

# Financial Snapshot of Art Centres

Financial years – 2004/05 > 2018/19

Data analysed – March 2020

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### Introduction

Art centres occupy a unique place in Australia’s cultural and creative sector. Often located in remote communities in the north and centre of the continent, art centres produce most of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works of art that are exhibited and sold in galleries throughout Australia and internationally.

Art centres, as community-focused, culturally-driven enterprises, are hybrid organisations, balancing social and cultural priorities with creative and commercial ones. By generating independent income and employment in remote communities, meeting government funding priorities and having a prominent profile means there is often strong interest in the ‘money story’ of art centres.

This industry update gives a financial snapshot of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centre sector.

### Summary

Art centres sales have been growing for eight years. From 2011/12 to 2018/19, the average sales of art centres have grown by 53.4%. However, average sales are still 11.7% lower than they were at their peak in 2007/08.

Art centres in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia have all increased their average sales since a low point around 2010. While Queensland art centres have seen a long-term decline in average sales, the last two years have seen modest growth.

Art centres are more financially independent. Over the last two years, the proportion of income from grants fell to its lowest level in almost a decade, at around 40% of total average income.

Four out of five artworks are produced by female artists.

Female artists over 50 years old produce more than one third of all artworks.

One quarter of all artworks are produced by artists aged 60 or more.

Seven out of ten artworks sell for less than \$250; 1.0% of artworks sell for more than \$5,000.

In 2018/19, there were 21,172 active artists. Among these, were also 1,636 core artists (those producing 10+ artworks); these core artists represent around 7.5% of the total number of artists who produced an artwork in 2018/19.

In 2018/19, 74,285 artworks were produced. This is an average of 895 artworks for each of the 83 art centres included in the data.

Over the six years to 2018/19, 65.6% of all artworks were produced in the NT; 17.8% in WA, 9.0% in SA and 7.5% in QLD.



## Sales

After four years of falling sales from 2007/08, art centres have seen seven years of stability and growth. In 2007/08, the average art centre's annual sales were \$570,117; by 2011/12 average sales had fallen to \$328,079 before recovering to \$503,401 in 2018/19. Over the eight years to 2018/19, sales growth has averaged 5.6% per year.

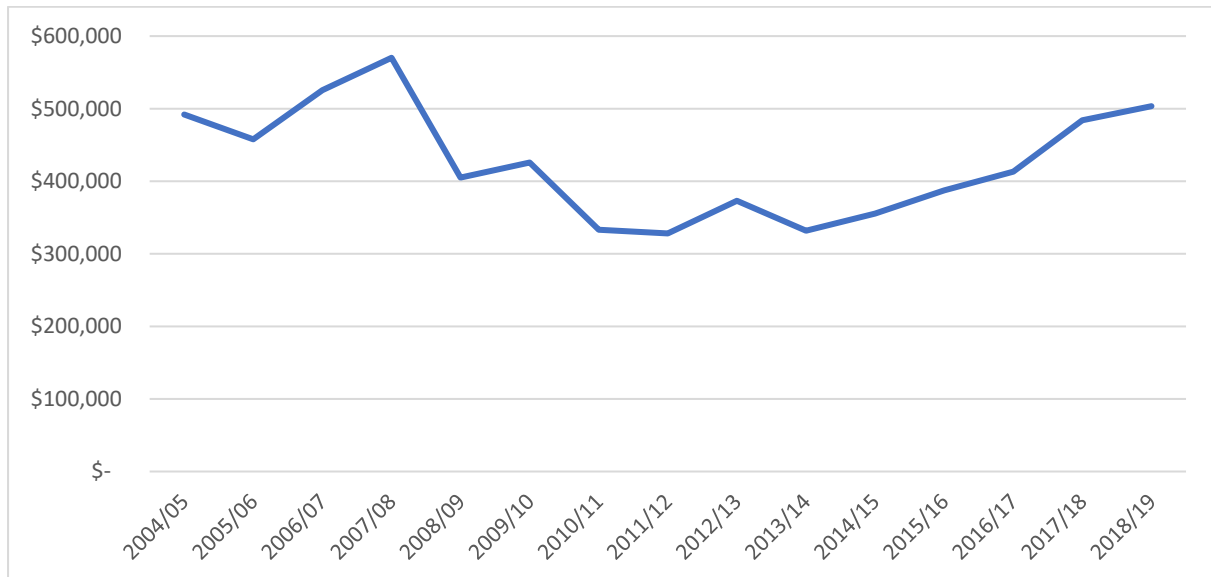


Figure 1: Average annual sales for Australian art centres, 2004/05 to 2018/19.

Of this sales income, art centres return an average of 59.4% to artists. This equates to average artist payments per art centre of \$286,087 in 2018/19.

Average sales generated by art centres are different across the four jurisdictions home to nearly all art centres, the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, as seen in Figure 2.

Queensland, with the lowest average sale per art centre has seen a halving since 2005/06, despite sales growth in 2017/18 and 2018/19. This trend is largely explained by the increase in new art centres in Far North Queensland. In the early 2000s, there were two large art centres in Queensland; by 2017/18 six primarily small and emerging centres had opened.

There is also an indication that sales in South Australian art centres have peaked, with a 7.9% fall in 2018/19.

