



# ***Data-led transformation of industry, career, and SAMAG***

*June 2023*

## Our journey



SAMAG commissioned The Insights Grill with a piece of strategic research to help the organisation understand how it could help members transform professionally, and in doing so, help transform the industry and SAMAG itself.

## Who we spoke with

- 260 people total
- 92% currently working in arts and culture (plus 3% studying, 5% seeking work)

- Top 3 art forms (multi-select allowed):



Visual arts 47%



Theatre 33%



Community Arts 31%

- Top 3 roles (multi-select allowed)



Artist/Creator 35%



Manager 31%



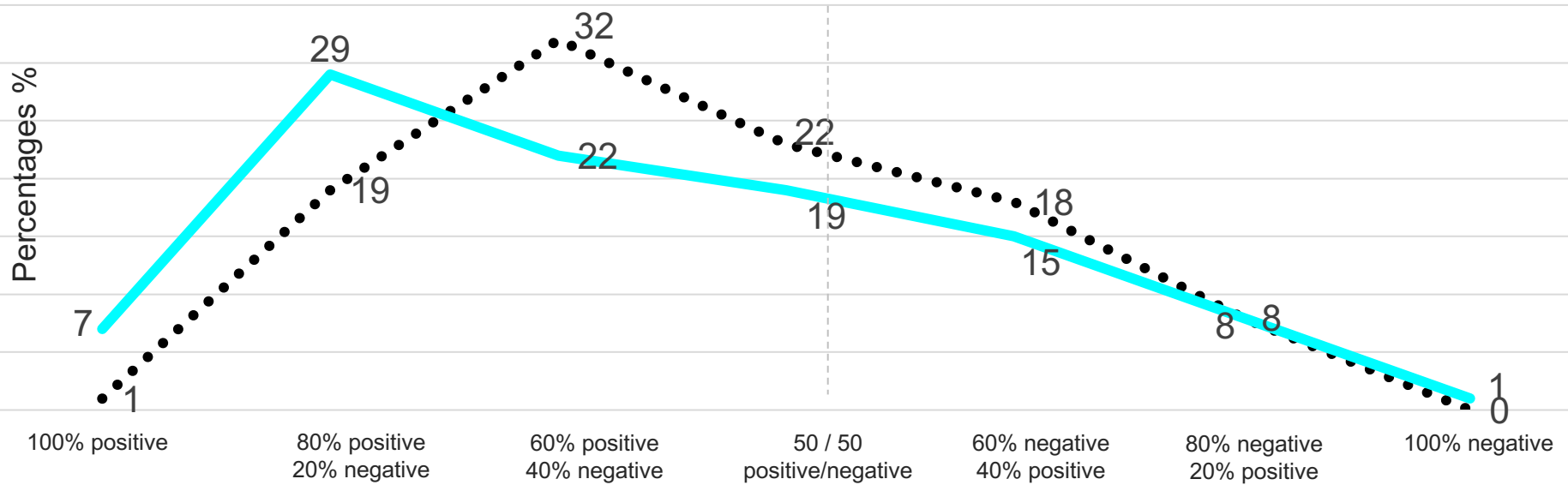
Administrator 28%



***Overall feelings towards the state of their arts industry and professional careers***

# The good news: Workers are twice as likely to feel positive than negative about industry & career

Q: How positive or negative do you feel about your industry?.... Your career?



**Total leaning towards positive:**

Career: 58%

Industry: 52%

**Total leaning towards negative:**

Career: 24%

Industry: 26%

## What's driving the positive sentiment?

- New roles / promotions
- Having impact on community
- Stability at good company
- Freedom / flexibility
- Feeling supported by others
- Producing great work
- Diversity of opportunities
- Love for what they do
- Sense of momentum, increased innovation post-Covid

*Doing things I want to do that have impact*

*There are lots of new opportunities and a real buzz coming out of covid*

*I feel very supported by other professionals*

*I have just started a new job and feel rejuvenated career-wise.*

## What's driving the negative sentiment?

- Ageism
- Burnout / tired
- Lack of funding
- Lack of appreciation / value for arts
- Underpaid / undervalued
- Contracts / casualisation of roles
- Lack of stability / security
- Limited career development and opportunities
- Post-pandemic pessimism

*Wage. Hours. Expectations.  
Appreciation. Burn out.*

*Pressure to do more with less.  
The lack of competent staff  
(or anyone)*

*Both government and  
audience support seems to be  
on the wane 'post'-COVID.*

*Lack of leadership opportunities - if I leave  
my role, it's highly unlikely I will be able to  
step into a similar position and salary.*

# Work/life balance, stability and career progression are their top priorities for 2023

Q: What are your main professional priorities for the next 12 months?



