Creativity & Cultural Production in the Hunter

An applied ethnographic study of new entrepreneurial systems in the creative industries.

Final Report: Hunter Creative Industries

Support Organisations, Education and Training

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17. SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

17.1 Background
Entrepreneurial systems are multifactorial in origin and in effect. Gone are the days when individuals alone could do all that is necessary to be innovative and bring complex creative works into being, if that was indeed ever the case. All entrepreneurs need support of some sort, whether it be financial, technological, administrative, legal, political, social, cultural or educational, in order to bring new and innovative products to market.

17.2 Education and Training
Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi contends that ‘a person who wants to make a creative contribution not only must work within a creative system but must also reproduce that system within his or her mind. In other words, the person must learn the rules and the content of the domain, as well as the criteria of selection, the preferences of the field’ (1997, p. 47). In order to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to the creative industries, anyone wishing to do this must be socialised or enculturated into the system they will eventually take an active part in. Thus learning to be part of the creative industries is most often a process of being educated into it. Education, according to Haralambos and Holbern (1995), is simply one particular aspect of socialisation which is specifically concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and the learning of skills. This process of acquisition may take many forms but for our purposes we can supply two categories, that is, either formal or informal. While informal socialisation into the field and enculturation into the domain may take the form of mentoring, familial immersion or various degrees of auto-didacticism, formal approaches to education certainly in Australia, are predominantly the function of state-based institutions.

17.2.1 University Education
Formal education and training in creative industries fields at the University level is concentrated in the lower Hunter and is primarily on offer within the regional hub in Newcastle.

Since its inception, the University of Newcastle (UoN) has been best known for its strengths in engineering, medicine, science and architecture but in recent years has given a greater recognition to the role and potential of the creative industries as signified by the construction of new buildings in the city centre and the transfer there of related teaching programs.

There are well over 3,000 students undertaking courses at the UoN in fields that are classified as part of the creative industries. These fields include Drama, Visual and Performing Arts, Film, Media and Cultural Studies and Creative Writing, Architecture and Industrial Design, Graphic Design, Animation, Journalism, Public Relations, Television, Radio, Sound Production, Multimedia, Web Design, IT, Software Application and Interactive Content Development. Many of the programs that focus on these areas are taught by creative industry professionals and are guided by a number of established External Advisory Boards comprised of current highly successful creative industries operatives. The University has now established a School of Creative Industries whose administrative offices and much of its teaching are located in the city campus which is centred around the NewSpace building and its accompanying facilities. This school was inaugurated in 2017 with its initial Head being a former BBC filmmaker with a background in television and digital media production ‘which he hopes will help him craft radical new multimedia platforms’ (Egglestone 2017, online). Professor Paul Egglestone was previously the Director of Research and Innovation in the College of Culture and the Creative Industries at the University of Central Lancashire, UK. He stated at the time that he was:
Interested in working with emerging technologies to craft new niche experiences with media, things that don’t exist yet such as new experiences for content, music and film. We use and engage with creative content in a very different way now than we did thirty years ago, so the question is what are the next disruptions in these industries?’ (ibid).

From this perspective Prof. Egglestone champions ‘collaboration, connecting communities, technologists and content creators to help identify and address real world problems’ (ibid). His objective is to have the new School of Creative Industries ‘getting involved with industry, doing very, very practical things, collaborating with industry that will help them develop and grow their business, which in turn will help employ our graduates’ (ibid).

17.2.2 Vocational Education and Training

NSW TAFE - Hunter and Central Coast in its online communications characterises the region as a ‘hotbed of creative talent’. TAFE has a strong record in education in the creative arts and media providing programs at Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma level. At the time of writing, the TAFE offered courses in Creative Industries, Fashion and Media including acting, digital media and communications, fashion, interior design and decoration, graphic arts and design, the music industry, product design and photography. For those engaged in fine art, TAFE also houses an intensive training facility, Newcastle Art School, which ‘specialises in studio-based, fine arts training, taught by locally, nationally and internationally recognised artists’ (TAFE 2018, online). Design Centre Hunter is an important part of TAFE’s creative industries offerings. It is:

A connected, collaborative hub that inspires and supports students, teachers and industry in design related disciplines to work together in new and innovative ways. These disciplines include, though are not exclusive to Architecture, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Fashion, Floristry, Industrial and Kitchen Design as well as Furniture Making, Performing Arts, Signage, Hair & Beauty, Digital Media and Fine Arts (TAFE 2018, online).

The exhibition space that is attached to the Design Centre opened in 2016, giving design students a dedicated venue to present their work. More broadly TAFE is recognised as the major vocational education and training provider in the region. Practical experience is also highlighted through other vocational providers such as the Regional Institute of Performing Arts and the Regional Music Institute.

17.2.3 Specialty Schools

The Hunter School of the Performing Arts (HSPA) is the only fully selective, years 3-12 performing arts school in NSW. Several schools in the region participate in the NSW Schools Spectacular in areas such as Aboriginal dance, choir, dance and production including, along with HSP, Gloucester, Kurri Kurri, Metford, Murrurundi, Nulkaba, Floraville and Callaghan College. The Hunter Valley Grammar School in the Maitland area also highlights its achievements in the creative arts. Callaghan College, with a number of campuses in the lower Hunter, including Waratah, Jesmond and Wallsend, offers high school students a chance to move beyond their traditional education and take up, among many other offerings, classes in Computing and IT and also Electrotechnology. The NSW high school system does not offer specific course in communication and media as part of their state-based curriculum although many schools do offer media studies options. Located inside the regional Catholic education system St. Francis Xavier’s College in Hamilton is one of these schools.
17.2.3 Other Training and Learning Centres

The region is rich in private training options. This includes both the development of the ‘content’ skills and for the business skills that creatives need to join the ‘industry’ and earn a living. The Business Centre, Hunter is perhaps the largest of these. Headquartered in Newcastle, but with outreach centres on the Central Coast and Mid North Coast, and with a Business Innovation Centre in Newcastle, it is a business assistance organisation providing professional services to micro, small and medium businesses. It is closely involved with local projects for innovation and the creative industries. Similarly, the Hunter Region Business Hub is a Business Enterprise Centre providing practical assistance in business planning, advice on marketing, budgeting and cash flow and provides those services to the creative industries practitioners in its areas as does Lake Macquarie’s Business Growth Centre. These centres are partly funded by government contracts but provide other services on a fee-for-service basis.

WEA Hunter also provides business courses but in addition delivers qualifications in subject areas such as musical theatre, and lifestyle and community courses in a range of special interests including computing, creative arts, writing and illustrating, acting, dance, magic, drumming, singing, painting and photography.

