



**ARTS INDUSTRY
COUNCIL OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

*an independent
voice for the arts*

WORKSHOP RESOURCE

Addressing Mental Health in the Arts

16 July 2024, The Mill

AICSA Financial Wellbeing & WHS Survey Report Summary

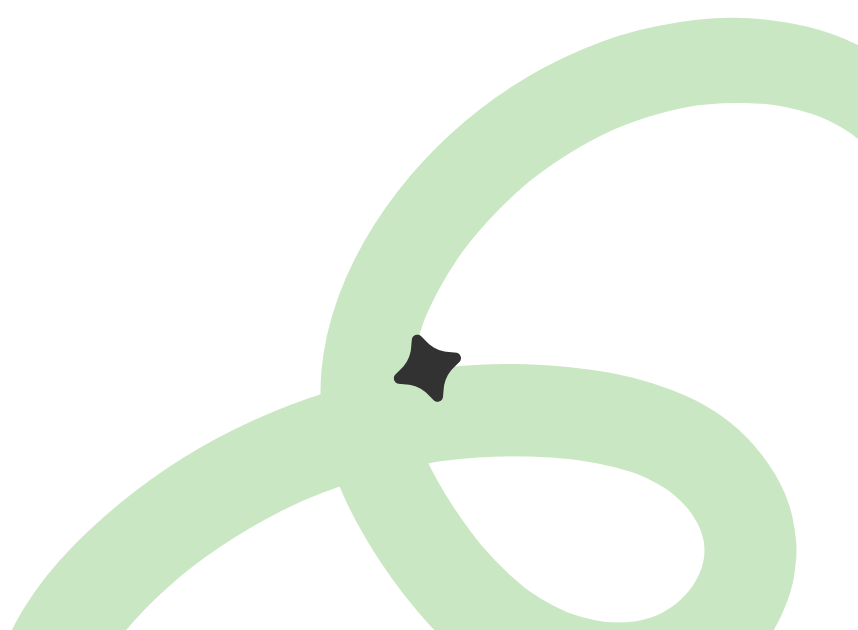
The Arts Industry Council of South Australia (AICSA) recently conducted research into workplace health and safety in the SA arts sector. AICSA General Manager, Kim Roberts, spoke to the results:

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

- 137 respondents
- Average: 35–44-year-old female, not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- 29.7% were solely arts workers, 26.1% solely artists and 44.2% are both
- 57% indicated that they worked within more than one art form
- 63.7% have worked in the sector for over a decade

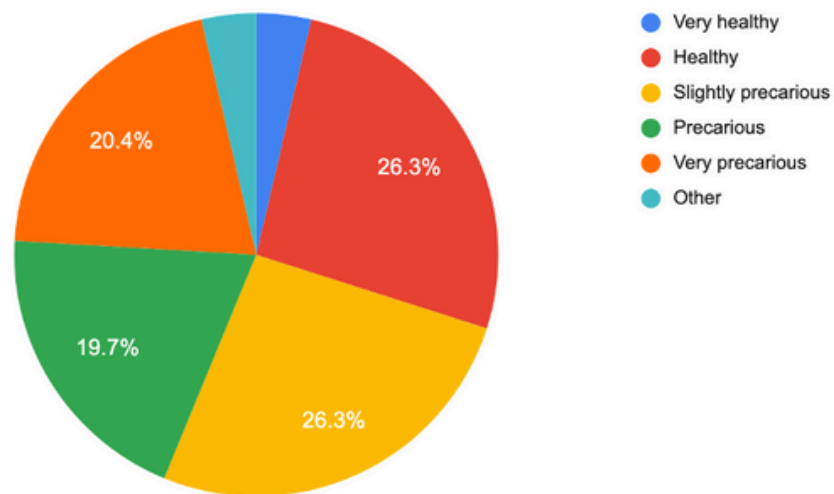
THE RESPONDENTS' WORK

- 27.4% are full time permanent workers
- 81% earn below \$80k per annum
39% earn below \$40k per annum
- 13% of artists don't earn any money or lose money from their arts practice
- Length of time in the sector did not necessarily show an increase in salary
- Only 78% reported that they received superannuation



How would you describe your financial wellbeing (i.e. your capacity to live comfortably on your current wage/salary)?

137 responses



RESPONDENTS' FINANCIAL PRECARITY

- 41% work in a role outside the sector to supplement their income
- 43% reported that a partner or family member provides financial support
- 40% rated their financial wellbeing as precarious or very precarious

“
So inconsistent
I am in constant anxiety
”

“
I am considering quitting,
I am exhausted
”

RESPONDENTS' VIEW OF WORKING CONDITIONS

62% indicated that their salary/wage is not commensurate with their hours/role

On a scale of 1 (Never) to 7 (Always), 60% gave a rating of 4 or above to the questions:

"I have unrealistic time pressures" and "I am pressured to work long hours"

“
The general expectation to work
for months on end,
unpaid and unreasonable
overtime is truly appalling
”

“
There is still an expectation
of artists and arts workers
doing unpaid work
”

PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS OF RESPONDENTS

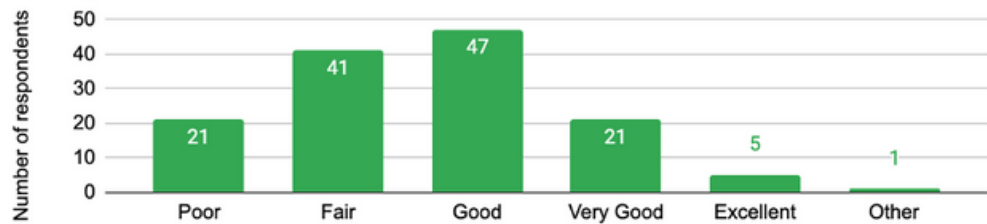
On a scale of 1 (Never) to 7 (Always) over the last 4 weeks, the following percentages represent a rating of 4 or above, indicating a higher frequency of exposure to unsafe work environments:

- 15% experienced bullying
- 24% witnessed bullying
- 5% were exposed to threats of violence
- 4% were subjected to sexual harassment
- 15% were subjected to culturally unsafe practices

“
Aboriginal arts workers are often having to work in culturally unsafe positions... Aboriginal people are not supported to be promoted into leadership positions, we are often overlooked and on our own within teams or a whole workplace. We carry a Colonial (cultural) load, and bring knowledge and experiences that can be used with our voices but are often taken by white researchers
”

How would you describe your mental health overall?

136 responses



RESPONDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

- 46% described their mental health as 'Poor' or 'Fair'
- 46% said they felt tired, sluggish or depressed 'Always' or 'Often'
- 49% said they feel anxious or overwhelmed 'Always' or 'Often'

On a scale of 1 (Never) to 7 (Always) over the past 4 weeks, the following percentages represent a rating of 4 or above:

- 66% felt tired for no good reason
- 56% felt nervous
- 36% felt so sad, nothing could cheer them up

Music sector workers were more likely to mention alcohol abuse in their submissions and attributed this to regular supply of alcohol to supplement low performance fees

**The full research report
will be available soon on
the AICSA website**



Support Act

supportact.org.au

Dr. Ash King, Wellbeing Content and Programs Lead / Psychologist spoke to Support Act's research and services tailored to the arts sector. Please see her presentation slides [here](#).

SERVICES

Support Act Wellbeing Helpline: 1800 959 500 includes dedicated LGBTIQ+, First Nations, Managers & sexual harassment support lines

Networking and wellbeing events
Workplace policy guides, services and templates

Provides free training to the music industry, to soon be expanded to the wider arts sector:

- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Bystander Awareness Training
- Suicide Prevention Training
- Money Management Training

FUNDING SUPPORT

- Crisis Relief Grants
- Funeral Help
- Tax Help

RESOURCES

Website has comprehensive FREE Mental Health Resources covering:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Loneliness
- Managing Conflict
- Stress
- Self Care
- Mindfulness
- Sleep
- Social Media
- Resilience
- Seeking help
- Grief & loss
- Suicide
- Touring

SA Mental Health Commissioner

Joanne Knolder, Principal Communications Adviser for the Office of the Mental Health Commissioner for South Australia spoke on behalf of
TAIMI ALLAN, MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSIONER

THE ROLE

- The role of the Commissioner was established by the South Australian Government to promote and advocate for the rights of all people relating to mental health and wellbeing.
- The role includes addressing systems and services being planned and delivered across South Australia and assessing whether they are working or not working, and subsequently how to make improvements to address system gaps.
- The Commissioner is an independent voice to ensure advocacy efforts remain true across the full breadth of the mental health sector, this includes charities and national bodies, government and private sector and the broader community.
- The Commissioner is committed to community connection and hearing from people with lived experience and works closely with Nadia Clancy, the Premier for South Australia's Advocate for Suicide Prevention to support suicide prevention initiatives.
- Dedicated to seeking opportunities, while influencing and informing government in decision making processes relating to mental health, the Commissioner works to positively shape the mental health narrative and improve mental health pathways in South Australia.

RESOURCES

[SAMHC Best Practice Guidelines for Reducing Discrimination and Prejudice for Performers](#)

CONTACT

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Other Resources

Free resources, services and toolkits

[FREE HEALTHY WORKPLACES SERVICE \(for employers\)](#)

[FREE PEOPLE AT WORK PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT \(for employers\)](#)

[SA Drug and Alcohol Services \(for employees\)](#)

[Mentally Healthy Workplaces \(for both employers and employees\)](#)

Active State Government Consultation & Policy Development

AICSA recognises that the poor mental health in the sector cannot be properly addressed without improving its underlying causes, such as low pay and work precarity. We hope the Government makes full use of these current opportunities:

[Artists at Work Taskforce](#)

[Cultural Policy](#)

AICSA regularly meets with the State Government to discuss issues affecting the sector, and will continue to advocate on behalf of artists and arts workers.

Federal Government

There is also substantial work in this area federally, so please see the following links and sign up to their mailing lists to stay informed:

[Creative Australia Research](#)

[Creative Workplaces](#)

About AICSA

AICSA is a non-government not-for-profit acting as an independent voice for the arts in SA. Run by a volunteer Executive Committee and part-time General Manager, AICSA acts on behalf of our members to advocate for a strong future for South Australian artists, arts workers and arts organisations. To support our work, please consider [joining as a member](#).

To stay up to date with our work, please [subscribe to our e-news](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).





Thank you

to all those who responded to the survey and/or attended the workshop. AICSA is committed to using this feedback and research as we form our future strategies and advocacy priorities.

AICSA.NET.AU

This program is supported by the Healthy Workplaces Strategy Grants Program, which is funded by Preventive Health SA and administered by the South Australian Business Chamber.