually and learning-disabled artists in the UK and Australia.

Central to Art et al. X 2021-22 was an in-person exhibition *Season One* at Cromwell Place, London. The exhibition includes British and Australian artists featured on the Art et al. platform, including five of the peer-to-peer collaborations - digital residencies pairing international artists with and without disabilities.

701 people saw the Season One exhibition in person, 325 people visited the exhibition event night, and site visitors spent five minutes on average on Art et al.'s Season One exhibition page.

Legacy

- Following the success of the project and the partnership between Art et al. x Cromwell Place x DFAT in 2022, planning is underway to secure funding/sponsorship for an exhibition at Cromwell place in 2024 which would include commissioning new writing, peer to peer collaborations and curating collections, alongside a public programme and workshops for neurodivergent artists.

Links

<https://artuk.org/discover/stories/season-one-for-an-inclusive-and-accessible-contemporary-art-world>

[Art et al 'Season One' Exhibition](#)

Australian World Orchestra performs at Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms

Lead organisation	Australian World Orchestra (Australia)
Partners	Michael Bishop Foundation (UK), Askonas Holt (UK), Edinburgh International Festival - EIF (UK), BBC Proms (UK)
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for UK/Australia Season
Location	EIF and BBC Proms in-person (UK)
Timescale	August 2022
Sector/Artform	Classical Music, Orchestra
Themes	Collaboration, Australian diaspora, relationship development



AWO 2022 Mehta Prom 48. Image credit: Mark Allan

The Australian World Orchestra (AWO)'s mission is to unite Australia's finest classical musicians, from the world's great orchestras to create unparalleled orchestral experiences in Australia and internationally, showcasing the best that Australia has to offer in the classical music world. It had been a long-held vision of the AWO to travel to the United Kingdom (UK) to perform. The AWO's

tour to the Edinburgh International Festival (Usher Hall), and the BBC Proms (Royal Albert Hall, London) met the aims of both the AWO and the Season.

The orchestra was led by world-renowned, globally acclaimed maestro, Zubin Mehta AC and the concerts were enthusiastically received with standing ovations and 5-star reviews. It was Mo. Mehta's first performance in Edinburgh for 41 years and in London for 10 years, so these performances were much anticipated; exposing UK audiences (in person and by broadcast) to a diverse orchestra comprising only Australian musicians, often hailed as Top 10, whilst witnessing one of the world's great conductors - highlighting a cultural collaboration between Australia, India and the UK.

Points of note

- The AWO's use of local and European musicians, reduced the use of air transport and was acknowledged as environmentally friendly ensuring these were "green" concerts.
- As the orchestra is a gathering of the Australian diaspora, representing over 55 orchestras and 35 cities, (including London, Edinburgh and Dublin) the performances also highlighted the phenomenal achievements of the classical musicians Australia produces, celebrated worldwide for their ambition and excellence.

Legacy

- The success of the tour has led to the possibility of tours to the US, Middle East, Europe and a return to the UK.
- The relationship with the BBC Proms has now been established, and they have been advised that they would look to re-engage them following the successful collaboration.
- The repertoire for the UK concerts included an orchestration of Debussy's Ariettes Obligées commissioned by the AWO in 2015 of internationally renowned Australian composer Brett Dean. This work included voice, sung by Australian soprano Siobhan Stagg. This choice of repertoire further enhanced and cemented both Brett and Siobhan's reputation in the UK.
- To complete the tour the AWO required further fundraising from the UK/Australian philanthropy network. They were supported by the Michael Bishop Foundation - establishing a relationship that continues to be nurtured by the AWO.

