

# Client Feedback Survey 2013

## *Key Findings*

January 2014



Trade &  
Investment  
Arts NSW

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## **Introduction**

The 2013 year Arts NSW Client Feedback Survey was distributed to 1800 individual email addresses. The list included all applicants and recipients of the 2013 Arts Funding Program and the various funding programs offered through the year, Arts NSW property tenants, assessment panel members and attendees of the various briefings and consultations which occurred during the year such as the Arts Funding Program Arts Funding Program Review and the Arts and Cultural Policy workshops.

The size of the list was significantly larger than the list of 600 for the 2012 survey. This reflects the high number of consultations, briefings, workshops and forums undertaken by Arts NSW in 2013.

There were 300 responses from the 1,800 distribution list, the highest number of responses since the first survey in 2010. This represents a 17% response rate. *The 2012 survey distribution was 600 with 175 responses, a response rate of almost 30%.* Although the 2013 response rate is lower, it reflects the significant increase in the distribution list.

The survey had two parts - the first sought general information about the respondents and feedback about their contact with Arts NSW staff including on-line communications, and the second section related to the Arts Funding Program including the application system, post-assessment feedback, and the notification and acquittal process.

The survey was advertised through the Arts NSW e-newsletter and was open for three weeks from 4 December 2013.

## **Part 1: Survey respondents**

*(Note: where appropriate, 2012 figures are italicised and in brackets.)*

### ***Individuals and organisations***

Of the 300 respondents, less than 50% or 142 said they applied for funding, with around 50% or around 150 respondents answering most of the questions in section 2. *This is around the same number of responses as 2012 but the 2012 result was 80% of that year's total response.*

Although over 120 people responded as individuals not representing organisations, 240 said they were representing organisations. This suggests that around 100 respondents or 33% identified as both (5%).

Of the 120 responding as individuals, almost 50 described themselves as artists and almost 80 as arts professionals.

Of the 240 respondents representing organisations 48% represented arts organisations (57%), 30% from local government arts organisations or local government (20%) and 8% from service organisations. Twenty respondents were

Arts NSW panel members and 27 represented tenant organisations of Arts NSW managed properties.

Of the 240, 68% identified broadly as arts professionals including 53% as general managers or artistic directors.

***Period of contact***

Most respondents had long-term contact with Arts NSW, with 56% (60%) having had contact with Arts NSW from one to ten years, and a further 31% (30%) having had contact with Arts NSW for more than ten years. Almost 13% (10%) of the individuals surveyed were new clients who had only contacted Arts NSW only in the past year.

To look at this another way, 50% of respondents had contact with Arts NSW up to five years and 50% for six or more years.

***Frequency of contact***

Over 55% (45%) of respondents had been in contact with Arts NSW between one and five times and 45% (55%) had been in contact six or more times. This is a reversal from 2012 and suggests that the frequency of contact by individuals is decreasing.

***Reason for contact***

There was a decrease in the proportion of respondents who had contact with Arts NSW in relation to funding enquiries 80% (93%). Many respondents had contact with Arts NSW staff for a number of other reasons and the proportion increased in most areas compared with 2012. However, the proportion contacted by Arts NSW staff decreased to 27% (35%). Respondents could provide more than one response.