40%

More work/life balance and stability



35%

Career progression from doing great work



29%

Grow my network / professional connections



26%

Improve leadership and management skills  
(higher among people under 45 and administrators)



12%

Upskill in a specific area



12%

Get new job in arts and culture



6%

Get new job outside arts and culture

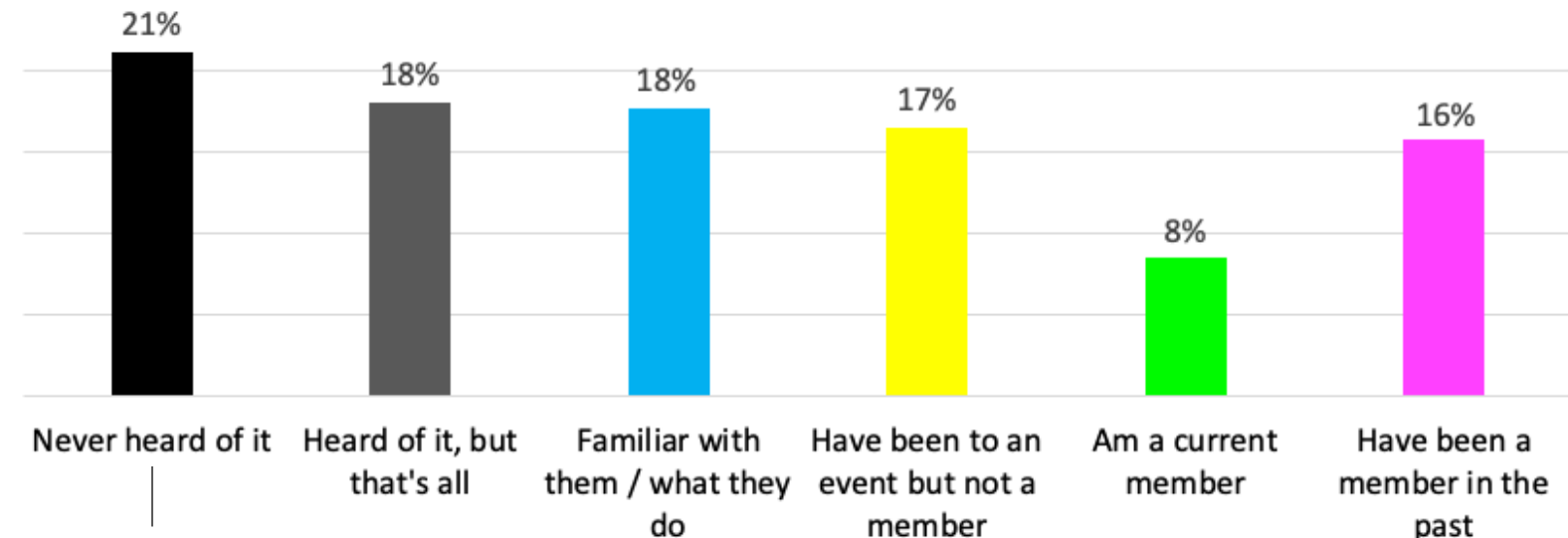




## ***What we learned about SAMAG***

# 4 in 10 arts and culture workers have no awareness or comprehension of SAMAG

Q: Before this survey, how familiar were you with SAMAG, the Sydney Arts Management Advisory Group?