Other private training options are widely available. Art Mania Studio at Wallsend, for example, provides community learning opportunities in a wide variety of creative arts. Hunter Design School is an RTO, providing training in graphic design, interior design and colour consultancy for design stylists. The Pump House School in Newcastle provides training in design, commercial software, media production, digital photography and social media.

17.3 Support Organisations, Groups and Businesses

The creative industries, like all other industries, do not act in a vacuum. Very few people succeed entirely on their own. There are a series of contextual factors which impact and affect all operatives in these industries. Some of these factors are well beyond the control of individual creatives. As a result, various organisations have been established in the region to advise, encourage and support the actions of creative industries personnel and to help catalyze the generation of business opportunities for these industries. These organisations range from smaller cases of what could be called self-help collective processes through to larger, usually government-funded, agencies and organisations.

17.3.1 Industry Development Organisations

I2N, the Integrated Innovation Network, is led by the University of Newcastle and has four locations in the region. They are the Dantia Smart Hub co-working space in Lake Macquarie which specialises in supporting SMEs; Three76 Newcastle co-working space which focusses on research-grounded innovation; the Innovation Defence Hub at Williamtown with a focus on applications in commercial aerospace and defence and, particularly, in cyberspace, control systems, autonomous vehicles, simulation modelling and energy; and the Upper Hunter Innovation Lab located in Muswellbrook which provides co-located offices, teaching and lab spaces. They all conduct skill development training and host community workshops, provide support for SMEs and link to research where relevant.

Hunter iF Limited is a project-based peak support organisation established in 2018 following a comprehensive planning and research process. Its core collaborating organisations include the University of Newcastle, Newcastle City and Lake Macquarie Councils, Newcastle Now, The Business Centre. Hunter Founders Forum, Eighteen04, Lunaticks Society, Hunter DiGiT, CSIRO, Business Growth Centre, DANTIA and a broader group of project-based collaborators.
This is an impressive group of organisations who have indicated their willingness to collaborate on projects for the greater good. Among the organisation’s objectives is included an intent to ‘encourage, facilitate, advance and support innovation in the Hunter region of New South Wales, Australia and adjoining regions with a focus on creating quality jobs and opportunities and increasing productivity, investment and economic growth for the public benefit’ (IF 2017). While the Hunter iF Limited project is focused more broadly at the region’s entire innovation ecosystem, by the very nature of its views on innovation, enterprises within the creative industries are being drawn into its strategies which are focussed on targets shown below. It was granted seed funding in 2018 in order to kickstart its program.

Renew Newcastle, on the other hand is focused at stimulating the activity of individual agents operating within smaller communities. It aims to find artists, cultural projects and community groups to use and maintain empty buildings until they become commercially viable or are redeveloped. Since 2008, Renew Newcastle has been connecting people with vacant spaces, supporting a community of creative entrepreneurs who bring life, interest and activity into under utilised neighbourhoods. Partnering with those who share the vision of giving back to their community. Filling these empty spaces has created a series of flow on effects. Reducing crime, graffiti, vandalism and giving a significant economic and social value back to the community that has attracted business and residential interest in the city (Renew 2018, online).

In fulfilling these aims Renew Newcastle negotiates rolling 30-day agreements with owners of neglected properties and artists, designers, photographers and craftspeople are invited to set up temporary galleries, studios and offices in empty buildings.

The organisation was founded in 2008 by Marcus Westbury along with Marni Jackson and Rod Smith, a lawyer. As Westbury admits, ‘Renew Newcastle would not have happened if it wasn't for social media’ (Westbury i/v June 2015). Having set up a Facebook page which acquired 3,500 members within a few weeks, Westbury indicates that ‘I had raised the expectations of a whole bunch of people so I had to keep going’ (ibid). As he suggests ‘small-scale cultural production can now thrive because it's connected to global markets and audiences are networks
of support, which wasn't possible 5, 10 or 15 years ago’ (ibid). Westbury’s primary interest is in:

Small-scale creativity basically like whether that's record labels, computer game designers or makers or craftspeople. I’m really interested in that really small-scale layer, the layer that doesn't really figure on the radar of sort of policymakers and big institutions … I come out of that culture of the open source, sharing, Creative Commons idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and by bringing together lots of small-scale things that can add up to something bigger (Westbury i/v June 2015).

From its early days Renew Newcastle has gone on to complete 256 projects in 81 properties and in July 2017 they had 15 active properties with 34 active projects. For some years it was managed by Marni Jackson and is now managed by Christopher Saunders.

Saunders trained in theatre at Curtin University in Western Australia before going to work for 25 years as a freelance actor in WA, Sydney and Melbourne. He also worked with a company called Big hART which uses the arts and narrative to tell stories from the fringes of Australia, and bring those stories to the mainstream. He moved with his family to Newcastle in 2011. He worked as the project manager for the restoration of the Regal Cinema in Birmingham Gardens which was officially re-opened in early 2014. He also Chaired Tantrum Youth Arts. He has been General Manager of Renew since 2014. Saunders believes that ‘there’s an enormous opportunity for creative people to play a part in shaping the future of this city’ and that Renew is playing an important role in this as ‘an enabler’. He says ‘there’s a history in the world of creatives coming in when a place has fallen into disrepair … I think that creatives are very good at taking advantage of opportunities and bringing something new to a place and I think that’s what’s happened in Newcastle’ (Saunders i/v June 2015). He also suggests that the emphasis he sees on the gift economy is highly problematic:

In the arts we’re our own worst enemies at devaluing ourselves in many ways because we’re constantly saying we’ll do stuff for nothing, we always do stuff for nothing, and that’s a great mistake. We should up our prices. I always believe that people should continue to do things for altruistic purposes, but we need to stop devaluing ourselves, and I think the use of the term ‘creative industries’ adds value from that perspective. That’s the positive for it … I think it’s useful to move away from the expression ‘the arts’, which I think has had such negative connotations and been derided as being the freeloaders who don’t really add any value. Of course, I would argue very strongly against that. But I think by rebadging it as ‘creative industries’, to have the word ‘industry’ there indicates that we are economically contributing, which we are (Saunders i/v June 2015).

