A typology of social change agendas in Australian arts organizations and NGOs

Brydie-Leigh Bartleet

Griffith University

CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Professor Brydie-Leigh Bartleet is the director of the Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University (Australia), and an Australia Research Council Future fellow and Fulbright scholar. She is one of the world's leading community music scholars whose research has advanced our understanding of the cultural, social, economic and educational benefits of music and the arts in First Nations' communities, prisons, war-affected cities, educational and industry contexts. She has worked on six nationally competitive grants, five research consultancies with leading arts and social sector organizations and five prestigious fellowships totalling well over $3 million. She has produced over 160 research outputs, and given invited presentations and keynotes in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Japan, Germany, India, Ireland, United Kingdom, and the United States. She is the president of the Social Impact of Music Making (SIMM) research platform (2021–24), on the Board of Music Australia, and is an associate editor of the *International Journal of Community Music*.

Contact: Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University, PO Box 3428, South Bank, QLD 4101, Australia.

E-mail: b.bartleet@griffith.edu.au

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4346-780X

Gillian Howell

University of Melbourne

Dr Gillian Howell is Dean's Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne where she investigates the contributions of participatory music and arts to post-war peace and reconciliation, community cultural development and social transformation. She is the co-chair of the Community Music Commission of the International Society for Music Education, a member of the editorial board of the *International Journal of Community Music* and an associate artist with Tura New Music, Australia. She has worked as a musician, educator, creative director and researcher in the arts, development and education sectors in Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Kosovo and North Macedonia.

Contact: Faculty of Fine Arts and Music Dean's Research Fellow, University of Melbourne, Australia.

E-mail: ghowell@unimelb.edu.au

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5621-8143

Abstract

An increasing number of creative artists, arts organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working on socially engaged initiatives that aim to bring about positive change in communities. Examples of outstanding arts practices can be found

throughout the world; however, there are major gaps in our understanding about how this work operates. Drawing on insights from 100 Australian arts organizations and NGOs working in this field, this article aims to address some of these gaps. It outlines a typology of change agendas in these organizations, in order to advance a deeper understanding of this field and inform future research, practice and policy.

Keywords

socially engaged arts

arts for social change

arts organizations

arts management

arts evaluation

Australia

Introduction: Setting the context

Across the world, creative artists are increasingly working on initiatives that aim to have a positive social impact. These artists are facilitating a range of projects, which aim to positively address issues such as conflict-resolution, racism, gender empowerment and youth resilience, and provide communities with new opportunities for expression and dialogue (Marcuse 2019). Such arts projects are offering disenfranchised groups access to the civic realm, and motivating people to make positive changes in their lives, including their economic livelihoods, mental health and well-being (Bartleet 2016). Their projects often aim to spark imaginative and creative processes that reframe complex and divisive issues (Korza and Schaffer Bacon 2012), and enhance public understanding of shared social problems (Johanson and Glow 2018). These kinds of socially engaged arts

initiatives have proliferated globally as arts organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have intensified their work in recent decades. For instance, organizations such as the Open Society Foundations have created new programmes like the Arts Exchange to integrate arts into all levels of their social programming. Research programmes such as Americans for the Arts' Animating Democracy have produced a large number of reports and user guides for the field.

Across the world, several new books on arts for social change have been published in recent years (e.g. Berman 2017; Capous-Desyllas and Morgaine 2017; Hess 2019; Elliott et al. 2016; Matarasso 2019) and an International Centre of Art for Social Change has been established in Canada by Judith Marcuse and her collaborators (https://www.icasc.ca). Within the Asia Pacific context, the Singapore International Foundation is offering an annual Art for Good Fellowship programme in order to grow the ecosystem of arts and social change work in this region. Across the world, major performing arts organizations have been increasingly writing social impact agendas into their programmes. Likewise, participatory arts programmes are becoming a growing presence in high-profile arts events; for example, the Rotterdam triennial festival of community arts, amongst many others (Matarasso 2019). In Australia, there are socially engaged projects, programmes and organizations at every scale, largely funded through the Australia Council for the Arts, philanthropic organizations such as Ian Potter Foundation, as well as local governments (Dunphy 2018).

