

CREATING IMPACT

2025



Community Engaged Arts
Impact Framework

May 2025

Authored by



We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and future.

Over tens of thousands of years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have developed and harnessed knowledge and practices that foster the wellbeing of people and place. This is a holistic conception which is whole-of-life and whole-of-time. One in which the wellbeing of the individual cannot be disconnected from the wellbeing of family, community, the earth, one's ancestors, and future generations.

Huber Social recognise and acknowledge First Nations peoples' knowledge and concepts of wellbeing which have informed the conceptualisation, development, and continued refinement of Huber Social's approach.



This report was prepared and written on the lands of the Gadigal and Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, and in Waikato, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Input was sought and received in order to co-design this Framework with stakeholders and partners from the lands of the Noongar people; the Kurna people; the Giabal and Jarowair peoples of the Western Wakka Wakka Nation; the Gadigal and Gamaragal peoples of the Eora Nation; the Cabrogal and Burrumattagal peoples of the Darug Nation; and the Jerrinja, Wandj Wandian, Wodi Wodi, Yuin, Bherwerre, Tomakin, Murramarang, Budawang and Dharawal peoples of Yuin and Dharawal Country.

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Cover Photo Credit:
Milk Crate Theatre, Patrick Boland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been designed to introduce readers to the Impact Framework that has been co-constructed by and for the community engaged arts sector in Australia through CREATING IMPACT, a multi-year project that has brought together arts organisations, funders, and experts to co-design a shared impact framework. The community engaged arts sector bridges arts and social impact working with predominantly structurally disadvantaged or systemically excluded individuals and groups.

The Framework was developed to respond to challenges identified within the community engaged arts sector, particularly, the difficulty of capturing the cumulative impact of the many and varied organisations within it beyond testimonials and the change seen with their own eyes.

The Framework aims to provide a common language and articulation of how the impact is being /will be achieved with a particular focus on both outcome and impact levels. The intention is that with organisations 'singing from the same song sheet' the collective voice will enable increased opportunities for funding and partnerships that continue to strengthen the sector, and ultimately enable greater impact to be had by organisations working in the space. Recognising that in order for outcomes and impact to be achieved organisations in the community engaged arts sector must continue with their approach that prioritises Respect, Safety, Equity, and Artistic Integrity is core.

“At a macro level, a collective approach to impact measurement will provide the opportunity to demonstrate the tremendous capacity and ability of community engaged arts organisations to create real change in people’s lives, and to share this back to their communities, to government, to investors and funders, and to other stakeholders.”

- Jodie Wainwright, CEO, Milk Crate Theatre

Additionally, through its application the The Framework will evidence the impact and outcomes achieved as a collective, and for each participating organisation. Measurement and subsequent analysis and reporting will be used to guide strategy and operations and ensure all activities remain driven by purpose. As this Framework has designed to be practically applied great care has been taken to ensure it will be fit for purpose particularly for the often resource constrained organisations it seeks to support.

The principles applied in this framework – and its subsequent measurement system – are:



Flexible



Scalable



Easy to apply



Strength based & person-centered



Rigorous and robust



Culturally safe



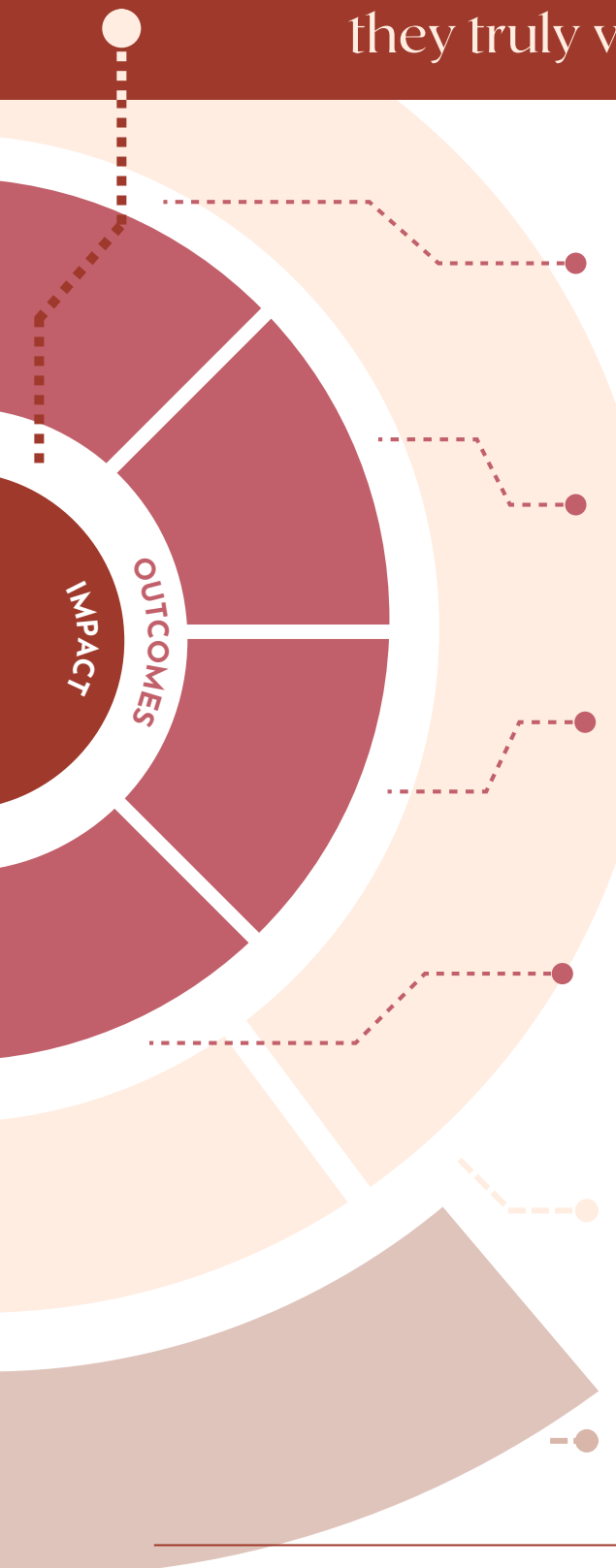
Accessible and inclusive



Cost effective

IMPACT STATEMENT

Community engaged arts organisations
 Invite and support people to shape their
 own paths and stories, and create a life
 they truly value through creativity.



INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES



Agency

The ability to make choices, take action, and shape your own life, even in the face of external challenges.



Connection

A sense of belonging formed through shared experiences, values, and participation.



Capabilities

The skills that creative practices help develop, allowing individuals to build confidence and mastery in tasks that matter to them.



Health & Holistic Factors

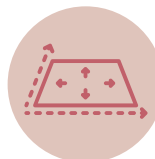
Mental, physical, emotional, and social wellness – as well as broader wellbeing factors–influence learning and participation, and help identify where additional support may be needed.

