

NT Arts and Culture Infrastructure Survey 2023 - Evaluation Report

Delivered in partnership with Arnhem, Northern and Kimberley Artists (ANKA) and Desart

ANKA ARNHEM, NORTHERN
AND KIMBERLEY ARTISTS
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Working together to keep art, country and culture strong



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1. Acknowledgement

The Northern Territory Government respectfully acknowledges the First Nations people of this country and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders, past, present and emerging. While this Submission uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations people living in the Territory and 'Aboriginal' should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2. Background

The Northern Territory (NT) Government rightfully acknowledges Aboriginal people as the oldest living culture on earth and the prior owners and occupiers of the land, seas and waters that are now called the Northern Territory of Australia¹. We recognise Aboriginal Culture, languages and lore as fundamental to the NT's identity; our strength, our past and our future.²

The NT Government values and celebrates our enduring Aboriginal art, culture and stories that have been central to the expression, practice and preservation of Aboriginal cultures for tens of thousands of years and recognises that Aboriginal traditional law and culture is the foundation for all art.³

As patiently explained by the Aboriginal Board of Desart, the peak body for the Aboriginal arts and culture industry across Central Australia: 'For us culture comes first. Our culture is who we are. It came to us from our old people, and we have to carry it on for our young people. It shows us how to live our lives. We express this through our art, how we look after our country and how we teach our young kids. Our art centres keep our culture strong. They are places that keep our stories strong and safe, for no one to take. They belong to us, Aboriginal people. Art centres are important for us. Art centres are keeping places. Holding the country and storylines.'

The NT Aboriginal art and culture industry contributes significantly to our cultural identity, social and economic development providing significant benefits to Aboriginal communities in regional and remote locations across the NT: as Aboriginal cultural leaders keeping Country, culture and stories strong on Aboriginal land and waters for future generations; as the birthplace of the Aboriginal art movement and through the significant ongoing contributions to the development, growth and profile of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) art both nationally and internationally.

In the NT, there are an estimated 53 active Aboriginal-owned art and culture centres and artist groups supporting more than 8000 Aboriginal artists and arts workers primarily in remote NT communities. These art and culture centres are supported through the Indigenous visual arts industry (IVAI) peak bodies Arnhem, Northern and Kimberley Artists (ANKA) and Desart. ANKA and Desart are key national First Nations leaders as the oldest and largest peak bodies for Aboriginal art and culture across Northern and Central Australia representing more than 87 Aboriginal-owned art and culture centres and an estimated 14 000 Aboriginal artists in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia. With a strong and established track record of Aboriginal governance and cultural and creative leadership, the enduring and vital significance of Aboriginal owned and led art and culture centres across Australia cannot be underestimated.

The Northern Territory (NT) Arts and Culture Infrastructure Survey 2023 (the Survey) was initiated by the NT Government and delivered in consultation and partnership with ANKA and Desart to gain an understanding of the status and development needs of Aboriginal owned art and culture centre infrastructure in the NT.

The Survey was delivered via the 'Have Your Say' online platform opening on the 12 October 2023 and closing on the 19 November 2023. A copy of the Survey questions is provided at Attachment A.

This report includes a summary of the Survey results and key infrastructure priorities and issues identified and will be used to inform NT Government and Aboriginal art and culture industry plans that support the development of Aboriginal art and culture in the NT.

¹ The Barunga Agreement - A memorandum of understanding, 8 June 2018, page 6 Available at (https://dcm.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/514272/barunga-muo-treaty.pdf)

² The Chief Minister, Barunga Statement, June 2018, Everyone Together 2019-2029 Northern Territory Government Aboriginal Affairs Strategy, 2021 page 4

³ Desart.com.au

Aboriginal-owned art and culture centres are integral to a strong, safe, ethical and sustainable Indigenous visual arts and culture industry and the continued development of Aboriginal art and culture.

Sustainable and inclusive facilities not only support best practice in the arts and culture industry, Aboriginal cultural maintenance and sustainability, business and service delivery, but also provide significant cultural, social and economic benefits for Aboriginal artists, arts workers and communities.

The survey invited Aboriginal art and culture centres to provide information on:

1. how the centre currently operates
2. what facilities the centre has to support core business
3. the types of art made
4. the cultural, business and visitor services provided
5. infrastructure priorities and needs for the centre.