Saunders indicates that Renew’s annual budget is approx. $250,000 per year. Newcastle Now (Business Improvement Association) provided the first funding for Renew and continues to provide funding but on an application process. They had funding from the state government but that ended in late 2014. Around the same time Arts NSW changed the criteria and that excluded Renew from funding. Newcastle City Council has recently come on board with a commitment of $30,000 a year. In 2015 Urban Growth NSW also committed to one year of funding. HDC – Hunter Development Corporation has renewed their triennial funding agreement with Renew but reduced it from $50,000 a year to $30,000. Renew now encourages and supports individual tenants to apply for funding and generates income through the ‘participation fee’ charged to tenants, currently $25 a week which totals $70,000 to $80,000 a year.
Shanti Mission’s aims are different. It is an organisation based in Lake Macquarie and is dedicated to ‘empowering higher consciousness’. The organisation through its network of Harmony Centres has extended its reach across Australia and into America and India. Art, writing, film and music are central to its work. Key to its growth in the region has been a philosophy of helping people to develop their own practice and from that practice to generate sustainable income.

HunterNet, on the other hand, is a long-standing organisation established to support the manufacturing industry at a time of regional downturn.

Formed as a non-trading, not for profit co-operative, it involves over 200 companies, active in national and international infrastructure and asset management, energy and resources, defence and advanced manufacturing supply chains. HunterNet provides members numerous support programs covering areas such as: business development, business systems and processes, WHS and training, marketing and communications, innovation, business improvement; and government advocacy. The network provides member companies with the opportunity to take part in activities previously out of reach of smaller enterprises including training and development, networking, joint marketing initiatives, joint project bids, focused task forces, trade missions and tendering. Further, through its subsidiary (HunterNet Group Training Company) HunterNet manages the training and development program for apprentices and trainees across a diverse range of disciplines on behalf of its member host companies. Relationships with key bodies such as Industry and Investment NSW, Regional Development Australia – Hunter, AusTrade and the University of Newcastle provide the network with additional support, services and weight in the political and business arena (HunterNet 2018, online).

The group now recognises the role of the creative industries in the manufacturing and engineering sectors and supports their further development. HunterNet aims to bring together smaller business collaboration and networking so that their skills and expertise can be combined to secure larger contracts.

17.3.2 Business Enablers, Consultants and Other Support Organisations.

Gunilla Burrowes is a founding member of Rights House, a Hunter angel investment organisation, and she chairs Eighteen04, an industry incubator focused on clean tech and smart city innovations. She is actively involved in regional economic strategy. She is an electrical engineer who initially worked in the renewable energy field. Her experience in starting up a technical company led her toward angel investing for technically orientated start-ups and scale-ups. She is committed to working through networks, such as Rights House, as an investor because of the advantages it brings from the diversity of ideas and experience. These advantages are also gained for start-ups and entrepreneurs through co-working spaces such as Eighteen04. She asserts that:

Community networks are also important for the innovative ecosystem to grow and this is where the contribution of the creative industries is so important for technical based start-ups. Whether you are investing in a start-up or starting a business, it is so important to have input from a diversity of people who can together create the best solutions (Burrowes i/v Jan 2017).

Burrowes experience has shown her that IP issues can be problematic.
We’ve not tended to go down the IP side so much. It’s an expensive legal field for start-ups. It’s more about being first to market. That’s where branding becomes important. You need the genius creatives to come up with the brand and get it to market – that’s as important as the IP. It’s one of the problems we have in Australia – the IP fixation. How precious are ideas? Well, they are no good on the shelf! We rank very low on the global innovation index because people won’t release IP. We need to encourage, support and motivate researchers to go on the commercialisation journey (Burrowes i/v Jan 2017).

For Burrowes it seems that there is a belief that having idea, even if it is brilliant, is all that it takes. However, she asserts that ‘you’re not going to get rich if your idea is sitting on a shelf’. Commercialisation, she believes, means taking risks.

Steph Hinds, the Director of Growthwise Business Consultants, is no stranger to risk. She is the Joint Convenor of Digfest and also a member of the Lunaticks Society. She also sits on a number of advisory panels, globally for XERO, as well for other national organisations. She trained in accounting and business and ‘liked reading about technology and start-ups and that developed as an interest’ (Hinds i/v March 2017). When she started his consultancy company:

We didn’t have any focus on who we wanted to work with. We just wanted to change the life of small business. My view is that small business drives the entire Australian economy. Therefore, small business shapes how Australia looks, how it is perceived in the rest of the world. About 12 months in, we decided that focus was something we needed just because the big, bad world of small business is just so big. So, the creative industries [sector] was something that personally I had an interest in and there seemed to be a lot in Newcastle. So, I delved into the questions of how to work with the creative industries. How can we get them ingrained into business in the same way they are into their creativity (Hinds i/v March 2017)?

The further Hinds investigated the matter the more it became apparent that:

For most people in the creative industries from web, all the way to artists and to theatre – they were all exceptionally talented at what they did, but most of them had no want or desire or hadn’t done any training in relation to business. So, I thought what a brilliant opportunity to impart our knowledge into an entire industry that is actually a big part of everyday life but a big part of the economy as well. Because one of the things we found was that a lot of them were only around for a couple of years. A lot of them would embark on this nice, next new step and then they would realise that there might not be enough money in it, and they would move on or go back to their original jobs and I found that terrible. Our question became ‘how could we help what we do to be a continuation of their business and get them to make profit at the same time?’ (Hinds i/v March 2017).

Hinds knows that to run a business you have to have business skills.

That’s a big part of the missing puzzle. And nowhere do you get that help. You just go on line and get an ABN and you are in business. It’s terrifying. For me that’s terrifying because how can anyone be expected to know everything about even the simple things like GST? Or about employing people? Let alone about running a business. What we try and do for creatives is if they are really creative people we try to bring that down into a business sense. What are your aspirations? Where do you want to go? Do you want to be selling it at the markets in Newcastle every
weekend? Do you want more than that? Do you want a presence in Newcastle? Do you want to be known Australia wide? Worldwide? Where’s the best market for you? And really bring that vision to life. And everything in between. How are we going to get from point A to point B? What are the steps you have to take? Letting their creativity come in along the way and then reeling them back into reality. And I think the biggest thing we provide is discipline. And keeping people accountable. The biggest problem most creative people have is that they don’t understand profitability from the point of time or manufacturing or that process of, if you’re going to be invoicing, what is your time worth? What is this product worth? And we can certainly help in that sort of thing as well (Hinds i/v March 2017).

The Growthwise business consultancy run by Hinds focuses on the creative industries:

Because I think that it’s in the creative industries that I see the biggest potential. For so many people as well. That’s part of why we were drawn to those industries in this business. As an example, the trades are generally location based. Someone might have a humungous business with branches all over the place, but it is still location based. Whereas you look at the best creative people they will be doing film, or web-based, or design projects all over the world. I have seen some great creatives who are building or designing products to sell, and they are selling them to the rest of the world. That’s very exciting (Hinds i/v March 2017).

