



# Futuring Inner West Arts and Culture 2036

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## 1. Executive Summary

The Inner West boasts an enviable amount of artistic gusto. Widely considered Sydney's leading independent arts quarter and one of Australia's most diverse communities, this broad swathe of inner-city space is home to many artists, studios, commercial art galleries, artist-run initiatives, theatres and festivals. Inner West artists are nurses, librarians, builders, accountants, graphic designers and growers. In turn, our bus drivers, gardeners, writers, managers and shopkeepers are creative, a duality that is nurtured by the diverse and supportive community that exists here.

Structurally, it is comprised of old-style residential properties, industrial and semi-industrial areas, and increasingly large-scale commercial housing complexes. This widespread change of use and vast investment in high-rise development is seen as a direct threat to the area, with artists and residents being forced to move elsewhere because of a scarcity of space, exorbitant rents and a lack of a recognition and security, and fear for what the future holds.

By applying 'futuring' strategies – the encouragement of creative, collaborative storytelling that helps us to consider possible, preferable and/or avoidable futures – to a series of workshops, residents, artists and arts workers in the Inner West identified a number of core themes to the future development of the area they work, live or create in.

Firstly, people are proud of the Inner West and consider it a leading cultural and arts hub in Australia. There is a clear desire to protect and celebrate the diverse independent arts organisations and spaces that exist here, while creating a sustainable future focus to retain and grow this sector. Multi-use creative spaces where people can produce, rehearse, engage, teach, live and learn are in high demand, as is the need to be heard in terms of social and cultural influence on local policy development.

There is a heartfelt recognition of local Indigenous knowledge in the Inner West, and a desire to nurture, protect and celebrate this knowledge as one of the cornerstones of creative life in the area. An increased ambiguity between rural and urban spheres as the population is transposed, encourages exchange programs and opens up the opportunities for rural arts spaces and a broadening of the creative community.

There is widespread support for exchange and sharing economies as people disconnect from the consumerist model, and education, health and wellbeing recommendations all advocate embracing the arts and creative spaces to help combat anxiety, depression and other social health concerns.

Sustainable living is important, with vegetable gardens, kerbside and street gardens producing organic and pesticide-free food, more trees planted for environmental cooling, and people embracing outdoor public space to increase their sense of wellbeing, to share skills, and connect.

Finally, as always, there is the issue of property. The question is asked over and over: 'why can't planning be tailored to incorporate diverse forms of family and co-housing?' A new model is sought that sees broad diversity in our living spaces, custodianship over ownership, multigenerational shared spaces, and perhaps most importantly, commercial property owners engaged in the arts and the cultural capital of the Inner West as hosts, philanthropists and fellow creators.

What is clear, then, is that rather than a new static infrastructure for arts and culture in the Inner West, a sustainable, localised and responsive model – based on interaction, regular conversation and storytelling – is what is needed, an inclusive and ethical response to the very real fear that the creative sector of the Inner West have of a dystopian future that no longer features them.



## 2. Methodology

### 2a. What is Futuring?

Futuring is related to 'future studies', 'speculative design' and 'strategic foresight'. **Fictions** is the collaborative design partnership of local artists and designers Clare Cooper and Will Owen. For this workshop we engaged designer and illustrator Tasman Munro. Fictions uses futuring as our primary vehicle for creative, collaborative storytelling that helps us to consider possible, preferable and/or avoidable futures. There is no single futuring method – we draw from a suite that includes the double variable method (Galtung 1998), STEEP analysis (discussing society from Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic and Political angles), pendulum futuring, scenario design and personas. We draw from the research of Australian design theorist Tony Fry (University of Tasmania) and political scientist Sohail Inayatullah ([Metafuture](#)), among others.

Design Futuring proposes creative processes for exploring the future contexts of your activities and communities in ways that are more nuanced than dystopias and utopias. The focus of design futuring is on thinking about alternative futures because it “reminds us that while we cannot predict a particular future always accurately, by focusing on a range of alternatives, we can better prepare for uncertainty, indeed, to some extent embrace uncertainty” (Sohail Inayatullah 2008, p 6).



## 2b. Fictions Design and Facilitation

In line with critical futuring practice, we designed a session based on *looking back* from co-existing fictions: from ‘present day’ 2036 back to Thursday July 13, 2017. Through our performative introduction, participants were informed that we had in fact been meeting like this for 20 years and to humour our efforts to retrace our steps from when we first met... therefore articulating a timeline, or a ‘backcasting’ from a thriving artistic and culturally engaged community to today.

We repeatedly asked participants to give more detail about how and why certain community spaces came into being, what support they required and whose responsibility it was to maintain and care for these spaces and the activity within them. The basic flow of the workshop was as follows:

- The bulk of the workshop comprised ‘unveiled futures introductions’. Each participant introduced themselves in 2036, feeding their expectations, hopes and fears into the fleshing out of the futures. These were noted at a rapid pace by two facilitators, with a third prompting questions and greater details. It was no accident that this took up the bulk of the workshop as this is where we hear some of the richest material that make up the resulting projections.
- Participants were prompted to spend more time fleshing out the ‘memories’ of 2017. All contributions were mapped on the timeline.
- We returned to the present to articulate what Futuring Methodology is, what ‘backcasting’ is and to answer questions relating to the specifics of the Create Inner West 2036 campaign, including what the next steps for Council should be.
- We arranged multiple expressions of views: direct to video, sketchnoting of workshop, participation in workshop (collective storytelling, collective authorship).