As Dunphy and Ware (2017) have observed, despite the increasing numbers of people and organizations working in this realm, there are still major gaps in our understanding about *how* and *when* the creative arts can operate as a mechanism of social

change. While research within, for and about the field is growing, systematic research that brings together practitioners, scholars and participants is needed to keep up with the expansion of programmes and practices. What is frequently missing in this space is a critical discussion of the theories of change that underpin these initiatives. Theories of change are processes that articulate how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context, and form the basis for theories of action, strategic planning and evaluation (Funnell and Rogers 2011). Such theoretical considerations are important when arts organizations are engaging in social change agendas, as theories of change can encourage artists to engage in a process that articulates how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context (Dunphy 2018). In the creative arts, this is a complex process as the arts operate as part of a large ecosystem of influences where simple cause-and-effect explanations are rarely sufficient (DeNora and Ansdell 2014).

In this article, we seek to begin addressing some of these gaps in our understanding about the work of arts organizations engaging in such change agendas and their practices, in order to contribute towards the international research in arts practice, policy developments and debates that are emerging in the field of socially engaged arts practices. We believe that a necessary first step in this process is understanding more about the contemporary landscape of the practice itself. This includes the practice-led understandings of the social outcomes attached to this creative arts work, but also how change is positioned and understood within arts organizations, and communicated to their audiences and stakeholders. Our article contributes to this endeavour by focusing on the cultural context of Australia, and mapping the practices, change agendas and intentions of arts organizations engaging in this work. To this end, we have developed a typology of

arts organizations and NGOs that are engaging in social change agendas based on a sample of 100 Australian organizations.

Our typology has emerged through analysis of the change agendas, theories of change, artforms, funding arrangements and participant cohorts that the database revealed, and each of these are summarized prior to presentation of the typology. Together, the findings indicate the trends, patterns and gaps found in current arts and social change work. A mapping exercise of this nature has rarely been undertaken in Australia before, and, as such, this article presents a new and more detailed picture of this significant landscape in Australia. Specifically, it shows that arts for social change work in Australian arts organizations tend to fall into four main types, and that many are engaging in complex change work: content producer, social development organization, advocacy and/or peak body, and activist arts organization.

These four types/categories are not only relevant to Australia alone, but will have salience across the world. By examining the landscape through this typology and its associated complex chains, we are better equipped to build theories of change that could help arts organizations and artists be more strategic, or create more compelling narratives of change, and track changes across multiple dimensions and intentions. This is an important initial step towards a deeper understanding of the field.

The research methods and approach

Our approach to building this typology has many resonances with Essig's (2014) typology of arts incubators. In order to make this typology workable, we elected to first gather information about Australian arts organizations working with a social change agenda into a database. Data were gathered by means of desk review, working with

publicly available online materials of arts organizations. We elected to undertake this mapping exercise using publicly available material (even if it ran the risk of becoming out of date) because the goal was to develop a tool (the typology) that had a general applicability, rather than to capture a detailed snapshot of practices at a point in time.

The data were then systematically entered and organized in the software programme Excel, and then later in NVivo12. We used this approach in order to shed light on the ways in which organizations articulate their social change intentions, theories of change and domains of change to the public, via their websites and associated collateral. For the purposes of capturing the breadth of the arts and social change landscape in Australia, organizational self-descriptions of mission, programming and outcomes were deemed sufficient in order to initially identify the most pronounced patterns in socially engaged arts activities. We believe the ways in which organizations communicate this information is noteworthy. It is significant in order to self-position their work in relation to the current policy context, and demonstrate how they communicate their core values relating to community benefit and value work publicly. We have also found it is useful methodologically to consider these stated goals separately to their actual outcomes, because in this kind of work, there are so many variables that can bring about unexpected outcomes. Stated goals should not be taken as indicative of outcomes (Howell 2018).

