

Key findings
from the
**Independent
Evaluation
Report**

UK

UK
AU

United
Kingdom/
Australia
2021–22

AU

Overview of UK/Australia Season

The UK/Australia Season 2021–22, led by the British Council and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), aimed to reframe, refresh and re-energise the relationship between Australia and the UK through cultural exchange. The recently published independent evaluation report found that these aims were resoundingly achieved.

The Season was bilateral in nature, with Australian cultural work delivered in the UK, as well as UK cultural work delivered in Australia. The Season incorporated live and digital events spanning theatre, film, visual arts, dance, design, architecture, music, literature, higher education, training and a public engagement programme. Themes of the artistic and cultural pieces included climate change, cultural difference, globalisation, sports, creative technology, and innovation.

“To understand modern Britain is to understand that we must project with pride our modern multicultural reality. Our diversity and the inclusive society we strive for is who we are today.”

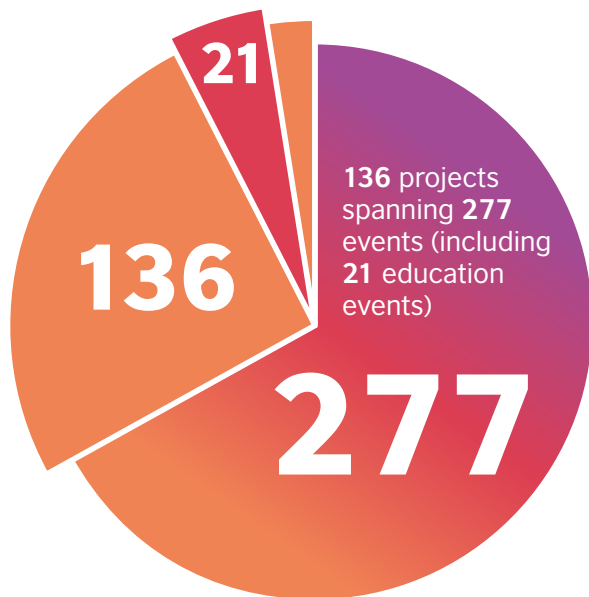
This is our modern nationhood. A nationhood that demands equality and fairness - at home and abroad: values we share with Australia. Last year, the British Council and Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade explored this complexity in the landmark “UK / Australia Season. Over one thousand British and Australian artists and educators collaborated across the globe to connect us with nuance, beauty and truth. All seeking to answer the question, Who are we now?”

Vicki Treadell, British High Commissioner to Australia, National Press Club speech, televised in Australia.

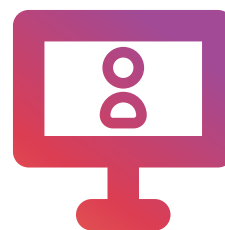
Reach/Scale

From September 2021 to the end of December 2022 the following was achieved:

Participant/Audience Reach



• **775,523** in person and **80,974** online audience engagements (people watching or experiencing)



• **8,523** in person and **937** online participant engagements (people more involved such as in workshops, courses, training etc)

Comms/Media Reach



• UK & Australia combined **500 million** estimated media coverage



• UK & Australia combined campaign reach **14.5 million**



• **11.5 million** estimated global reach **#UKAUSseason** hashtag



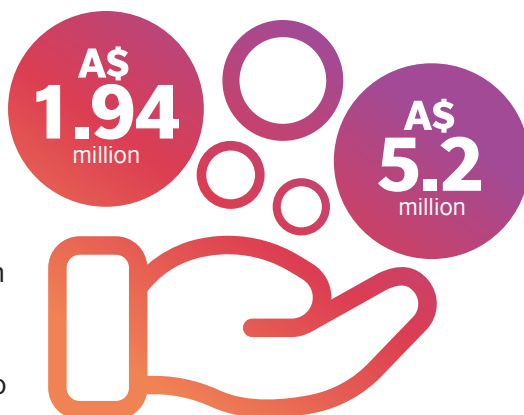
• UK & Australia combined value is **10.65 million** outdoor & print media.

Funding and Prosperity

Core funding for 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:

Philanthropic support

- **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 raised independently by individual projects to participate in Season

Further Government support leveraged

- **Over A\$1.8 million** from AU state governments, arts bodies, and federal funding outside of the core Season budget granted directly to individual companies/projects

- Over **A\$277k (£160k)** from GREAT for Season activity focused on climate, education, technology, and the free trade agreement.

Most organisations (**66%**) were able to secure additional funding and income for the Season. For every **£1** received in grant contributions, another **£2.18** was received/generated from other contributions. That is, it is estimated the projects leveraged **£13.8m (A\$24.7m)¹** of additional funding/income.

The Season also had many notable individual successes which have led to further legacy and there has been further support for British companies and artists at a range of events and festivals in Australia:



- UK Companies, such as Javaad Alipoor Company, who co-created a new work with the National Theatre of Paramatta, have benefitted from evolving new touring opportunities.
- The play ‘Counting and Cracking’, originally produced by Belvoir with Co-curious had an excellent reception in the UK and is set to return for further tours in Europe.
- The ‘Sync Leadership Programme’, has already had a second iteration in 2022, with plans for more.
- The Office for the Arts has recently announced they will be supporting a second year of the ‘House of Oz’, a new venue created for the Season at the Edinburgh Festival. The continuation of this venue in Scotland is a significant outcome for independent performing artists from Australia.