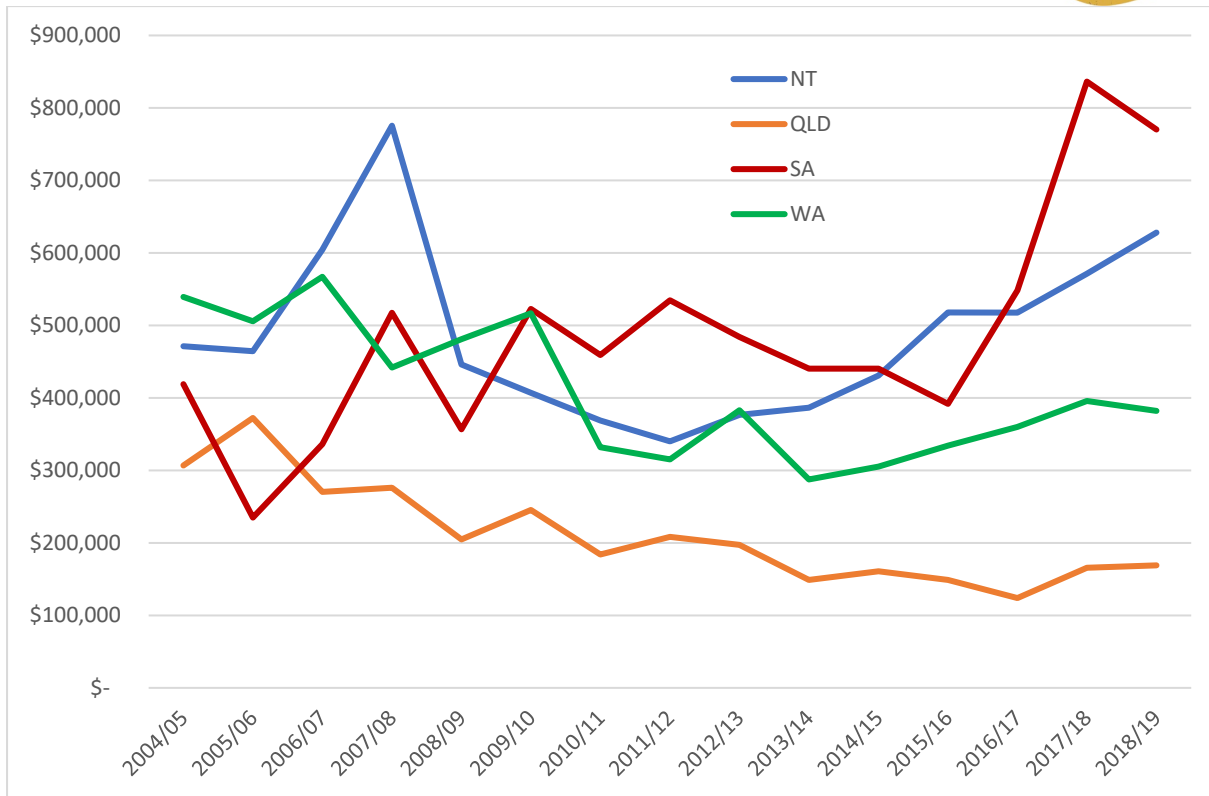


Figure 2: Average annual sales by art centres in each state/Territory, 2004/05 to 2018/19.

### Grants

Almost all art centres rely on grants, as seen in Figure 3. This reliance has changed over the 15 years of the data. Early years are characterized by a low level of reliance on grants, with around 80% of total income from sales. By around 2010 this situation changed, triggered by new funding priorities (particularly around employment) and the start-up of new and smaller art centres.

For the last eight years, grant funding has made up 44.6% of the average art centre’s total income. However, with the growth in sales and the stabilisation of emerging art centres, this situation is showing signs of change. Reliance on grants has been reducing. Over the last two years 41.0% of an average art centre’s total income was from grants, the lowest level for around 10 years.

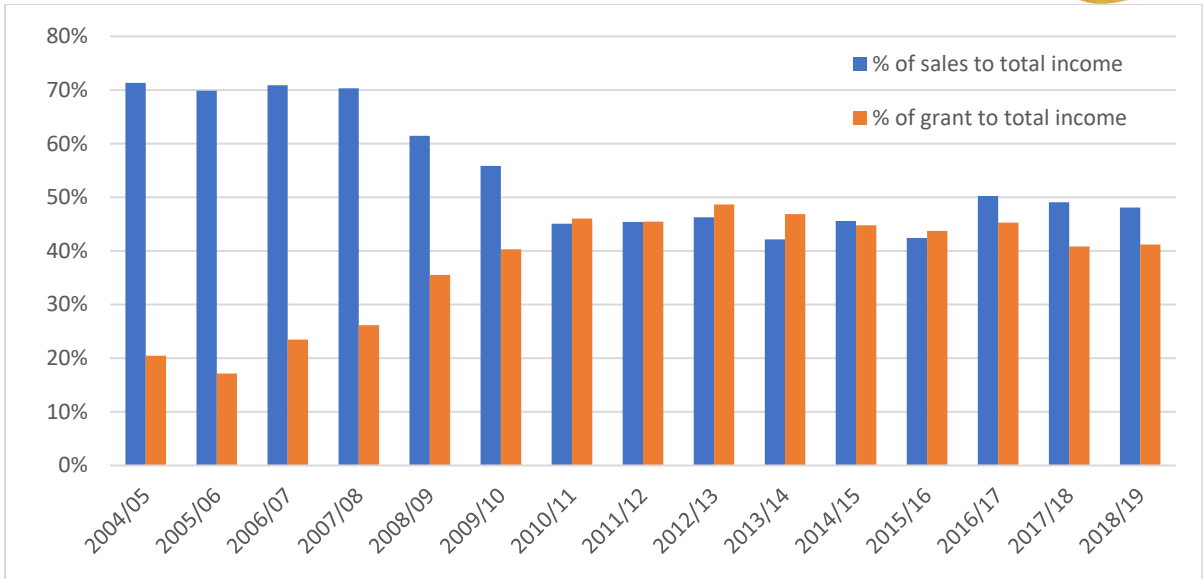


Figure 3: Income mix: the proportion of average art centre income that is generated from sales vs grants.