Links

- ABC recording: <https://www.abc.net.au/classic/programs/lunchtime-concert/proms2022-prom-48-australian-world-orchestra-zubin-mehta-dean/14036066>
- The Guardian article: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/aug/24/prom-48-australian-world-orchestrazubin-mehta-review-a-remarkable-and-rare-return>

Sherman Centre for Culture & Ideas (SCCI) Fashion + Architecture Hubs

Lead organisation	Sherman Centre for Culture & Ideas - SCCI (Australia)
Partners	The Design Museum, London (UK)
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for UK/Australia Season
Location	The Design Museum, Cromwell Place, London (UK)
Timescale	October-November 2022
Sector/Artform	Fashion, Design, Architecture
Themes	Interdisciplinary discussion, networking



*Dr Gene Sherman AM launches the SCCI Hubs alongside opening speakers
Sir Lloyd Dorfman CVO CBE and Tim Marlow OBE*

Across consecutive weekends SCCI welcomed approximately 1,300 guests to four keynote presentations and 12 panel conversations profiling leading Australian practitioners across the fashion, design and architecture industries, inviting a broad interdisciplinary discussion on each profession from a uniquely Australian perspective. Four social events accompanied this series of keynotes and panel conversations, amplifying the opportunity for Australian creatives to socialise with their British peers and form professional connections.

Points of note

- The programme included engagement with five institutions - through financial support for PhD attendance, keynote speakers and student commissioned short films. Institutions included: University of New South Wales, University of Western Sydney, University of Queensland, Israel Museum, Jerusalem and Australian Film Television and Radio School.
- The events attracted several VIPs.
- Don Cameron was invited by Dr Gene Sherman AM to conceive of intimate, unique installations for the Design Museum's Helene and Johannes Huth Gallery and Atrium, forming part of the SCCI's intimate event space.
- *The Spoken Object* (Images Publishing, 2022) was launched on 2nd Nov at Cromwell Place's historic Lavery Studio providing an opportunity to evoke the personal, lived and worn collections of Dr Gene Sherman AM - the publication's core focus.
- Various partnerships were pursued by SCCI to enrich the programme and promote its participants i.e., Drest Artificial Intelligence Shopping Game profiled a selection of products by Australian Designers present in the SCCI Fashion Hub.
- SCCI secured notable digital and print media as a result of the programme, both in the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

Legacy

- Podcasts of panels and keynotes on SCCI channels and via Google Arts and Culture partnership.

“ I'd like to extend my warmest congratulations on the programme, and deepest thanks for your hard work and dedication in bringing this initiative to the UK. The SCCI Architecture & Fashion Hubs project really embodied what we had hoped to achieve for the Season - as a forum for the exchange of ideas, of innovation, and exploration of the power of creativity and cultural expression to help us envisage a better future. This was also a rare opportunity for the UK sectors to hear from some of Australia's leading thinkers, creators and change makers in one of our most important institutions of contemporary design, London's Design Museum. ”

Stevie Spring CBE, Global Chairman, British Council

- Numerous UK-based cultural leaders, including Design Museum Director Tim Marlow OBE and Director of the British Council in Australia Helen Salmon, expressed an interest in building upon the format and curatorial framework of SCCI.

Links

<https://www.stirworld.com/think-opinions-sccis-fashion-and-architecture-hubs-bridge-two-nations-and-disciplines>

Terrapin - Anthem Anthem Revolution

Lead organisation	Terrapin Puppet Theatre (Tasmania)
Partner organisation	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (UK)
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for UK/Australia Season / Birmingham 2022 Festival
Location	Birmingham
Timescale	March-August 2022
Sector/Artform	Digital/Multimedia
Themes	Sport, games and music, Commonwealth and imperialism, First Nations artists; Connecting with the wider Festival and Games



Terrapin: Anthem Anthem Revolution in Birmingham UK. Image credit: Peter Matthew

Project

Anthem Anthem Revolution combined sport, games and music by offering people the chance to battle a table tennis playing robot to replace Australia's national anthem with a newly devised piece. The participatory installation was designed by Terrapin in collaboration with a Tasmanian Aboriginal (Pakana) rapper, who worked with a group of Tasmanian school children to develop a brand-new national anthem. The resulting composition can only be heard by participants by scoring points against the table tennis playing robot.

As the ball is served to the participant, they must play it back to the robot. The more they do this, the more of the song they unlock and the more difficult the serves become. Ultimately, not everyone will unlock the full anthem and, in this context, the resulting piece that was played was ultimately shaped by the participant taking part.

Over two weeks, from late July to early August, 2022, Anthem Anthem Revolution was installed at three locations in Birmingham: Mell Square in Solihull Town Centre, Lavender Hall Park in Solihull and the Smithfield Festival Site in Birmingham.