## 2c. The Main Questions Addressed

What makes the Inner West unique? = **Where did you take visitors that came to the area? Why?**

Where are we now? = **What stories do you still tell about the Inner West from back in 2017?**





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### 3b. THE CONVERSATION IS REFRAMED

The deficit discourse that dominated past conversations has shifted to a more empowering one, lead by Indigenous peoples, with a massive impact on new migrants and asylum seekers. Storytelling in many forms is key to this shift. Welcomes and recognitions are two manifestations of community values. Due to increasing climate and ongoing resource crises, finite resource consciousness is widespread. Many have unplugged from consumerism. Australians have redefined their national identity as being one that celebrates participation, adaptability and the sharing of opportunity.

Change is celebrated alongside the celebration and recognition of historical events that have shaped our community. Attitudes dominated by fear are changing thanks to the reframing of conversations. Individuals, families, small businesses, communities taking more of an active role and interest in things like environmental protection, racism, sexism, rising mental-health challenges and an ageing population by supporting active institutions and local council initiatives.

### 3c. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES CORE TO CREATIVE PRACTICE

The Inner West region is now known as Cadigal Wangal. Traditional owners lead cultural conversations thanks to initiatives from 2016/2017. Indigenous knowledges are interwoven with contemporary technology.

- ❖ Council engages advice from organisations like [First Peoples First](#).
- ❖ Council engages advice from organisations like [Old Ways New](#).
- ❖ Council works with local elders and schools to build initiatives to protect local language.

### 3d. MULTI-USE SPACES AND INTERGENERATIONAL CREATIVE EXCHANGE

Many participants expressed that there was a great need for multi-use spaces that were family-friendly (including non-traditional/queer family formats). Artists that also work in the provision of health care or disability support suggested these spaces address the need for human contact and mixing of social groups at different age and life-stages. All agreed that there would be mutual benefit to this, recognising the complexities of undertaking designing for this combination of needs.

These spaces were everything from simple informal, non-institutional and non-commercialised meeting places decoupled from alcohol, through to complexes that housed our elders, educated our kids, promoted sustainable living, community gardens and also made space for the rehearsal and development of new creative works.

‘Wisdom spaces’ have reframed and readdressed our relationship to our ageing population as a boon, not a burden on the economy. Our elders are not sidelined but continue to be involved in community life, especially the education of children.

- ❖ Community co-design spaces initiated by council in partnership with arts and culture advisors.
- ❖ Child and parent-friendly event organisation, primarily reflected in the time of day the event is organised and the spaces they are organised in.
- ❖ Structured skill-sharing spaces are very popular. Course content is responsive to needs of the month/moment and co-written by community elders and kids.

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- ❖ Night-time economy recognised and supported, driven by campaign for Night Tsar/Night Mayor of the Inner West. Encourages thriving performance cultures and therefore richer stories being told/shared, as well as increased tolerance of difference in a time of increased migration..
  - ❖ Culture of ‘caretakers’ rather than landowners.
  - ❖ Kids designing and driving the content for regular street parties. Unloved spaces are transformed.
  - ❖ Proactive tactical urbanism common.
  - ❖ The majority of Inner West residents choose to cycle thanks to the safer bike lanes, prevalence of cycling safety areas, workshops and regular council-maintained biking kit stations around the Inner West.
  - ❖ Stronger public transport (not privatised) allows for fluid and easy movement of groups from different areas, encourages cross-pollination of skills, cultures and experiences. Light rail allows for commuters to travel with bikes in designated area.

### 3e. OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACES USED FOR STORYTELLING AND SUSTAINABILITY

There is regular, spontaneous and council-supported reclamation of public spaces in the form of areas for outdoor theatre rehearsals, choral groups, collective storytelling and permaculture-based sustainable native growing and food preservation. Food waste is a thing of the past. All-ages street parties celebrating many cultural events. The young and diverse are feeling safer thanks to the above and feel they have a right to create in their city.

- ❖ Reconnection with land through human-scale measures (see Jan Gehl) [The Human Scale](#)
- ❖ Council moves from prioritising safe public bets like sports fields over multi-use recreation spaces with a variety of content/activity driven by shifting needs of the residents. Increase in spaces that prioritise conservation and passive recreation.
- ❖ [Callan Park](#) reclaimed for public activity and passive recreation, and used as living example of benefits of allowing community activation of disused land and buildings.
- ❖ Citizen-led reclamation of the streets, from edible nature strips to outdoor concerts and films. People gather in social plazas more often to engage in critical conversation about local issues around locally sourced, good-value fresh groceries and butchers. Tactical urban interventions on local street level (eg. edible nature strips, house concerts and resident-led design starting to happen more often).
- ❖ Many residents taking the cue from initiatives like [Mike Mobb’s Sustainable House in Chippendale](#).
- ❖ Teaching reconnection to land and plants, encouraging local foraging to combat food waste (eg. [Diego Bonetto](#) and the [Wild Food Map](#)).
- ❖ Many residents celebrate their local community gardens like [Camdenville Paddock](#) (Newtown), [Angel St Permaculture Food Forest \(Newtown\)](#) and are integrating urban farming techniques

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thanks to workshops by [Earlwood Farm](#), [Milkwood Permaculture](#) and [Diego Bonetto](#). Council increases support to these educational resident-led initiatives enabling them to scale their impact and develop more sustainable and locally-focused models of operating.