As with sales, grant dependency is uneven across the four jurisdictions. Queensland art centres have the highest reliance on grants, with an average of 64.8% of income from grants (excluding the 2016/17 anomaly caused by a large loss at one art centre). There are some indications that the reliance on funding by Queensland art centres is trending down. South Australian art centres have the lowest reliance, with an average of 28.9% of income from grants.

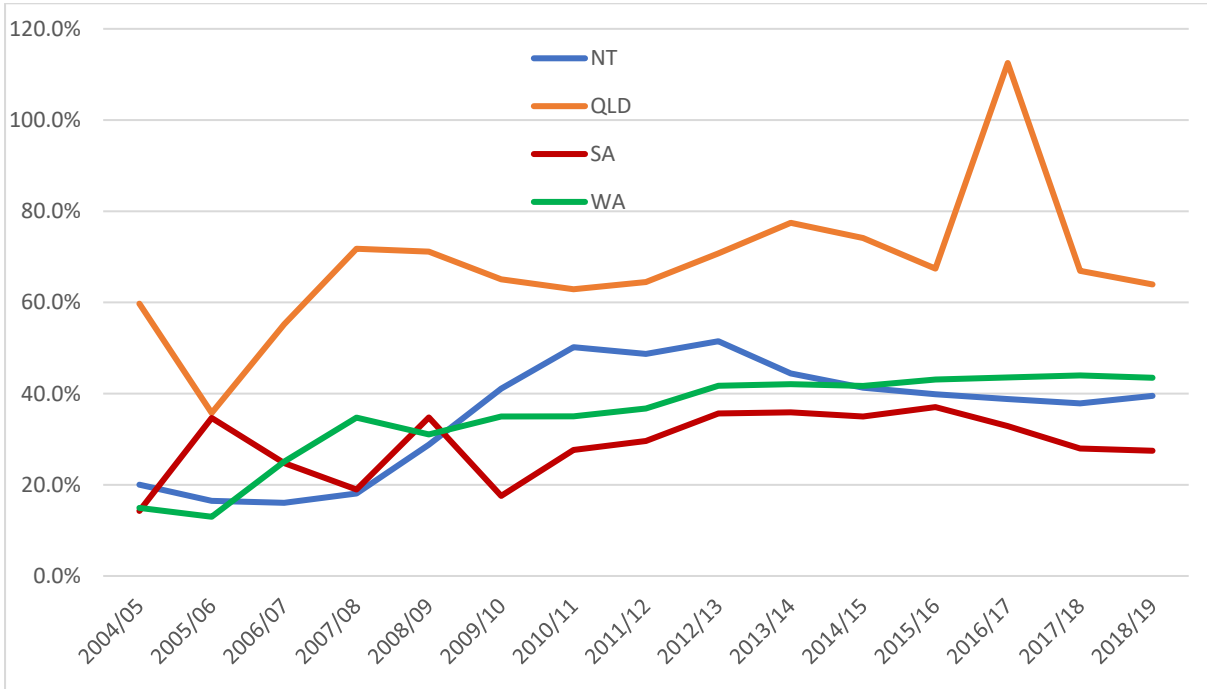


Figure 4: Proportion of an art centre's average total income from grants, by state/Territory, 2004/05 to 2018/19.

## Artists

Between 2012/13 and 2018/19, female artists produced an average of 74.5% of all artworks. The proportion of works produced by female artists has recently increased further. Between 2016/17 and 2018/19, female artists produced around 79.8% of artworks.

The proportion of artworks produced by female artists varies between jurisdictions:

State/Territory	% of works produced by female artists
NT	74.5%
QLD	64.2%
SA	81.5%
WA	80.7%

The proportion of artworks produced by female and male artists also changes with age, as seen in Figure 5. In total, artists aged 60 or more produce 26.9% of all artworks, while female artists aged 50 or more produce 36.6% of all artworks.