“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.”

Sydney Opera House evaluation feedback

Partnerships and Relationships

The evaluation showed a strong affirmation for the role the Season played in the development of partnerships, relationships and networks. Partners expressed a strong desire to learn and understand more in order to facilitate future work and identify opportunities, particularly to feel part of a wider/global international or intercultural community.

Opportunities/Connections/Networks



- **78%** 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’

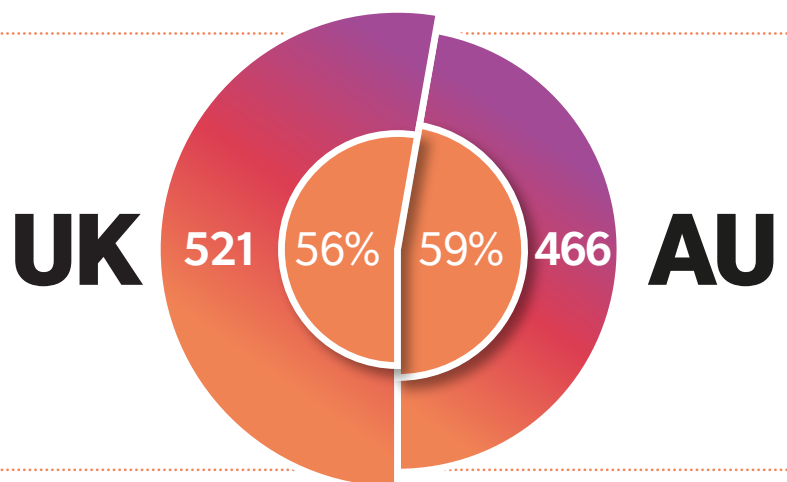


- **81%** that it had enabled their organisation to become part of a wider intercultural/international network’.



- **93%** had made connections with individuals or organisations they otherwise wouldn’t have.

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



Cultural Relations

Compared to other British Council Seasons, the UK/ Australia Season outperformed for participants in terms of an “Improved Understanding of the Cultural Sector” and “Developed new skills”.

Seasons Outcomes Dashboard

Outcome	Season average	UK Korea	UK Georgia	UK India	UK Japan	UK Australia
Extended professional networks	84.4%	81%	75%	84%	96%	86%
Improved understanding of the cultural sector	80.4%	75%	74%	83%	78%	92%
Improved intercultural fluency / exchange	79%	58%	82%	85%	89%	81%
Developed new partnerships / renewed prtnerships	83%	49%	---	84%	100%	99%
Developed new skills	78.8%	51%	82%	81%	80%	100%

“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”

Source not identified

Skills and Reputation



• **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'.



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



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



• **89%** said delivery of their project/activity 'improved their organisation's reputation internationally'.

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.



This acknowledges the significant value that the British Council provides to the sector in developing profile, skills and networks internationally.

Case Study - Climate Crisis and the Arts

The Adelaide Festival and Australia Council for the Arts (Australia) with Julie’s Bicycle and British Council (UK) initiated a new forum ‘Climate Crisis and the Arts’ to support sharing of successful initiatives and approaches to the climate crisis. The event in March 2022 brought together over 400 people in the arts and sciences to discuss climate action, storytelling and sustainability. An important element of the event was championing the role of artists in communicating climate action in a more inspiring, optimistic, solutions-based way.



“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 reimagined 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”.

Adelaide Festival evaluation feedback

In February 2022, ahead of Climate Crisis and the Arts, 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 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.**

The day-long Climate Crisis in the Arts event included panels and deep dives across two stages, as well as several artist commissions which illustrated the role of artists in communicating and educating audiences around positive climate action and sustainability.

Audiences attending the event reported that they were inspired to tackle climate crisis challenges in their community and wanted to learn more about the climate crisis and what we can do. 82% of attendees, artists and speakers believed the inclusion of the Climate Crisis and The Arts event was very important for the Adelaide Festival and South Australia.

The relationships forged during the Season have now evolved into a collaboration between British Council, Australia Council of Arts and Julie’s Bicycle to offer for the first time in Australia the sector development programme Creative Climate Leadership. Julie’s Bicycle is co-developing and facilitating with cultural arts and environmental specialist Ruth Langford. As a Songwoman and Storyteller, Ruth draws upon the cultural knowledge of her Yorta Yorta lineage and the Tasmanian Aboriginal community where she was born and continues to live. There was great demand with the first iteration this September significantly oversubscribed.

Case Study - ‘Counting and Cracking’

‘Counting and Cracking’, a theatre production written by S. Shakthidharan had 22 performances at the Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh and Birmingham Rep. Approximately 6,000 people attended the show in both cities, enhancing Belvoir St Theatre’s international reputation as a theatre producer of compelling and thought-provoking work.

The play follows four generations of a family, from Colombo to Pendle Hill, in a captivating narrative about Australia as a haven, Sri Lanka’s efforts to stay united, and the process of reconciliation within families, countries, and across generations. The show is a Sri Lankan Australia story with universal themes with a company drawn from Australia and internationally.

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 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

