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Creators of Ipswich Report

Dr. Ashley P. Jones

Dr. Margaret Power



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*“Art is not what you see, but what you
make others see.” – Edgar Degas*

Executive Summary

Purpose of the report is to produce a set of recommendations to inform an updating of the current Ipswich City Council 2018-2023 Arts and Cultural Strategy document and a way forward for Ipswich's creatives and creative industries community.

The survey provides clarity around the current state of play for the local creative community. It has confirmed some of the current understanding and in other areas has provided a new or highlighted understanding of the needs and desires of this cohort.

The report highlights the creative communities sector leadership aspirations and vision for the future. It is very clear that the creative community is seeking to bring leadership to the sector and to do this in concert with Ipswich City Council. The overall understanding that emerges from the data is one of optimism and a reasonably high level of sector awareness. It gives rise to some of the traditional challenges that tends to repetitiously arise from the creative sector, specifically the anxiety about the sporting sector and their perceived privileged position in society. It highlights access to facilities and challenges around funding.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of data collected from the CREATE Ipswich Survey has identified five key themes that emerge and these are supported by the authors recommendations, subsequently upheld and validated at the Creators of Ipswich Summit held at the Ipswich Civic Centre on November 13, 2020.

Recommendations

Artistic Expression-who we are

1. Explore and define the current creative ecology in Ipswich
2. Value the diversity of the creative community through forming clusters within the creators of Ipswich framework.
3. Establish the database

Art as Business

1. The creative economy is a framework and language that should be used to capture what Ipswich art community is practicing. It perfectly fits the current state and will support the future growth.
2. Undertake research into a few of the successful communities (regional) to identify, specifically, how part time and full-time business are established, what support they have and to whom do they market their creative work.
3. Undertake further conversations with those seeking to build an arts business and explore the barriers and opportunities as a case study to improve processes and to establish some models.

Sector Leadership and Governance

1. Establish a leadership group in association with Ipswich City Council to guide planning and development of the sector.
2. Ensure a good cross-section of the arts community be represented on the management group.
3. Identify who you are and what your product is.
4. Support the development of the leadership groups' vision statement.
5. Establish clear goals and key performance indicators so that the whole creative community can clearly see action is occurring.

Capacity Building and Resources

1. It is recommended that a Creators of Ipswich website and Facebook page be developed to meet a number of the needs raised in this survey and improve communication among sector members.
2. Develop a series of strategic workshops, mentors and educational activities to deliver to the local arts community.
3. Explore current models for displaying of work and make improvements on the existing and re-imagine additional modes such as online, streamed, etc.
4. Explore sports club models to understand their challenges and successes. Identify the similarities to the arts economy and apply.
5. Establish capacity building resources to share with the arts community.

Funding and Support

1. Explore the current grants and other sources of funding applicable to this sector
2. Explore models for the creative economy to be fully established within the city with emphasis on a creative industries approach.
3. Identify types of funding required for the various creative artists within the city
4. Develop broader strategies to lobby government and the corporate sector to explore funding opportunities.

Introduction

The end of the 20th century saw a profound shift by policy makers to call for economic and social benefits to come from the arts (Vuyk, 2010 p 173-183). The shift is consistent with the impact of globalization and local communities seeking a level of individualization or local identity. The arts and entertainment sector is responsible for contributing \$14.7 billion per year in Australia, in value added GDP. According to the Australia Institute report, the arts and entertainment industry employs almost 194,000 Australians. (Browne, 2020).

The arts and culture sector provides two distinct outcomes, firstly that of the societal benefits and cohesion, from bringing joy and happiness to the creator and the recipient of the work, as well as establishing stronger communities. The second economic benefit is realised directly and indirectly by collaboration with other related groups such as entrepreneurs, mainstream businesses, software developers and the like. (Waits, 2012, p. 17-23). The Creative economy is therefore a framework to bring disparate and like entities to realise the value and place of the arts and culture in society.

Koivunen identifies that the later 20th century is when the global attention was turned to the notion of a creative economy (Koivunen, 2009, p. 98-99). Early exponents of the creative economy, namely Richard Florida, John Howkins, argue that creativity is not a commodity that it can be bought or sold, it is within the human.

Florida argues that creativity is to be motivated and nurtured, this is to occur by “employers, by people themselves and by the communities where they locate” (Koivunen, 2009, p. 13-17). In the context of this report, the focus on creativity is not limited to the traditional creative expression where the artist carries out work for their and others satisfaction with little to no income, rather it has a broader view to embrace what creativity looks like in the second decade of the 21st century.

We have been impacted by notions of an information or knowledge economy that transitioned the world from the industrial economy. Florida asserts that the creative economy is one of human creativity, this creativity embraces singing, art, crafts but includes fashion, film, food products, architecture, and IT (software development), to identify just a few. “The winners in the long run are those who can create and keep creating”, (Koivunen, 2009, p. 98-99)

Howkins defines the Creative Economy as including some 15 creative industry sectors, some of these are: software, R&D and design, and creative-content industries like film and music. These industries produce intellectual property in the form of patents, copyrights, trademarks and proprietary designs (Howkins, 2013).

The creative economy report, presented by the United Nations identifies that, “Being able to either generate or access both the economic and the non-monetary benefits of the creative

economy must be counted among the instrumental freedoms that are integral to people-centred development” (Creative Economy Report, UN, 2013).