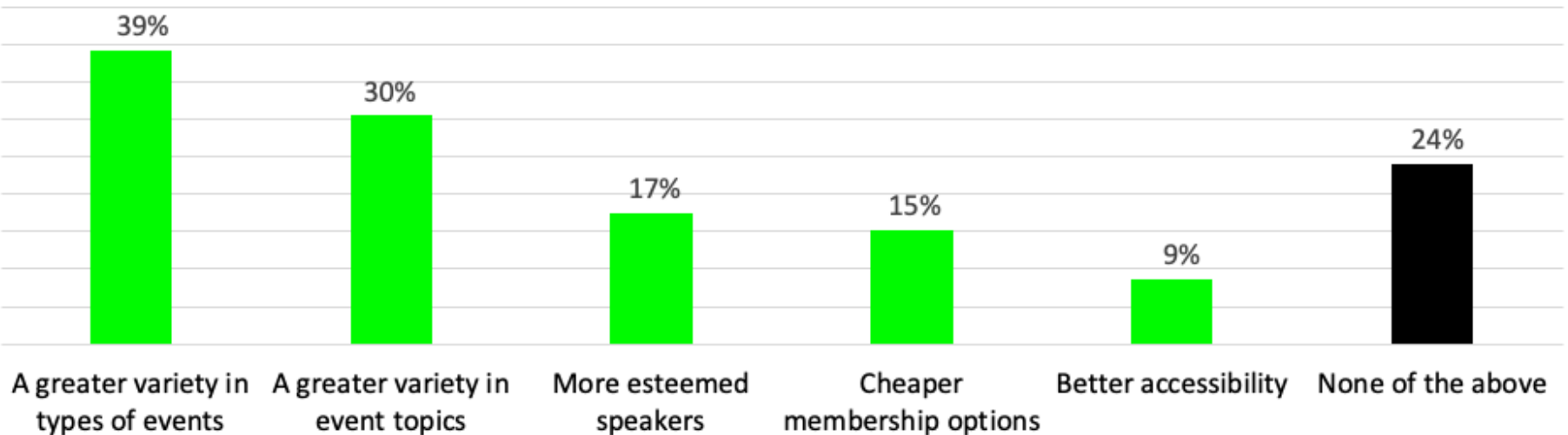


Significantly high for artists / creators / makers: 30%

And interstate: 37% vs...  
 32% regional  
 5% outer Sydney  
 14% inner Sydney

Twice as many who took the survey were lapsed members than current members

## Lapsed members: What would it take to re-join SAMAG?



So in the next section  
we ask all about events  
and topic preferences



***What we learned about events for arts & culture industry workers***

# They want a better network, but networking events make them cringe.

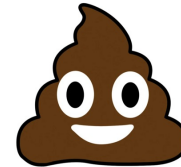
Q: Please rank your preferred event style from most to least preferred:



#1. Panel  
Discussions  
(288 points)

#2 Keynote  
Speakers  
(270 points)

#3 Interactive  
Workshops  
(251 points)

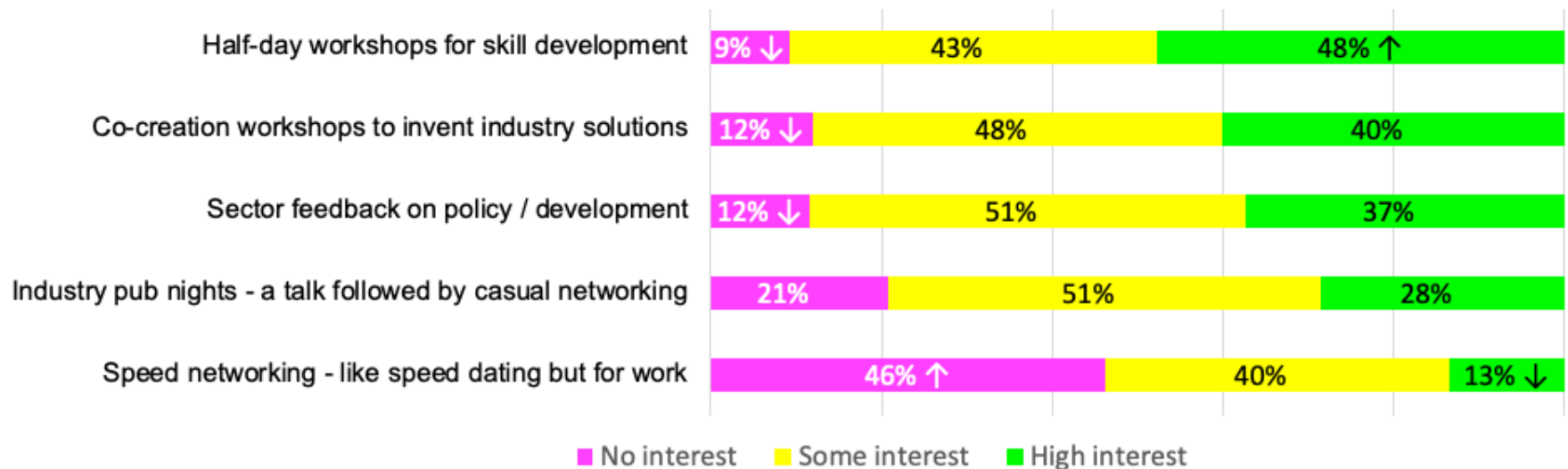


#4 Networking  
events  
(194 points)