AUDIENCE & COMMUNITY OUTCOMES



- Access
- Empathy
- Challenging Stigma / Bias
- Feeling of Being Seen
- New Ideas / Experiences

THE ARTS SECTOR OUTCOMES



- Contribution
- Inclusive Stories
- Access to Public Institutions

FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES

The Framework captures and communicates the impact and outcomes of the community engaged arts sector across its diverse activities, initiatives, and programs delivered by an array of organisations, across many genres and art forms and in many contexts. The key objectives of the Framework are:



Clear Articulation of Impact and Measurement Approach

The Framework provides a common language and articulation of the impact and outcomes achieved by organisations working within the community engaged arts sector. The Framework provides a common language which makes visible the deep and long term impacts of community engaged arts beyond traditional metrics to enable increased opportunities for funding and partnerships that continue to strengthen the sector, and ultimately enable greater impact at many levels; individual, community & audience, and sector wide.



Development of a Simple to Apply, Scalable Approach

CREATING IMPACT will deliver an approach that is capable of being consistently applied across a diversity of programs, organisations, or initiatives to enable both a collective picture of impact achieved - in terms of a contribution to the wellbeing of the people ultimately impacted - and for each participating organisation.

The holistic strength-based approach is aligned to the needs and aspirations of the community considering both overall wellbeing and the 'capabilities and opportunities' necessary to achieve it. The focus on co-design, and further co-construction, ensures ongoing measurement is feasible and sustainable leveraging the strengths and experiences of contributing organisations and promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing across the sector.



Capability Built to Ethically & Effectively Measure & Manage Social Impact

The Framework enables a more streamlined approach to internal impact management, with capability being built throughout the co-design. Importantly, the development was and will continue to be conducted in a culturally safe manner, recognising diverse worldviews and biases. Co-design with those closest to impacted individuals has ensured inclusivity and respect for all viewpoints. Additionally, in the pilot phase 3, measurement tools and approaches will be further validated ensuring the system is fit for purpose. Huber Social's Ethical Review Board will ensure adherence to ethical standards.

Every organisation has impacts - intended and unintended, short and long-term, positive and negative, directly and indirectly - on people. The Framework will also be used to guide strategy and operations and ensure all activities remain driven by purpose.

2. SETTING THE SCENE



COMMUNITY ENGAGED ARTS IN AUSTRALIA

Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) projects are made with communities through processes that are participatory, collaborative, and responsive, employing many art forms for the purpose of social change and inclusion.

Projects involve the creation of artwork with, for and by the community. The development process is a primary objective of the initiative and involves the engagement of highly skilled arts and cultural experts to inform, lead and share skills. ^[1]

Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) in Australia has its roots in the 1970s, driven by the desire to use arts as a tool for social change and community empowerment. Today the community engaged arts sector is strengths-based, diverse and multifaceted. It predominantly involves collaborative practice with individuals and communities for the dual purpose of artistic and creative expression and supporting positive social outcomes. Organisations work with and for predominantly structurally disadvantaged or otherwise vulnerable groups across Australia, including but not limited to; Youth, First Nations peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, people experiencing homelessness, individuals living with disability, and those who are systemically marginalised, all of whom may experience overlapping forms of disadvantage and discrimination through an intersectionality of these identities.

The project group (see page 10) acknowledges the need for a broader framework for the Creative Sector. However, to ensure the successful development of this initial framework, they have chosen to focus on organisations engaged in community-based practice as part of the CREATING IMPACT project (see page 9). Future iterations of the framework will refine and expand on its relevance across the wider sector.

CREATING IMPACT

The development of this Framework has been enabled through CREATING IMPACT, a multi-year project that has brought together arts organisations, funders, and experts to co-design a shared impact framework for the community engaged arts sector in Australia. Milk Crate Theatre, a New South Wales arts organisation working at the intersection of arts and social impact with a focus on community engaged practice, established the project and has partnered with a range of organisations (the project group) to develop a shared outcomes framework in order to measure the social impacts of the sector.

“Milk Crate Theatre strongly believes that community engaged art programs have the ability to transform lives, and that the arts often represent innovative approaches to achieving deep and meaningful social outcomes.

We see this project as an opportunity to evidence this narrative and prove the tremendous and complex impact possible through our collective work.”

- Jodie Wainwright, CEO, Milk Crate Theatre



Partners involved in Phase 2 of CREATING IMPACT include:

ActNow Theatre, Adelaide SA
Monique Hapwood & Yasmin Gurreeboo



Arts and Cultural Exchange (ACE), Parramatta NSW
Anne Loxley & Yamane Fayed



Brand X, Sydney NSW
James Winter & Sam Johnson



Community Arts Network, WA
Danielle Antaki & Miranda De Baughn

CuriousWorks, Fairfield NSW
Kiriaki Zakynthinos

Digital Storytellers, Sydney NSW
Amelia Loye



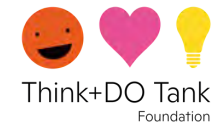
Empire Youth Arts, Toowoomba QLD
Jeanette Weidmaier

Improv Theatre Sydney, Redfern NSW
Cale Bain & Emily Small



Milk Crate Theatre, Sydney NSW
Jodie Wainwright & Jessica Pantano

Opn, Sydney NSW
Ricky Tana



Outloud, Bankstown NSW
Finn O'Branagain

Sydney Youth Orchestras, Sydney NSW
Daniel Placido & Mia Patoulios



Think + Do Tank, Fairfield NSW
Jane Stratton, Maysoon Elnigoumi & Afaf Al-Shammari

The Push, Collingwood VIC
Greg Chalmers

Thank you also to the many organisations who were unable to attend the outcomes sessions but provided information around their impact measurement practices, special mention to Beyond Empathy, Jute Theatre Company, and Corrugated Iron Youth Arts.

PHASE 1: STATE OF THE SECTOR

Phase one State of the Sector confirmed the difficulty of capturing the cumulative impact of the organisations within the creative sector, and the outcomes and impact of community engaged arts. It was clear that work in the community engaged arts sector - "which bridges arts and social impact - has not historically, nor consistently, been valued appropriately. As such, community engaged arts organisations "receive lower levels of organisational funding as compared to organisations of a similar size in other practice areas".^[2]

As identified and highlighted in the *Creating Impact Phase 1, Current State of Impact Measurement Report* challenges include:

- Organisations **not being equipped with sufficient resources** to appropriately measure their impact, both in terms of staff and finances.
- **A notable skills gap** around impact measurement in the sector. Whilst many organisations know what impacts they are having - and stay really connected to those they serve or support, they are struggling with the skills and knowledge to measure and articulate these outcomes in a way that serves them.
- **A complicated landscape.** Many organisations are juggling the different measurement requirements from different funders which is making the resource gap more difficult again.

The principals devised through the scoping phase have underpinned the co-design process of the framework, as seen in the critical success factors outlined on page 13.