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that arts organizations working in the social change space may need to emphasize certain aspects of their work over others in order to maximize funding opportunities. Therefore, self-reports as provided through key marketing tools such as websites need to be assessed as only telling the *public* story of

what takes place. Different perspectives on the work that the organization does might be gleaned through observing the practices in person, or speaking with participants. The database therefore cannot be read through an evaluative lens. Rather, it maps how Australian arts and social change organizations publicly describe their mission and programming.

This approach should be seen as a first and necessary step in constructing a national picture of this activity, and we acknowledge that for the purpose of building a database, the researchers' interpretive lens has been the primary tool for making decisions about how to classify this work. It provides a baseline of sorts to promote further discussion and debate and should be read with this in mind. To this end, the following sections outline the inclusion criteria, search methods used to build the sample, database categories and some comments on the limitations of the sample and implications of these for the current findings. While by no means exhaustive, the approach has suited what is an exploratory inquiry into the current Australian context, enabling us to answer our key research question and present patterns and gaps to inform future research agendas.

The key question guiding this research has been: 'What are the ways in which Australian arts organizations are engaging with social change agendas?' This overarching research question has been underpinned by the following secondary questions, which inform the development of the typology outlined in this article: 'What areas of social change/social development have the arts addressed?' 'What types of arts practices have been used, and how have these projects, programmes and organizations been organized and operationalized?' 'What theories of change have been articulated through these

projects, programmes and/or organizations?' 'What are the reported outcomes and impacts of these initiatives?'

Inclusion and exclusion criteria around social change

We have applied a broad understanding of social change, as one of the goals of this inquiry was to gain insight into the various ways that different arts organization might position themselves with regard to change in individuals, communities or nationally. Change agendas could include change within the arts sector; change occurring in individuals; change in relationships between people, between individuals and the wider community, or between collectives; change in audiences' attitudes and perspectives; change in communities' attitudes and/or behaviours where community extends beyond audiences to include people *not* directly engaging with the artwork and change in policy and legislation. A key determinant for inclusion was how the organization described itself in its online presence; a second determinant was how others understood its work (see section 'Building the sample'). Organizations that did not describe themselves as having a social change (or change with social implications) agenda were excluded.

Two types of change agendas were excluded that merit some further comments: artform development and audience development with the goal of increasing the audience for that artform. Development is of course a form of change, but if an organization described goals around artform or audience development but did not explicitly or implicitly link that development to a social meaning or justification, it was excluded. Of course the distinction between audience development and community engagement is a fine line, and its delineation will depend on the specifics of the project rather than the organization undertaking the activity. Indeed, in the current climate with its increased

expectations of engagement and impact, audience development is likely to be absorbed into more multi-directional community engagement agendas. Our interpretation concluded that artform development for the sake of the artform existing or continuing to exist was as an insufficient change agenda for the purposes of this mapping inquiry. Sometimes these interpretations needed to tread a fine line. For example, one organization working in the field of acoustic ecology *could* have been working towards shifting public perceptions around the environment and/or environmental care; however, the dominant change emphasized on its website was about how people listen, suggestive of audience development. We deemed this insufficient for the purposes of this mapping task. However, where artform development was linked to other kinds of social change such as increasing diversity within the arts, supporting the well-being of communities, or access and inclusion to participation, or providing a stronger platform for important stories or missing voices, it was included.

Building the sample

The search process used four strategies to compile a list of arts organizations for inclusion in the database. First, we examined arts grants allocations at the state and federal government between the years 2015 and 2018 (where multiple years were available), as well as the grant allocation records of philanthropic organizations that include arts projects in their remit. Among these results, we looked for projects that had a social dimension, such as a community partner, participatory element or engagement with particular social issues in the project descriptions, and compiled a list of organizational names for further investigation. Those that met with the inclusion criteria around social change in their online self-descriptions were added to the database. This strategy was

effective; however, it also brought up many socially engaged projects initiated by individual artists that were not included in the database.

The second strategy drew on personal knowledge of the sector. As long-standing researchers and practitioners in this field, we added the names of those arts organizations whose work we already knew met with the inclusion criteria. A similar, third strategy was to use a snowballing technique that invited recommendations of organizations to include from colleagues working in the arts and community sectors. Lastly, we used online search engines using search terms such as 'social change' and 'arts' in order find additional organizations.