This speaks to the notion of “art for art sake”, in the current context understood as a demeaning or negative connotation. The shift away from a singular view of economic and social benefit derived from the arts to the pluralistic understanding provides for a more accurate understanding of current practice. Further, it broadens the base of what is traditionally understood as the arts and cultural expression within a community. The performing and visual arts, craft, woodworking along with software development, filmmaking, advertising, tourism, fashion design, culinary and gaming are all accepted within the framework of the cultural economy. This extends and expands our view of what is considered in or out of artistic expression. The need for a flexible framework to realise the creative economy is required to capture the diversity of this space. The following diagram goes some way to providing a visual representation to this framework.

Figure 1.2 Modelling the Cultural and Creative Industries: Concentric Circles Model⁶



Used by permission – (Creative Economy Report, UN, 2013)

Other models depart from the notion of “the economy” and posit that “The creative economy is simultaneously linked to all human beings who are caught up in rhythms, movements, relationships and exchanges of resources,” (Creative Economy Report, UN, 2013). Developing nations tend to have an informal system, reliant on the “cultural systems, processes and institutions” present in the community (Creative Economy Report, UN, 2013).

The involvement of other institutions tends to be more significant in more developed countries. Arguably there is a level of “informality” within the creative arts in Australia, and of the broader artistic expression of the community. The institutional inclusion tends to be introduced at the point of funding or mode of operation, for example; a semi or fully commercial operation (Creative Economy Report, UN, 2013).

Cultural or Creative economics is used interchangeably, in the research the author understands cultural production are ‘products’ such as artwork, musical and theatrical performances and literature. Creative industries speak to the notion of mass-produced content and includes film, tv and radio as well as music, advertising, architecture, and design.

Cultural industries typically produce the tangible or intangible outcomes with the purpose of generating income. These industries use creativity, cultural knowledge, and intellectual property to produce products and services with social and cultural meaning (Creative Economy Report, UN, 2013).

Cultural products can have cultural characteristics that are not able to be measured in terms of money. This often will go to the heart of a particular community’s identity reflected in the product or service (Koivunen, 2009, p 17-19).

From this brief discussion, it reminds those in the creative arts that there is value in the production of goods or services that might be self-gratifying and indeed self-satisfying. It may hold a value that is separate to a fiscal value, one of socio-cultural recognition and of artistic expression. The divide that may exist between the artistic practice and business practice can be polarising. What the creative economy has achieved is a reconciling of the two perspectives upon creativity, i.e. art for arts sake, and commerce, opening ways to value creative expression, innovation to reciprocate with some positive outcomes. Therefore, the real or perceived pressure to generate income is removed from those for whom this is not a focus, and provides a framework and language to assist those who wish to derive some or all of their income from creative practice. This eco-system is helpful to realise the full potential that comes from the creative economy.

Research Approach

This research has been undertaken within the framework of Community-based Participatory Action Research (CBPR). CBPR is one of these research activities that are linked to transformative action and social change (Israel et al., 2003). Embedded within this context,

this research approach draws on the lived experience of those most affected by the issue under study and actively involves them in the research process (Israel et al., 2003).

‘This participation comes with the acceptance of local knowledge in understanding and addressing the problem that is being dealt with.’ (Israel et al., 2003)

CBPR takes a holistic, systems approach to its practice. Although the principles and considerations provide the basic foundation of CBPR practice, they are not intended to be taken dogmatically but within the context of each partnership and project to which they are applied; to that end, they can be adjusted if needed for a particular collaboration (Israel et al., 2003).

Principles of CBPR and considerations for facilitating emancipatory practice

These principles of CBPR (Israel et al., 2003) are:

- 1. acknowledge the community as a unit of identity;
- 2. build on the strengths and resources in the community;
- 3. facilitate a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of the research;
- 4. foster co-learning and capacity building among all partners;
- 5. balance knowledge generation and intervention for the mutual benefit of all partners;
- 6. attend to both local relevance and ecological perspectives;
- 7. develop systems using a cyclical and iterative process;
- 8. disseminate results to all partners, and involve all partners in dissemination;
- 9. commit to a long-term process and group sustainability.

This approach has a cyclic rhythm, exploring a particular phenomenon and sharing the research outcomes and strategies, confirmed and actioned by the community in this mutually constituted approach (Nicolaidis, & Raymaker, 2015).

The research included an online survey that was completed by 120 respondents. The link for the survey was sent out to the wider arts community through the resources of Ipswich City Council, BEMAC and the University of Southern Queensland. The survey was a combination of both quantitative and qualitative responses. This means that respondents can provide context to the question and will give the research greater depth.

Secondary material was also consulted include the Ipswich City Council Arts and Cultural Strategy 2018-2023 and the Queensland Government Creative Together document 2020-2023.

The survey provided robust baseline data from which this report has been developed. NVivo qualitative data analysis software has been used to develop word maps and emerging

themes around which the recommendations and strategies have been developed. The final stage, and consistent with this methodology, was to present the findings to a creators of Ipswich summit that had 80 people attend in person and a number of people online and further capacity to review the recording at any time.

Scope of the report

The Ipswich City Council currently has an Arts and Cultural Strategy 2018-2023. The formal document has identified five action statements and subsequent strategies to achieve the action or goal. This report remains consistent with the former report in respect to the terminology. This report upholds the notion of “**The Arts**” having a physical result of a creative impulse, and the fact that it covers a broad framework, including the traditional visual and performing arts, along with screen and digital art, literary art and broader areas of expression including advertising, fashion and architecture as some examples.