Hinds also suggests that getting to know who is doing what in the region is vitally important.

The biggest thing we try to get people to do is that networking thing - getting involved with things that are outside your own business and the norm for what you are trying to do. People need to collaborate in partnership with other businesses - that could really make sure they are sustainable for the long term. A lot of people are happy to pay for advice. It’s the rest of support that is missing. We have too many fragmented groups and networks. We need some overarching approach for networking and advice. How does one know what is happening? We literally search for it, but unless you have resources to do that, how can you know? That was part of getting Newie Start-ups and the web site going – so if you are around Newcastle, this is what is going on – where is the networking? who is getting awards? who is working overseas? The big question is ‘who will help this happen?’ And I think that’s what is missing - that’s where other organisations could come in to support - There’s not enough collaboration. People still think of themselves as competitors here in Newcastle and not collaborators and I think that is a very big thing. If we want to continue to grow, there needs to be a lot more collaborations (Hinds i/v March 2017).

Operatives like Christina Gerakiteys are in interesting positions since the advisory, consulting and advising part of her business, Ideation at Work, coincides with her own experiences working in the creative industries. Speaking to Penelope Green from the Newcastle Herald, Gerakiteys outlined her work and early career:

I studied Law. I found it too constricting and left to study performance music at the Conservatorium and drama at University. From uni, I went into television, ran a production company, worked on the news, worked as a creative director in advertising, studied and practised herbal medicine and sang in a band. All these experiences contribute to what I do today. I ended up at TAFE with a strong commitment to experiential learning. My colleagues and I created Newcastle Music
Gerakiteys took all of those experiences and started her own business:

Ideation is in the business of inspiring hearts and minds to possibility. I work with clients to identify passions and strengths. We work on creating and growing ventures. I work with organisations to identify purpose and intent, to identify the impact they want to have on the world. Then we work on how that shows itself day to day. Increased productivity and contribution increase the bottom line. We offer one-on-one sessions with entrepreneurs; education and consultation with small and medium companies; workplace culture facilitation; workshops in Design Thinking and Start With Why; keynote speaking; and innovation program creation and facilitation. It’s discovering what’s uniquely needed, what the particular end objectives are, and then digging into the tool box to create programs that deliver identified needs. Organising entrepreneurial events like Top Shots and creativity and innovation retreats are specialist offerings. I also produce the Hunter Innovation Festival (Green 2018, online).

Gerakiteys’ wide set of experiences have been useful to her:

I’m a sole operator. I contract myself out to other people and I contract other people to work with me. So, if I’m making a video for example, then I might be contracted in as the producer and then I will contract other people in as I need. So, I will get the camera person and the audio. I might know how to set something as a tonal quality but I prefer to get an expert in. I have to be creative about my administration. I don’t enjoy it and I don’t like it and I’m sure other people don’t either. But I guess you either must be disciplined about it or outsource it. What I often say in my role as an advisor to creative industries – pick the things you don’t like and outsource them if you can (Gerakiteys i/v March 2017).

For Gerakiteys this approach lends her some very transferable skills:

I guess I am in some commercial relationships because of my brainstorming ability and my skill sets which are quite broad. I was telling someone the other day that I was quite upset because I used to consider myself a Jill-of-All-Trades-Master of None. But the more I read of the creative industries, the more I realise that is a good thing. I wish I had realised that years ago when I was beating myself up about not mastering in one area. But now I realise that it is the whole creative industries experience that has allowed me to work with a whole lot of different people in a whole lot of different ways. I don’t think we own (that mindset) exclusively in the creative industries but perhaps we are used to it more. We are used to coming up with different ideas and coming out with different concepts – whether it’s for a video or an architectural design or designing a new shirt or a new fabric or a new pattern. I think we are used to coming up with new ideas. We get a buzz out of that achievement. And we get a buzz out of helping other people come up with different ideas. It’s problem solving. In the creative industries, it’s often problem-solving. You are always trying to solve a problem for someone (Gerakiteys i/v March 2017).
Seeking the same ends RDA Hunter (Regional Development Australia Hunter) is a key regional body which has recognised the creative industries as one of seven areas of ‘smart specialization’ for the region. They have noted the role they can play in sustainable economic diversification. For example, in their submission to the NSW Government’s proposed Creative Industries Taskforce in 2013 they claimed that the ‘creative industries will drive economic growth, exports, productivity, innovation and competitiveness for the Nation, the State of NSW and the Hunter region’ (RDA Hunter 2018, online). As an instance of their activities in this direction they released, as part of their ‘Smart Happens Here’ series, a video promoting the Hunter's creative industries nationally and internationally (see RDA Hunter on Youtube at https://youtu.be/OILubMWQhrs). Up until 2017 Todd Williams was the CEO of RDA. He argues that:

The creative industries sector is of key importance as an enabler of growth through design thinking and a creative approach to problem solving. In terms of having to tap into overseas markets, you need IT to help you with that. I think that focusing on areas that are more willing to accept change is probably the way to go. However, the weakest is the IT. Area. The Hunter is possibly the worst region in the country. We need to fix that. There was a report in the paper 2 weeks ago about digital – not sure what the title was, but the Hunter was the worst region in Australia for digital – 3 measures – one was accessibility; one was pricing and the third was ‘do you know what to do with IT?’ And the Hunter was the lowest in Australia. Newcastle was all right if you took that in isolation. So, in terms of digital literacy there’s a long way to go. The strength of I.T. is that if you know what to do with it, you could live here and work elsewhere but most people choose to go to a bigger centre – the urbanization that is happening globally – to get jobs. That’s the game that Newcastle and the Hunter is in – global talent issues – how to attract and retain talent. And IT is a part of that, but you’ve got to start a critical mass somehow. It’s an interesting quandary (Williams i/v March 2017).

In the meantime, Williams suggests that there are other connections to be made:

In a perfect world I would like to build better links between manufacturing and creative industries certainly. And I think, medicine and education – from the perspective of economic development – high value jobs and growth. The creative industries really put the after-burners on something like that. Defence. Agriculture. I am thinking of a story I was told about a corn picker. There was a farmer in the Upper Hunter who bought a half million-dollar corn picker. And then proceeded to cut it apart and put it back together again. It picks 40% more corn. He doesn’t want to do anything with it. He just wants to pick corn better. It’s how to use things a bit differently. Also, new markets. So, it’s new markets and tailor-making the products to market. For that, you maybe need a design-thinking type of person and maybe a plain-speaking technology person. That would really help. To help introduce people to the world of technology (Williams i/v March 2017).