3. Survey responses

The Survey was sent to 53 Aboriginal art and culture centres across ANKA and Desart members and affiliated programs and a total of 33 responses (62%) were received, including:

- 20 responses from 30 ANKA centres (70%) – 17 online and three paper based responses.
- 13 responses from 23 Desart centres (61%) – 12 online and one paper based response.

4. Survey results

A summary of the key findings of the Survey are outlined below.

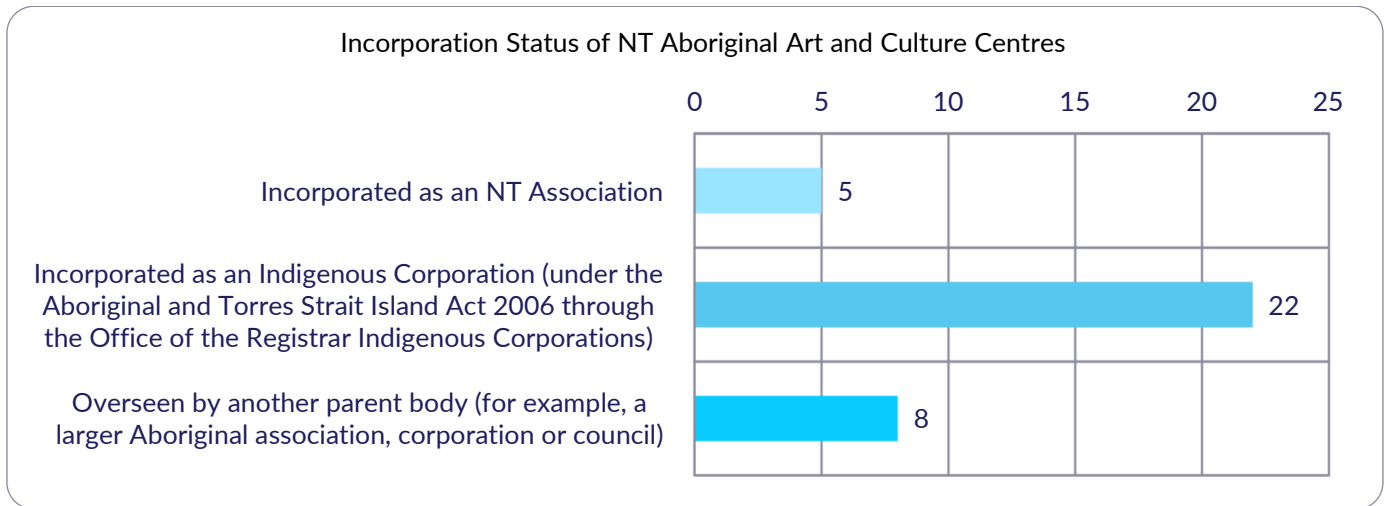
The summary statements and data refer to the 33 survey responses received. Note that one art and culture centre responded twice (and while the centre is counted once in overall number of surveys received, the detailed response data is included in the report) so there is a 3% variance in results. One survey response incorporates information for two art and culture centres administered by the same parent body but is counted as one survey.

Detailed Survey results and art and culture centre responses will be shared with each centres' representative peak body - ANKA in the Top End and Desart in Central Australia.