These strategies were used concurrently. As the database began to grow, we elected to cap it at 100, as we felt that this would give a useful snapshot of activity in the sector. It is therefore not considered to be an exhaustive list. That said, towards the end of the search, a certain amount of data saturation had begun to occur.

Categories included in the database (meaning and purpose)

The database records four broad aspects of the organizations' work. The *operational context* included locations in which they work or present programmes, an assessment of the size of the organization (small, medium or large), and whether the social change programming is the organization's core work or if it is nested within a more mainstream presentational agenda. Their work within a *change arena* was explored using several different lenses, including (stated or implied) theories of change, target cohorts, dimensions of change (personal, relational, structural), types of desired or hoped-for change (e.g. skills; well-being; empowerment, voice and agency; and cultural), the artforms used to facilitate the desired changes and whether the work took place in

schools, communities, online, through advocacy and campaigning or through touring. Next, we included categories around *financial arrangements*, including access to government, philanthropic or private donors; and lastly, we noted *key outcomes and impacts*, as claimed on websites or in annual reports, or evidenced through third-party research and documentation.

Limitations

Sorting and categorizing organizations according to their self-descriptions does have its limitations, as many organizations attempt to work *across* domains of community and/or change. The database entry and analysis was completed by one author, and the other author undertook an inter-rater check. This check produced a general consensus of how the categories were applied; however, we also acknowledge we share a common set of interests in how the arts can interact in a socially engaged space.

Overview of results

Scale and scope of arts organizations working for social change in Australia

The sample of arts organizations was spread across all Australian states and territories (Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia). The sample also included a range of artforms and related activities, as outlined in Figure 1. We note that many organizations work with multiple artforms and activity offerings. ‘Training’, for example, coincided with artform specializations.

Figure 1: Sample of arts organizations by artform.

'Other' includes consulting (2); symposia, fora, gatherings and roundtables (5); festivals (6); dance nights (1); music video releases (3); oral history (1); podcasts (1); puppetry (3); psychology (2); radio (1); research (1); site-specific works (1); street art (1); story-telling (1); zines (1). We acknowledge that the term 'multi-arts' was somewhat ambiguous in this exercise where many organizations embraced multiple artforms in their work. We took care with our application of this term, and if an organization described its work in terms of classes or programming in specific artforms, we noted each artform separately. The term 'multi-arts' was applied only if the organization used it, or if they were engaged with performance-making or Community Cultural Development (CCD) that was clearly built upon a multi-arts framework.[1]

The 100 organizations in our sample engaged in a range of different contexts and settings. The most prevalent settings are outlined in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Sites and groups for change action (1).

Figure 3 offers more granular detail. Of these, three reported work in schools only; 47 reported work in communities only; two work with campaigning only; one works online only. However, many described their work as taking place across multiple sites: we found six working in communities and with campaigning; two working in communities and online; six working in schools, in communities, and with touring; one working in communities, with campaigning, and online; and four working with touring and in communities. See below:

Figure 3: Sites and groups for change action (2).

Change theories and intentions articulated by the arts organizations

Across the sample of 100 organizations, theories of change that support their work or provide a firm rationale for their programming were rarely stated, reflecting low adoption of theories of change in the Australian arts sector more generally. However, the majority of included organizations implied or articulated logic statements that connected their programming to beneficial outcomes for participants, and/or goals towards individual, interpersonal or collective changes in society or the arts sector. From these statements, it was possible to analyse their change agenda, noting the target cohort and the type of change sought, written as prose statements. For those that did not offer a clearly articulated theory-of-change, we constructed one by drawing phrases and claims from their online materials. The following is an example of the latter:

> By giving marginalised people the chance and tools to tell their stories in creative and thoughtful ways, we can train a new generation of cultural leaders and shift the mainstream conversation to embrace greater diversity.

However, as noted above, the constructed theories of change, as with those explicitly stated, rarely offer greater detail on the small shifts that they anticipate will contribute to the larger, projected social change.