On a more localised scale, Newcastle Now, the Business Improvement Association for inner city Newcastle, has taken a long-standing focus on the role of the creative industries in city and economic revitalisation, supporting through sponsorships and grants a range of organisations, events and projects that link the creative industries to skill development, business activation and placemaking. CEO of Newcastle Now, Michael Neilson, was originally trained in industrial relations and human resources undertaking a business degree with a major in IR/HR. He started his career as an Industrial Relations Officer and then moved into strategic HR with local
government. His involvement in an internal review of the services sector of the Council gave him a broad overview of what Councils did. At the same time, he became involved in his own businesses beginning in 2009. He has been exposed to local government while balancing that out ‘with some private enterprise thinking as well as small business operator experience’ (Neilson i/v Nov 2016). When he first took up the role of CEO of Newcastle Now, Neilson, like many others was aware of that the city was populated with a significant number of artists and musicians with limited incomes. He admits his view of the creative industries was also limited:

I probably had a pretty ignorant view – the basket-weaving model so to speak. So, I probably didn’t give it the respect that it deserved. But then my eyes were opened to what the creative industries were, and are – a new understanding of the sector. And I realised that it is big, that it opens up a whole range of sectors that are emerging opportunities. So my thought was that we can build on the strengths we have established here and take things to another level through the creative industries. I guess it is a point of difference to other cities that haven’t built their change around creative industries. I know there are other sectors – professional services, but creative industries have the potential to cut across all of them (Neilson i/v Nov 2016).

Neilson indicates there are policy and strategy documents that guide this organisation’s programs in relation to the creative industries.

We work as closely as we can with Council and with Government agencies. Collaboration and close strategic alignment help us all achieve our goals. For example, with the live music sector, where we want it to come back strongly to support the night-time economy, we will work hard to help resolve the legitimate challenges that Council has to work through to let this happen. That will draw us into working with their goals for the night-time economy as well as their goals to meet resident concerns and for compliance with noise standards. We work with similar policies and strategies when we work with events, placemaking, development projects such as Nobby’s lighthouse, the smart cities strategy – we are guided in everything we do. It doesn’t matter if it operates as a constraint – we have to work within them (Neilson i/v, Nov 2016).

Apart from working pragmatically with the situation as it stands, Newcastle Now has also invested in research, including supporting this project, as well as exploring opportunities such as the night-time economy and creative placemaking using these to address social challenges. They also invest in longer time frame projects such as the Hunter Innovation and iF Projects. It is worth noting here the significance of major projects, of the type Newcastle Now is involved in, to act as catalysts for the generation of business opportunities for the creative industries. As this study has reached its final stages, several projects have arisen which are dependent on the creative sector and which have the potential to create new jobs and businesses. The Hunter Innovation Project (HIP) is a collaborative project between University of Newcastle, the City of Newcastle, Newcastle Now and Hunter DiGiT to support an innovation hub and digital smart-city infrastructure. Alongside the smart city infrastructure, and derived from it, are projects to develop policies in open data, digital applications to support parking control, foot traffic management, environmental monitoring and many more applications. At first glance, these seem unrelated to the creative industries but gamers, virtual reality programmers and promotional activity is beginning to cluster around the project. Also linked to HIP is I2N, a system of regional innovation hubs with four sites and four industry priorities – Newcastle,
Lake Macquarie, Muswellbrook and Port Stephens (Williamtown). Outputs from these hubs are already gaining recognition through digital events such as CEBIT and start-up events where interest is growing in considering the Hunter for relocation of small businesses. Night Time Spaces is a collaborative project of Newcastle Now, Newcastle Council, University of Newcastle, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and Hunter Development Corporation which is using interactive design in public spaces to counter problems in high-crime hot spots while newer projects will use sensor-based technology to drive ‘smart-play’ interactive areas in the public domain. Neilson suggests that:

If we provide the infrastructure, and in particular Open Source Data, then there are unlimited opportunities to what we could do here. So capturing that data and opening it up to the developers – I don’t know where it could end. My thoughts are that we need to create that infrastructure for it to happen. In the activation and placemaking – again using smart technology to take those sorts of activation activities to another level. Instead of the traditional outdoor chess set, let’s have an interactive, visual outdoor chess set. By having the infrastructure let’s take it to another whole other level. The whole interactive space, there’s an opportunity for us to make a name for ourselves. The biggest issue and opportunity I think lies in the role that the creative industries can play in enabling innovation across many other sectors – health, manufacturing, professional services, tourism – the other sectors we need to be healthy in this city … I think one of the big issues we have to understand more about is the changing nature of the work place. Coming from an IR background makes you realise that the workforce of the future is going to be greatly different. The creative industries, in some areas in particular, are uniquely positioned to move seamlessly into that new era – many of them already work within the newer models (Neilson i/v Nov 2016).

Neilson asserts that Newcastle Now’s ‘primary purpose is that things do the job they are designed to do. Creativity and innovation are often a key element’ (Neilson i/v Nov 2016).

While organisations such as Newcastle Now, and the projects they stimulate, are enablers of the broader creative industries there are other organisations that focus at enabling specific sectors within the creative industries. One of these is the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA). Through its Newcastle Division, servicing the Greater Hunter Region, the AIA delivers professional development, awards and prizes, events, policy and advocacy and noting significant architecture. It also provides a range of services to members including HR assistance, benchmarking, Australian Standards, insurance and a ‘Find an Architect’ service.

In the Upper Hunter, Arts Upper Hunter aims to provide support and promote opportunities for people to participate creatively in their communities. Mark Reedman is the Executive Director with Arts Upper Hunter. He trained initially as a high school drama/English teacher, taught for a number of years, worked in theatre education as actor and musician, moved into community theatre for a decade as well as working in youth circus before another decade in youth theatre before starting work with the New South Wales Regional Arts Network eventually moving to Arts Upper Hunter.