| Reasons for contact   | 2013<br>Response<br>% | 2012<br>Response<br>% | 2013<br>Response<br>Count | 2012<br>Response<br>Count |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Arts Funding Program/funding enquiry</b>                               | <b>80.2</b>           | <b>93.1</b>           | <b>235</b>                | <b>163</b>                |
| <b>Arts Funding Review consultation and development</b>                   | <b>28.3</b>           | -                     | <b>83</b>                 | -                         |
| <b>Arts Funding Program briefing</b>                                      | <b>27.7</b>           | -                     | <b>81</b>                 | -                         |
| <b>Arts Policy consultation and development</b>                           | <b>25.3</b>           | -                     | <b>74</b>                 | -                         |
| Policy consultation and development                                       | -                     | 21.1                  | -                         | 37                        |
| <b>Regional arts development</b>  | <b>21.8</b>           | <b>17.1</b>           | <b>64</b>                 | <b>30</b>                 |
| <b>General information, publications or other resources</b>               | <b>19.1</b>           | <b>13.1</b>           | <b>56</b>                 | <b>23</b>                 |
| <b>Community project or partnership</b>                                   | <b>15.0</b>           | <b>14.9</b>           | <b>44</b>                 | <b>26</b>                 |
| <b>Arts and education projects</b>  | <b>14.3</b>           | <b>19.4</b>           | <b>42</b>                 | <b>34</b>                 |
| <b>Aboriginal Arts and Culture</b>  | <b>13.7</b>           | <b>17.7</b>           | <b>40</b>                 | <b>31</b>                 |
| <b>Sector meeting</b>   | <b>13.3</b>           | <b>11.4</b>           | <b>39</b>                 | <b>20</b>                 |
| <b>Arts NSW assessment panel</b>  | <b>9.2</b>            | <b>12.0</b>           | <b>27</b>                 | <b>21</b>                 |
| <b>Arts and Disability</b>  | <b>8.5</b>            | <b>13.7</b>           | <b>25</b>                 | <b>24</b>                 |
| <b>Seeking promotion of event or activity</b>                             | <b>6.8</b>            | <b>5.1</b>            | <b>20</b>                 | <b>9</b>                  |
| <b>Partnership</b>  | <b>6.5</b>            | <b>5.7</b>            | <b>19</b>                 | <b>10</b>                 |
| <b>Infrastructure project – eg Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, Arts Exchange</b> | <b>6.1</b>            | -                     | <b>18</b>                 | -                         |
| <b>Current lease, tenancy</b>   | <b>5.5</b>            | -                     | <b>16</b>                 | -                         |
| <b>Enquiry about potential tenancy or hire</b>                            | <b>3.1</b>            | -                     | <b>9</b>                  | -                         |
| Tenancy enquiry   |                       | 5.7                   |                           | 10                        |
| Lease, tenancy or infrastructure issue                                    | -                     | 11.4                  | -                         | 20                        |
| <b>Fellowships</b>  | <b>3.8</b>            | <b>5.7</b>            | <b>11</b>                 | <b>10</b>                 |
| <b>Research project</b>   | <b>3.4</b>            | <b>3.4</b>            | <b>10</b>                 | <b>6</b>                  |
| <b>Cultural Facilities Directory</b>                                      | <b>3.1</b>            | <b>2.3</b>            | <b>9</b>                  | <b>4</b>                  |
| <b>Arts NSW contacted me</b>  | <b>27.0</b>           | <b>35</b>             | <b>79</b>                 | <b>62</b>                 |
| <b>Other</b>  | <b>5.1</b>            | <b>8.6</b>            | <b>15</b>                 | <b>15</b>                 |
| <b>Total answered question</b>  |                       |                       | <b>270</b>                | <b>175</b>                |

Figure 1

## **Part 1 continued: General feedback**

### **Quality of information and service provided**

Clients continued to report high levels of satisfaction in response to questions about the quality of information and service provided by Arts NSW staff –

- 97% (97%) of respondents found Arts NSW staff to be professional or very professional
- 95% (81%) described staff as helpful (a large increase on 2012)
- 85% - accessible
- 98% - courteous
- 97% - friendly.

This high level of satisfaction is consistent with more detailed feedback that was received about the quality of service provided by Arts NSW staff although there were minor decreases from 2012:

- 91.6% said that if you contacted Arts NSW for information or advice the matter was resolved
- 91.7% (91.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that the information provided was useful, relevant, well presented and easy to understand
- 89.6% (90.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that Arts NSW staff demonstrated the ability to communicate clearly and effectively
- 88.3% (88.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that Arts NSW staff demonstrated the ability to understand the issue raised.

There were some comments in this section, amplified later in the responses to the question about funding application feedback which indicated that some requests for information and feedback had not been attended to. Despite this 17 respondents took the time to make comments in praise of staff.

## Arts NSW on line communications

### **Website**

Almost 91% of respondents used the Arts NSW website – 19 respondents took the time to provide positive comments while there with 7 criticisms.

Respondents could provide more than one response. The website is accessed for a range of purposes –

| Reasons for access                  | %  |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Funding and support information     | 89 |
| Information about Arts NSW          | 59 |
| Arts sector information             | 51 |
| Contact and staff information       | 51 |
| Policy information                  | 38 |
| Media releases                      | 29 |
| News items                          | 26 |
| Strategy information                | 25 |
| Enews access                        | 21 |
| Publications                        | 14 |
| Statistics                          | 11 |
| Infrastructure/property information | 5  |

Figure 2

### **Twitter**

Arts NSW launched its Twitter account in 2013. Almost 19% of respondents (55 responses) followed Arts NSW on Twitter. There were four respondents who provided positive comments.