Importance

- Cultural variances were well accommodated. The history of the commonwealth and imperialism was a strong theme that was integral to the project. Their lead artist explained, prior to arriving in the UK:

“In all honesty, the UK is sort of the enemy to my community. And so, I’ve had to come over here with an open mind and an open heart.”

Exposure to culture and people in the UK was helpful in gaining perspective on this, continuing: *“you can hate something better if it’s not in your face all the time and you can imagine it to be a monster, and it’s very much not like that.”*

- The artistic director said that feeling like a ‘settler’, it was good to be able to provide a platform for a First Nations artist to provide their view on the history of colonialism. Importantly though, this work was also about looking forward at what a better future might look like. As the opening verse of their new anthem cries:

*Anthem Anthem, this a revolution
Stop the division and start the inclusion
Work out the problems, find the solution
From changing the climate and causing pollution
Working together to stop the confusion
It’s Anthem Anthem, it’s a revolution*

Points of note

- The project received positive media attention and was promoted widely. The Marketing and Partnerships Manager from Terrapin said that the project received really strong media coverage. The highlight for the team was the coverage in Tasmania on ABC, the national broadcaster for Australia, but they were also featured in a substantial segment on the SBS News. This level of exposure is not inconsequential in the opinion of the artistic director who proclaimed that it provided *“a significant opportunity for First Nations artists to be able to present their work internationally and then to be able to be in the United Kingdom as it’s being presented. I can’t sort of overstate the importance of that.”*
- Terrapin was interested in the decision making of not having a concentrated period of activity around the Commonwealth Games itself. Although there were mixers that they were invited to, international artists are often only in the UK for a focussed period of time but would like the opportunity to participate more fully.
“... from an artist or an artistic director’s perspective, what those festivals provide, if we imagine that there’s a period of cultural activity that is of a similar scale to the games itself, and it’s concentrated around the games, that provides an enormous opportunity... to network to seek further opportunities for your own work in that context... Which new collaborations form the legacy of the work? Could we pitch this work to other artists or those that were there?”
- Anthem Anthem Revolution originated from a chance meeting with a Birmingham-based contact at a networking event (APAM - Australian Performing Arts Market), exemplifying how important are these meeting points to the international cultural ecosystem.

Legacy

The project influenced the thinking of Terrapin for further work around improving inclusivity and accessibility of the project.

“We want to put our work in places where people who the Australian Council might refer to as ‘non-traditional audiences’: people who would never step inside a gallery or a theatre. And we wanted to be able to provide them with a cultural experience, because everyone has an equal right to art and culture.” [Project Lead, Australia]

Terrapin is interested in working in the UK again, but this decision making is influenced by practical, economic and political factors. The recent trade agreement between the UK and Australia has added impetus and renewed focus for future work between the two countries which could provide more opportunities than previously.

Project lead quotation

“You can hate something better if it’s not in your face all the time and you can imagine it to be a monster, and it’s very much not like that.” [Lead Artist]

More information

Project webpage: <https://www.terrapin.org.au/event/anthem-anthem-revolution/>

Belvoir Theatre - Counting and Cracking

Lead organisation	Belvoir St Theatre
Partner organisations	Edinburgh International Festival, Birmingham 2022 Festival, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, Birmingham Rep
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for Australia / UK Season + donor funding
Location	Edinburgh and Birmingham
Timescale	August 2022
Sector / Artform	Theatre
Themes	Migration, Diversity, First Nations, international touring.



Belvoir Theatre, Counting and Cracking. Image credit: Brett Boardman

Project

‘Counting and Cracking’ is a theatre production written by S. Shakthidharan, directed by Eamon Flack and produced by Sue Donnelly for Belvoir. It follows four generations of a family, from Colombo to Pendle Hill, in a story about Australia as a land of refuge, Sri Lanka’s efforts to remain united as well as reconciliation within families and across countries and generations.

There were 22 performances at the Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh and Birmingham Rep.