4.1. Current Art Centre Business and Infrastructure Status

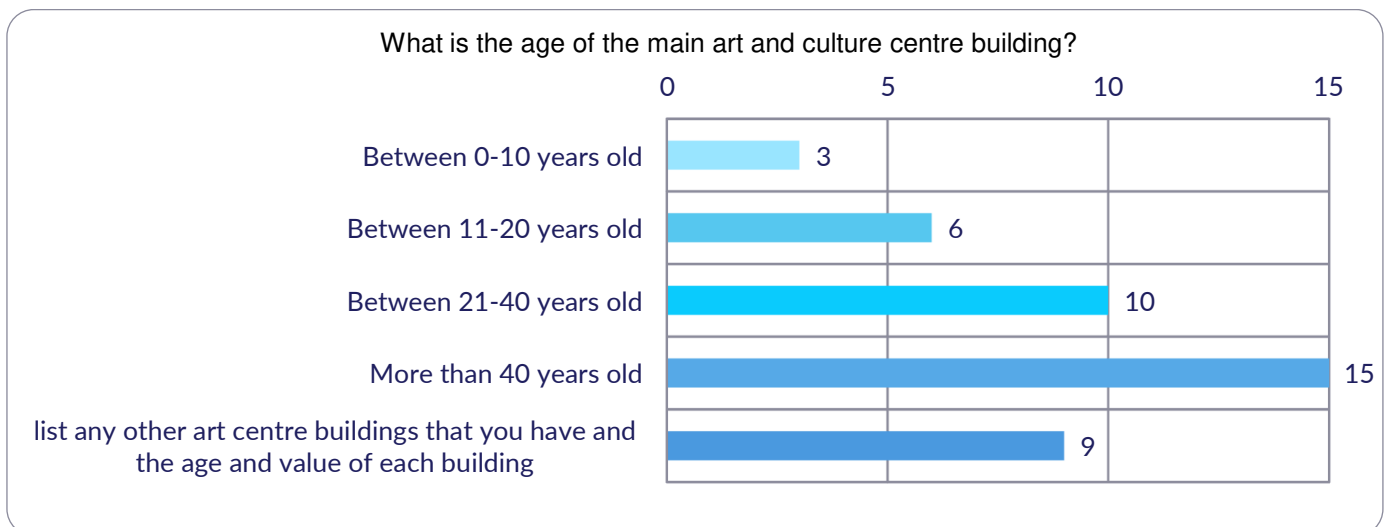
4.1.1. Incorporation status

- The majority of NT Aboriginal art and culture centre respondents (67% - 22/33), are incorporated as an Indigenous Corporation (under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Act 2006 through the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations. Around a quarter of the centres (24% - 8/33) are overseen by another parent body, for example, a larger Aboriginal association, corporation or council.
- Only 15% (5/33) of respondents are incorporated as an NT Association.

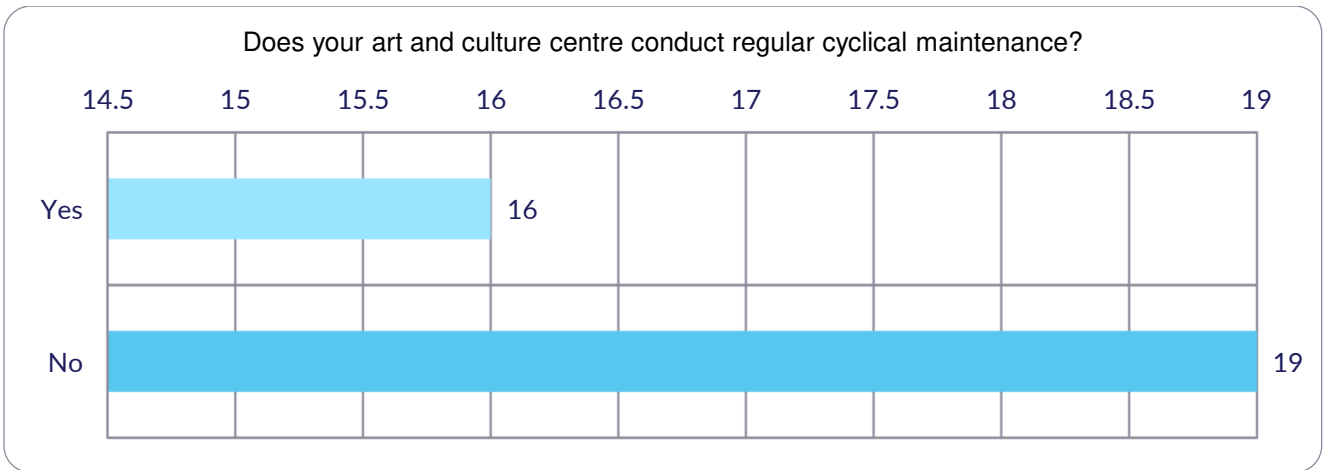
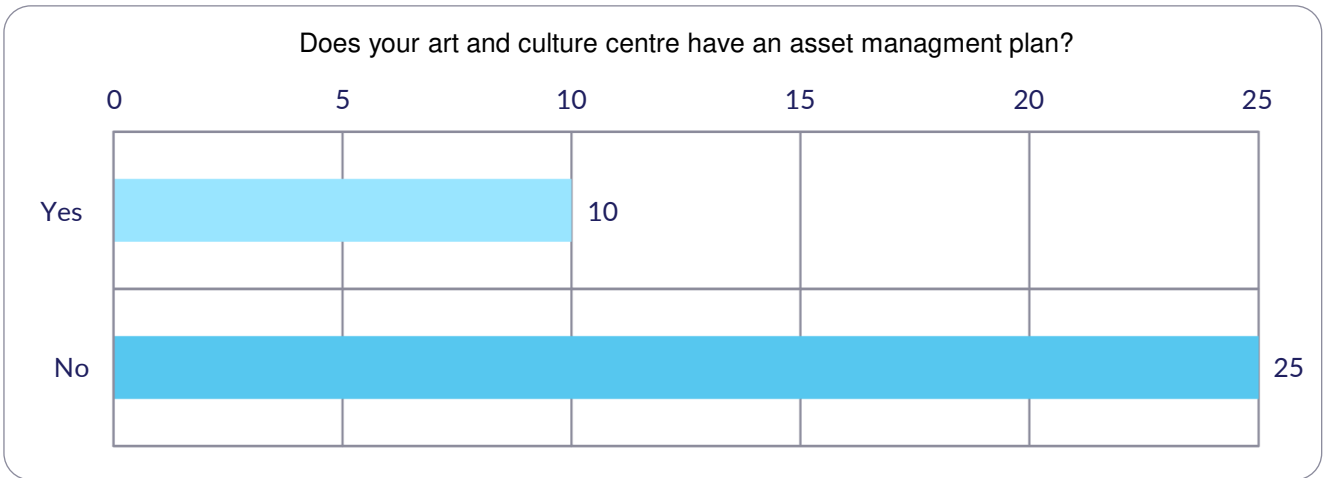