Target cohorts

The predominant target cohort found in the 100 Australian socially engaged arts organizations is that of youth and young people, with Indigenous individuals and communities the next most represented cohort. People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (with refugees and asylum-seekers a subset of this group), disadvantaged, marginalized and regional communities, people with disabilities or those who are incarcerated make up the next most targeted cohorts. There is also a smaller group of organizations focused on less measurable political or societal attitudinal

changes, with audiences a subgroup of the societal group. The prominence of the word 'artists' indicates the significant number of arts organizations that work to facilitate positive change for *artists*, often with an interest in artists from diverse backgrounds.

Change focus

Next, we analysed the type of change that the organization intended to generate, where, and for whom. We noted that it was often the case that an organization aspires towards (or anticipates) multiple, accumulative changes. In the database, the change focus was written as a short phrase or sentence, rather than single words. The prominence of the words 'increasing' and 'access' alongside 'youth', 'Indigenous', 'people', 'social' and 'community' indicates that much of this work is in response to perceptions of a constrained space for public participation in the arts, particularly among more disadvantaged communities. Words such as 'development', and verbs such as 'supporting', 'improving' and 'learning' underscore the presence of a commitment to ensuring access and inclusion or, alternatively, reflect the availability of government funding for particular social groups in the current time. 'Creativity' implies agendas around creating new work rather than staging pre-existing work.

Examining the results using existing typologies and frameworks

The work of some organizations resisted classification and narrowing into a single target cohort or change agenda. As mentioned previously, this was because there were multiple, accumulative changes being attributed to the activities. These change-chains tended to work outwards from individual and relational transformations, with the same activity (e.g. public performance work) contributing to gradual, accumulative change across audiences and societies, generating broader cultural shifts that might then be visible in the

form of policy change at the level of gatekeepers (within the arts sector) and government agencies or politicians (in determining arts and cultural policy agendas). The subject of chains of changes making up a multi-layered and complex change agenda will be explored later in this article.

To excavate these layers, we applied two separate analytical frameworks. The first differentiates between change dimensions. Eguren (2011) recommends social change be understood as potentially occurring across four dimensions: personal transformation, relational transformation, transforming collective patterns of action and thinking and transforming structures and procedures. This framework had useful application to our sample, offering a nuanced way to consider the change foci of a wide array of arts organizations:

Table 1: Change dimensions prioritized.

Dimension of change	Number
Individual change	58
Relational change	24
Collective behavioural and attitudinal change	10
Structural and procedural change	8

This analysis found that more than half (58%) of the organizations appeared through the implied or stated theory of change to be most focused on supporting individual transformations, whether through transformations of health, self-esteem, skills and learning, or new understandings of self. The second most prominent dimension of change (24%) was about relational changes, in which individuals experience transformations with the wider social/cultural/political environment. This detail is corroborated in the 'Change focus' section, where the most heavily aspects feature particular social groups (e.g. Indigenous and youth), programming tenets (e.g.

participation, access and social), arts-specific outcomes (e.g. creativity and music) and non-arts outcomes (well-being, empowerment) that occur predominantly at the level of the individual. There were some challenges in distinguishing between objectives of *relational* change and *collective* change with some organizations that present mainstage arts outcomes with non-mainstream performers (e.g. companies featuring performers with disabilities, or professional film outcomes made by marginalized youth). Many of these companies referenced a desire to challenge audiences and transform their expectations and willingness to *see and engage* with the performers, and the groups they could be seen to represent. This could be a relational transformation, or it could be a transformation of collective behaviours and attitudes. In assigning one category or the other, the theory-of-change statement was the main reference point.

However, analysing the dimensions of change only told part of the story. We were also interested in capturing change agendas that were more specific to the arts. Therefore, we adapted a second analytical typology based on the change intentions of music interventions in war-affected settings (Howell 2018). While Australia is far from a war zone, the typology nevertheless proved helpful in summarizing the most frequent goals attached to arts-as-interventions in complex social settings. We analysed the change intentions of the organizations in the database across five types of intentions or goals: arts education; cultural (re)generation and cultural development; social development; healing, health and well-being and political and/or policy change through advocacy and activism. The first and fourth of these types imply change at the individual level (education and learning, health and well-being), while the second, third and fifth types are more indicative of changes occurring at the relational and societal level (developments in

culture and social relationships, and shifts in policy and/or broad based recognition for people or issues).