- ❖ Roads closed more frequently for public events.
- ❖ In warmer months it is common to see theatre groups, orchestras rehearsing/developing work in public parks, natural amphitheatres.
- ❖ WestConnex found to be unsustainable for private investors as #StopTheTolls campaign had overwhelming support from community in Western Sydney hand-in-hand with Inner West. Redesigned to prioritise public transport and communal green spaces.
- ❖ Council makes timeline and information hierarchy visible for approval of applications for 'creative' use of public spaces (eg: street parties and arts festivals not run by Council).

### 3f. CELEBRATION OF PROCESS OVER PRODUCT

There are 40,000 more residents in the Inner West, but thanks to the infrastructure of arts and culture funding and spaces prioritising openness and process-focused ideas, these new residents are engaged in the making and sharing of art in safe, diverse, non-elite dialogical spaces. Participation in the process of art-making is the norm, a move from static public artworks and objects to share/process spaces – both formal and informal, modular and responsive. Thanks to local car traffic slow-speed regulations, and an increase in pedestrian-only streets, the streets are walkable with regular walking tours celebrating shared multi-use studios.

Back in 2017, many artists were facing prohibitive obstacles trying to fit 'art' into 'for-profit business' models, misrepresenting their actual value systems which led to misunderstandings between organisations and individuals, and exhausting many due to the extra work involved in 'fitting this square peg into a round hole'. Artists who were not born with education and privilege felt locked out of the grants model. Many arts and culture organisations were unable to focus on experimentation and long-term development as most grants and support structures focus on and/or reward short-term profit-driven projects where half the work is documentation and acquittal, all the while preparing the next grant applications. Hearing this, Council responded by being more proactive in leveraging philanthropy, allowing arts and culture organisations to focus on experimentation and long-term development.

When not working other jobs and/or operating out of solitary short-term studio arrangements, many artists and culture-workers base themselves in council subsidised spaces like [Frontyard](#) (228 Illawarra Road, Marrickville, 2016-current), encouraging skill-sharing, futuring, civic engagement, experimental pedagogy and community-driven content as opposed to external curated content. This is in part due to the organisation deliberately avoiding programming fees as part of a push for minimal administration so as to ensure workability and sustainability of the core team.

- ❖ Project-based grant model re-thought/re-designed to prioritise slow, iterative, community and collective research-based, multi-outcome ideas and work. Ideas that build resilience and interconnectivity supported.



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- ❖ Encouragement of small performance spaces with less pressure to present ‘bums-on-seats’ works thanks to the ban of poker machines from places of public gathering.
  - ❖ Traditional arts prizes rewarding individual artists are only available if the artist engages in a community mentorship program to encourage younger generations as part of the deal.

### 3g. URBAN AND RURAL EXCHANGE

In recognition of the increase in ex-Inner West residents and families drifting in and out between regional life and urban engagement there is regular exchange with rural art space through residencies and educational programs. Many people are living half the year out of urban centres, sharing and trading time with city-dwellers. When they return to the Inner West they still feel connected thanks to the plethora of community cultural centres that thrive on conversation, storytelling and community-driven work.

Council and local spaces partnering with any of the following projects:

- ❖ <http://ksca.land/futurelands>
- ❖ <http://cementa.com.au>
- ❖ <https://bundanon.com.au/residencies>
- ❖ <http://wiredlab.org>

### 3h. CO-EXISTING EXCHANGE/ECONOMIES SUPPORTED

Small business at the fore of new, ethical exchange and metrics and new social contracts are thriving in Inner West 2036. Growing investment in alternative systems of exchange, education and resourcing. ‘Skill-sharing’, ‘circular economy’, ‘bio-regionalism’ and the ‘gift-economy’ are household terms. Strong diversity (not monoculture) thanks to the foresight of past peoples.

Collaboration opens up across sectors due to barter systems that exist alongside currently. Creative modes of exchange are the norm. [The Marrickville School of Economics](#) was key to the education of alternative exchange systems for the arts community at [Frontyard](#) in 2017.