Importance

- Around 6000 people saw the show in Edinburgh and Birmingham consolidating Belvoir’s international reputation as a theatre producer of exciting, entertaining, intelligent work. *“We hadn’t toured internationally since 2015 and it was wonderful to reconnect with, and meet, new presenters, artists and companies. There is interest in future partnerships and being able to share an Australian story that centres on the Sri Lankan experience feels like an important step in cementing the future of Australian identity locally and globally.”* [Project lead]
- The show is a Sri Lankan Australia story with universal themes and employs a First Nations actor and a cast of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) actors. The Producer, the Writer/Assistant Director, the Head of Sound, Design Associate and the two Assistant Stage Managers are all CaLD.
- It was well received by audiences, press and producers/programmers and has been singled out by several people involved in the UK Australia season as one of its most important successes. Reaction included:
“If you see one play this summer, make it this one. You won’t be disappointed, I’m so proud to host this award-winning play in our city, in your theatre.”
Sean Foley, Artistic Director, Birmingham Rep
“This is rich, heady, memorable stuff” Financial Times
“A vital tale for our times...a touching and gorgeously-staged tale” The Scotsman

Points of note

- There were a number of unexpected challenges, including members of the company catching Covid-19, requiring a flexible response with cast members performing different roles as well as the use of understudies. Even more challenging was the late (non) arrival of the set, but this led to an improvised response that has influenced the way that the company will tour internationally in the future.

“This was one of the worst things that could happen, but necessity is indeed the mother of invention and hence a simpler, quicker to assemble set was designed by the very experienced Dale Ferguson, and we begged, borrowed and hired numerous set elements from many UK companies and friends. We ended up with the perfect touring set and I have arranged storage of it in Nottingham so that we will not face the precarious sea freight situation again.” [Project lead]

It also encouraged the company to consider how it could make better use of local casting when touring internationally.

- Being able to take the production to Birmingham meant it had the potential of engaging with a diverse audience including many with a South Asian background.

“The audience was at times 3/4 full of people from, you know, South Asian people.”

[Project Lead]

These performances also included Sri Lankan food served during the interval.

- Counting and Cracking was able to be staged as part of the collaboration of DFAT, the British Council and the Patrons Board. The Board were also instrumental in helping the show to be presented as part of the season going beyond the role of donor to that of producer.
- Producing such a show for international touring is expensive. It requires careful planning and coordination and as a theatrical production, has complex requirements that aren't always necessary in other artforms. The UK Australia season was vital therefore in enabling the production to happen, especially in terms of its funding support, the connections and relationships made and networks utilised.

Legacy

The positive response to Counting and Cracking in the UK has led to further offers in the UK and Europe, potentially to be developed for 2024.

“We are currently developing another outing of this show to the UK and Europe in 2024 as there was so much interest in the show.” [Project lead]

In addition, its success has encouraged Belvoir to consider a new production set in Sri Lanka using its experiences and contacts for the new production. Belvoir aim to take the production to Sri Lanka but political conditions do not currently allow this.

Project lead quotation

“Certainly the season was an amazing experience and we're really grateful for having the opportunity because we knew when we made counting and cracking it needed to go beyond

Australia. And we went to the UK and the experiences of the audiences and the UK were very similar to what happened in Australia. And it wasn't a problem that it was about Sri Lanka and Australia. It was about the experience of a person being an immigrant or an asylum seeker or refugee or even somebody who's always lived in their own country, but their life has been enriched from all these people from other countries."

Gravity and Other Myths - MACRO

Lead organisation	Gravity and Other Myths
Partner organisations	Adelaide Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Djuki Mala National Youth Choir of Scotland
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for Australia / UK Season + donor funding
Location	Adelaide and Edinburgh
Timescale	March and August 2022
Sector / Artform	Circus, music, dance
Themes	Cross-artform collaboration, Diversity, First Nations, Scotland, spectacle.



Gravity and Other Myths. NYCOS and Djuki Mala - MACRO. Image credit: J.L.Preece, The Edinburgh Reporter

Project

'MACRO' took place on the opening night event of the 2022 Edinburgh International Festival, following on from development and a premiere at the Adelaide Festival earlier in the year. It was presented by (Circus Company) Gravity and Other Myths collaborating with First Nations dance company Djuki Mala, composers Ekrem Eli-Phoenix and Aidan O'Rourke, five Celtic musicians, the Aurora Vocal Ensemble and the National Youth Choir of Scotland. It was a celebration of a range of cultures connected with Australia and Scotland and including a poem by writer Hannah Lavery.