Table 2: Typology of intentions results.

Intended domain of change	Number
Arts education and learning	7
Cultural (re)generation and cultural development	36
Social development	18
Healing, health and well-being	28
Political and/or policy change	11

These results (Table 2) gave more representative coverage of the concepts of change and change goals attached to Australian arts organizations than Eguren's (2011) aforementioned dimensions of change. The use of Howell's typology also brings to the foreground the *cultural development* dimension of arts organizations' change intentions, which was obscured in the previous analytical framework. It indicates that three broad goals predominate in the current arts and social change landscape: cultural regeneration and development; healing, health and well-being; and social development. The process of assigning each organization in the database one of these intention types stimulated development of our typology, which the next section introduces.

A typology of Australian arts organizations working on social change agendas

Through our analysis of the change agendas and intentions described in the arts organizations' public-facing online materials using two analytical frameworks, we began to note some common patterns in the way the organizations positioned themselves and their work. We found that Australian arts organizations and NGOs working on the social change agendas outlined above appear to fall within four broad categories: content

producers, social development organizations, advocacy and/or peak bodies and activist arts organizations. The distinguishing characteristics of these are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Typology of arts organizations working in social change space.

Type	What this includes	Number
Content producer	Producing contemporary arts for mainstream audiences, working with and presenting under-represented/marginalized artists.	37
Social development organization	Training, mentoring, emphasizing access, inclusion, pathways, participation, voice, social connections.	46
Advocacy and/or peak body	Networks, training, policy and gatekeeper advocacy, sometimes including public programming and provision.	13
Activist arts organization	Messages, education on issues, lobbying decision-makers.	4

It was not always straightforward to determine which label should be applied based on a close reading of their online materials, particularly assigning the labels of 'content producer' and 'social development organization', with the former emphasizing the artistic outcome and the latter an approach to engagement with others through the arts. Arts for social change often occupy an ambiguous space, particularly when created in collaboration with community members that do not identify as professional artists (Matarasso 2019). By closely reading each organization's online presence, we observed the way that some organizations foregrounded the work they had produced and its subsequent achievements (e.g. festival invitations and arts sector awards), while others used their website space to emphasize the specific communities with whom they work, and described outcomes that centred on changes in their participants' lives. While this difference in emphasis should not be read as connoting a substantive difference in the artistic or aesthetic value of the work created, it was an interesting and subtle distinction that we felt worth capturing in this analysis. It is also possible that within a single organization, particular *projects* may be aligned with content production or social

development, creating programming in which both positions are represented. However, that kind of fine-grained analysis was outside the scope of the current mapping inquiry. The drivers and contexts for this difference certainly warrant further research.

Thus, our sample of 100 socially engaged Australian arts organizations revealed interesting variation in the way that social change was articulated and operationalized. The next subsections delve further into the characteristics of the four types of self-positioning we have identified, mapping the dimensions of change sought (from individual change to structural change) against types of intention (educational, cultural, social, health-focused and policy-driven).

Content producers

Of the 38 organizations positioned as content producers in our analysis, there was considerable heterogeneity of intention. Goals of cultural development were the most pervasive, with 61% (23 of the 38) indicating goals towards development of cultural ideas, norms and practices in Australian contemporary arts (such as the creation of new cultural scenes and platforms, generating interest and demand over time). A second trend (55%) was the focus on individual transformation. Roughly a third of the content producer group (32%) was focused on transforming relationships between individuals and the wider environment as a step in the cultural development pathway, with 11% concerned with transforming collective patterns of behaviour and thinking (with audiences the predominant collective to be transformed), 16% were analysed as working with social development intentions as per Howell's (2018) typology of intentions. This micro-to-macro change pathway, where *individual* change is supported through changes in *individual-societal relations* and reinforced over time through *transformation of*

mainstream society is an example of the kind of complex change that many arts organizations aspire to effect. Only one of the 38 organizations appeared to be working towards structural change.