- ❖ Support for arts-specific skill, space and tool-sharing platforms. Artists and arts-workers collectivise community arts co-ops with practical pooling of administration, legal work, healthcare, childcare and more. Council helps to promote the sharing platforms (eg. [www.noncash.space](http://www.noncash.space), below) widely so that people can find one another. These sharing platforms and regular meetings benefit artists who do not identify as white males, or who had felt shut out from traditional ‘treat your art as a profit-driven business’ model.
- ❖ [Marrickville School of Economics](#).
- ❖ Many people have unplugged from social media as community notice provider. Community radio is (still) key and acts as an effective ‘town crier’. Independent radio is not shy to challenge power structures and to inform populace of activist movements, enhancing their momentum (good example from 2017 is FBI’s role in driving the Keep Sydney Open campaign pre-night time economy): [FBI Radio/ 2ser/ Keep Sydney Open](#).

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- ❖ Community skill, tool and space-sharing digital prototype and ongoing physical events based out of Frontyard in the form of NONCASH ([www.noncash.space](http://www.noncash.space)). Established in 2016, thanks to a City of Sydney Knowledge Exchange Grant, NONCASH makes wide variety of community 'assets' and exchange facilitation visible, which feeds positivity into the current low self-esteem of the arts sector after successive cuts and attacks to infrastructure and education. Also may provide the resources, skills, capacity building, equipment and facilities needed for artists in Sydney to create, produce new work, and facilitate longer term sustainability and resilience. Community initiatives like this identify the changing practical needs of the arts community. Through discussions with community we identify possibility for Council to broker deals with companies and organisations where artists spend a large proportion of their income (eg: storage companies on behalf of artists to help alleviate some of the ongoing costs to creating and storing physical works between shows. NB: The full prototyping and research report submitted to City of Sydney after being awarded a Knowledge Exchange grant 2016 has been submitted attached to this report).
    - Council funding for a platform agitator/aggregator and researcher.
    - Support for enhancing usability and functionality (technical summary of stage 1&2).
    - Support and promotion of non-cash physical stations and events.
    - Council helps to promote and negotiate non-cash as assets register for organisations and insurance opt-ins.
    - Councils introduce arts assets/non-cash budget line for grants.
    - Council assists in exploration of geographical scope and assists in navigating complexities of asset ownership (individual or organisational).

### 3i. EDUCATION

Tech and culture hubs are booming, spaces where art as mechanism of social and cultural exchange are common. This engages many languages, ages and life-stages. These spaces, their operational times, content and childcare options are family friendly.

Youth offered different ways to access knowledge and engage.

- ❖ All schools in the inner west are host to an elder and an artist-in-residence. This combats negative stereotypes around ageing and creative industries, inviting future humans to value both based on lived experience.

### 3j. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Huge increase in local and native food production. Block-by-block micro-climate education initiatives supported by Council. Knowledge shared by long-term locals, with cuttings of successful local and edible species of plants also shared. This leads to a more widespread understanding of permaculture principles for living, not just growing food.

- ❖ Increased local power generation and storage, with resources readily available and subsidised by Council.

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- ❖ More informal and formal meeting places for conversation about shared challenges and opportunities abundant: [Greenhub Sustainability Learning Centre](#).
  - ❖ Huge community and Council push to have alcohol decoupled from public gatherings. This makes many more creative uses of public and private spaces possible for all cultural events.
  - ❖ Push by residents – supported by councils – to have poker machines banned, which leads to reopening spaces that were previously used for live performance. Specific gambling spaces operate under strict guidelines from community advisory groups. Counselling and financial advice is offered to all families suffering from the effects of gambling.
  - ❖ Council actively supports initiatives to support LGBTQI families and kids in the area: [Campout](#).

### 3k. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In 2036, activism is now mature, gentle and responsive. Community activism and civic literacy high due to widespread education in zoning, building codes, infrastructure challenges and funding. State and Federal politics less functional, with residents looking to their local council to be their primary ‘voice’ in democratic system.

Council takes steps to encourage regular discourse with community on shifting needs. Works on being more approachable to all residents. Council advocates for an expanded understanding of what ‘the arts’ actually encompasses – films, books, photography, design... not just ‘high art’. Council materials refrain from using ‘creative’ as a noun – it reinforces the idea that there are people who are creative and some that aren’t, which is unhelpful to the public perception for artists. Council connects artists with local philanthropy.

- ❖ Council draws on consultants, ambassadors, elders, researchers from community as advisors to agile policy – this requires regular conversation and non-institutional spaces that attract those who might otherwise be suspicious of civic engagement.
- ❖ Council offered mentorships for emerging community interdisciplinary leaders.
- ❖ Council investing in regular conversation with arts and culture reps (not just every four years).
- ❖ Council encouraging and engaging Futuring methodology – becomes common practice for creative, consultative problem-solving.
- ❖ Council provides mentorship/training for local artists and educators in the following areas:
  - to connect with job opportunities in the arts in their area
  - self-care and mental health strategies
  - building code and legislation literacy.
  - administration and the rapidly changing economy

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- ❖ Council can help to connect artists with arts advocacy bodies and groups campaigning on their behalf (eg. [Visual Arts.net](#), [Musicians Union](#), [Media, Entertainment + Arts Alliance](#)).
  - ❖ Waterloo Public Housing Action Group (WPHAG) setting high benchmark for community and resident-led urban planning [WPHAG](#).
  - ❖ Public conversations about ethics and agency abound in spaces exploring alternative pedagogy (eg. [Frontyard](#) 2017). Greening and reclaiming streets drive people's movements and motivations.
  - ❖ Citizens draw the attention of our reps to pro-active precedents of spaces/orgs and other leadership bodies doing a good job of XYZ

### 3I. HOUSING (RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY USE AND ACCESS)

To ensure housing and community spaces are self-sustaining, Council provides support programs and oversees rental precarity. Social housing accommodates and nurtures multiple structures of families. There is an increase in support for spaces for mess and noise as well as access. Council assists in identifying and removing the impediments to creative and collaborative experimentation – mostly ideas that require time and experimentation without short-term profit.