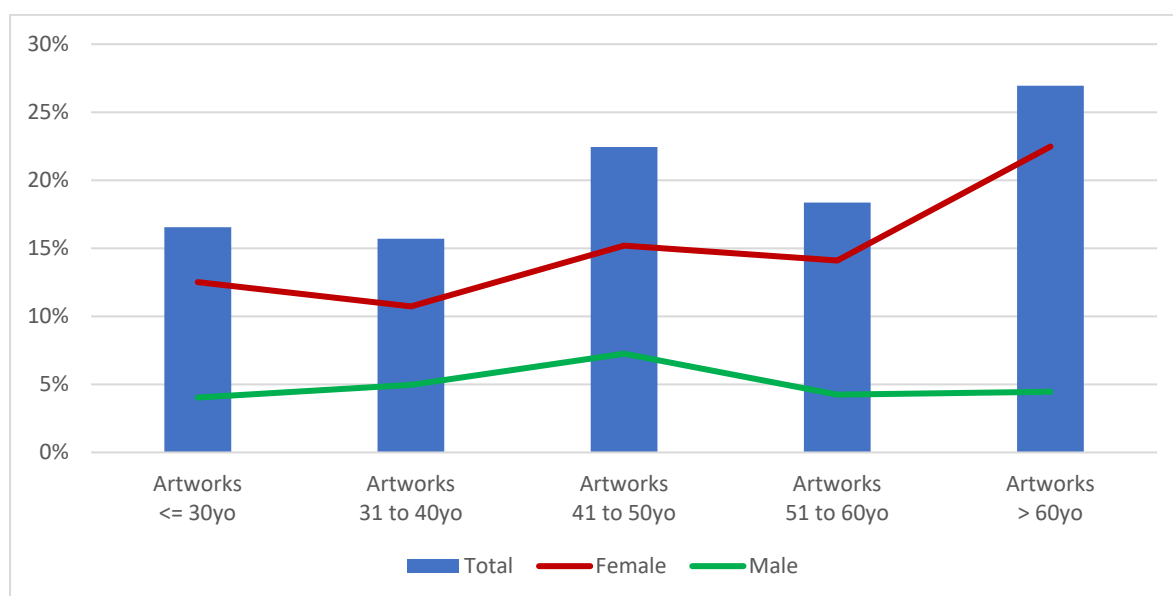


Figure 5: Artwork production by age group and gender, 2004/05 > 2018/19.

The proportion of artworks produced by each age group varies considerably between each State and Territory, as seen in Figures 6 > 9. Western Australian artists over 60 years of age produce 40.5% of all artworks in WA, considerably higher than other regions; 24.4% of all artworks in QLD are produced by artists aged over 60. Except for artists over 60, QLD also has the most even gender balance in the production of artworks.

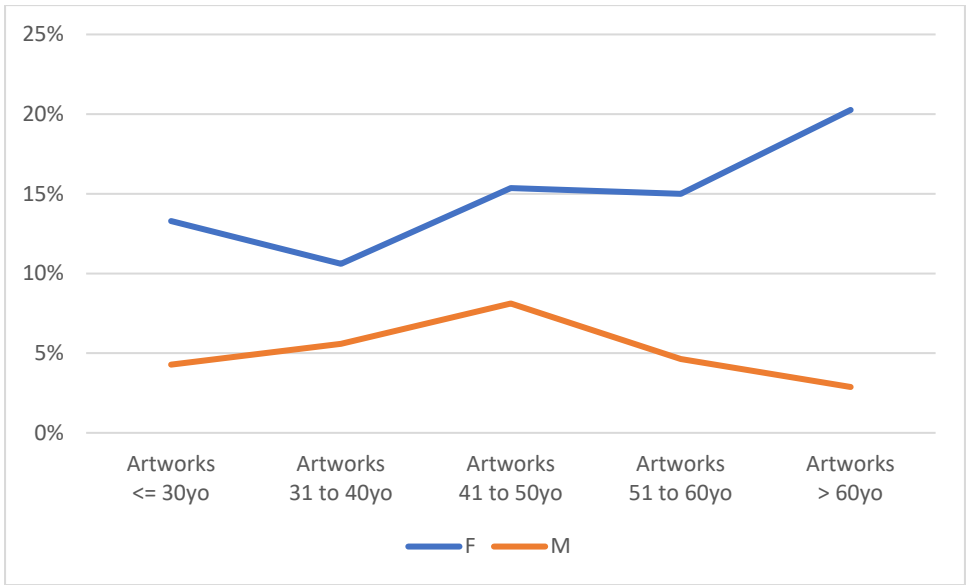


Figure 6: Artwork production by age group and gender in the Northern Territory, 2004/05 > 2018/19.

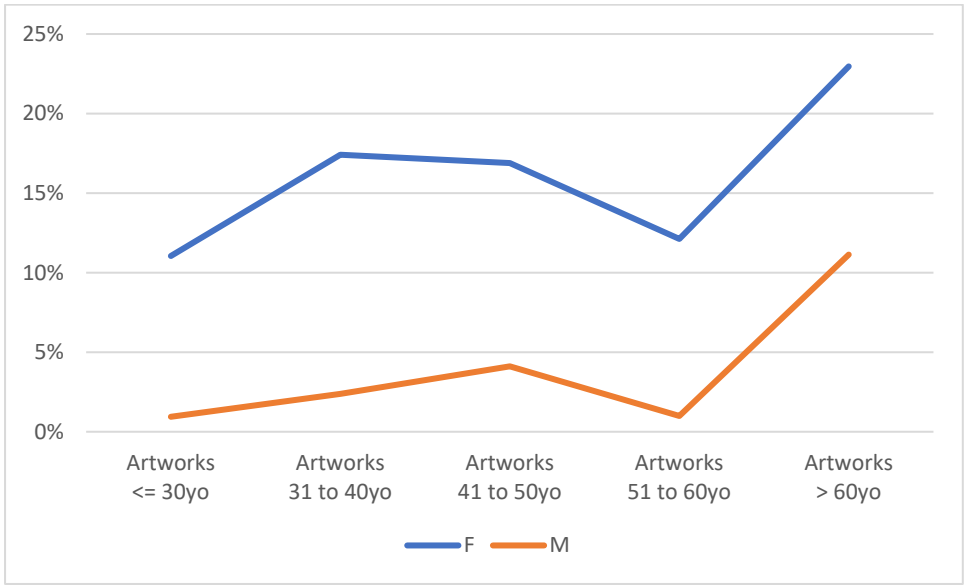


Figure 7: Artwork production by age group and gender in South Australia, 2004/05 > 2018/19.