Importance

The production brought together a range of collaborators to produce a multi-artform spectacular. Whilst Gravity and Other Myths was familiar with combining music and circus previously and had been developing large scale stage work for many years, this was their most ambitious project yet.

"The idea was always to challenge the scale of work that we've made previously, because as a company we have never really made a work of that scale for that large an audience. It felt like the next step for us, and especially for our director as well. So being able to present the work in a stadium was very good impetus for us to make a work that was big enough for that kind of space." [Project lead, Australia]

The UK / Australia Season was vital to this particular occasion. The commissioning from Adelaide and Edinburgh Festivals was facilitated and supported by DFAT and the British Council to make it happen.

MACRO integrated a range of diverse elements that fulfilled many of the aims behind the theme of the Season of 'Who Are We Now?'. This meant that it explored today's 'humanity' by drawing on First Nations (Australia) and Gaelic (Scotland) cultural heritage, combining this with a contemporary dynamism.

Points of note

- For Gravity and Other Myths this represented a significant moment in their company journey with the Edinburgh Festivals. Previously they had performed on the Fringe in smaller venues with a much smaller audience. This was their first performance as part of the International Festival, significant not only for them but also for the status of Circus and for Australian companies.

- The work is entertaining but also presents relevant and important themes for an audience in an accessible engaging way.

“Our work strives to appeal to every audience, without assuming artistic education and as such, it resonates to a broad cross-section of the population. The universal accessibility of our work ensures its ability to connect with audiences of all ages, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status.” [Project Lead]

- Its role as a key part of the Season enabled a range of new connections and partnerships to be formed including some that might not have existed otherwise.

“We worked with a Scottish poet. And that connection was incredible. So that kind of added a lot to our experience of connecting with Edinburgh and the UK.” [Project lead]

- The use of live stream projection in the design allowed audiences to experience the live action from different visual perspectives and to ensure a sense of proximity and connection between performer and audience event though it was produced at scale, maintaining the sense of intimacy for which the company is known.
- With collaboration, international touring and works of scale, comes difficulties around mis-communication and mis-understandings. This meant that there were occasional problems, especially around technical production in advance of the show.
- MACRO recognised the importance of ‘Spirit of Place’ with Karl Telfer and Yellaka in Australia and Hannah Lavery in Scotland developing Spirit of Place celebrations for both countries, the integration of which will influence their future work.

“Our understanding of cultural contexts increased substantially and our recognition of the importance of First Nations representation in our work will now influence all future developments. The creative team, core management and acrobatic ensemble at GOM felt humbled by and thankful for the experience and, although we are still learning, we have a deeper understanding of the complexities of ensuring a successful collaborative process when working across diverse cultures. This knowledge has already been put to use and we hope to continue to grow this aspect of the company for future artistic endeavours and collaborations.” [Project Lead]

Legacy

A variety of legacies have come out of the project.

- Foremost has been the interest in the work of the partners, with further tours, for example by Gravity and Other Myths. This also seems likely to include further collaboration with the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

“It was as a direct consequence of GOM’s knock-out performances of MACRO and The Pulse in Edinburgh that a great many presenters and producers in Europe and the US who came to Edinburgh had the opportunity to experience, at scale, what GOM does and the astonishing skill with which it does it.” [Season Director]

- Furthermore, as outlined above, the project has had a profound influence on the artistic considerations of the partners. One direct consequence is that discussions have started between Gravity and Other Myths with Edinburgh International Festival for a future collaboration furthering creative investigation into ancient Gaelic and Australian cultures. This work will also see them deepen the company’s connections to First Nations artists in Australia.

Project lead quotation

“Being able to secure a booking in the International Festival and a booking of the scale feels like a huge stepping stone, not just for our company, but also just for circus as an art form. And then I guess because of that, and because of the opportunity to present work of the scale of MACRO we were able to connect with so many presenters who have supported our work in the past, but this wasn’t the right scale for them. So, for those presenters to have been able to see that work live, it’s actually given them much more reason to continue to book our work and to offer us different seasons that we wouldn’t normally have.”