- ❖ Co-housing, queering of family units and connections common.
- ❖ Goal of 20-30 per cent social housing vital to the sustainability of creative community in Inner West. Council and government partners work towards genuine social housing achieved in combination with strong affordable housing policies.
- ❖ New LEP 2018-2028. Bigger government, building codes changed, leading to more community ownership alongside increasing corporatisation of governments.
- ❖ Planning increasing density, but with creative rezoning enables residents to live creative lives. Massive development to accommodate growing population but in genuine consultation with affected community, disused and inefficient use of space is mitigated.
- ❖ Move to rethink and dismantle policies that allow disused and inefficient use of space ('landbanking'). Residents and councils look to movements like [Renew Adelaide](#) and [Renew Newcastle](#) as models.

### 3m. COMMERCIAL PROPERTY USE AND ACCESS

Business held to account – triple-bottom-line accounting leads to a cultural trading scheme where industries that are considered damaging to communities (eg: gambling, mining) contribute 'social investment'. This has a huge impact on the arts as it enables council/government to provide long-term spaces for arts and culture education, development and exchange. This benefits a generation of citizens who would never have considered applying for funding for arts projects or attending art schools. Plural roles/occupations inform multiplicity of use and value.

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Council and local business recognise that the community is always changing and is nourished by regular opportunity for dialogue and exchange around products, services and collaboration between not-for-profit and commercial enterprises.

- ❖ Council subsidises projects with arts, cultural and social outcomes, helps to negotiate longer fixed-rent leases with private landlords. Prioritises accessibility to all groups. The local queer community engaged, Council ensures that multiple structures of businesses and non-traditional career choices are nurtured.
- ❖ Live bands have more options for spaces to play. Council co-designs and launches a fair rating system where artists can identify the organisations and businesses that treat artists well as opposed to exploit 'for exposure'.
- ❖ Small-scale enterprise valued and nurtured by Council through mentorship programs. This also leads to an increase in Inner West-based businesses registering as internationally registered [B Corps](#). Huge community pressure to work towards social accountability.
- ❖ Makerspaces, DIY and localised manufacturing thriving (following models developed by NYC where they fostered these deliberately [Making it here: the future of manufacturing in New York City](#)).
- ❖ Council policy discourages practice of 'landbanking' by developers. Introduces prohibitive taxes – empty buildings taxation contributes to local arts, culture, living stories.
- ❖ Council active in brokering Aboriginal land agreements, leading to spaces being activated and Indigenous-owned.
- ❖ Queer spaces supported by the community and council enabling safe expression of identity – this goes for everything from performance spaces to queer family 'oddkin' based housing.





#### 4. The Inner West “Back in 2017”

The Inner West boasts a gravitational power of like-minded people interested in culture, community and diversity. Locals are powered by Phở, coconut smash and pork-rolls. Addison Rd community hub is a go-to for residents interested in their community, in upcycling, recycling, repurposing and organic vegetables. Sunday markets here thrive with not-only-local-but-local-feeling humans having a wonderful time and supporting local businesses.

Many artists are working from home balancing several freelance and short-term projects alongside ‘feast or famine’ grant-funded exhibition and tour planning and creation. Artists are often working solitary in front of a computer. The main employers for artists and arts-workers outside of the arts themselves are education and hospitality, both having suffered attacks in recent years.

The arts community feels under attack from several directions – cuts to federal funding avenues for emerging and experimental, small to medium companies, as well as cuts to arts education ([Sydney College of the Arts](#) and [National Art School](#)). In addition to this, many artists are casual teachers at school and universities, so many also seeing their fees decrease and their jobs become more precarious. Recent research has shown an increase in mental health problems and suicide ideation in the arts community. [Entertainment Assist](#), [The Conversation.com](#).

There is a mass exodus of artists from Sydney, both behavioural (artists who stop making art but remain in the Inner West) and physical (artists moving out of the LGA to somewhere they can afford to live/work/create). Many are working multiple jobs and often paying over 50 per cent of their income on rent. National Association for Visual Arts (NAVA) advocacy body hosting regular conversation with nation’s artists and exploring nexus of art and activism, encouraging community discourse.

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Mental health concerns, access and housing/space affordability concerns informing individuals and groups assessing where they might live (outside of Sydney, several participants mention Tasmania and South Coast NSW).

Fewer young people engaging in arts courses as they are afraid they will not be able to support themselves working in this industry due to political comments like arts study being 'a lifestyle choice' (Education Minister Simon Birmingham, [Sydney Morning Herald](#)).