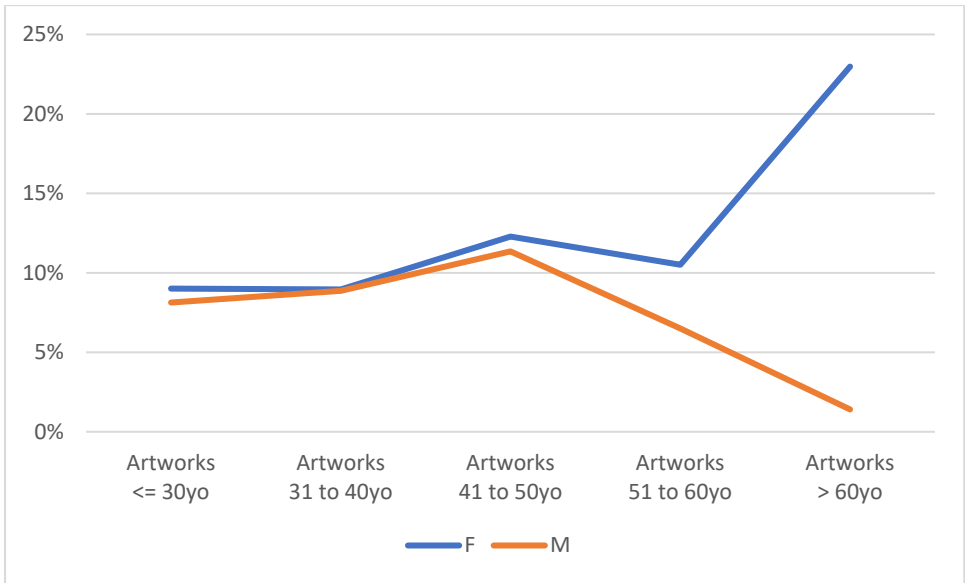


Figure 8: Artwork production by age group and gender in Queensland, 2004/05 > 2018/19.

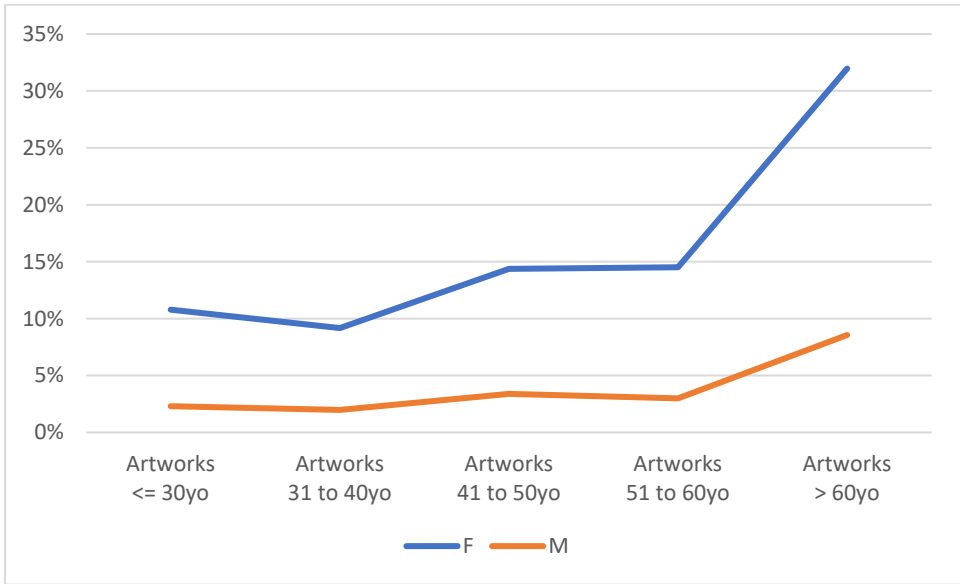


Figure 9: Artwork production by age group and gender Western Australia, 2004/05 > 2018/19.

Each art centre relies on a small group of committed artists. These core artists produce most of the higher quality works that are central to an art centre’s commercial and creative profile. A core artist is defined as an artist producing more than 10 artworks each year. Of these core artists, an average of 75.0% are female, as shown in Figure 10.



There has been a decline in the average number of core artists per art centre, also shown in Figure 10. In 2018/19, there were a total of 1,636 core artists, or 19.7 per art centre, a 4.0% fall from 1,705, or 22.1 per art centre, recorded in 2017/18.

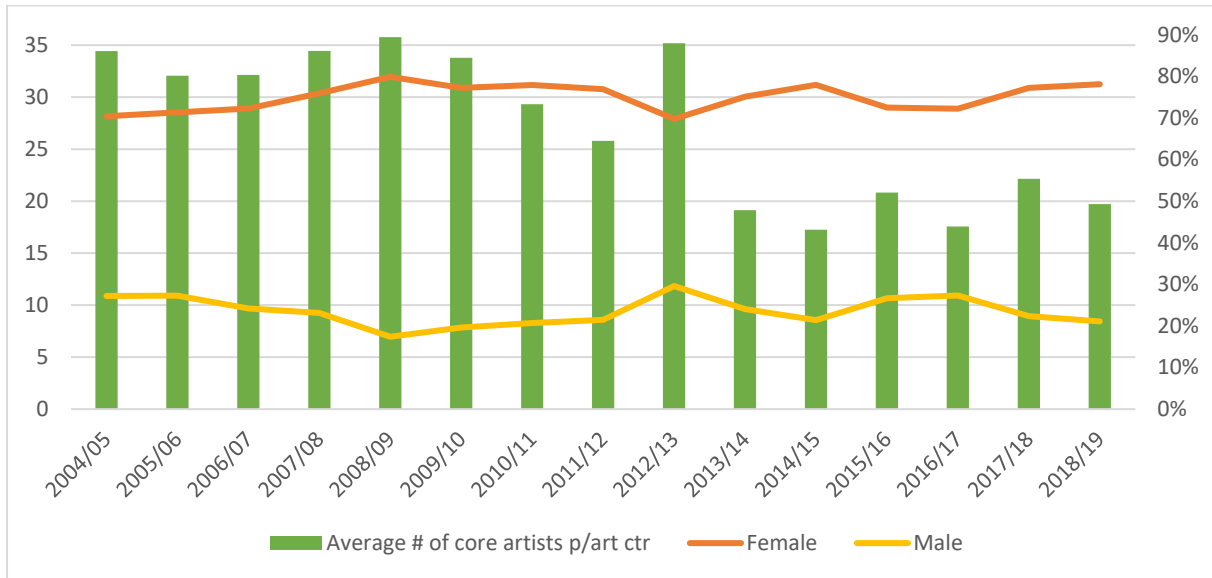


Figure 10: Proportion of female/male core artists and average number of core artists per art centre, 2004/05 > 2018/19.