Culture is understood, for the purposes of this report, as referring to the values, behaviours, ideas, customs, attitudes and physical artefacts of a particular people or society. This approach is consistent with the understanding contained within the Arts and Cultural Strategic Plan (Ipswich City Council).

This report does not share the view that culture is to be used interchangeably with artistic expression, - the creative work. On this premise the understanding of culture needs to be valued as defined, and the author suggests that this be the subject of a separate report. The culture of Ipswich needs to be researched and defined in its own right, recognising that creative expression is just one part contributing to the culture of Ipswich.

This report finds that the five-point action plan items are problematic in as much as it seeks to inform and embrace several aspects of Ipswich City life including: heritage, tourism, culture and arts all into one document. Creative expression is the only focus of this report and the earlier survey. It is recommended that action one, two and five in the current strategic plan be generally discarded on the basis that it is too broad for the scope of this work. Action points three and four are directly aligned with the report and are directly or indirectly located within the findings of the survey and subsequently addressed in this report. Further, it is recommended that heritage and cultural development be addressed as two separate matters. These are determined to be outside the scope of this body of work and are deserving of independent attention.

I have analysed this work specifically giving focus to the Creators of Ipswich, there is strength in this and the other areas picked up in the current active strategic plan. The value of keeping each separate is based on deriving the genuine strengths and weaknesses of each and perhaps moving towards a single document that acknowledges the independence and the commonality of tourism, culture, and heritage.

Survey

The following is a general analysis of the Creators of Ipswich 2020 survey undertaken in October, 2020 as an online survey distributed to those involved in the wider creative arts and industries located in databases with Ipswich City Council, BEMAC and USQ.

Survey Analysis

The creative community within Ipswich is made up of a diverse range of creative expressions, the dominant groupings are clustered in visual and performing arts and within arts and crafts. Music, song writing, choral work is also a significant category. The range of creative expression include film making, digital design, writing, photography, events, children and youth artistic expression. Our heritage and cultural expression is also well represented.

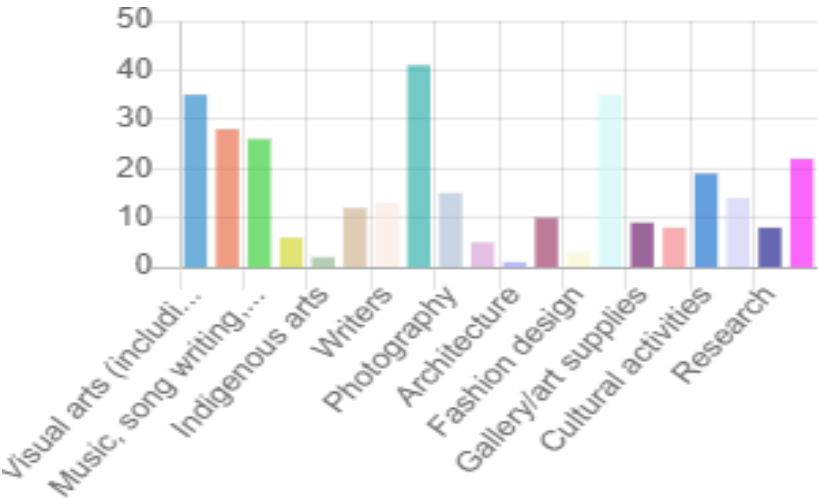


Table: a representation of the spread of creators in Ipswich

Our creative community demographically sits strongly between 25 to 59 as the primary group but the survey shows involvement with those 12 plus and those 60 plus. The older demographic is remaining engaged in their creative expression.

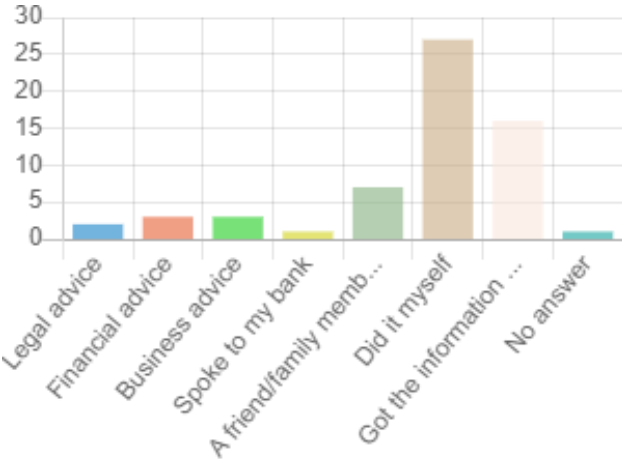
The survey identifies that 47.5% of respondents are hobbyists or undertake part time activity, while 20% are full time in their creative work. The qualitative responses highlight that many creatives are working across multiple roles and no one category fits in terms of defining their singular role. This goes to the heart of the creative individual who is typically working across a range of mediums and expressions.

Over half of respondents have some type of formal business structure 52.5% while 26% do not have any business structure in place. The majority of respondents work from home with around 15% who work in shared, rented or commercial premises.

Half of all respondents undertaking the survey, (50%) are represented in the following information. (n=60). Only 12.5% of respondents derive their full income from their creative work, with 36% not deriving any income from their creative work.