4.2. Status of the main art and culture centre premises

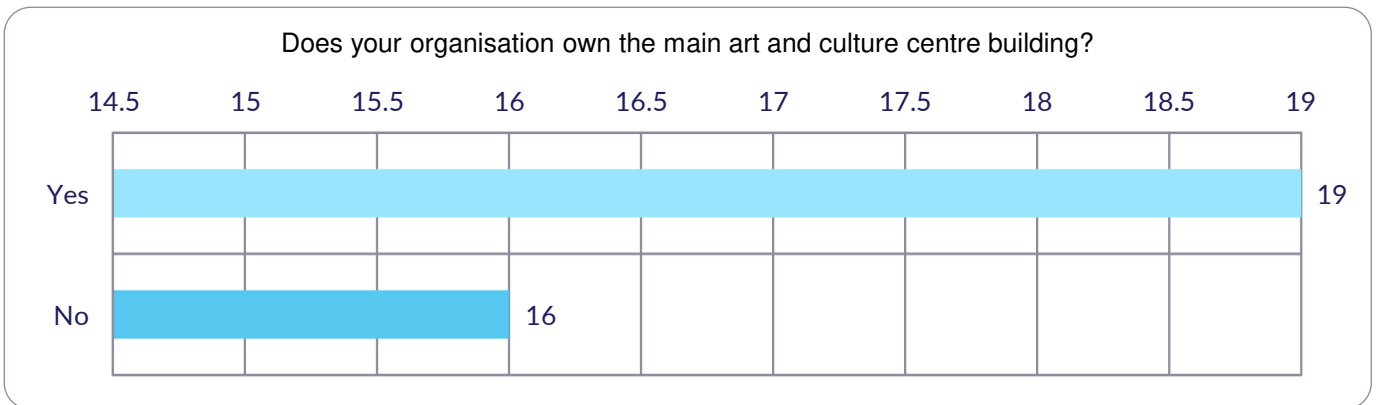
- The majority of art and culture centres (75%) are more than 21 years old: with 45% (15/33) more than 40 years old and 30% (10/33) between 21-40 years old. 34% report that significant upgrades or building replacement is the centres number one priority as buildings are either at the end of their useful life or require expensive maintenance to be fit for purpose and effectively meet core business needs or development opportunities. Only 9% of premises are between 0-10 years old. Nearly 30% of centre respondents have more than one building such as additional arts workshop areas, museums or keeping places.