PHASE 2 CO-DESIGN

It is important that the process of designing any impact framework is informed as much as possible by those directly involved, be it as participants, artists or the organisations themselves. To that end, this framework has been co-designed with a range of partners who are committed to the goals of CREATING IMPACT and have given their time to be involved with the project.

Organisations contributing to the community engaged arts sector, and involved in the Framework development, span multiple art forms, communities, and geographic locations, but a key guiding principle is their active engagement of participants in the creative process. Their deep community connections and direct involvement enabled the possibility of meaningful and relevant approaches to measuring social impact.

Through this approach, the framework has been directly informed by those working most closely with the people whose lives are shaped by the work, providing their insights into the specific context of people's lives (see page 10 for a list of key partners involved in Phase 2). Additional desktop research has also been undertaken to confirm that the outcomes identified in this process are appropriate for the framework.

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The development of the Framework was possible with thanks to support from



This project is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW



The project partners additionally want to thank these partners for their thoughtful review and input into the framework during its development.

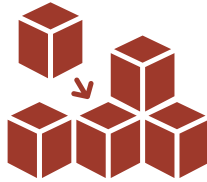
FRAMEWORK CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

To be effective, the principles applied in the design of this Framework are:



Flexible

It is adaptable for different programs, initiatives, and use cases; it can evolve and grow over time.



Scalable

Valuable at the individual organisation level, as well as scaling up to provide sector-wide insights and value.



Easy to apply

Requiring little technical skill or time.



Strength based & person-centered

Focuses on people's / projects definitions of growth and success.



Rigorous and robust

Fit for purpose in that it can effectively be used to evidence and, if needed, improve the impact of the sector.



Culturally safe

Understanding what people need to feel safe and respected to participate, including intersectional awareness as culture, disability, gender, age and class all shape access and safety differently.



Accessible and inclusive

Considers language, literacy, length, and format.



Cost effective

With scales of entry that organisations can choose to participate in.

While there are some quite practical considerations listed here, which go beyond the scope of Phase 2 and this Impact Framework, Huber Social believe it is important to outline, discuss, and agree on these factors upfront as critical to the development of a fit for purpose Framework.

3. THE FRAMEWORK



USING THE FRAMEWORK

The goal of Huber Social and the project group was to deliver an impact framework that can be operationalised to deliver a measurement system that that supports learning, reflection and accountability to community. The theory of change (see page 16) outlines what will be measured and underpins this Framework. As with any hypothesis, a theory of change is a theoretical tool. To test and refine the hypothesis the Framework also includes a set of metrics which have been established to measure the impact of the initiatives, activities and programs, as they are experienced by the people who take part.

The application of the Framework (measurement against it, analysis and reporting), are scheduled for the pilot of CREATING IMPACT in phases 3 and 4. Prior to the pilot the Framework in its current form can be used to structure and organise the feedback and data currently being collected and reported on, build capability in impact measurement and management across participating organisations and advocate and raise awareness of the outcomes and impact that are/ will be achieved.

LEVELS INVESTIGATED: UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUALS TO UNDERSTAND THE COMMUNITY

As the community engaged arts sector is seeking to have an impact on society as a whole an argument can be made that measurement of impact should include the whole community. However, there are a range of practical and methodological challenges this would present, such as evidencing the contribution of the sector to any changes in the community, as well as the significant cost involved which would be unfeasible for such a resource constrained sector.

This Framework therefore sets out a plan for its measurement that in the first instance focusses on those directly impacted by activities, initiatives and programs delivered by the sector - the individuals participating. These 'measurement participants' could be individuals participating in a program, initiative or activity, of any artistic genre, anywhere in Australia. Planning for the pilot also includes measurement at both the community and audience level, and with stakeholders in the sector to understand and evidence impact at these scales. The Framework has been designed to be as modular and cost effective as possible, enabling organisations to measure their direct impact on the individuals they engage with and feed up the data to aggregate level.



Community Engaged Arts Australia Theory of Change

1. IMPACT STATEMENT

Community engaged arts organisations

Invite and support people to shape their own paths and stories, and create a life they truly value through creativity.

Approach: In order for outcomes and impact to be achieved organisations in the community engaged arts sector recognise that an approach that prioritises Respect, Safety, Equity, and Artistic Integrity is core.

2. OUTCOMES

Individual Outcomes



Agency



Connection



Capabilities



Health & Holistic Factors

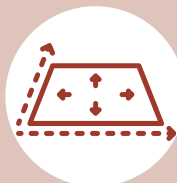


Core, Optional & Cohort Specific: Cohorts identified in the co-design process where specific or modified factors or metrics are likely to be required, including but not limited to: Young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Culturally, racially or otherwise systemically excluded people, Creatives (Career support), People living with Disability, People identifying as LGBTQ+, intersex, and/or sex, sexuality, or gender diverse, and People living in remote or regional areas.



Audience & Community Outcomes

- Access
- Empathy
- Challenging Stigma / Bias
- Feeling of Being Seen
- New Ideas / Experiences



Arts Sector Outcomes

- Contribution
- Inclusive Stories
- Access to Public Institutions

3. OUTPUTS

The tangible results delivered by an activity performed by an organisation.

4. ACTIVITIES

Actions taken or work performed by an organisation to achieve outputs, outcomes and impact.

5. RESOURCES

The financial, human, and material resources put into the establishment and operation of Community Engaged Arts activities, programs and services.

For guidance on reading this Theory of Change see pages 44 and 45.

Note: The separation of the outcomes in the Framework are artificial and have been displayed as such for the purposes of classification and clarity only. In reality, they are often interwoven and co-dependent.



Impact

IMPACT STATEMENT

Community engaged arts organisations:

Invite and support people to shape their own paths and stories, and create a life they truly value through creativity.

Community engaged arts serve as a catalyst for individuals to explore creativity, express themselves, and ultimately shape meaningful lives. ^[3] Through artistic engagement, individuals can further experience personal transformation, develop agency, and develop a sense of belonging within their communities. ^[4] By embedding creativity in everyday life, community engaged arts can also empower people to envision and actively pursue paths that align with their values and aspirations. ^[5]

METRIC

Subjective Wellbeing (aggregated)

Subjective wellbeing (SWB) is being used as a primary indicator of impact as part of a Subjective Wellbeing Evaluation approach. Positioning subjective wellbeing as the central indicator of human wellbeing enables decision-makers in the community engaged arts sector - and those who fund and support it - to use the statistically established links between subjective wellbeing and other domains to inform priorities and strategy. Unlike objective measures, SWB focuses on an individual's own perception of their wellbeing, rather than external evaluations allowing individuals to assess their own life satisfaction, emotional health, and sense of purpose, etc. and providing a more accurate representation of personal transformation.