Business Support and development:

The majority of those establishing some level of business activity set the business up without any formal advice, this accounts for 22.5% of respondents. 13% of respondents did access online resources to support establishing their business. Respondents were asked to identify, with hindsight, what advice would have benefited them in establishing their enterprise.



This table represents how respondents established their business – majority did it themselves without professional assistance.

The following table identifies the shift in the approach to establishing a business, with the benefit of hindsight.

| | |
|--|--------|
| Legal advice (1) | 7.50% |
| Financial advice (2) | 14.17% |
| Business advice (3) | 20.00% |
| Grant access (4) | 28.33% |
| Be aware of other groups in the city (5) | 20.00% |
| Belonging to a peak body (6) | 11.67% |

The data indicates that 20% would seek out business advice and make themselves aware of other groups in the city. Only 14.17% would seek out financial advice with legal advice remaining low. The data indicates a valuing of connecting with others, to seek appropriate

business advice but there remains a strong focus and reliance on grant dollars. This is symptomatic of the current arts economic culture.

Hobby

The survey sought to identify key information about the hobbyist within the City of Ipswich. Specifically, to gain an understanding around their attitude to their practice, where they work and around collaboration and general practice.

27.5% of respondents undertake their creative work as a hobby. 15% are satisfied as being a hobbyist. Respondents identified that their satisfaction that comes from their creative work is summed up as coming from the joy of being creative and helping others and working with others.

The joy of being creative is captured in responses such as:

“bringing Smiles to people’s faces, initiating and organising events and concerts, exploring new methods, seeing the end result.”

Helping Others and working with others are reflected in responses such as:

“Displaying my work and passing on my knowledge to anyone interested in perusing my hobby, being in contact with the public. The opportunity to collaborate with other artists - in my case, predominantly musicians. Being able to connect, through the beautiful works we bring to life, with live audiences.”

Dissatisfaction in creative practice is captured in a ‘frustration’ around developing a business, to build on to the hobby level to a part time or full-time income stream. Challenges are identified around time issues, focus on current work, building a profile, costs of transitioning from hobby to full time, are some of the key issues that face the sector.

The survey probed further with respect to the respondent’s readiness to undertake at least part-time work through their creative work. The following indicates their responses:

| | |
|---|--------|
| Well prepared (1) | 5.00% |
| I think I can work it out (2) | 10.00% |
| Not really clear about what to do (3) | 1.67% |
| Have not got a clue (4) | 0.83% |
| Just do cash, all the paperwork is too hard (5) | 1.67% |
| Not prepared at all (6) | 3.33% |

Concerningly is the notion that the respondent “can work it out” being the highest response. This suggests that they will repeat the behaviours of the group who have a current business and, with hindsight, would seek out professional assistance. It goes to the independence of this sector and the isolation in which the business approach is considered.

Resources and Funding

This section will consider the physical and human resources as well as the financial strategies currently employed. Key resources cited as being of assistance to creatives assisting them to be effective in their practice include:

1. Funding or grants
2. Access to free or low-cost facilities
3. Free studio space
4. Arts officer – for advice and guidance
5. Workshops and social gatherings
6. Group of interested people

The physical resources specifically consider free or low-cost spaces such as a gallery or performance space. This emerged as a need within the community. The human resources, including an Arts Officer, workshops, social gatherings are high on the list. This suggests a need to share ideas, interact on a regular basis and to build confidence in social settings.

Another arising out of the data is promotion and marketing of the arts into the community. Several comments have been made around effective use of media, better coverage of artistic events and a co-ordinated marketing approach.

“Promotion of artistic pursuits through mass media the way sports are promoted. Sport gets the support of the masses because they are constantly bombarded with it, making it all the more accessible. Performing arts need to be more accessible. To clarify - more reality TV shows or “Home and Away” sitcoms are NOT representative of the performing arts, opera, music theatre, orchestras, live theatre are what need promotion. The ABC has 2 channels devoted solely to children’s entertainment, where is the channel of live performances from our major arts companies? It will not stop people from attending in person any more than televising major sporting events stops people from wanting to attend in person.”

Grants appear to be accessed by around a quarter of the respondents - 32%, but 36% do not apply for grants citing: applying is too difficult, time poor and cannot apply, having appropriate projects that fit into funding models and being eligible. There are a significant

| | |
|--|---|
| | Brian Tucker Arts Loan Materials+ Grant, Visual Aids, New York |
|--|---|

The experience of applying for a grant is viewed by respondents as follows: top five responses -

1. Do not meet the criteria
2. Do not know about them
3. Too many questions
4. Takes too long
5. A select few get them

Some of the key responses include:

“Grants are aimed towards those in business or academic, limited to organisations who are companies, little to no feedback when unsuccessful, hard to find suitable/ appropriate grants.”

On the idea if grants are broad enough in their offerings, 40% of respondents say NO, with 24% saying they are broad enough.

Beyond grant funding, resources are required to support creative goals, respondents identify the following as important:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Business development information | 35% |
| 2. Information on grants | 34% |
| 3. Central database of resources | 27.5% |
| 4. Sense of community | 25% |
| 5. General advice on business | 25% |
| 6. Other resources | 17.5% |
| 7. General advice on the arts | 14% |
| 8. Education | 12% |

Some key qualitative responses include:

- Access to event spaces – low or no cost
- Showcases/exhibitions/ networking events
- Media exposure/ marketing
- Support of local artists by local business/government

It is pleasing to note that the Creators of Ipswich are keen to improve their awareness and education around business development, access to other creatives and a focus, as noted previously, on the social interactions.