The long-term health of art centres depends on supporting both existing artists and attracting new artists. Figure 11 shows the total number of artists active and the number of new artists in each year, from a total of 97 art centres. New artists make up around 10% of all artists, with some annual variation. An active artist is defined as any artist that produces, sells, is paid for or consigns an artwork during that year.

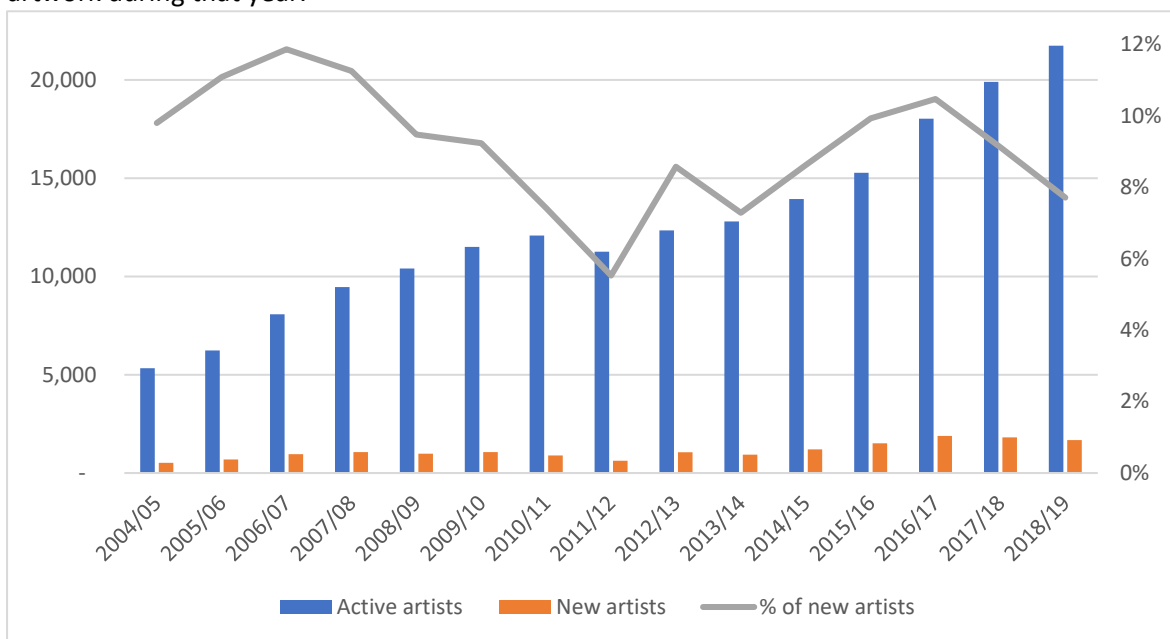


Figure 11: Annual total of active artists, new artists and proportion of new artists to active artists, 2004/05 > 2018/19.

### Artworks

Seven out of ten artworks sell for less than \$250, with 1.0% of artworks selling for more than \$5,000. The proportion of artworks selling for different price points has remained largely static, despite significant change in the sector, as seen in Figure 12.

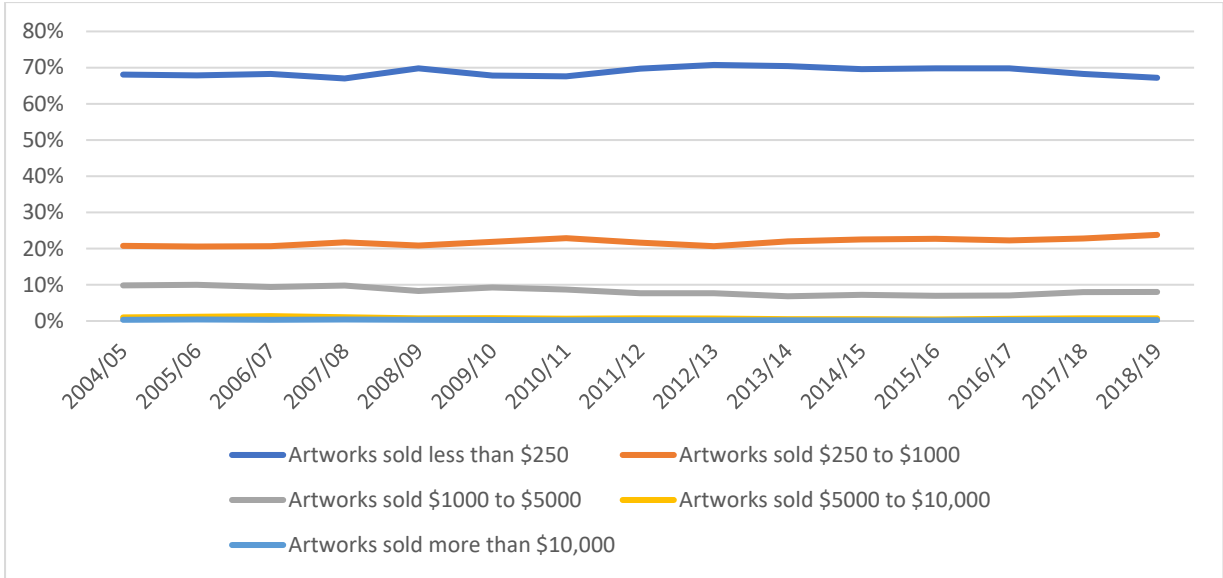


Figure 12: Percentage of artworks sold at different price points, 2004/05 to 2018/19.