Subjective Wellbeing is particularly useful in assessing the impact of community engaged arts because it is based on an individual's own perception of their wellbeing rather than external evaluations. This eliminates potential bias from others imposing their own expectations or standards of success onto participants.

ALIGNMENT

A wellbeing approach

This approach is particularly fitting as it eliminates potential bias from others' expectations or standards of success and support individuals' agency and voice, aligned with the objectives of community engaged arts organisations. Additionally, it aligns both with the principles of the Standards Australia Handbook^[6] on the measurement of social value and Measuring What Matters^[7], Australia's national wellbeing framework to progress towards a more healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive, and prosperous Australia.

Subjective Wellbeing Evaluation is increasingly being seen as global best practice, aligned with current thought leadership which posits wellbeing as a 'thick' concept (concepts which both describe and evaluate simultaneously) and approaches that advocate for participatory models of wellbeing measurement and development of public policy.^[8] Critically, these approaches argue that specifying what a thick concept such as wellbeing encompasses, must take into account the relevant value judgements of those whose lives stand to be affected by the measurement (which will inform decision-making for policy development or appraisal, for example).

This is a departure from what Fabian et al describe as 'the social planner perspective' in wellbeing public policy (approaches that rely on the value judgements of experts about what wellbeing consists of and what data reliably measure it).^[9,10,11] Instead, a 'citizen perspective' they argue, seeks to utilise co-production methods to democratise the development of metrics / indicators and the measurement process and bring together different types of expertise: 1. 'lived' experts or citizens who bring expertise pertaining to the value judgements wellbeing public policy should serve and an understanding of contextual factors; 2. 'practitioners' who might be people working in organisations/institutions developing programs or policy; and 3. 'academics' who seek to bring technical rigour to validate metrics / indicators and a grounding in theoretical perspectives. Importantly, 'participation means that people have agency and are not mere receptacles for wellbeing'.^[9]

“Subjective questions allow people to express the quality of their own lives, reflecting their own histories, personalities, and preferences.

They reflect what people think is important and desirable, rather than what experts or governments think should define a good life.”

Adler, A., and Seligman, M. (2016). Using wellbeing for public policy: Theory, measurement, and recommendations. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 6(1), 1-35. ^[12]

Approach

With respect, safety, equity, and artistic integrity at its core.

For outcomes and impact to be achieved programs, initiatives and activities performed by organisation in the community engaged arts sector must be based on respect, safety, equity, and artistic integrity.

This approach aligns with the Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) framework which ensures programs are: ^[1]

- Community-driven: participants influence the artistic process.
- Inclusive: equitable access and participation opportunities.
- Participatory: including active and collaborative engagement.

By definition: “CACD projects are community driven, inclusive, and participatory, employing many art forms for the purpose of social change and inclusion. Projects involve the creation of artwork with, for and by the community. The development process is a primary objective of the initiative and involves the engagement of highly skilled arts and cultural experts to inform, lead and share skills.”

The approach has further been developed through the lens of safety and respect, which has been informed by the outcomes workshops, and is in alignment with CACD principles.

Key CACD principles:

- Artwork is created by, with, and for the community, from a values-base of respect, reciprocity, equity and inclusion.
- Development and creative process is a primary focus underpinned by a long term approach.
- Activities are socially inclusive and responsive.
- Projects are community-centred and collaborative.
- Skilled practitioners are engaged as either/both participants and creative leads.
- CACD drives meaningful change, aiming to leave individuals and communities in a stronger, more resilient position.



Outcomes

Outcomes Contributing to this Impact:

As outlined in the Theory of Change (see page 16) the impact is/will be achieved through the **building of capability** and **access to opportunities** across the following outcomes:

- Agency
- Connection
- Capabilities
- Health & Holistic Factors

Within each of the outcomes there are a range of factors, as well as one or more proposed metrics for each. These Factors, explored on the following pages, are marked as either **Core** - in which it is recommended that all organisations use these in the application of this Framework - or **Optional** - meaning they were identified through the co-design process as key outcomes but recognised as potentially not applicable across all organisations working in the sector.

To establish the framework, we have developed a structured impact measurement approach to capture the effect of artistic engagement on individuals and communities. Subjective Wellbeing (SWB), and various opportunities and capabilities, will be used to assess the impact on wellbeing, and personal and social transformation.

Where the first level of the Framework recognises subjective wellbeing as the overall measure of impact, the second level covers capability and opportunity factors, both in their own right and as inputs to overall subjective wellbeing. To avoid imposing external norms, the scope of factors measured has been determined through the co-design process detailed above, involving the project group - organisations delivering the services, programs, or interventions and other stakeholders - as well as leveraging research.

To mitigate adaptive preferences in taking a participatory approach, instead of asking 'what' a person values, the approach is to ask people 'how' they are across the range of selected factors, capturing their lived experience and relying instead on statistics to identify the 'value' of these inputs to overall wellbeing. Additional checks beyond phase 2 include the measurement tools (primarily surveys) as well as findings, being validated, and the measurement project reviewed by an independent Ethics Review Board.

Each factor within the Framework links to an evidence-based measurement tool (where available) using a combination of subjective and objective measures.



Agency

The ability to make choices, take action, and shape your own life, even in the face of external challenges.

Why measure this outcome

- Agency refers to an individual's capacity to make choices, exert control over their life, and influence their future. **A strong sense of agency is linked to higher levels of self-determination and personal growth.**^[13]
- **Agency is important for community participation as it empowers individuals to take an active role in shaping their futures and engaging with their communities.** When individuals feel empowered to influence their environment and to express their rights and interests, they are more likely to work together towards collective action. Research in Indigenous Australian communities shows how art, as a way of acting in the world and communicating knowledge, ideas, and values, can enable people to act as agents to create positive changes in their own lives and foster collaboration within communities. This has the potential to not only enhance local cohesion but enable communities to influence national discourse and create a more inclusive society.^[14]
- **Adjacent factors are identified as outcomes of engagement.** Matarasso's 'Use or Ornament? The social impact of participating in the arts' identified Personal Development as a domain, with indicators of impact including an increase in people's confidence and sense of self-worth, a channel for people to have power and influence over how they are seen by others, and a forum to explore personal rights and responsibilities.^[15]

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

Agency



This outcome will be measured through the following factors and accompanying metrics. Metrics are indicative only, awaiting further validation in phase 3. Factors are displayed in no particular order, prioritisation of factors including core and optional status will be determined once pilot measurement is complete.

Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Value of Voice	A sense that one's voice holds value.	My story is valued.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Self-determination	Despite external forces, a sense of power to shape a path and define a future.	I feel I have control over the direction of my life.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Hope/Aspirations	Hopes and dreams for the future.	I believe good things will happen in my future.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Joy	A deep sense of joy that comes from meaningful experiences, connections, and accomplishments.	I have opportunities to feel joy and wonder.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Self-Belief	Trusting in one's own abilities and worth, and agency to enact them.	I believe in myself.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Confidence	The belief in one's abilities, qualities, and judgment.	I have confidence in myself.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Freedom of Expression	The feeling of being able to express oneself artistically without inhibitions.	I feel free to express myself artistically.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

Agency (2 of 2)



Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Purpose	A sense of direction and meaning in life.	My life has purpose.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Skills for Life	The skills and knowledge desired and required by the individual to live their daily life.	I have the skills and knowledge to manage my daily life.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Practice of Culture	The opportunity to engage with traditional customs, languages, rituals, art, and knowledge passed down through generations, fostering a deep connection to land, community, and spiritual beliefs.	I have opportunities to participate in activities important to my culture and heritage.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Pride	Self Acceptance and pride in oneself.	I am proud of who I am.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional



Connection

A sense of belonging formed through shared experiences, values, and participation.

Why measure this outcome

- People who have a strong sense of belonging are substantially more likely to actively engage in community activities. **Participating in these opportunities for community connection further solidifies bonds within society, creating a mutually reinforcing cycle that enhances social cohesion.** Feeling safe in one's community is also crucial to this sense of belonging.^[16]
- Social cohesion in Australia dropped to its lowest levels on record in 2023. **To counter the nationally declining sense of belonging, evidence indicates a need to invest in organisations that enable access to creative and cultural experiences.** The contributions of arts and cultural activities to fostering belonging and community connection have emerged in a number of Australian research studies with various populations, including culturally and racially marginalised communities.^[17] Social cohesion, the dynamic interaction between individuals, communities and broader society, is enabled through active citizens who use their voices to impact and influence the systems that affect their lives. Without meaningful resources and capacity to participate in the community, the desired levels of social cohesion cannot be achieved. The concept of equitable societies is deeply interwoven with social cohesion, as achieving equity is necessary for cohesive communities.

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

Connection



This outcome will be measured through the following factors and accompanying metrics. Metrics are indicative only, awaiting further validation in phase 3. Factors are displayed in no particular order, prioritisation of factors including core and optional status will be determined once pilot measurement is complete.

Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Sense of Belonging	An individual's sense that they belong to a community or a group.	I feel I belong to a community or group.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Active Participation	Regular participation in community events and activities.	I regularly participate in activities in my community.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Empathy	The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.	I can understand another person's point of view, even if I don't agree with it.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Reduced Social Isolation	The process of increasing meaningful connections and interactions with others.	Lately, I have been feeling lonely and/or isolated.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Connection to Place	The emotional, cultural, and spiritual bond individuals have with a specific location.	I feel connected to a place that has meaning to me	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Connection through values	A group that is connected through common values.	There are people in my life who share my values that I feel connected to.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Artistic Contribution	The notion of feeling that one can artistically contribute to the larger arts and cultural landscape.	I feel I can contribute to the wider arts and cultural landscape	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional



Capabilities

The skills that creative practices help develop, allowing individuals to build confidence and mastery in tasks that matter to them.

Why measure this outcome

- **The building of capabilities enables individuals readiness to pursue growth, acquire new skills, and seize opportunities for long-term success.** ^[18]
- When combined with Agency (Autonomy) and Connection (Relatedness), this **contributes to greater self-determination and intrinsic motivation, leading to personal fulfilment.** Building mastery over creative and personal skills (**Capabilities**) **enhances motivation and long-term engagement in self-improvement.** ^[19]

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

Capabilities



This outcome will be measured through the following factors and accompanying metrics. Metrics are indicative only, awaiting further validation in phase 3. Factors are displayed in no particular order, prioritisation of factors including core and optional status will be determined once pilot measurement is complete.

Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Opportunity for Creative Skill Development	That there is opportunity for creative skills development.	I have the opportunity to develop my creative skills.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Collaboration	The act of working together with others to achieve a common goal.	I am able to work well with others to achieve a common goal.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Communication	The process of sharing information, thoughts, or feelings through verbal, non-verbal, or written methods to understand and connect with others.	I find it easy to share my thoughts and feelings with other people.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Skills and Knowledge acquisition	Skills and knowledge gained through creative program participation.	I have the skills and knowledge I need to take on other opportunities I am interested in.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core
Readiness for Opportunities	A sense of feeling ready to take on other opportunities.	I am ready to take on new opportunities in my life.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Core

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

Capabilities (2 of 2)



This outcome will be measured through the following factors and accompanying metrics. Metrics are indicative only, awaiting further validation in phase 3. Factors are displayed in no particular order, prioritisation of factors including core and optional status will be determined once pilot measurement is complete.

Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Perseverance	Determination to overcome challenges through autonomy and intrinsic motivation.	I don't like to give up, even when something is hard to do.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Resourcefulness	The ability to find solutions in tough situations.	Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Innovative Thinking	The introduction of new ideas, methods, or products that improve upon existing ones or create entirely new solutions.	When I'm in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Critical Thinking and Enquiry	The ability to analyse and evaluate information objectively to form reasoned judgments.	I have been exposed to ideas and opinions that challenged my own thinking.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional



Health & Holistic Factors

Mental, physical, emotional, and social wellness –as well as broader wellbeing factors–influence learning and participation, and help identify where additional support may be needed.

Why measure this outcome

Inclusion of these factors provides opportunities for learning and to evidence the levels of need, beyond overall wellbeing scores, of those engaging with community engaged arts organisations.

While some factors are currently beyond the remit of many the organisations in the sector, data collected will provide insights on the environments they collectively work in and may provide the necessary data to the broader ecosystem (such as government or philanthropy partners) to act in this area, thereby improving not only the wellbeing of the community, but the potential impact of their work.

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

Health & Holistic



This outcome will be measured through the following factors and accompanying metrics. Metrics are indicative only, awaiting further validation in phase 3. These factors are optional because, although we believe the Community Engaged Arts Sector is improving individual health outcomes, they currently fall outside the scope or capacity of many organisations in the sector. Factors are displayed in no particular order, prioritisation of factors will be determined once pilot measurement is complete.

Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Mental Health	The ability to cope with life's challenges, maintain emotional balance.	Over the past week my mental, and/or emotional health has stopped me, or made it difficult for me, to do the things I need to do.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Coping (handling many things at once)	The process of managing with difficult emotions in a healthy and effective way.	I feel that I can handle many things at a time.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Anxiety	A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.	Lately, I have been feeling anxious.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Sadness	The condition or quality of being sad.	Lately, I have been feeling sad.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Sleep	Understanding of levels of sleep, to the required degree or extent as determined by the individual.	On most days I get enough sleep and feel well rested.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Substance abuse (awareness)	Awareness of the health risks of substance abuse.	I understand the health risks of using drugs, medication, alcohol, vaping and smoking.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Substance abuse (use)	Use of substances for stress relief.	I use alcohol and/or drugs to de-stress or relax.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

Health & Holistic (2 of 2)



Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Safety (in public)	Feeling of safety in public.	I feel safe in my local area.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Respect	Feeling respected by people.	I feel respected by most people I interact with.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Physical Health	Reflection on ones own physical health.	In general, my physical health is good.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Living Circumstances (Safety)	Feeling of safety where one lives.	I feel safe where I live.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Income (for everyday needs)	Incomes levels for every day needs.	I have enough income to cover the costs of everyday needs.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional
Access to food (enough)	Access to sufficient food (self-determined).	I have enough food.	Self report surveys or equivalent	Optional



Cohort Specific

Measurement of Specific Cohorts

- Particular cohorts were identified in the co-design process for which specific or modified factors are likely to be required. In practice an organisation using this framework can choose one or more of these cohorts as they are relevant for their work and communities.
- Neither the cohorts nor the indicative indicators are an exhaustive list, we expect this section to grow as the framework is applied.
- We understand intersectionality as a guiding framework—not merely a collection of identities, but a tool to examine how power, access, and outcomes vary both within and between communities. ^[20, 21] This understanding underscores the need to take extra care in designing metrics that are relevant, respectful, and inclusive of the diverse experiences within specific communities.





Communities & Audiences

Measurement at Community and Audience Level

- Measurement at this level has been designed to vary between organisations, dependent on the organisations levels of capacity and the capability, and availability of access to this group - in keeping with the key objective of the Framework in that it be modular and flexible.
- Measurement will focus on; **access, levels of empathy, challenge of stigma and/or bias, a feeling of 'being seen' and opportunities to access new ideas and experiences.**
- This data will support the Framework, and comprehensive measurement at individual level, to deliver a fuller articulation of the impact of community engaged arts organisations.

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

Communities & Audiences

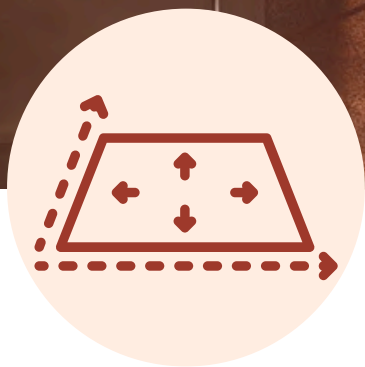


Note: These factors in particular are likely to be refined prior and/or following the pilot implementation.

Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Access	Inclusion in creative experiences and spaces.	TBC	Self report surveys or equivalent	TBC
Empathy	Greater understanding of others' experiences.	TBC	Self report surveys or equivalent	TBC
Challenging Stigma/Bias	Shifting perceptions through shared storytelling.	TBC	Self report surveys or equivalent	TBC
Feeling of Being Seen	Recognition of one's identity and experiences.	TBC	Self report surveys or equivalent	TBC
New Ideas/Experiences	Exposure to diverse perspectives and possibilities.	TBC	Self report surveys or equivalent	TBC

“The performance changed me - as soon as I woke up today I felt recharged and able to deal with life at the moment which strangely channelled through the show - I know the show wasn't about me personally but it affected me personally.”

- Milk Crate Theatre audience member



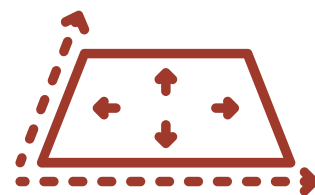
The Arts Sector

Measurement at Sector Level

- Measurement at this level will involve stakeholder discussions and the mapping of available data sets to investigate particularly; **levels of access to arts institutions, contribution to the diversity of stories told, and the overall contribution of the community engaged arts sector**
- As with Community and Audience data, data collected at this level will support the Framework, and comprehensive measurement at individual level, to deliver a fuller articulation of the impact of community engaged arts organisations.

FACTORS & PROPOSED METRICS

The Arts Sector



Note: These factors in particular are likely to be refined prior and/or following the pilot implementation.

Factor	Definition	Metric	Data Source	Core / Optional
Contribution	Creative work that shapes public discourse, practice, or policy.	TBC	Self report surveys or equivalent	TBC
Inclusive Stories	A broader range of voices, perspectives, and narratives represented.	TBC	Self report surveys or equivalent	TBC
Access to Public Institutions	Opportunities for underrepresented communities to engage with and shape mainstream cultural spaces.	TBC	Self report surveys or equivalent	TBC

“Cultural participation is a human right, and every Australian has the right to participate in the cultural life of the nation. However, socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities in Australian society create systemic barriers, preventing equitable access to arts and culture.”

- Australia Council for the Arts 2023, *Widening The Lens: Social inequality and arts participation* ^[22]



4. NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

Phase 3 of CREATING IMPACT will see data collected by and with a selection of organisations in the community engaged arts sector (the pilot group). Throughout the co-design of this Framework discussion regarding accessibility, and appropriateness of digital and / or survey tools for some communities has been considered, balanced against the desire for rigorous and representative data collection. Of particular interest is the challenge regarding the sophistication of language used in many validated indicators, and their suitability for the cohorts.

Once phase 3 commences the first step will be configuring the Framework for each of the organisations in the pilot group, gaining ethical approval, then validating the proposed metrics outlined in this Framework with members of the impacted groups themselves. How the Framework is applied will vary between participating organisations, but the complete scope for The Framework comprises of all aged 12 and above impacted by the community engaged arts sector or who benefit from the work of organisations delivering community engaged arts.

Once data has been collected the phase 4 analysis will take place to account for the interconnected nature of determinants to understand what matters for wellbeing. Combining this approach with collective reporting on outputs the data will be used to demonstrate results to a variety of audiences. This data driven approach will demonstrate where programs have the greatest impact on outcomes, support organisations to manage the risk of potential negative outcomes, and uncover what else may be accelerated, adjusted or developed to maximise impact.





5. APPENDIX

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK

Activity Summary and Timeline

1. Prepare

- Kick off & logistics meetings to determine stakeholders map, confirm objectives, identify any opportunities/constraints
- Desktop review & research, including report from Phase 1, existing available data sets, strategic plans and measurement in place within project group organisations, best practice research and engagement methods for the sector, and other applicable documents