The arts need to be funded, and the arts community was asked to identify their level of willingness to pay more in council rates to improve the service. There were as many NOT in favour 19% as those in favour – 18% with 22.5% neutral to the concept.

Value of the Creative Person and their Practice

The purpose of exploring how valued the local creative person feels is to understand how they see themselves. It is an opportunity to gain some insight into the sense of self, of their practice as it occurs in the context of Ipswich. Being valued or not as an artist provides some clear insights, 24% of respondents say they feel valued while 37.5% say they do not feel valued.

To feel valued means, according to the respondents: a strong sense of artistic community, valued by local authority reps, friends and recipients of the artistic work. Peoples appreciation of the art.

Not feeling valued is about the general view of the arts as not being a ‘real job’, respondents talked about *lack of awareness, high use of external bodies to delivery Ipswich events etc, lacking in the arts awards, lacking in use of local artists in civic work, lack of exhibitions, no long term investment or vision, working for free, not paid, not valued and so on.*

Local artists indicate a high level of collaboration akin to sharing and supporting each other within the sector. It is a characteristic of the creative arts more broadly and was evident in earlier comments around artistic practice and mode of operation, e.g. resources and exhibitions. Any lack around collaboration is understood in terms of being:

- Time poor
- Lack in confidence/social skills
- Not knowing other artists
- Isolation and self-doubt
- Access to a centralised database of creatives

The sense of a lack of value in the context of being a creative within the City of Ipswich therefore speaks of a perception or of fact that there is a disconnect between the local council and business operators and the creators of Ipswich. Some of the challenges sit with the individual in terms of lack of self-confidence and self-doubt, but this will not be assisted by the sense of a disconnect. There appears to be a lack of a framework and policy to support the creatives and to give a sense of inclusion and direction.

Sector Leadership

Throughout the survey respondents have alluded to lack in leadership, their need for information, a centralised database and general direction for the sector. The question posed to respondents is to identify whose responsibility is it to provide leadership in the arts and creative sector. This is a particularly important question as it goes to attitudes and

expectations around leadership. It is also fraught with capacity for any individual or organisation to make assumptions around this.

The creatives of Ipswich have a strong sense of taking responsibility, in fact 42% expect to have a leadership structure that is led by the sector. There was essentially equal weighting (37%) for the Ipswich City Council to have leadership, but 43% of the respondents support creating a peak body of both local creative artists and Ipswich City Council. Survey participants suggested the need for a “peak body” or “overarching organisation” that can “bring cohesion between groups” and “show leadership” was needed for the arts sector grow. Notably, one participant identified- *“the lack of collaboratively minded participants [presently within the arts community and]- too many groups and individuals unwilling to be flexible in order to achieve a bigger picture,”* bringing the creative community together under a select leadership group will require clear processes that address this issue. However, most survey respondents felt strongly about forming a cohesive leadership group, which is evident in this survey quote- *“A cohesive artist collective could create worthwhile projects and bring them to fruition by collaboration amongst the artists.”*

This suggests a local arts board, management group or steering committee would be an appropriate structure to take this into account. Survey participants proposed a central body with reference pool of local creatives, *“A central body that could have a reference pool of local performers/artists...”*

The artistic community recognise that all level of governments have a role to play but it is the local community and the local level of government who must take responsibility. Survey respondents identified the importance of local government policy support and valuing of and encouragement for the arts in comments like: *“Policy support from Council is essential; A Governmental culture that values and recognises the importance of the arts; and To have a council that fully supports an encourages creativity in our city.”* Additional to support, valuing and encouragement survey participants stated that Council must be active listeners who engage, understand and trust creative stakeholders.

“To have a Council that ...listens to us, engages with us, understands us, advocates for us, prioritises us, trusts us, believes in us, promotes us, values us.... and some supporting \$ for grants and appropriate venues/space.”

Survey respondents felt “optimistic” and “hopeful” with the change in Council leadership as evidenced in comments such as *“Hopefully new leadership in Council can instigate change”* and *“I'm very optimistic about Ipswich's approach to arts and culture as I've never had any survey or summit and have always just thought it was something I had to do on my own.”* However, the rebuilding of trust between creative stakeholders and Council will require resources and time. Comments such as *“The city needs arts infrastructure - people, services, venues and money. These things need to be interconnected and they need to be overseen,*

managed and championed” and “We don’t even have an arts advocate within Council - there is no Arts and Cultural officer.”

In line with this thinking, respondents were asked to identify how serious they believe the local Ipswich City Council is about the arts, does the council provide opportunities for artists and also the community to engage in the cultural arts. On each of the question’s respondents are split between agreeing with and disagreeing with the statements. What is worthy of note is that approximately 23% of respondents, on each of the three questions were neutral in their views. This is by far the highest percentage on each question and suggests that the majority are neither confident that there is support or not and perhaps take a distant view. This is consistent with comments like “do yourself, get on with it yourself” and the like.