Social development organizations

Of the 46 organizations that this analysis determined to be most clearly positioned as socially development providers (i.e. where social transformation was the predominant emphasis), the majority (78%) were working to effect change at the level of the individual. The remainder were focused on relational transformations, in particular through a social justice-informed interest in creating dialogic interaction with the social and political environment. Transformations at the level of the collective, such as transforming collective/group behaviour or thinking, whether the participant group or a mainstream audience group, also featured, but were not the primary emphasis within the website copy.

Over half (57%; 26 of the 46) had intentions towards improving the health and well-being of participants. Others had intentions towards social development of participants and audiences (22%; ten of the 46), but as this often included amplifying the voices of the marginalized, and creating more inclusive societies, these would also be contributing towards individual and collective health and well-being. As with the content provider positioning, a small number of organizations (7%; three out of 46) had primary intentions towards arts education and skills development, of which two were providers working only in schools.

Notably, a much smaller percentage in this group had intentions towards cultural development (15%; seven of the 46), offering a useful point of difference between social

development organizations and content producers, where 62% described work with cultural development intentions (see above). This suggests an interesting correlation between cultural development as a goal and an observable rhetorical position as a content producer, and supports our analytical decision to capture and bring to the fore these subtle differences.

Advocacy and/or peak bodies

Among this group of organizations, two related concerns predominate: to facilitate cultural development through claiming more of the mainstream arts space; and to transform the social environment to be more inclusive, compassionate and accepting of diversity in all its forms. All of the organizations in this group represent a subgroup of performers/creatives who represent a more diverse Australia, bar one. The exception is an advocacy and/or peak group whose social change agenda was artform-specific (community music), and focused on increasing broad community access and participation in communal music-making. In this category, the majority of organizations are peak bodies, existing to support and advocate for the interests of a subgroup within the arts sector, such as culturally diverse artists, or community arts workers. Many work with a membership structure. While most of their activities are focused on building and supporting networks, promoting and advocacy, a small number also produce events or arts projects as part of their work.

Just under half of the organizations in this group have cultural development intentions (46%; six of the thirteen), with the remaining seven demonstrating intentions towards social development (8%), arts education (8%) or political and policy change (38%). Two that showed intentions towards cultural development were focused on

individual transformation, where such transformations occurred through training, skills development and industry placement schemes. However, given organizational remits towards increasing diversity within the arts sector more broadly, these micro-transformations would – if successfully realized over a longer time span, accumulating multiple individual transformations – also create a cultural shift in the arts sector, i.e. a long-term objective of collective or structural transformation.

Beyond cultural development, the next most prominent intention among advocacy and/or peak bodies was that of political and/or policy change (38%, or five of the thirteen). The priority dimension of change in this category of socially engaged arts is transforming collective patterns of behaviour and thinking (31%), and transformation of structures and procedures (31%). Note, however, that delineating between relational, collective and structural transformations can be challenging when considering the work of peak bodies, as the three are often concurrent and interdependent. Our analysis categorized only one organization as having social development intentions. But here, as with the others in the advocacy and/or peak body positioning, the organizational intention has a collective and structural dimension. The organization is one that seeks to create more just and reciprocal relationships between the artists it represents (refugees) and audiences (mainstream Australia), in order to transform the social conversation about refugees in Australia (collective and/or structural change).

Activist arts organizations

This is the smallest of the four types of positioning that we found, representing just 4% of the sample. Of the four organizations positioned as activist arts organizations, three work towards structural and procedural change, and one works with messaging towards

changes in collective attitudes or behaviours. Their work takes place in communities, schools and through campaigns, and while some of the latter might take place online, it is a secondary site for action, reflecting that these organizations predominantly use live arts experiences in their activism, prioritizing the experiential, in-person interactions, space-claims and provocations to mobilize others and bring attention to their cause.