Growing trend of local production and manufacturing eg: small printers [Rizzera](#), [Big Fag Press](#) and makerspaces like [Maker Space & Co.](#) New exchange models promoted by small businesses such as [Cornersmith](#) (workshops, cafe, pickletry). Community gardens increasingly common. Push to section off more public park land for edible food.

Walkable community and some queer spaces, although women, migrants and members of the queer community still feeling unsafe at night. Right to public space elevated and fought for through campaigns such as [Reclaim The Streets](#) and [Keep Sydney Open](#).

Noise complaints shutting down valued venues for performance and experimentation and driving out musicians: [Noise complaints: changes to legislation](#).

There is a sense of constant, massive development. Residents are conscious of Millers Point and Waterloo housing crises. Several generations of artists sleeping in their studios illegally.

Developers starting to bypass councils to deal directly with small-medium arts orgs to 'activate' spaces while waiting for development... (eg ex-Fedex distribution building in Alexandria now owned by Chinese developer [HPG](#) being activated by [Sydney Fringe Festival](#)). Community distrust of this model as it perpetuates the temporary, rootless and placeless nature of arts organisations. Cements the precarity. Uses artists and culture-workers as cultural currency to sell apartments.

Multi-use warehouses still celebrated. Many internationally celebrated artists are creating/experimenting in Inner West warehouses. Many are set to be demolished causing panic among artists requiring space for large-scale development of work and/or artists that have already moved several times to different studios in the last few years. Most artists co-housing and renting to afford to live in Inner West

Small bars and small venues key for intergenerational cross-pollination of ideas and sharing solutions to problems in the arts community.

#### 4a. Key Examples of Spaces, Organisations and Events Vital to Arts and Culture in the Inner West in 2017:

- ❖ **Maker Space & Co.** <http://makerspace.org.au/> Ongoing challenge to maintain subscriber base – staffing and maintenance costs.
- ❖ **Red Rattler** <http://www.redrattler.org/sydney/whats+on>
- ❖ **The Bearded Tit.** Even though it is in Redfern, it has become a bastion for many in Sydney's art scene. Restrictions around its hours of operation are leading the community to speculate that it

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may be forced to close its doors. There have been hundreds of submissions to Council (CoS) to fight for the survival of this space and community.

- ❖ **Heaps Gay** <http://heapsgay.com/> adventurous, multi-platform celebration of queer arts and culture
- ❖ **Join The Dots** <https://jointhedotsworkshop.wordpress.com/> Landlord could decide to sell the block. Could council drive/arrange purchase of space with local philanthropist/investors and commit to keep it as a long-term creative core live/work hub for the Inner West?
- ❖ **Tortuga Studios** <http://www.tortugastudios.org.au/> Artist-run warehouse space and gallery in operation for almost ten years, providing affordable studio rental and exhibitions. The future of the space is in jeopardy as the landlord has made it clear he will sell up to developers in the near future. Between Tortuga and the aerie (upstairs), over 40 artists and creatives work within this multi-disciplinary space. Known for large-scale multi-artist exhibitions, community/ arts street festivals and arts workshops. Actively looking for new long-term warehouse space in the Inner West.
- ❖ **the aerie** <http://theaerie.com.au/> Creative co-working space upstairs from Tortuga Studios.
- ❖ **FBI Radio** <http://fbiradio.com/culture-interviews/> acts as effective Sydney-wide arts and culture 'town crier'.
- ❖ **The NOW now** <http://thenownow.net/> and **Splinter Orchestra**.
- ❖ **SNO Gallery** <http://www.sno.org.au/> (closing August 2017).
- ❖ **Gallery 55** <http://www.55sydenhamrd.com/>.
- ❖ **Rizzeria** <http://www.rizzeria.com/>.
- ❖ **Big Fag Press & Wild Food Map**.
- ❖ **Brand X** Precarious rentals while council amalgamates.
- ❖ **Tempe Jets** Food, performance, rehearsals, multi-disciplinary activity. Precarious rental while council amalgamates.
- ❖ **Perfect Match Street Art** good example of council engagement with arts in our community providing a good deal for all  
<http://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/art---events/events-and-festivals/perfect-match>.
- ❖ Friends of **Callan Park** ongoing campaign to 'save Callan Park'.
- ❖ **National Association for Visual Arts (NAVA)** Arts advocacy body, based in Woolloomooloo, but active nationally.
- ❖ **Frontyard Projects** is an imperfect and precarious example of the kind of organisation and space that is responsive to change. It is not a static structure, and the 'content' is based on regular

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conversation with community. It's a space for elegant activism that is driven by and supports its community. Precarious rental while council amalgamates. Home of the Noncash Assets project, the decommissioned OZCO arts resource library, two residency spaces, Australian Charter for The Arts, Frontyard listening station, workshop room and edible garden. Inner West Council could recognise Frontyard library as a 'special collection' arm of the vibrant learning centre known as Marrickville Library. Celebrates residency program and regularly consults with core team on arts and culture issues. Continues to subsidise affordable rent so that the broad range of community-driven intimate content can continue to thrive.