Photo Australia - Christian Thompson, Being Human Human Being

Lead organisation	Photo Australia
Partner organisations	The Photographers Gallery, London
Grant/Fund	DFAT Grant for Australia / UK Season
Location	London
Timescale	August - November 2022
Sector / Artform	Photography and Street Art
Themes	First Nations, identity, sexuality, gender, cultural hybridity, memory



Christian Thompson - Being Human Human Being in Soho Photographers' Quarter. Image credit: Luke Hayes

Project

'Being Human Human Being' was an immersive site-specific installation of photographic works including a large-scale art frieze, cross street banners, a sound scape and projections, by artist Dr Christian Thompson AO. Photo Australia partnered with The Photographers Gallery for the inaugural exhibition at the Soho Photography Quarter, a new cultural space in Ramillies Place, London.

Importance

Thompson's multidisciplinary practice engages media such as photography, video, sculpture, performance and sound. His work explores constructs and ideas of identity, sexuality, gender, cultural hybridity, memory and history, often highlighting the relationships between these concepts and the environment.

This was the first time that Photo Australia had collaborated with The Photographers Gallery, with the two organisations working together to present this work. As the first such installation in that space it aroused much interest with significant numbers seeing the work.

Points of note

- The UK / Australia Season was an important stimulus for the project to take place. With the original idea and a potential collaborator in place they applied for funding with an ambitious proposal which, though successful, was limited. DFAT then helped to support the project further so that it could take place in the way that was wanted.
- The Photographers Gallery wanted something impactful to open the quarter and were also keen to work with an artist from Australia. Christian Thompson's work suited their needs well:

"... not only the fact that his work was incredibly interesting, but it also suited the ambiance of an outside space. Our space is very particular. There's lots of flat brick walls. And it felt Christian's work was really interesting in terms of the flower walls, and how that might fill the space, but also his relationship with his works in moving image too because we also had this other option of a projection." [Project lead, UK]

The content was also thought to be relevant to the location, given Soho's connections to the LGBTQ+ community.

For Photo Australia and Christian Thompson too, it offered an opportunity to realise their ambitions.

“We were realising how important it was to take the lead in promoting and championing Australian photography internationally, because no one else was doing it.” (Project Lead

- The project was produced digitally but presented physically. The photographs, projections and sound work could be transferred easily across the world, with the work then being printed and outputted in the UK. The work could be developed to a high standard, with physical banners, moving images and sound projections creating an impressive location.

“I was always amazed, particularly at night, when the projection came on, and the freezes lit up, how much people were dwelling and looking at the work and actually sitting down and watching the watching the projection.” [Project lead, UK]

- This international collaboration had benefits and legacies for all partners.

“It was such an impressive project that it is inspiring us to do more in this territory, in more international work, and to look for opportunities to do similar projects, with artists elsewhere around the world.” [Project lead, Australia]

Legacy

A variety of legacies are anticipated for the project.

- One of the curators from The Photographers Gallery has been asked to be a selector on the next Photo Australia Festival.
- The project has been followed up with another exhibition in the space in the Soho space, with more planned.

“It did shape who we asked to do the next one, because we realised what worked up there, what kind of work enabled you to meld these very different outputs between the still image the moving image opposite and the sound.” [The Photographers Gallery]

- It has raised the profile of a First Nations Artist - Dr Christian Thompson.

“The kind of impact it has for an artist's career is profound. It allows them to think about their work and new ways to present it in an extraordinary way and extraordinary scale by reaching extraordinary numbers of people.” [Project lead, Australia]

Project lead quotation

“This project was an incredible opportunity to deliver Photo Australia’s objectives to champion Australian photography on an international platform and do so at scale with significant impact.” [Project lead, Australia]

“It just fulfilled everything we wanted, as well as giving us a really supportive context for that first project.” [Project lead, UK]

“We work in photography and ritual art, photography as a visual art. There's close to zero representation in the UK or anywhere. First Nations Australians, Settled Australians, whoever it is, there's none out there.” [Project lead, Australia]



Christian Thompson - Being Human Human Being in Soho Photographers' Quarter. Image credit: Luke Hayes

Appendices

Board of Patrons

The UK/Australia Season is supported by a board of UK and Australian representatives called the Board of Patrons.