Arts Upper Hunter is supported by the local councils of the Upper Hunter region and it supports projects, promotes artists and galleries, museums and historical societies, coordinates creative workshops and maintains a directory of art and cultural groups. It is also a strong supporter of indigenous arts and culture. As Reedman indicates, changes in the political landscape have altered the underpinning constitution of this support organisation:
We had five councils in our region who contributed on a per capita amount depending on the population of each local government area. We had Gloucester but we lost it because they have amalgamated with Greater Taree and Great Lakes. We’ve still got Dungog but it will amalgamate with either Maitland or Port Stephens. Gloucester went to one of our sister regional arts boards, Arts Mid North Coast. Dungog will not go to any other regional arts board because neither Port Stephens nor Maitland are in the regional arts network since they’re kind of considered to be not sort of regional. It’s had quite a significant effect on our funding but we still have Singleton, Muswellbrook and the Upper Hunter Shire. The board’s constitution currently is someone nominated by a contributing council. In the past that’s been five councillors. A year or two ago that changed and one of the councils nominated a staff member which is fine. It’s anyone the council nominates plus a community representative whom we advertise for from each of the LGAs, and from time to time the board co-opts. Having said that we signed, just by the way, a three-year agreement with Arts New South Wales. Arts New South Wales want all the regional arts boards to move to a skill-based model and so we’re kind of all in the process of figuring out exactly how that’s going to happen. Rather than being representative it means, just for the sake of argument, having someone who’s got financial skills perhaps, someone who’s got perhaps public relations/marketing skills, someone who’s got HR skills, someone who’s got perhaps legal skills, that sort of approach. It’s just a lot of artists aren’t any good at the business side of things. I mean, some are, some aren’t. It’s a bit of a changing world because of the internet (Reedman i/v Aug 2015).

Other arts support organisations in the Upper Hunter such as Scone Arts and Crafts Inc. also aim to enthuse, practice and demonstrate all branches of the arts. Others such as the Singleton Arts and Music Society present orchestral concerts, chamber recitals, opera concerts and plays.

Further down the valley in Newcastle, the Newcastle Community Arts Centre supports the development of community-focussed arts activities by individual, groups and organisations providing space and skills development and promoting events, while the Octapod Association aims to inspire new ideas in arts and media and support a creative and diverse arts sector. Octapod has supported the development of artists through programs such as the This Is Not Art Festival, culturehunter.org and Podspace Gallery. TINA, known as This is not Art, is an annual festival of experimental and emerging arts. It attracts artists and visits from across the country. One of its highlights is a Young Writers Award. The Dungog Festival is an arts festival which highlights art in many genres and includes film, workshops, sculpture on the Farm, music in a street party and lots of family entertainment.

Apart from a focus on the arts, publishing and film communities, the digital sector has also had its supporters and enablers. Hunter Digit, for example, is a non-profit organisation committed to establishing the Hunter Region as a leading digital economy with a global reputation by 2020. Leaders of the group have been closely involved with the Hunter Innovation and iF Projects which are delivering these outcomes. Closely linked to Hunter DiGiT is Eighteen04 which provides an incubator and co-working space for smart cities and green technology. It runs start-up events and hackathons and provides mentoring and skills development.

The Lunaticks Society is a not-for-profit association of digital and creative enthusiasts and related professionals and entrepreneurs who are engaged in the digital economy and want to network and promote their ideas and achievements to others. Gordon Whitehead is its Chair and founder. Whitehead’s background was as a Royal Air Force technician. He then moved
into IT Services and from there into Business Development Management. He has a Masters Degree in Marketing. Whitehead’s own business is a marketing consultancy but he was recently offered the opportunity to work within a business advisory capacity. This situation:

Also gives me a role in regional planning in the sphere of innovation. It brings together my experience and training but also my passion to make a difference … I have come to the view that the methodologies of business development are wrong – archaic. So, I started to look at one-to-one marketing, databases and so on because the traditional marketing agency model was broken. There are new models, new revenue models. What I used to do for businesses isn’t useful any more. Now I work as a business advisor and can use all of that experience to help others (Whitehead i/v Sept 2016).

As Whitehead explains:

I helped form the Lunaticks Society - named after the Lunar Society of Birmingham - which is dedicated to digital innovation and new ideas in Regional Australia. One program is the annual Newie Awards for digital creativity based on a whole range of technologies – social media, new technology solutions, agency work, start-ups, solutions for government and tourism. It has been running for five years now and has become a significant event – entries from around Australia, even overseas. We’ve run Coffee Mornings and evening sessions where we talk about creative topics. We are trying out a more TV-style program approach with our goal to do more consumable programs. It’s all about collaboration – agencies, suppliers, clients. At Lunaticks – it’s everyone who is involved. Stop the competitive stuff. Collectively we can lift the bar … My goal is to generate optimism. It’s an exciting time. We are in an age of experimentation and innovation we have never seen before. The big issue is the transition from traditional businesses on the street corner to the new services, as well as the new industries and the businesses that support them (Whitehead i/v Sept 2016).

Among the growing complex of privately-run co-working spaces that specialise in clusters of related creatives are the INNX Hub which provides co-working space, studios, meeting spaces and hot desks for creatives such as filmmakers, architects, designers, photographers and The Production Hub which is a co-working space in Newcastle for film-makers, 3D artists, animators, graphic designers, UX designers and web developers.

Harry Balding is the Community Manager for the DASH co-working space. After studying communications, he worked in marketing, sales and business development for a manufacturer before taking up his role with DASH. He indicates that his:

Interest lies in tech start-ups so being able to tie my interest into my employment is ridiculously good. Here, we’ve got media producers, website designers, graphic designers – quite a few working in the creative sector but that’s not our sole client group. Within the Hunter you’ve got the Roost, Production Hub, and INNX, Newcleus. So there are plenty of options specifically for the creative sector … Dantia, the vehicle for Lake Macquarie’s economic development strategy, is DASH’s parent company. We thought to set up a place for people in the knowledge economy to thrive and to meet, and to collaborate and connect. We also feature in Council’s smart cities and ecosystem management strategies … Newie Start-ups is a meet-up group that has just grown. For each event we have held, there have been more attendees. We did a pitch event last October and had 85 people come and 8
start-ups pitched. The University provided the prizes. It’s one of a whole lot of innovative meet-up groups in Newcastle – Agile Newcastle, Newcastle Intracoders; Newcastle Ruby Developers, Hunter Young Professionals; UON Bizcom; UON Computing Society and others. Within Newie Start-ups and DASH there is now lots of informal and social mentoring around (Balding i/v Jan 2017).

For the film world Screen Hunter, the regional film office, supports production in the Hunter region. This office is funded by Hunter Councils and its aim is to capitalise on the unique qualities of the region by increasing film production and fostering and driving the development of a creative and sustainable film industry in the region. As discussed previously it has been successful in attracting film projects to the region and with them the flow-on jobs to local film workers and actors.