- ❖ **People Just Like Us** refugee rights group
- ❖ **Subbed-In** Poetry and experimental writing courses and shows <http://subbed.in/>

## 5. Who was Invited?

### 5a. Council Invitations

Workshop 1 (afternoon): Council consulted internal arts and culture staff across Inner West Council regarding key reps from a variety of artforms

Workshop 2 (evening): Council advertised on arts networks including Art Post, Create eNews and social media

### 5b. Fictions Invitations

In addition to Council inviting a list of targeted community members, we contacted members of our community that we knew would provide insightful, diverse and specific feedback. Our collective network consisted of activists, artists, advocates, venue operators, those identifying as LGBTQI, ESL, Indigenous and people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, ages and genders.

## 6. Participants and their Relationship to the Arts/Creative Industries

**Angie Abdilla** Founder and CEO of Old Ways New <http://www.oldwaysnew.com/>, Angie is a Palawa Kaui woman. As a United Nations Delegate, she has presented on the Ethical Digitisation of Indigenous Culture at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Angie worked with the United Nations Development Programme and Indigenous leaders and their Indigenous Traditional Knowledges within world climate change negotiations, as part of the Paris Agreement. She is a published author on her work within the field of robotics, AI and Autonomous Systems. Angie has worked in digital product development, policy, strategy and research. Prior to this, Angie was the Director of the Indigenous Digital Excellence, as part of the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, and is previously known as an acclaimed film director and producer for her immersive documentary film and cross-disciplinary arts works. Angie continues to utilise the craft of story-telling as the central component to all her work.

**Rhiannon Newton** <http://rhiannonnewton.com/> Rhiannon is a Sydney based dancer and choreographer. Her practice concentrates on the live-ness of dance and processes of repetition, problematising how a dancing spirit meets economies of production and authorship. Her works have been presented at Brisbane Festival, Dancehouse, Dance Massive, The Lock-Up Gallery, Judson Church (USA), Metro Arts, Nagib On Stage (SL), PACT Centre for Emerging Artists and Strut Dance. She has developed her practice in residencies throughout Australia and abroad with organisations such as Bundanon Trust, Campbelltown Arts Centre, The Centre for

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Interdisciplinary Arts, Critical Path, UNSW Creative Practice Lab, Lo Studio (CH), Movement Research (USA), Nagib (SL), Performing Arts Forum (FR) and Tanzhaus Zurich (CH). Rhiannon has been a part of international forums such as the Australian Eastern European Choreographic Exchange, Avignon Festival Seminar and the Swiss/Australian Reciprocal Residency. She works as a performer with artists such as Rosalind Crisp, Mette Edvardsen, Martin Del Amo, Paea Leach and Brooke Stamp. Rhiannon also co-facilitates First Run Sydney, is on the board of ReadyMade Works Studio and lectures at the Australian College of Physical Education.

**Chloe Wolifson** <http://chloewolifson.com/> Independent arts writer and curator, Chloe is 33 years of age, female, and English speaking. Lived in Marrickville since 2009 (first-home buyer). Also has a casual part-time job in Newtown.

**Axel Powrie** <http://axelpowrie.blogspot.com.au/p/about.html> Alex is a 24-year-old, Campsie-based nurse and improvising musician. Current member of the Splinter Orchestra.

**Prue Fuller** is a 29 year-old Inner West resident “from a small town,” musician and disability support worker based in Leichhardt. She is a member of the Splinter Orchestra, works with various groups out of Tempe Jets – managed by Brand X on behalf of Council – she is engaged with the running of the NOW now festival and series (various spaces around Sydney), Studio Arts and Emus.space website (and independent initiative listing all experimental music happenings in Sydney) local record label Splitrec Records and the Life Groove Cafe (Leichhardt).

**Ruby Everett** is a “lifelong resident of Marrickville”, a 25-year-old local musician and activist.

**Meredith Williams** is a local artist and one of the collective owners of the Red Rattler theatre, Marrickville. <http://www.redrattler.org/sydney/about+us>

**Diego Bonetto** is an Italian artist, father, forager, speaker, keen naturalist and award-winning cultural worker based in Sydney. Since 2002, Diego has been working as a multimedia artist and cultural engagement practitioner and is key member of artists’ collectives [SquatSpace](#) and the [BigFAGPress](#). Diego's art practice encompasses collaborative socially engaged projects like the [Green Bans Art Walk](#) and the [Redfern/Waterloo Tour of Beauty](#) to environmental campaigns like the [Weedy Connection](#) and [Wild Stories](#) projects, celebrating and fostering culturally aware interpretation of the landscape. Diego works with chefs, scientists, architects, academics, herbalists, brewers, soap makers, producers, educators and land owners, providing programs, workshops, tours, community engagement strategies and exhibitions. He regularly presents at conferences and symposiums on the ecological and cultural value of botanical species. Diego is now collaborating with a cluster of developers, web producers naturalists, horticulturalists to create [Wild Food Map](#) – a community to identify public domain food and medicine plants living in the landscape, sharing locations and related knowledge through social media interaction. Diego's project have received a substantial amount of media including a Gardening Australia segment and articles in *Marie Claire*, *GQ Australia*, *LonelyPlanet*, *SMH*, *The Daily Telegraph*, ABC Radio and TV and SBS Radio and TV. <http://www.diegonetto.com/#book-foraging-tours>