While the proportion of artworks sold at different price points has remained static, Figure 13 shows the change in the sales volume, particularly the increase at lower price points.

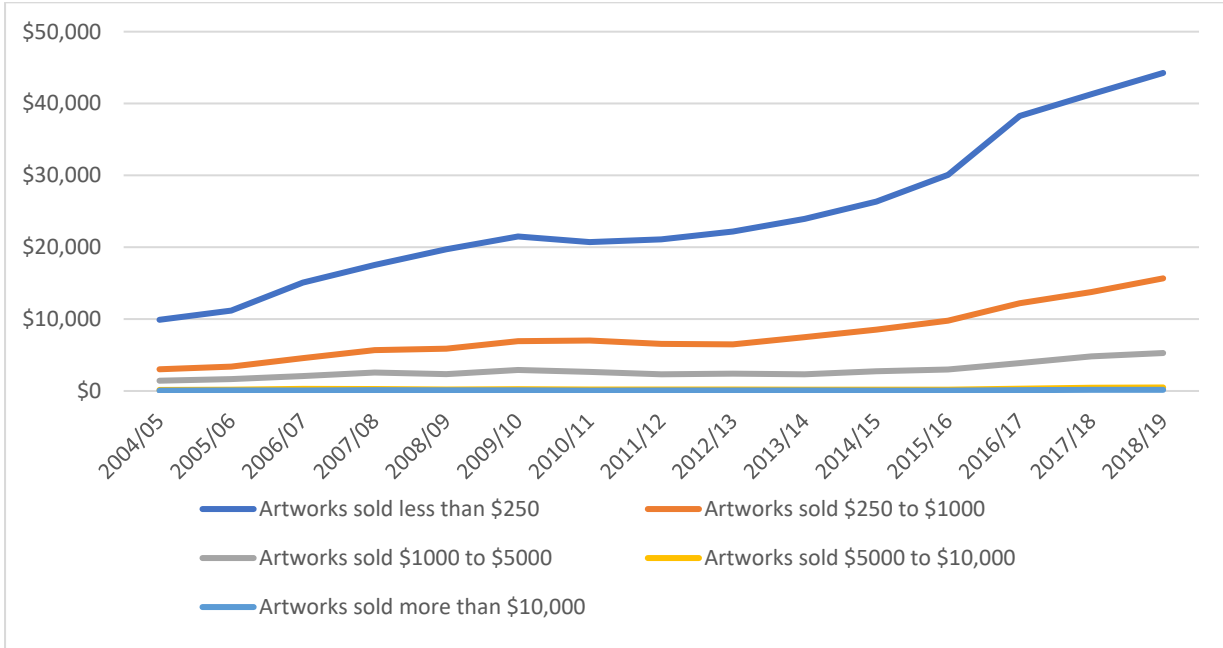


Figure 13: Number of artworks sold at different price points, 2004/05 to 2018/19.

Between 2012/13 and 2018/19 (the date range for which there is comparable data), art centre productivity – the average number of catalogued artworks produced by art centres – has been fairly stable, as shown in Figure 14. In 2018/19, artists at 83 art centres produced 74,285 artworks, or an average of 895 artworks per art centre. This is in addition to any products and uncatalogued artefacts they produced.

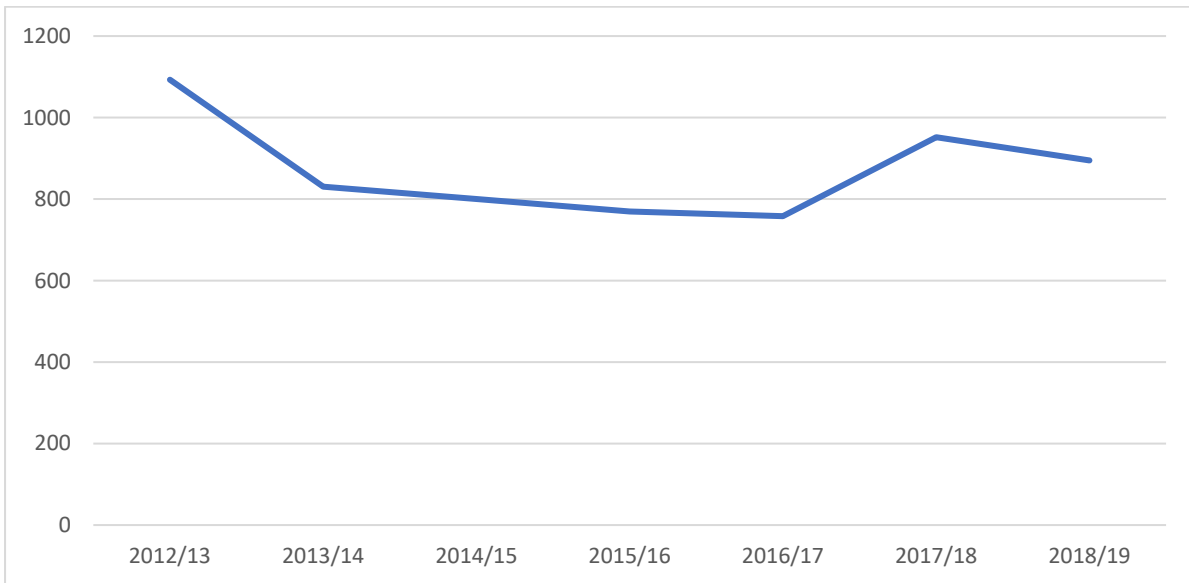


Figure 14: Average number of catalogued artworks produced by reporting art centres, 2012/13 > 2018/19.