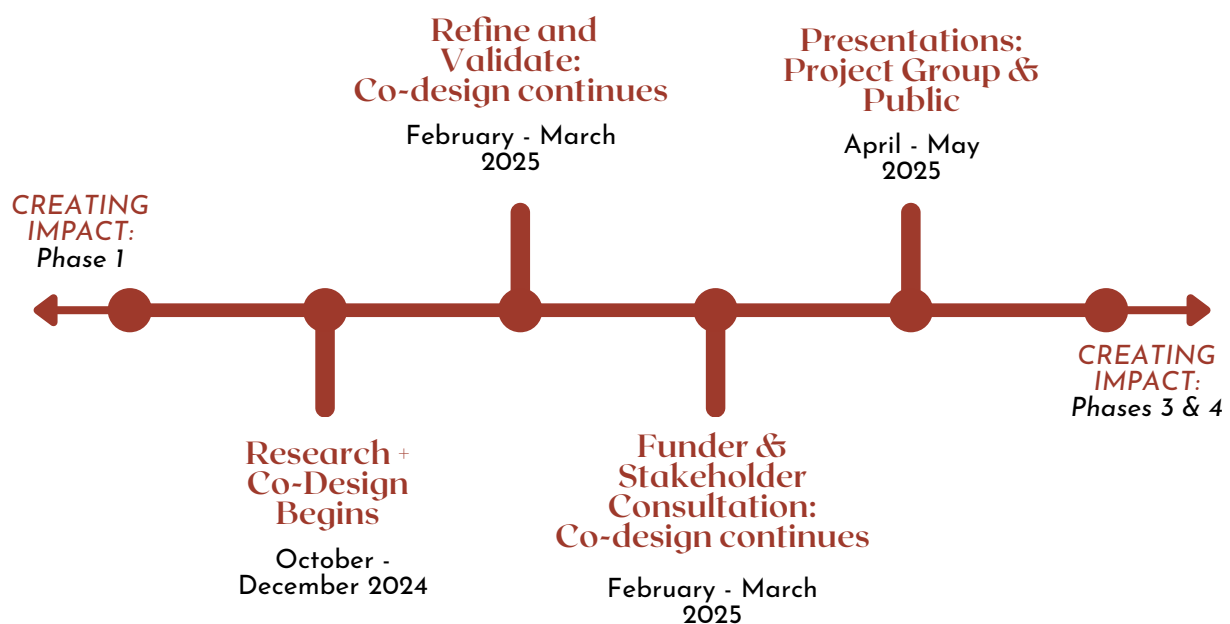
2. Connect & Validate

- A series of co-design workshops with the project group to understand outcomes that matter for the community, potential challenges, and aspirations for measurement, including exploration into potential outcomes, indicators, and logistics / measurement considerations.
- Project group confirmed that deliverable will be fit for purpose and reflect their needs and aspirations

NB. An additional benefit by design was inclusion of education in the development process, supporting the project group to be further enabled to fully utilise the framework

3. Deliver & Advise

- Development & Delivery of the Community Engaged Arts Impact Framework
- Public presentation of the final deliverable, recorded for additional distribution including practical advice on how the Framework can be utilised prior to the Impact Project's phase 3 and 4 roll out
- Recommendations provided for a successful pilot across phases 3 and 4



CO-DESIGN IN ACTION

2. Connect & Validate

The series of workshops held with the project group were focused on listening and sharing ideas specifically about the work underway, the outcomes being achieved and who organisations were working with, to inform how it might be measured for collective benefit. The initial session set out to explore the following four key elements, with subsequent sessions diving deeper into each, and reviewing and refining the Framework as we progressed.

1. Defining the Measurement Group

Whose lives are being impacted by your work?

Whose experience are we going to measure?

2. Core Outcomes

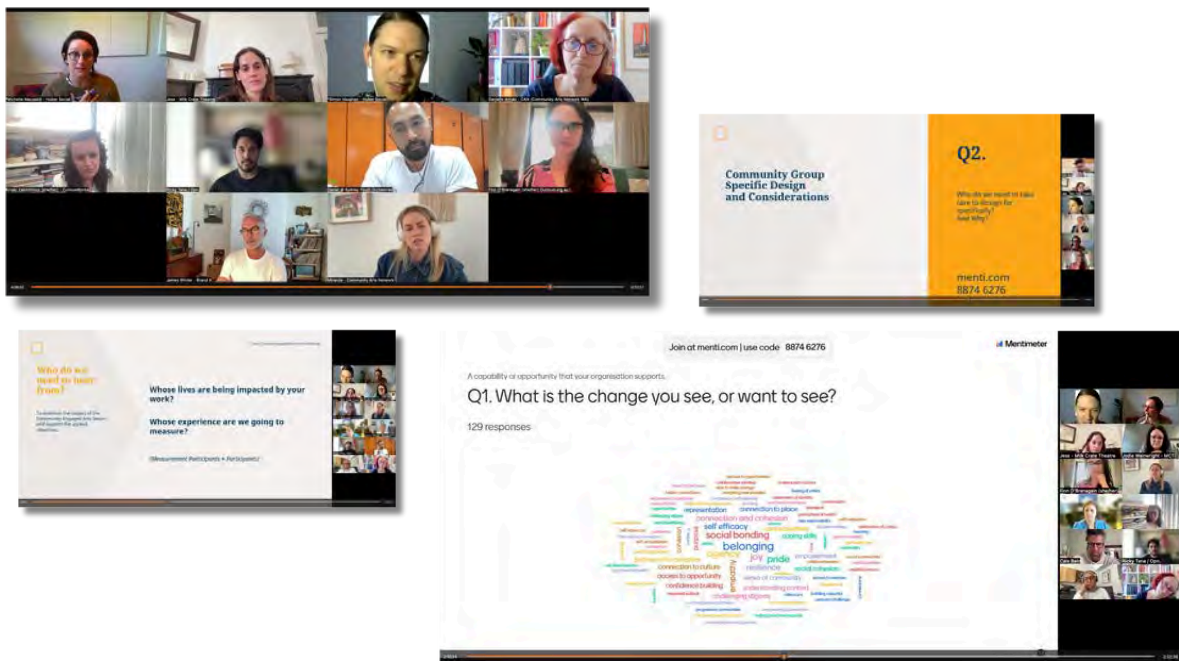
What is the change you see, or want to see, in the lives of people impacted by your work? What elements are consistent across all community engaged arts practice and are therefore to be considered 'core' for measurement and what elements are relevant to some but not all groups?

3. Communities Specific

Who do we need to take care to design for specifically?