**H Morgan-Harris** is the director of Tortuga Studios and creative co-working space **the aerie**. Currently living in Tempe, H has lived and worked in the Inner West for all of the 18 years she has been in Australia and considers it home. As a copywriter and editor, much of her work sits in the arts/ culture sphere. As a curator and arts manager, she is intrinsically involved in promoting, housing and exhibiting the artists of the Inner West. As a writer, her work deals with the memory of place and placemaking, and for her the two concepts are intrinsically interlinked. She is 44 years of age, a mother, female and English speaking. “Space, people and culture connect me”. [www.fromthesportsdesk.com](http://www.fromthesportsdesk.com) <http://theaerie.com.au/the-nest/>



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**Clare Holland** Managing Director of FBI Radio <http://fbiradio.com/author/clare-holland/>, ex-director of Underbelly festival <http://underbellyarts.com.au/>. Independent arts producer.

**Brianna Munting** co-Director of the National Association for Visual Arts (NAVA) <https://visualarts.net.au/>

**Claire Pettigrew** Equity and Diversity worker, facilitator and researcher.

**Caz from Leichhardt** Caz is a 77-year-old passionate volunteer for Callan Park. "Reactivate Callan Park for PASSIVE RECREATION." <http://www.callanpark.com/>

**Lyn Latella** Balmain resident, designer, aestheticist, creative director of "Cucina Latella", exec. Of Friends of Callan Park, Education Officer at Glovers Community Garden in Lilyfield.

**Fayrøle** Town planner in Northern Sydney, resident of Camperdown.

**Vince Vozzo** is a local sculptor working primarily with marble and stone.  
<http://harveygalleries.com.au/artist/vozzo-vince/>

**Tasman Munro** longtime Inner West resident, core member of [Join The Dots Collective](#) co-working and arts space in Marrickville. Strategic designer and illustrator, researcher, teacher and academic with [Designing Out Crime \(UTS\)](#).

**Will Owen** Will is a 29-year-old Newtown resident, who has lived in the Inner West for the last decade. Facilitator and designer working with social innovation platforms and systems. Currently also working with [Second Muse](#) in Melbourne, a strategic innovation company. One of the founding members of [Frontyard](#), co-founder of Fictions Group with Clare Cooper.

**Clare Cooper** is a 35-year-old local artist and parent. Grew up in Strathfield and has lived in the Inner West since moving out of home 18 years ago, with the exception of a six-year stint in Germany. She is a designer, facilitator, organiser, researcher and academic. Cooper co-founded [Frontyard](#), established [The NOW now festival of experimental music and film](#) (est 2001-current, co-director from 2001-2007) as well as the Splinter Orchestra (2002) among other collaborative and community arts projects.

**Prue Foreman**, Inner West Council

**Naomi Bower**, Inner West Council

**Annie Coulthard**, Inner West Council

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## 7. Additional Questions and Prompts

Below are some of the additional questions and prompts that were used throughout the two sessions. The responses to these questions have been integrated into the above summaries.

- *If you are no longer living in the Inner West, why?*
- *Why do you still feel connected to the place?*
- *What does community consultation look like? (Civic leadership and quality of life)*
- *What can we do to strengthen current initiatives?*
- *How can we support/encourage more of these examples?*
- *What are the barriers and threats to achieving this future?*
- *What is tangible in this future?*
- *What have the major societal shifts been?*
- *What languages do we speak?*
- *Is the language of 'social vitality', 'community', 'culture', 'the arts', 'promoting inclusion' inclusive, helpful and representative of what we are actually experiencing/sharing/creating?*
- *What does a thriving creative community look like in 2036?*
- *Can you think of a place, organisation, event that was proactively generating diverse, inclusive and sustainable culture back in 2017? What did this thing need?*
- *What is a thriving community?*
- *What could lasting outcomes be?*
- *What are the behaviours and activities of value to you in a thriving community? Why? Exactly...*
- *What supports these things to occur/survive?*
- *What are the structural levers?*
- *Who/what is responsible? From individuals voting with their feet through to government levels.*
- *Give concrete examples every time...*
- *40,000 more people will be living in the Inner West - what are the cultural rights of new residents? What kinds of spaces and organisations will promote access and therefore encourage participation in the arts?*

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## 8. Workshop Details and Credits

July 13, 2-4pm and 6-8pm

Facilitators: 'Fictions' Clare Cooper, Will Owen and Tasman Munro [hello@fictions.com.au](mailto:hello@fictions.com.au)

Sketchnoting: Tasman Munro, Will Owen

Videography: Mark Taylor

Catering: Alfie's Kitchen [alfieskitchen@gmail.com](mailto:alfieskitchen@gmail.com)

Venue: Frontyard, 228 Illawarra Rd, Marrickville [info@frontyardprojects.org](mailto:info@frontyardprojects.org)

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