

# Arts Workforce Scoping Study - Interim Findings

## TNA Overview

13 November 2024

### Overview

This document provides a brief overview tailored to TNA members with key points that are relevant to the performing arts sector.

The interim findings from Creative Australia's Arts Workforce Scoping Study highlight significant workforce shortages and skill gaps impacting the performing arts sector. Issues with recruitment, retention, and training are prominent, exacerbated by regional disparities and limited diversity.

The findings are based on survey responses from 244 creative organisations, including 115 performing arts organisations, that undertook recruitment in the 12 months prior to June 2024. The report is broken down into six creative industry sectors, including: Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Craft & Design, Writing & Publishing, Digital Games, Screen, and Music.

### Key Findings Relevant to the Performing Arts Sector

- **Role Shortages:** Critical shortages exist in production and technical roles, especially for stage and lighting technicians, sound technicians, and stage managers. Additionally, off-stage creative roles, including lighting designers, and business support roles like marketing and communications, are in high demand.
- **Regional Challenges:** Recruitment challenges are heightened in regional areas, with acute shortages reported for technical staff and front-of-house roles such as gallery assistants and guides.
- **Retention Factors:** Low wages, long hours, and limited career advancement opportunities are leading factors in retention issues across the sector. Perceived poor working conditions contribute to turnover, particularly for technical and production roles.
- **Recruitment:** Applicants lacking experience and a lack of applicants are the most common difficulties in recruiting, as well as low salaries for recruiting production/technical, management and business support roles.
- **Diversity in Recruitment:** Approximately half of the surveyed organisations prioritise diversity, including roles identified for First Nations people. Almost half of organisations did not recruit with diversity in mind (49%).
- **Training Needs:** There is a strong demand for accessible, short-term, and on-the-job training, particularly skillsets and micro-credentials. Organisations also seek more external training for production and technical staff, as well as training in digital skills like social media and digital marketing.
- **Impact of Digitalisation:** The sector sees a growing need for digital skills, though adoption of AI is limited by cost and training availability. There are calls for regulation of AI to prevent potential negative impacts on creative roles.

### We Also Know That ...

- Only lighting and sound technicians are recognised on the 2023 Skills Priority List, and the 2024 Apprenticeships Priority List.



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- Skilled migration provides opportunities to fill some gaps; however, many roles are in global high demand.
- There is competition from other industries offering better pay and stability, particularly for core business skills such as marketing and communications and finance.

### **Next Steps**

Creative Australia has also undertaken consultation with artists, technical workers, managers, industry leaders and educators to verify and add detail to these interim results. Findings from that consultation process will be published as part of the final Arts Workforce Scoping Study report in early 2025.

### **Read the full report:**

<https://sacsa.org.au/our-projects/arts-workforce-scoping-study>

## **Theatre Network Australia**

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