The size of paintings produced by art centres has seen change and some growth. This growth has accelerated for smaller (30x30cm or less and 50x50cm) artworks, as seen in Figure 15. In 2018/19, 50.3% of all artworks were produced on these two smaller size categories.

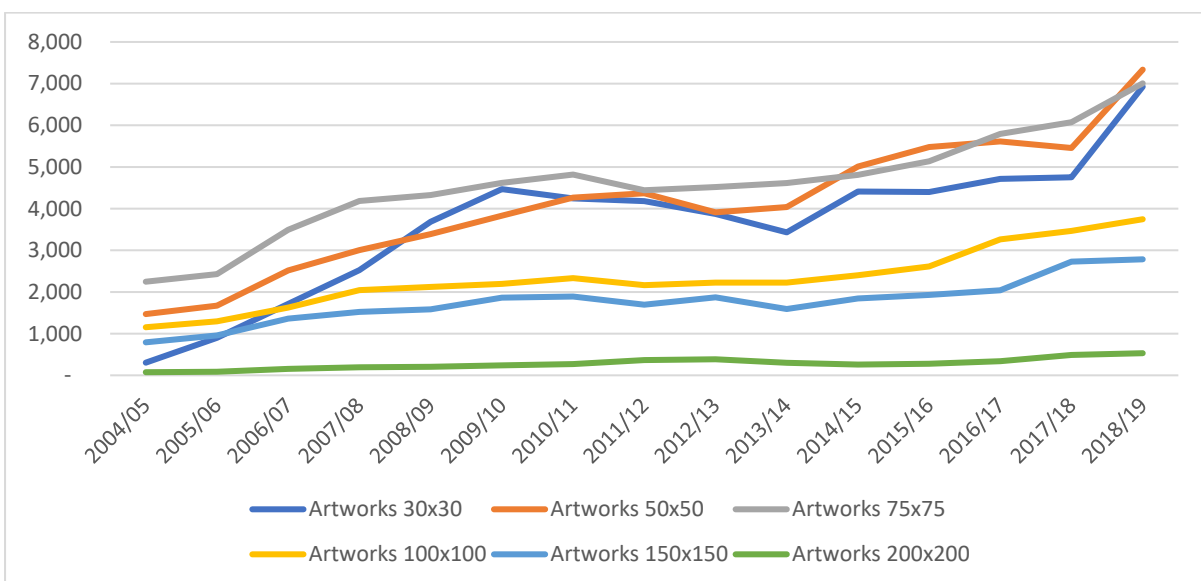


Figure 15: Number of artworks produced at different sizes, 2004/05 > 2018/19.

## Methodology

This report is based on information from two sources, art centre audits and extracts from their operational database. While this data does not include every art centre, it covers a statistically significant sample and provides a reasonable picture of art centre performance:

1. Art centre financial audits: many art centres complete an annual audit and the majority of these are publicly available. The number of art centres whose audit is publicly available or who provide their audit report varies over time, as shown on the following table. A total of 646 audits were analysed for this report, primarily for sales and grant income.

2004/05	19
2005/06	29
2006/07	31
2007/08	31
2008/09	49
2009/10	50
2010/11	56
2011/12	59
2012/13	47
2013/14	56
2014/15	56
2015/16	52
2016/17	55
2017/18	56
2018/19	49

2. Art centre operational data: most art centres use an operational database, SAM (Stories Art Money). SAM provides data on production and participation. The number of art centre datasets analysed each year varies as shown on the following table. A total of 691 art centres datasets were analysed:

2004/05	16
2005/06	16
2006/07	23
2007/08	27
2008/09	31
2009/10	33
2010/11	40
2011/12	39
2012/13	44
2013/14	55
2014/15	62
2015/16	70
2016/17	75
2017/18	77
2018/19	83



3. The proportion of art centre audits and SAM datasets used in this industry update reflects the distribution of art centres across the four jurisdictions:

Area	Annual financial data	SAM	Proportion of Art Centres
NT	44%	46%	45%
QLD	14%	16%	14%
SA	12%	11%	11%
WA	29%	27%	31%

4. Some data was available for art centres outside of the three states and the Northern Territory; however, this data only provided around 1% of results and was thus excluded in the analysis.

All data used for this update is fully de-identified. All figures are non-adjusted.

This update draws on, and extends the data and analysis generated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Economies Project, which concluded in 2015. This data is available at: <https://old.crc-rep.com/research/enterprise-development/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-art-economies/project-outputs>

### Disclaimer

This report is based on third party data representing a sample of the art centres in remote and regional Australia. While Desart is not in a position to verify the accuracy of that data or determine how representative it is, Desart has no reason to believe that the data on which this report is based is not accurate or broadly representative of the sector as at the date of publication. The information in this report is provided by Desart in good faith but is of a general nature and should not be relied on in lieu of appropriate professional advice. Desart does not warrant or guarantee its reliability, accuracy, completeness or fitness for purpose and accepts no liability whatsoever arising from, or connected to, the use of any material in this report.