Discussion: Mapping complex change

Based on our findings, much of the arts and social change work taking place in Australia works within a social justice framework. This reflects the concern that particular groups in Australia have fewer opportunities to engage in creative arts and that marginalized groups are rendered somewhat invisible and silent in the mainstream cultural landscape. For these groups, engagement with and participation in the creation of new art works also provides a platform from which to tell their stories, to be heard and to claim space within the unfolding national narrative. Many organizations also recognize and seek to change the lack of diversity in Australia's cultural production, where the faces and names that make up those employed within the sector are unrepresentative of the country's vibrant and diverse cultural mix.

The multidimensional nature of these goals is reflected in the complex chains of change found within many organizational remits. Consider this change agenda from our database, constructed from one organization's website text:

> By presenting First Nations People's stories in high-quality productions, we can challenge racist and one-dimensional stereotypes, develop First Nations' talent, and strengthen the First Nations' arts sector. In the process, we will reflect recognisable lives and stories back to First Nations' audiences, entertain and provoke non-Indigenous

> Australia, and build a broad and diverse audience for these stories so that they become embedded in mainstream Australian culture.

In this construct, we can see change occurring in each of Eguren's four dimensions of change: individual transformation ('develop First Nations' talent and arts sector', which includes creating training pathways for new talent and building capacity), relational transformation ('entertain and provoke non-Indigenous Australia'), collective change ('challenge stereotypes') and structural change ('stories that become embedded in mainstream Australian culture'). The work is also attached to multiple interconnected intentions, reflecting Howell's (2018) typology of intentions: arts education and training, valued in and of itself but also as a contributor towards cultural development; and social development, increasing social inclusion through 'reflecting recognisable lives and stories back to Aboriginal audiences', and also as a contributor to cultural development. Finally, cultural development as and when it occurs will help to transform *collective* behaviours and attitudes, placing upwards pressure on the *structures and processes* that currently inhibit the possibility of these transformations.

Arts organizations creating and presenting work made with/by marginalized artists (e.g. artists with disabilities) work across a similar sweep of micro-, meso- and macro-level changes, some sequential and often concurrent. However, as noted in the above discussion of findings related to the content producer positioning, these change agendas are not always explicitly stated, thus leaving a considerable gap between, for example, individual transformation and a larger goal of cultural development. We contend that it is the multitude of small changes (see Balfour 2009), adjustments, responses, progressions and pre-conditions that merit a more forensic and critical mapping, if we are to deepen the understanding of the social change potential of arts

practices in this specific national context, and ensure the necessary economic and cultural conditions for its proliferation.

Concluding remarks

In this article, we have presented a landscape view of the arts and social change terrain in Australia, focusing in particular on the public narratives of the most influential groups of actors working in this space: arts organizations and NGOs. Through applying multiple analytical frameworks, we have developed a typology of positions and foci that show promising salience when applied to the sample of 100 Australian arts organizations working in the social change arena. This is a starting point for addressing some of the gaps in our understanding about the Australian context in order to inform future research. Moreover, this adds complementary insights to the current practices, policies and discourses emerging from other cultural contexts across the world (Essig 2014; Lee 2013; Nijkamp et al. 2018; Skaggs 2020).

The typology we have outlined – content producer, social development organization, advocacy and/or peak body, and activist arts organization – illustrates the diversity of practices and approaches to change agendas and theories of change and has helped to illuminate some of the gaps in conceptualizing this work at present. While developed in response to Australia-centric research, the typology may also provide useful differentiation between arts organization positioning and approaches in other contexts around the world.

At the same time, attempts to drill down into the specific change dimensions and intentions highlighted the ways that arts efforts in the social arena are frequently grappling with complex change, and chains of change, across multiple dimensions. This

may account for the vagueness and breadth with which some organizations currently describe their social change work. It also highlights the need for arts management to remain attuned to this. Our hope is that the insights shared in this article have the potential to not only inform arts organizations engaging in such change agendas and their practices, but also to contribute towards the important international research, practices, policy developments and debates that are emerging in the field of socially engaged arts practices.

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Note

1. Multi-arts refers to multidisciplinary art, which encompasses artistic activities that combine different artforms in new and innovative ways. Often these organizations are focused more on performance-making than on offering classes and training with one artform at a time.