### **Enews**

Arts NSW's enews continued to increase its subscription base during 2013. Almost 63% of respondents (183 responses) said that they subscribed. All comments (15) were positive and most said that they were potential subscribers.

## **Part 2: Feedback on the Arts Funding Program**

Between about 150 and 200 respondents answered the various questions in this section, depending on relevance to them, with just over 140 respondents saying that they had applied for funding in 2013.

In previous years a number of questions included the option to answer 'unsure' or 'neutral' in addition to 'agree' and disagree'. Feedback received was that this often made the questions unclear and difficult to answer. In 2013 the 'unsure' and 'neutral' options were removed providing respondents with the opportunity to provide more direct and clearer responses.

### **Sources of information on the Arts Funding Program**

The main sources of information about the Arts Funding Program remain the website, the receipt of past funding and email. For the first time, the Arts NSW enews emerged as a significant source of information with Twitter also becoming a new source. Print media diminished in significance.

| How did you find out about the Arts Funding Program? | 2013<br>Response % | 2012<br>Response % | 2013<br>Response<br>Count | 2012<br>Response<br>Count |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Arts NSW website                                     | 61.1               | 66.2%              | 126                       | 96                        |
| Received funding in the past                         | 35.9               | 46.9%              | 74                        | 68                        |
| Email  | 27.1               | 38.6%              | 56                        | 56                        |
| Arts NSW Enews                                       | 18.9               | -                  | 39                        | -                         |
| Funding information session                          | 17.5               | 18.6%              | 36                        | 27                        |
| Word of mouth  | 17.5               | 18.6%              | 36                        | 27                        |
| Meeting with Arts NSW staff                          | 15.1               | 16.6%              | 31                        | 24                        |
| ArtsHub  | 10.2               | 9.0%               | 21                        | 13                        |
| Regional Arts Development Officer                    | 10.2               | 3.4%               | 21                        | 5                         |
| Australia Council                                    | 6.8                | 0.7%               | 14                        | 1                         |
| Community colleagues                                 | 6.3                | 4.1%               | 13                        | 6                         |
| Google   | 5.8                | 1.4%               | 12                        | 2                         |
| Arts NSW Twitter                                     | 4.9                | -                  | 10                        | -                         |
| Other Twitter  | 1.0                | -                  | 2                         | -                         |
| Print media  | 3.9                | 2.1%               | 8                         | 3                         |
| Other funding agencies                               | 2.9                | 5.5%               | 6                         | 8                         |
| <b>Total answered question</b>                       |                    |                    | <b>206</b>                | <b>145</b>                |

**Figure 2**

The survey included a question on how respondents would prefer to receive future correspondence and information on the Arts Funding Program. Of the clients surveyed, 94% (93.8%) would prefer to be contacted by email. Approximately 33% (25%) indicated a preference to receive information via the enews, and another 33% (25%) indicated they would like to receive information via the website. Approximately 7% indicated a preference for Twitter and about 8% (8%) had a preference for receiving information by phone.

## Application system

There were overall improvements in the level of positive response to the application system -

- 70% (71.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that the structure and content of the application system was clear, convenient and easy to use.

When asked if the following were easy to understand and complete, those who answered agreed or strongly agreed were -

- 85% (81%) - how to apply and eligibility
- 90.5% (84.4%) - general information about the organisation
- 93.2% - project summary
- 90% - project information
- 77% - audience development, participation and benefits (*Note: in 2012, project summary, project information, audience development and benefits were combined as one question and the result was 69.5%*)
- 70.4% (62.7%) - the delivery plan template (which required applicants to describe key activities and identify KPI's)
- 71.6% (66.2%) - the budget template
- 84% (73.1%) - organisational capacity.

It should be noted that there were a large number of comments (27) about difficulties with the application system, particularly in relation to the budget template. However, there were 12 respondents who took the time to make positive comments about the system.

## The application process

### ***Completing the application***

In the question asking respondents to specify the main sources of information used in completing their application, 71% (75%) indicated that they completed the application independently while 25% said that it was completed by someone else in the organisation and 33% said that colleagues or peers assisted.