## We tested a few event ideas with them.

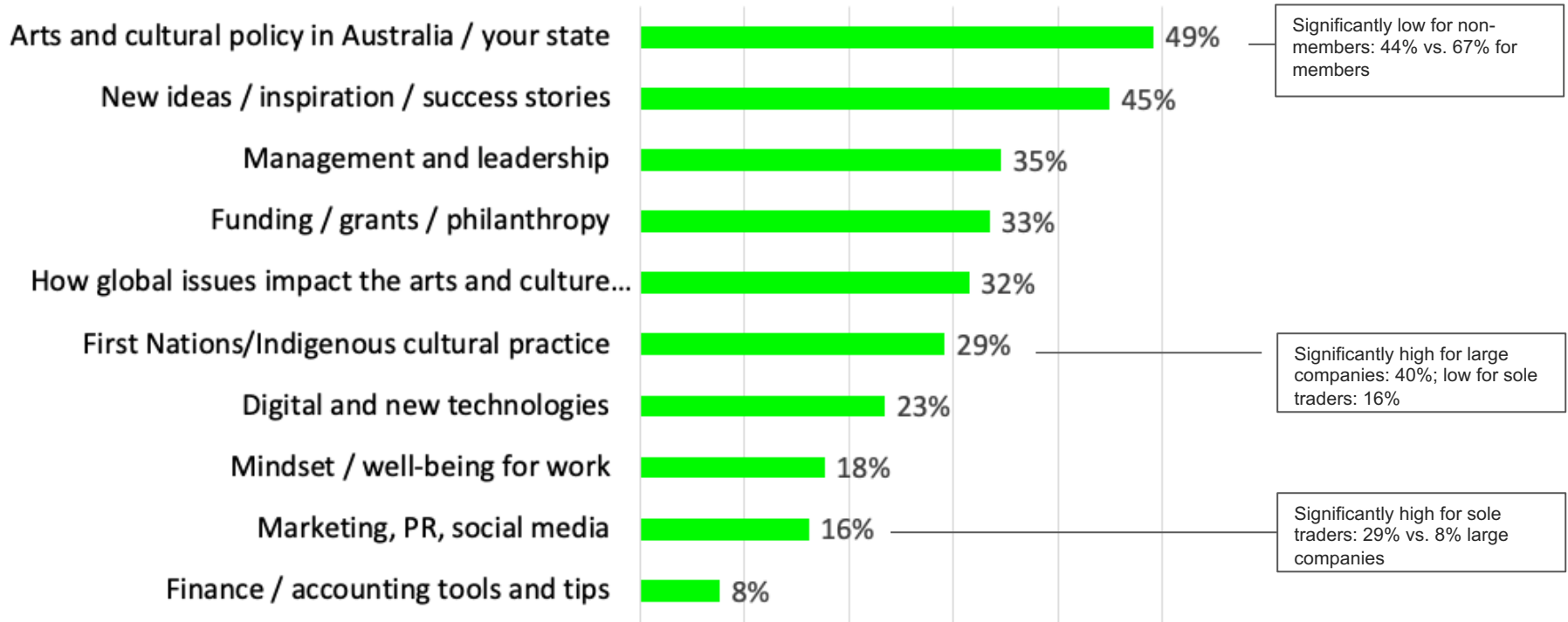
Tangible skill development over a half day has the most appeal - of high interest to almost half the sample (48%). Speed networking fell very flat.

Q: 'How interested are you in the following types of events



# We tested 10 broad topics and saw two very different top interests

Q: Which 3 topics are you most interested in hearing about?





**Q: If you could ask a top arts & culture expert one question, what would you ask them?**

**7 key themes emerged...**





## The 7 questions they would ask an expert

How to sustain  
long-term

*“How do you sustain a career in the arts with low wages and big workloads?”*

How to create a  
fairer industry

*“How do we change discrimination against women in arts, particularly in classical music?”*

How to increase  
risk appetite

*“How do we encourage greater appetite for calculated risk & innovation across government and business?”*

How to prove  
our value

*“How do we re-centre the arts as a public good?”*

How to be  
headstrong

*“How do you get past the imposter syndrome that is so ripe in our industry and back yourself to apply for the jobs?”*

How to market /  
get funding

*“How do I approach major institutions to propose staging a mid career survey exhibition?”*

If you could turn  
back time...

*“What project did you never do but always wished you did, and why didn't you do it?”*



***To recap***

## TRANSFORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

### INDUSTRY

The majority of arts & culture workers are feeling positive (only 6% want to leave the industry) – but 1 in 4 are mostly negative



Tackle the major points of industry discontent, ie: burnout, ageism, sexism, lack of perceived value

### CAREER

Top 3 priorities are balance/stability, career progression through great work, and to grow networks... but networking is a bugaboo – they want it but how remains unsolved.



Help them achieve balance/stability, career progression... and reinvent networking for arts & culture workers

### SAMAG

Relatively low brand awareness among the industry, with lapsed members wanting more diversity of events and topics. Half-day skill building workshops hold potential.



Big opportunity for SAMAG to reinvent and rebrand itself:

- More national and online
- More active skill development
- More clear in its member value



***Thanks for your time – any questions?***



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