The visual arts community is supported and enabled in its activities right across the region. As an economic booster for micro enterprise, it is strongly evident through opportunities such as the Gloucester Arts Trail and the highly successful Olive Tree, Hand Made in the Hunter, Singleton Farmers and Craft, Wollombi Village, Maitland, Laguna, Wine Country and Hunt and Gather Markets as well as the many smaller markets that present throughout the region. Similarly, it seems that almost every town across the region has a small gallery, arts-based retail outlet or annual art show where local creative is given the promotion and support it needs. Several societies are actively engaged in providing a broad creative impetus. These include the Artisan Collective Port Stephens; the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society Scone – which promotes education in the study of the decorative and fine arts; the Gloucester Arts and Cultural Council which is a not-for-profit that operates a gallery and provides workshops and activities; Dungog Arts Society which aims to provides a focal point for fostering creative activities in their community; the Lake Macquarie Art Gallery Society and the Newcastle Art Society. Delivering a broad approach, Murrurundi Arts and Crafts Council is a not-for-profit volunteer-based arts council which runs workshops and ArtStart lessons and hosts the annual Murrurundi Art Prize, photographic Prize and biennial Opera Murrurundi, while the Hunter Arts Network is a non-profit group of artisans that strives to facilitate opportunities of promotion of members and their work through an art bazaar and promotional activities. Port Stephens Community Arts Centre provides facilities for community arts and craft activities and a gallery as does the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre while Newcastle Printmakers Workshop is a dedicated space run by volunteers and available to artists. Ceramics is a strong interest with groups such as Newcastle Studio Potters, Scone Ceramic Group and the Pot House at Muswellbrook all having active ceramics groups, with shared studio spaces for creating ceramics and there are also private teaching studios such as the one at Adamstown. Textiles and fibre arts is a consistent interest with an apparently growing commercial market, locally moving out of functional items and into fine arts. From more traditional crafts such as represented by the Knitters Guild, Fibreholics Clarence Town focusses on spinning and knitting crafts and Daughters on Dowling is a networking and skill development group working with textiles in Dungog. In Newcastle, Creative Embroiders and Textile Artists work with fibres, textiles, quilting and jewellery while Timeless Textiles is a gallery store and open studio featuring textile arts and providing workshops and visiting artists programs.

All Councils in the Hunter Region also actively support indigenous cultural programs through their gallery spaces and events programs. Indigenous art is represented in many galleries including the dedicated Free Spirit Aboriginal Gallery, Outback Art and Red Ochre Workshops – all in Newcastle. The Wollombi Valley Arts Council supports an Aboriginal arts and culture group; while the Hunter Valley Visitors Centre and Cessnock Art Gallery also highlight indigenous arts. Tobwabba Art, based a little to the north in Forster, represents 22 artists but is
an internet-based business – successfully linking the traditional to contemporary markets and crossing regional boundaries. Speaking in Colour is a business delivering Aboriginal art workshops and education resources across the region.

Writers’ support groups are also evident throughout the region and focus on both appreciation and skills development. Gloucester Writers Centre, for example, delivers readings, classes, lectures, films, writers-in-residence and community events. The Hunter Writers Centre is a not-for-profit organisation devoted to both aspiring and established writers and delivers courses, conducts competitions and awards, and (differently from other groups) provides writing services. The Lake Macquarie Branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers meets monthly as do the Raymond Terrace, Maitland and Singleton Writers Groups which provide a range of writing workshops and meetups. Writers Festivals are very popular. The National Young Writers Festival is the country’s largest gathering of young and innovative writers working in both traditional and new forms including zines, comics, screenwriting, poetry, journalism, comedy and prose. It presents panels, discussions, workshops, performances and many forms. The Newcastle Writers Festival is relatively new but has quickly become a well-established event attracting a broad audience and successful writers. The Scone Literary Festival aims to ‘maintain the page’ in this digital age, promoting books and a love of literature.

For the performing arts sector, individual facilitators like Shane Bransdon are essential. He has been a practitioner in acting, singing and dancing since he was five years old. His interest in the performing arts is broad and active but he sees himself primarily as a facilitator. Until recently his paid position was as an educator where he was Vice-Principal at Waratah Public School until 2018 when he began a drama business with Daniel Stoddart called OzTheatre. Bransdon has also lectured at The University of Newcastle Drama Department. Importantly he devotes a great deal of his time to the theatre. He is a judge of the City of Newcastle Drama Awards (CONDAS) which entailed, for example, seeing 60 shows in 2013. He was Chair of the Newcastle Performing Arts Taskforce from 2012 until 2015. He is the drama rep on the arts funding body for the NSW Department of Education which in 2014 disbursed approximately $230,000 in the region. He is also currently undertaking research into performing arts for his PhD at The University of Newcastle. Bransdon’s commitment to being a facilitator may be linked to his comments on the lack of support for performing arts:

Whether it is infrastructure, huge issues with rehearsal spaces, performance spaces and storage spaces, workshop spaces to build things, that’s a significant area that has popped up with my work. Support in terms of grants that either lend towards that or support other organisations such as Tantrum and not-for-profit things. Also within the media the support is minimal. I think the media is an important element within our ecosystem because we can’t get audiences without getting the message out there (Bransdon i/v Dec 2014).

Bransdon also identifies a need for systems to support professional development:

People do generally operate on a sole trader basis however we do have theatre companies like NTC (Newcastle Theatre Company) that do have the potential to say ‘We have all of these shows coming up this year, we have 6, 7, 8 directors, let’s send them to do some professional learning’. This just doesn’t seem to happen. We all know in every other industry that professional learning is a significant ongoing part of being able to keep with the times, produce quality work economically. That is another area I feel is lacking (Bransdon i/v Dec 2014).
Theatre companies in Newcastle, according to Bransdon, are using social media, and whatever form of communication that entails embedding into their posts, to promote their shows:

I’ve looked elsewhere in Australia and they are not doing it but Newcastle theatre companies are producing film trailers in an effort to promote their shows. Stooged Theatre is a wonderful example of companies that go to a lot of effort to stage elements of their show for film … We do have a wonderful community in Newcastle theatre everybody is linked into social media, regardless of age … Being able to tag people, share the experience. People are able to instantly access five or six hundred of their friends by making a single post. I am the coordinator of the CONDA Facebook page and I am able to see using data how many people are exposed to our posts. When I posted about the CONDA winners it was in the vicinity of 900 people that that post reached, just by typing in a sentence and adding an attachment and clicking post. Stooged Theatre have in particular - and I’m not sure if it is entirely social media but I believe that is a significant factor - been able to access an entirely new young audience that nobody else has been able to capture. It is also because they are doing 21st century plays but they are definitely bringing in new audiences (Bransdon i/v Dec 2014).

For Bransdon collaboration remains central:

It’s really important because a lot of us are individuals who look after our own craft, whether it’s development or seeking employment, creating work for ourselves, collaboration has to happen … Every show that you do creates a little family of people who have to collaborate. The wonderful director Julie Black [from Metropolitan Players] always describes it to me as a jigsaw puzzle. She says to me ‘I treat the ushers the same as I do my lead actors because we are all pieces in the jigsaw puzzle. Without all the jigsaw pieces we are not complete’ (Bransdon i/v Dec 2014).