Just over 17% (50%) indicated that they had consulted the guidelines during the application process. Only 12% (32%) had contacted Arts NSW staff for information. Over 7% (30%) reported that they the Arts Funding Program information session had provided the information needed. The question asked respondents to tick more than one box if applicable.

### ***Funding guidelines***

Feedback on the guidelines was generally positive and was similar to 2012 with the total for agreed or strongly agreed being -

- 79% (79.2%) - clear policy directions about the Arts Funding Program
- 87.3 (86.8%) - clear information on types and levels of funding
- 78.4% (81.3%) - clear information on the assessment criteria
- 90.6% (90.1%) - clear information on how to apply for funding and eligibility
- 78.8% (74%) - clear information on the assessment process
- 88.3% (87.2%) - clear information on how to get advice and/or contact Arts NSW staff



- 86.7% - clear information on annual program funding
- 85.7% - clear information on project funding.

There were 15 negative comments about the guidelines.

### ***Funding information sessions***

There were a total of 48 respondents (53) who said that they had attended an information session with 15 identifying that they had attended Sydney CBD sessions and 6 in Western Sydney, 9 in both Wollongong and Lismore, 6 in Dubbo and others attending Albury, Newcastle and Coffs Harbour.

There was an increased level of satisfaction with the sessions compared to 2012. This reflects the positive responses received by staff at the various sessions. The removal of the 'neutral' option in the question this year also contributed to respondents providing more direct responses.

In response to various statements the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following -

- 92.7% (55.9%) - the information presented was useful and relevant
- 79.5% (50.7%) - the level of content was appropriate
- 97.1% (68.7%) - the speakers were knowledgeable
- 91.1% (63.7%) - there was enough time for questions and discussion
- 92.4% - the event was well organised
- 92.2% (57.9%) - the travelling time to and from the Funding information session was reasonable.

There were eight positive comments and 12 negative comments. Suggestions included a session for triennial funded organisations, a parking map, fewer slides and the ability to book time after a session.

Respondents were also asked this year about their interest in information sessions being presented in other ways. There were over 110 comments with over 70 in agreement with Skype with other suggestions including website/online methods and webinar. There were about 15 comments preferring face-to-face and about 20 who responded negatively.

### ***Post-assessment feedback***

There were 48 respondents (31) who indicated that they had requested post-assessment feedback on their unsuccessful application. Only 17 or 37% (36%) said that the feedback was useful. There were four positive comments and 15 negative comments with some respondents saying that they had requested but not yet received feedback.

### ***Acquittal process***

There was a small improvement in relation to the acquittal process –

- 80.2% (75.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that the acquittal form was easy to use

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- 85.3% (78.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that the acquittal process was easy to comply with.

***Notification process***

There was a large improvement in this area. There were 151 (107) respondents to the question asking whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I was advised of the results of my application in a timely manner'.

- 109 respondents or 72.1% (36.4%) agreed or strongly agreed. There were 42 respondents or 27.7% (19.2%) who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. In 2012 43.9% indicated that they were unsure.

There were a number of positive comments about this aspect.

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## **Results and Conclusions**

- The survey itself was distributed to a record number of recipients and received a record number of responses, with 10% of respondents being new to Arts NSW.
- The overall level of satisfaction and positive feedback from clients remains high for Arts NSW staff and the quality of service they provide.
- For the three years 2011, 2012 and 2013, 97% of respondents have rated Arts NSW staff as professional or very professional. There was an increase to 95% of respondents describing staff as helpful and 92% saying that issues were mostly dealt with.
- There was improvement in relation to the timing of funding announcements and a positive response to the funding information sessions.
- Comments from respondents acknowledged the hard work of staff and the challenging environment.
- The results indicate that there remains room for improvement in how Arts NSW provides feedback on unsuccessful applications and the timeliness of providing that feedback. Although there was increased satisfaction in relation to the application process, attention is required in relation to some aspects such as budget template, for example.
- Some comments indicated a need for greater clarity around the assessment process and the decision making process.
- Online communication is increasing in importance for Arts NSW and its clients with strong use of the website, enews and the establishment of the Twitter presence, with strong support for the use of Skype and webinars in the future to reach clients.

Arts NSW will carefully consider the responses and comments and develop strategies to address the issues raised.

*Arts NSW is grateful to the 300 clients who took the time to complete the 2013 survey.*