Vision

A significant number of respondents took time to provide feedback around their vision or hope for the creative community in Ipswich. The data clearly provides a sense of the creative community that is desired. The following is a snapshot of the types of comments and thoughts being expressed:

“The desire for Ipswich to be a creative destination, to be more aware of each area within the arts and seek collaboration between each, addition of creative spaces, events and workshops, to transcend age, a sense of looking for leadership and mentoring, to celebrate the artists and the art. A sense that this will be a building block in restoring pride in the CBD and the wider city. Fostering the youth voice in the arts, better funding models, grants and education. Better art visibility and awareness. Marketing of the arts.”

“I’d love to see cross-pollination between each area of the arts. Previously it has felt like there’s been segregation between departments (visual arts, musicians, theatre etc) as well as age demographics. I want to see us come together and establish a healthy, creative culture across the board.”

“Where possible youth should be engaged in all stages of creative development to raise future leaders for the arts community. Real engagement rather than tokenism will retain our youth, others they will seek opportunities outside the region. We need to value and nurture our young creatives to ensure the arts and cultural development into the future.”

There is a deep sense in the feedback that is aspirational and full of hope for a city that respects and values its creative and cultural expression.

“The future I see for Ipswich is one where the arts are valued as highly as sports.”

“To expose and praise the artists giving it a go and trying to be authentic and the best possible humans that reflect on all our diversity through art we appreciate and vitality need as a “tribe” to sustain and treasure for years to come.”

“That with community support it can be a thriving growth across all aspects of the arts.”

“That we can develop a stronger connection and sense of identity, and help revitalise the city through a strong, public creativity.”

“My hope is the arts and cultural community plays a central role in restoring city pride and business growth in the Ipswich CBD. Artists by nature are ideas people and are vocal and passionate. ICC should embrace this passion and use creative artworks to rebuild both our image and city pride. Public art including performances and festivals. It is vital to engage local artists to present and produce public art that is at the core of rebuilding city pride.”

“That the creative community is celebrated and supported. That the community produces work that is relevant, meaningful, entertaining, insightful, amazing.”

Desire to have a creative Hub or shop front for the arts within the community was expressed.

“I would love to see Ipswich become a creative hub. Just like people move interstate to Melbourne or to cities like L.A to be close to the action. I want Ipswich to be a creative destination where people come from all over to build a thriving community.”

“To have Ipswich known as a creative hub in south east Queensland.”

To have a permanent location available to all artists, a community arts hub, where artists could work, collaborate, instruct (classes/workshops), display, and sell the art. If not a permanent premise, a regular Artists Market that could move around the LGA.”

“To have a creative hub (physical and online) which is well known in the city. This hub nurtures all levels of creatives through mentoring teaching collaborating and is a source of information and tourism.”

The respondents highlight that there is a loss of local artists who tend to move away when working as a professional artist and or operating an arts business.

“Ipswich does not offer enough opportunities to locally-based practitioners.”

“Ipswich has a fantastic amateur arts scene, but it is impossible to both develop new work and extend personal creative practice here. I love Ipswich, but it has been damaging for my career to stay here.”

“95% of my paid artistic work occurs outside of Ipswich (where I reside). My experience locally is that, as a local, I should work "for love" of what I do.”

“I think that the arts are undervalued in the Ipswich Region from the local artists perspective. Too often external artists are brought into the city/region without consideration of the use of local artists like myself.”

It would seem that a necessary next step is to identify what “**product**” the city has to market, how that might be done in a strategic way and to showcase the diversity that is the creative community of Ipswich.

“Customers appreciate the handmade aspect of my products as well as the uniqueness of them.”

“People are loving the products I make and that's such a reward in itself.”

“That it is intrinsically linked to tourism and hospitality and leads economic recovery. That it drives the civic and cultural life of the region. That Ipswich becomes a widely recognised and celebrated arts and cultural leader.”

“That city growth is matched by cultural investment with informed leadership and depth of understanding of the cultural sector, in particular support for professionals living locally who want to develop their businesses in Ipswich.”

“To be seriously taken as an important sector of Ipswich community. To have people working in council positions who understand the importance of the arts in the community.”

“The general consensus still stands that Brisbane is the place to go for entertainment, which denies Ipswich artists opportunities to express their art form.” (Should we move this to the next section??)

Local artists were asked to consider other cities or communities they feel are demonstrating a lively arts and creative sector.

1. Artistic Expression-Who we are
2. Funding and Grants
3. Capacity Building and Resources
4. Leadership and Governance

Artistic Expression – who we are!

The survey revealed the diversity of the creative expression in Ipswich. Whilst the visual and performing arts remain dominant in this data, there is good representation of film, writing, poetry, fashion design, animation, photography, advertising, architecture, and the list goes on. We have a broad age range as well engaged in the sector, the primary audience is 25 to 59 but there is activity from the youth and those older than 49. The survey clearly identifies the three clear groups as creators in Ipswich, these being full time creative business, part time creative business and hobbyist.

One must be careful to not create a binary relationship between the business and non-business Creators of Ipswich, rather it is vital that each is respected and valued for what they bring. The creative economy should bring hope to the aspirational, and assurance to the sector that art is valued in a variety of ways.

This particular theme draws out the joy of being creative. Respondents spoke of the smiles, the satisfaction and the pleasure that is derived from sharing art.

The hobbyist is only dissatisfied in their practice when they want to explore business opportunities, either part time or full time.