17.4 Conclusion

The creative industries, like all others, do not exist in a vacuum. Once operatives within these industries acquire enough knowledge to become contributors to help complete the jigsaw puzzle, they are part of their own sector and also, increasingly, across sectors, they need support to access information, finance, advice and support as they make their way through an increasingly complex world. Educational opportunities at all levels are available in the Hunter Region with many courses on offer focused specifically at the creative industries. Local, State and Federal instrumentalities have been set up to ensure that the viability of these and other industries serves to benefit the region. The business world also recognises the need to help budding entrepreneurs realise their objectives and at the same time provide research and project support where possible. A number of businesses are focused at this exact task training, advising, consulting, encouraging and, at times, financing those willing to take risks in the creative industries.
20. APPENDICES

20.1 Appendix 1: Short Films

‘Creativity and Cultural Production in the Hunter’ ‘Creativity and Cultural Production’

(Director: Samuel Hutchinson, Producer: Susan Kerrigan 4 minutes)

This short promotional film explains the research behind the ARC Linkage project being conducted in the Hunter Region by Associate Professor Phillip McIntyre, Professor Mark Balnaves, Dr Susan Kerrigan, Evelyn King and Claire Williams.

Check out on Youtube - https://youtu.be/P0Vg6zntiBE

‘Creative Newcastle’

(Director: Samuel Hutchinson, Producer: Susan Kerrigan 14 minutes)

This film is a visual case study of creative industry practitioners who work in Newcastle, it covers film, media, design and fashion industries and looks at creative business strategies used in Newcastle. Creative Newcastle highlights creative industry practitioner’s hopes for their future in Newcastle.

Check out on Youtube - https://youtu.be/uPaJc-rR6JA
20.2 Appendix 2: CI Businesses and Practitioner Interviewee list

**Architecture**
Edward Duc, Duc Associates  
Cassie Stronach, Group D Creative  
Debra McKendry Hunt, McKendry Hunt Architects

**Advertising**
Gavin Banks and Olivia Olley, Good Eye Dear  
Kristie Ferguson, Newcastle Now  
Jamie Lewis, OOTS  
Kara Sullivan, Guts Creative  
Craig Wilson, Sticky Advertising  
Kent Woodcock, Woodcock Creative solutions

**Public Relations and Events**
Paul Tibbles, Cultural Events  
Melanie James, PR/Communication University of Newcastle  
Heidi Pollard, UQ Power

**Design**
Liz Anelli, Children’s Book Illustrator  
Donna Burrell, Hunter Design School  
Trevor Dickinson, Muralist and Designer  
Tina Elliott, The House of Elliott  
Sophia Emmett, Designer/maker  
Jono Everett, Designer/Maker  
Jeff Julian, Pendulum  
Mario Minichiello, Professor of Design, University of Newcastle  
Shannon Roman, Crackler  
Graham Wilson, Designer

**Electronic Games and Interactive Content**
Cameron Baker, Interactive Games Developer  
Karen Blackmore, IT, University of Newcastle  
Tim Davidson, Virtual Perspective/VR and 3D Animator  
Ivan Demidov, Virtual Perspective & Demidov Innovations/VR and 3D animator  
Matthew Farrelly, NSW Mines Rescue Services  
Emma Leggett, Digital Marketer/Web developer  
James Vidler, DiGiT

**Fashion**
Kevin Coffey, Jean Bass and 144: A Style Collective  
Angela Foong, High Tea with Mrs Woo  
Rowena Foong, High Tea with Mrs Woo  
Angela Hailey, Studio Melt  
Lara Lupish, Creative Director
Visual Arts

John Bradley, Landscape Artist
Peter Carlin, Haydon Hall Art Gallery
Kerrie Coles, Artist
Andrew Davis, Artist
Brad Franks, Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery
Peter Lankas, Artist
John Lechner, Photographer
Rachel Milne, Artist
Jo O’Toole, Artist
Trevor Richards, Morpeth Investment Art Gallery
Gillean Shaw, Art Gallery Director
Roger Skinner, Photographer
Catherine Strutt, Bespoke and Lightweight Funky Jewellery
Jennifer Strutt, Bespoke and Lightweight Funky Jewellery
Meredith Woolnough, Textile Artist

Performing Arts

Julie Black, Metropolitan Players
Graeme Black, Metropolitan Players
Shane Bransdon, Judge, educator and performer
Carl Caulfield, Playwright/director/actor
Sarah Coffee, Paper Cut Theatre Company
Tamara Gazzard, Paper Cut Theatre Company
Timothy Gordon, Dancer
Amy Hardingham, Tantrum Youth Arts
Lucy Shepherd, Paper Cut Theatre Company
Mat Lee, Stooged Theatre
Daniel Stoddard, Hunter Drama

Music

Morgan Evans, Country Music Performer
David Fitzgerald, Musical Director and Audio Engineer
Capree Gaul, Live Music Producer
Philip Matthias, Composer, University of Newcastle
Tim McPhee, Musician
Frank Millward, Musician
Steven Pickett, Music Entrepreneur

Publishing

Simone Bailey, Writer
Marilyn Collins, Magazine Publisher
Phil Collins, Magazine Publisher
Mark McLean, Publisher, Writer and Editor
Rosemary Milsom, Writer/Journalist

Radio

Phillip Adams, Public Intellectual
Phil Ashley-Brown, National Radio Manager ABC
Sean Ison, Radio Entrepreneur
Anthony Scully, Multi-Media Producer, ABC
Wayne Stamm, 2NURFM

Film and Television
Vanessa Alexander, Film and TV Writer/Director
Gavin Banks, Good Eye Deer
Karl Brandstater, Storyhaus
Ian Hamilton, Limelight Creative Media
Annette Hubber, Screen Hunter
Anna Kelly, Limelight Creative Media
Brendan McCormick, Bar TV
Josh Mason, Bar TV
NBN Television
One80
Olivia Olley, Good Eye Deer

Sector Enablers
Liz Burcham, Cultural Director, Newcastle City Council
Gunilla Burrowes, Electrical Engineer
Christina Gerakiteys, Ideation
Steph Hinds, Growthwise
Harry Balding, Dash Co-working spaces
Nuatali Nelmes, Lord Mayor Newcastle
Michael Neilson, Newcastle Now
Mark Reedman, Arts Upper Hunter
Christopher Saunders, Renew Newcastle
Marcus Westbury, Cultural Entrepreneur
Gordon Whitehead, The Business Centre
Todd Williams, Regional Development Authority – Hunter