The Board of Patrons is chaired jointly by Sir Lloyd Dorfman CBE and David Gonski AC. It advises the UK/Australia Season on partnership opportunities and collaborative initiatives in the UK and Australia. Members include directors from the British Council, representation from the Australian High Commission to the UK and British High Commission to Australia, founding partners, business and arts leaders.

About our co-chairs

The Board of Patrons is co-chaired by a representative of each country. For the UK, this is Sir Lloyd Dorfman CBE, and for Australia, this is David Gonski AC.

Sir Lloyd Dorfman CBE

Sir Lloyd Dorfman is founder of Travelex, the world's largest retailer of foreign exchange, Chairman of Doodle and The Office Group. He Chairs The Prince's Trust, is a director of London Theatre Company and BAFTA, and is a trustee of the Royal Opera House, Royal Academy and JW3. He is major benefactor of the Dorfman Theatre at National Theatre and Dorfman Foyer at English National Ballet.

David Gonski AC

David Gonski AC started his career as a lawyer at Herbert Smith Freehills before co-founding an investment bank. He is now one of Australia's most respected business leaders and company directors. David has business experience in Australia and internationally and is involved in a broad range of organisations in the government and education sectors. He is a leading philanthropist and provides strong community leadership, particularly in relation to education and the Arts in Australia.

Our Board of Patrons

- Nick Allott OBE
- Georgina Black
- His Excellency the Honourable George Brandis QC
- Catherine Brenner
- Tom Dery AO

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- Allan Myers AC QC
- Karen Napier
- Dick Porter
- Her Excellency Vicki Treadell CMG MVO

UK/Australia Season 2021-22 - Media Coverage Summary

Source: Bolton and Quinn, February 2022

The launch of the UK/Australia Season 2021-22 in June 2021 was reported widely across national, broadcast, regional and specialist media including The Guardian, BBC Radio 3, Times Radio, Evening Standard, Daily Mail, Gramophone, Broadway World, plus multiple local publications through Press Association.

National

- The Guardian has covered the Season widely in print and online including a full-page feature on the [UK/Australia Season Indigenous programme](#), an online interview with [Christian Thompson](#) and reports around Edinburgh Festival 2022.
- *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters* was also reported widely in national papers with a half-page report on the opening in [The Guardian](#) and [Financial Times](#), plus a double-page feature in [The Guardian Saturday](#) magazine.
- *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters* was reviewed positively in both [The Times](#) and [The i.](#)
- The [Telegraph Luxury](#) featured a major interview with ambassador for the Season Barry Humphries in the print magazine, highlighting the Season.
- *Counting and Cracking* at Edinburgh Festival was reviewed positively in [The Guardian](#), [The Times](#) and the [FT](#).
- [The Daily Telegraph](#) interviewed Zubin Mehta for a feature around *the Australian World Orchestra at the Proms as part of the UK/Australia season 2021-22*.

Specialist

- Mary Beard included the launch of the book *Ancestors, Artefacts, Empire: Indigenous Australia in British and Irish Museums* in her column in [TLS](#). While The Art Newspaper included it in their Book Club roundup.
- Specialist archaeology magazine, British Archaeology included a 6-page spread on Indigenous objects in British museums, centred around the launch of *Ancestors, Artefacts, Empire: Indigenous Australia in British and Irish Museums*.

Broadcast

- [BBC Radio 4, Front Row](#)
Yorta Yorta composer Deborah Cheetham and Dharug artist Janelle Evans talk about cultural custodianship and bringing Indigenous voices to the world.

- [BBC 2, Inside Culture](#)
Mary Beard investigates the ongoing history of creative connection and cultural exchange between Britain and Australia and asks what that relationship looks like today, including a visit to *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters*.
- [BBC World Service, The Cultural Frontline](#)
Focused on Edinburgh Festival 2022, including an interview with William Barton around his Chineke! Chamber Ensemble performance.
- [BBC Radio 4, Front Row](#)
Reviewing Edinburgh Festival 2022 performances, including *Counting & Cracking*.
- BBC Radio Asian Network
Feature around *Counting and Cracking*, including interview with Shakthi Shakthidharan.

Evaluator Contacts

This evaluation was undertaken by The Audience Agency a ‘not for profit’ organisation which is based in the UK and works internationally.

Further information can be found here: <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/>

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