Recommendations

- Explore and define the current creative ecology in Ipswich
- Value the diversity of the creative community through forming clusters within the creators of Ipswich framework.
- Establish the database

Art as Business

The research identified, as previously noted, the various types of creative practitioners. There are those who produce 'art for art sake', the hobbyists or non-commercial creators and, those who engage in a part time or full-time arts business, the commercial creatives.

Respondents identified that, for those in business, they started up businesses without any outside advice. Some sought input from online resources. A significant number noted that, with hindsight, they would seek financial and legal advice and to look to the arts community to also input into business development, essentially a community of practice model is anticipated.

The data clearly indicates that there is potential for re-imagining what is creative practice, how do we think of art as a business, the notion of Creators of Ipswich. The Creative Industry, as a concept or framework, is worthy of further exploration, especially in the context of business development. The broader creative economy speaks to this ecology that supports the hobbyist and the arts business operator simultaneously. Therefore, the economics is not understood as a singular, i.e financial, its plurality goes to the heart of the arts business, the capacity to have all players in the field, each taking their place and each contributing to the creative economy albeit financially, socially, and culturally.

“Lack of maturity of the sector: lots of little ideas that seem to be stunted and isolated. Most of the arts and culture I see council supporting is aimed at community arts, yet there are many established artists here. I am not advocating bringing them all together as it is important that the uniqueness of each creative venture be allowed to develop.”

Several best practice communities have been cited in this research deemed to be outstanding examples of a vibrant arts community. It would be a useful exercise to unpack why these centres are highly esteemed and to understand the creative economy at play in these centres.

Recommendations

- The creative economy is a framework and language that should be used to capture what Ipswich art community is practicing. It perfectly fits the current state and will support the future growth.
- Undertake research into a few of the successful communities (regional) to identify, specifically, how part time and full-time business are established, what support they have and to whom do they market their creative work.
- Undertake further conversations with those seeking to build an arts business and explore the barriers and opportunities as a case study to improve processes and to establish some models.

Funding and Grants – the Funding Model

The arts community seems to be established on either a sale of product or service or the dominant financial source of grants. It is obvious that this is a logical source of funding to support the arts in the current model. The research suggests that lack of money and resources is a source of frustration. It is evident that the broader arts community is a “victim” of a system that appears to focus on specific areas of the arts. There is generally a low level of awareness around the availability of grants, the type of grants and difficulties in understanding what is required to meet the guidelines.

Grant funding, by its very nature, is short term and tends to cater to particular areas within the broader ‘arts’. The research brings focus to the limiting nature of grant funding and the

lack of a broader understanding around financing the sector. It appears that there needs to be a functioning arts economic plan, considering notions of a creative industries approach. This becomes inclusive of a diverse range of skills and talents already existing in the city.

The survey brought to light the number of creators who have moved from Ipswich. It suggests that these creatives could not or choose not to build their business in the city. It is therefore important to learn from this trend and seek to arrest it.

It would be a viable notion to identify successful artists who have moved away from Ipswich, seek to understand what informed their decision. By doing so, any impediments to business development can be addressed and their experience can go towards informing how a successful creative industry model can be established in Ipswich. This could go towards attracting creatives to return to Ipswich or could at least make Ipswich a viable option for particular creators.

The narrow funding models are of concern and exploration of non-grant dollars is important. Suggestions of dollars that are set around business development, innovation, scholarship models, mentorship and start up type dollars are worthy of consideration.

There is a low business literacy, and this is consistent with the creative nature that tends to avoid dealing with administration and finance. It must be noted that a significant number of respondents, with hindsight, would seek professional input from the start and are willing to involve those expert voices into their current practice. A greater awareness of, and accessing from, local agencies who can assist in business planning and the like will be a necessary part of moving forward. Groups like the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, regional development is important to be aware of.

The research identified other concepts of funding growth, specifically a potential increase in household and business rates. The survey found a strong neutral response, but it certainly was not dismissed as unsupported. That is ultimately the business of local government, but it is worth considering as a funding model. Increases in rates can be kept very low, sensitive to the current climate, but the cumulative effect is significant. This is not the best way to raise dollars, but it may provide a kick start to the local creative economy.

It is important to note and recognise that The Queensland Government has provided the Creative Together Action Plan, a 10-year strategy covering the Arts, Culture and creativity. The action plan provides three key points of action, to sustain, grow and see the arts thrive over this period and beyond. The sustain phase is current and until 2022 providing some very clear opportunities to seek funding under some key initiatives including: Activate local spaces and places – focus on infrastructure, grow local arts community with a focus on increasing economic participation and broadening cultural tourism. Two other areas include fostering of arts-led projects and new creative work with a view of supporting storytelling in a variety of ways.

Recommendations-

- Explore the current grants and other sources of funding applicable to this sector
- Explore models for the creative economy to be fully established within the city with emphasis on a creative industries approach.
- Identify types of funding required for the various creative artists within the city
- Develop broader strategies to lobby government and the corporate sector to explore funding opportunities.

Capacity Building and Resources

The research clearly shows a group of creatives that possess great diversity and capacity. There is confidence in the art making, in many cases there is a well-defined lacking in personal confidence and self-belief. This is diminishing the individual capacity in terms of collaboration and broader engagement. The insecurity presents when engaging with others and goes beyond the presentation of self, to also impact on business development confidence and the confidence to promote oneself, to value the practice the creative is engaged in. Capacity is also diminished in terms of finance, business acumen and having a sense of order and control around the artist and cultural expression in Ipswich. The lack of a framework leaves the individual highly exposed and vulnerable.