4. Logistics and Inclusion

Additionally, thinking towards the practical application of the Framework discussion also included logistics and inclusive design taking time to hear concerns, so they might be addressed throughout the process, or at the very least, the group could continue to be aware of limitations.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Impact Statement	This details the cumulative impact and outcomes of individual engagement and community level impact and outcomes within the sector, the “wrapping up” Long-term or ultimate effects produced by an initiative, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Measured in terms of a single over-arching measure of subjective wellbeing.
Levels of Impact	<p>As the community engaged arts sectors is seeking to have an impact on society as a whole an argument can be made that measurement of impact should include the whole community. However, there are a range of practical and methodological challenges this would present, such as evidencing the contribution of the sector to any changes in the community, as well as the significant cost involved which would be unfeasible for such a resource constrained sector.</p> <p>This Framework therefore sets out a plan for its measurement that in the first instance focusses on those directly impacted by activities, initiatives and programs delivered by the sector - the individuals participating. These measurement participants could be individuals participating in a program, initiative or activity, of any artistic genre, anywhere in Australia. Planning for the pilot also includes measurement at both the community and audience level, and with stakeholders in the sector to understand and evidence impact at these scales.</p>
Factors & Metrics	<p>Used to measure the actual impact of a program, organisation, or initiative against its intended impact. Within each outcome there are a series of Factors, each of which maps to one or more direct questions.</p> <p>For example, the outcome “Holistic Wellness” includes the factor “Physical Health”, which maps directly to the metric “In general, my physical health is good”.</p>
Social Impact Model	A social impact model combines the theory of change, as detailed in this report, with factors and indicators / metrics that enable organisations working with the people ultimately impacted, in this case those taking part in community engaged arts activities, programs and initiatives, to apply the framework as a measurement system.
Measurement Participants	These are people experiencing the direct impact that an organisation in the community engaged arts sector is having. These are the eventual measurement participants of the measurement system that will be developed from this Framework. This may include active participants in programs or initiatives, as well as emerging and established creatives and audience / community members and those involved or adjacent to the sector as appropriate.
CARM	This terminology is used instead of ‘Culturally and Linguistically Diverse’ (CALD) because it acknowledges the intersectional forms of systemic exclusion that individuals may face due to their race or culture, while also recognising the broad and diverse communities that organisations engage with.

UNDERSTANDING THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of Change

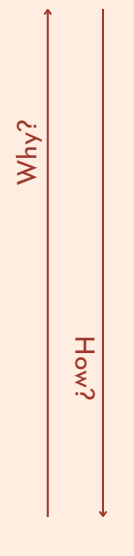
What change program, organisation, or initiative intends to have on the people it affects, considering various levels of change (Impact, Outcomes, Outputs, Activities, Resources). To measure the impact of the program, the theory of change is first determined. Social change requires a systemic approach. Therefore, change must be understood in terms of overall intended impact first and then the outcomes (necessary conditions) required to achieve that impact. A systemic approach provides flexibility in how outputs, activities and inputs may be chosen and refined as necessary to maximise the overall positive impact.

To measure the impact of the community engaged arts sector, we first determine the change that the vast array of initiatives, programs and activities intend to bring about for the people who take part. This is known as the impact thesis or theory of change and is a hypothesis which outlines a potential chain of logic through which the initiative is intended to result in impact on a specific audience.

The theory of change starts first with the intended impact, and then progresses down to what is required at each level to achieve that impact. As you move down the hierarchy, the level below explains how the level above will be achieved. As you move up through the hierarchy, the level above explains why the level below is needed. Impact sits at the top of the hierarchy because it is the ultimate aim, the reason why activities are resourced and delivered. Taking an impact-led approach prioritises an organisation's focus on the overall impact they are trying to achieve, rather than siloed resources or activities they may be doing at any given time.

Theory of Change Structure

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Impact | Long-term or ultimate effects produced by an initiative, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Measured in terms of a single over-arching measure of subjective wellbeing. |
| 2. Outcomes | The necessary conditions to achieve the impact, defined in terms of specific human needs. |
| 3. Outputs | The tangible results that an initiative delivers in order to achieve the outcomes. |
| 4. Activities | Actions taken or work performed to achieve the outputs. |
| 5. Resources | The financial, human, and material resources needed to conduct the activities. |



UNDERSTANDING THE THEORY OF CHANGE, CONT.

Impact Statement

This details the cumulative impact and outcomes of individual engagement and community level impact and outcomes within the sector, the “wrapping up” Long-term or ultimate effects produced by an initiative, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Measured in terms of a single over-arching measure of subjective wellbeing.

Outcomes

The necessary conditions to achieve the impact, defined in terms of specific human needs.



Individual Outcomes

Core

These are outcomes and factors that are recommended to be included by default in all measurement / surveys (unless specifically removed). These should be considered as essential elements to achieve the impact as outlined in the Impact Statement and to evidence the outcomes and impact achieved by the sector collectively.

Optional

These are outcomes and factors that we strongly identified in the co-design process as being outcomes of community engaged arts. For organisations able to conduct more comprehensive measurement these elements should be included for their ability to strengthen the evidence base for both outcome and impact.

Cohort Specific

Particular cohorts identified in the co-design process for which specific or modified factors are likely to be required. In practice an organisation using this framework can choose one or more of these sectors that are relevant for their work. Neither the cohorts nor the indicative indicators are an exhaustive list, we expect this section to grow as the framework is applied.

Community and Audience Outcomes

Sector Outcomes

Planning for the pilot also includes measurement at both the community and audience level, and with stakeholders in the sector to understand and evidence impact at these scales.

STANDARDS AUSTRALIA HANDBOOK: MEASURING AND VALUING SOCIAL IMPACT

The following eight principles, as outlined in SA HB 204:2022 *Measuring and valuing social impact – Guidance on approach and methodologies*,^[19] guided the development of this Framework. This page provides a summary description of each of the principles.

A **principle-based approach to impact measurement** ensures decision makers select or develop an approach that best suits their context and objectives. A measurement approach is ‘fit-for-purpose’ when it provides clarity and insights into the implications of the decision being made, enables alternatives and trade-offs to be assessed and priorities to be set, and is then able to measure the actual impact of those decisions. Acknowledging that approaches which more fully incorporate each principle are more likely to provide meaningful and useful measurement results.

PRINCIPLE	SUMMARISED DESCRIPTION
Principle 1: Measure social impact in terms of wellbeing	Measurement is holistic, focusing on the needs of the people impacted, not the intention of the initiative. Measurement supports a systems approach to solving social issues or understanding the ultimate impact of an initiative.
Principle 2: Use subjective wellbeing as the overall measure of impact	Measure progress based on what is important to people impacted, not what appears objectively important to an outsider.
Principle 3: Measure the lived experience	Measurement focuses on actual impact, not perceived impact. Measurement avoids unintentional bias or the assumption that good intentions lead to good outcomes.
Principle 4: Practice cultural safety	The measurement scope, tools and process reflect the definition and drivers of wellbeing as is understood by the relevant culture and heritage of the people being impacted, and not those who have commissioned the measurement. The measurement does not reinforce existing power differentials and dominant cultural values, which may lead to inaccurate findings that perpetuate social issues rather than solving them.
Principle 5: Measurement results must be actionable	Measurement findings and insights provide decision makers with sufficiently accurate and appropriate information to allocate or re-allocate their resources for the greatest social impact.
Principle 6: Measurement results must be comparable	Measurement findings allow decision makers to compare the impact of one initiative with alternative uses of resources, both now and over time as the context and/or initiative changes.
Principle 7: Measurement must be assurable	There is sufficient documentation of the measurement design, data and analysis so that it can be independently reviewed, thereby minimising the risk of bias or undue influence affecting the results.
Principle 8: Social impact is a scientific pursuit	The measurement tests a hypothesis using an evidence-based, repeatable and transparent methodology so that decision makers can be confident in the conclusions reached.

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