There is a consistent, concerning theme that develops around 'demonising sport'. Sport is seen as taking money from the arts. This is simply not true, and I will further consider this in the findings.

The research also identifies that many artists will benefit from regular and targeted workshops, mentoring and general support. A common database and some form of resourcing around people and their skills in the local area is noted.

Physical resources are also noted, amongst these is some type of common physical location in which the arts community can gather, undertake their artistic work and offer workshops and the like. The capacity to build part time and full-time businesses within Ipswich needs to be explored and current practitioners consulted for input.

The research identifies a great capacity to produce content in isolation and collaboratively but the capacity for this creative economy to grow is being reduced by limited resources and no feedback loop to validate the activities/events and exhibitions held in the city. Traditional models are heavily used, such as live performances and exhibitions in galleries, it would be useful to explore other ways and spaces as additional resources.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that a Creators of Ipswich website and Facebook page be developed to meet a number of the needs raised in this survey.

- Develop a series of strategic workshops, mentors and educational activities to deliver to the local arts community.
- Explore current models for displaying of work and make improvements on the existing and re-imagine additional modes such as online, streamed, etc.
- Explore sports club models to understand their challenges and successes. Identify the similarities to the arts economy and apply.
- Establish capacity building resources to share with the arts community.

Leadership and Governance

It is pleasing and inspiring to note the willingness of the arts community to step up to be part of the leadership. The Ipswich City Council is considered a significant part of that process. The desire to establish a leadership structure to guide the development of the creative economy in Ipswich is vital.

The arts community has a solid sense of self, but there is a propensity to level blame at funding models, grants, government structures. These may be well placed concerns, but the leadership model will allow a greater sense of ownership and partnership with, especially, the Ipswich City Council.

Through good governance and leadership, the arts community will have a consistent voice and a set of clear objectives. This is built on best practice in the business arena, capacity building across the sector and a set of goals informed by an overarching vision. The vision should clearly align with the city vision as set by council. The research found a set of clear vision statements expressed in the individual hopes and dreams of respondents. This speaks of the capacity and belief each has in the sector. There is a clear frustration around brand and clarity of the 'who we are', not as a group per se, but how the creative arts and the creators of Ipswich are perceived and valued in the wider community. This can and needs to be addressed both in capacity building and in leadership.

Recommendations

- Establish a leadership group in association with Ipswich City Council to guide planning and development of the sector.
- Ensure a good cross-section of the arts community be represented on the management group.
- Identify who you are and what your product is.
- Establish clear goals and key performance indicators so that the whole creative community can clearly see action is occurring.

Additional Recommendations:

To have clear separation between heritage, tourism, culture and the arts in terms of research and reporting. It is recommended that policies are clearly aligned to each category with a definite intention to look for synergies and sustainability.

It is recommended that the current strategic plan be finalised and a new, more robust plan be established. This should be based upon this report using the emerged themes as working headings.

Removal of concepts relating to heritage and culture, as defined in this report, and merging concepts into the new strategic plan. It is recommended that the plan be established for a five year period and embraces elements of the overarching Queensland Government strategy in terms of funding opportunities.

It is recommended that a meeting be held with the Arts Minister for Queensland presenting the new strategic plan and submissions for alignment to funding.

Summary

The survey was analysed, and a presentation was prepared, based on the five themes already discussed; along with key actions. A Creators of Ipswich summit was held in the Ipswich Civic Centre theatre and the energy and effort that had been put into staging, table arrangement, catering and overall presentation was of a very high standard. The survey report was well received by those in attendance, and the gathered crowd was asked, by MC Cat Matson, Manager, Economic and Community Development for the Ipswich City Council to vote for '*the one thing*' that is the next step. This was based on the following 'next steps' list:

Next Steps:

- Leadership
- Grants and Funding Models
- Creators of Ipswich – structure, website & social media
- Define stakeholders in the creative ecology
- Establish a framework for developing the creative economy

The vote was measured by the volume of applause and general noise made by participants. Equal response was placed against Leadership and establish a framework for developing the creative economy. The others shared equal weighting, also measured by applause volume. This is consistent with the findings of the survey, the general atmosphere that anecdotally is

clearly one of change and moving on. There is a mood for change, and this is towards a systematic approach, a maturing of the sector and a recognition of the value of the arts, the creators of Ipswich.

Establishing the two priority elements, the framework for the creative economy and leadership to drive this agenda, will be lifegiving to the sector and an assurance that their concerns and understandings of the sector are heard and valued.

The Ipswich creatives are clearly passionate about their community and their work. It is evident that the sector lacks leadership, at least consistent and sector driven leadership. As previously noted, there is a deep sense of frustration around ‘talk fests’, suggesting that there has been a lot of conversation that is not converted to action. There is a mood for change and the sector is poised to embrace changes and to enter into a strategic creative economic framework. This values the artist as self-expression to the artistic business operator, and everyone in between. The sector is inclusive and energetic, and action is now required to support and grow the community.

Authors:

Dr Ashley P. Jones - Associate Head of School (Engagement), Senior Lecturer, TV and Radio Broadcast, School of Creative Arts, University of Southern Queensland.

Dr. Margaret Power – Senior Community Development Officer, School of Creative Arts, University of Southern Queensland.

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