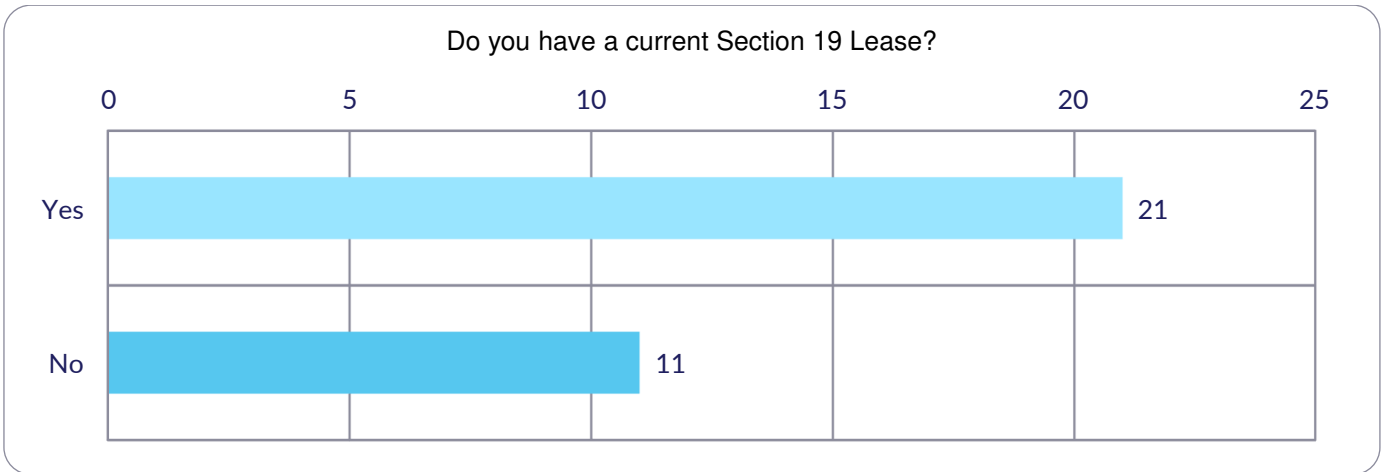


- The majority of respondents do not have a current asset management plan (76% -25/33) and nearly half (48% - 16/33) conduct regular cyclical maintenance. Respondents describe the age of the building, the cost of maintenance and the lack of available contractors to provide maintenance in remote communities as barriers to maintaining ageing facilities.

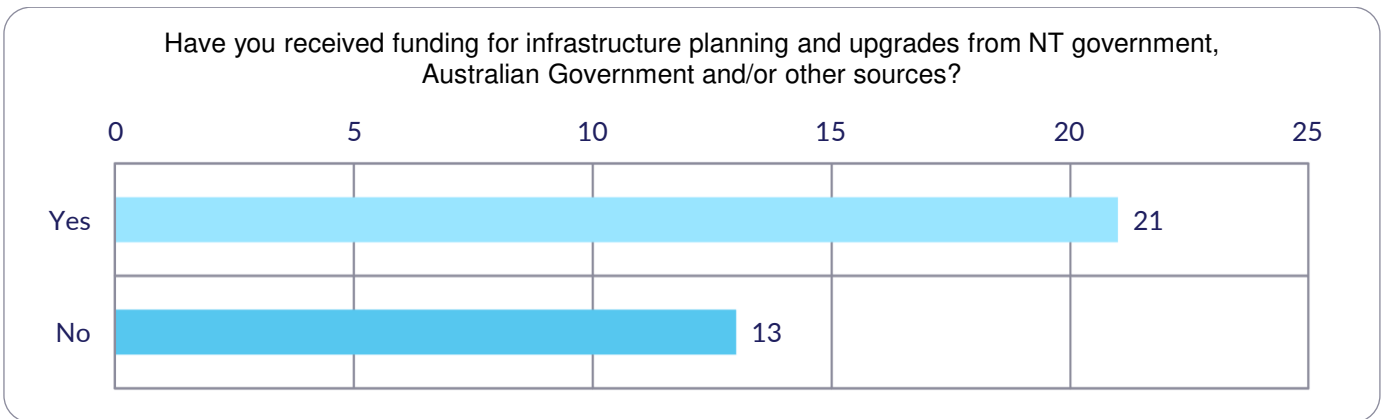


- More than half (58% -19/33) of respondents own the main art centre building and 64 % (21/33) have a current section 19 lease through the relevant Land Council which allows the centre to use Aboriginal land for purposes outlined in the lease under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

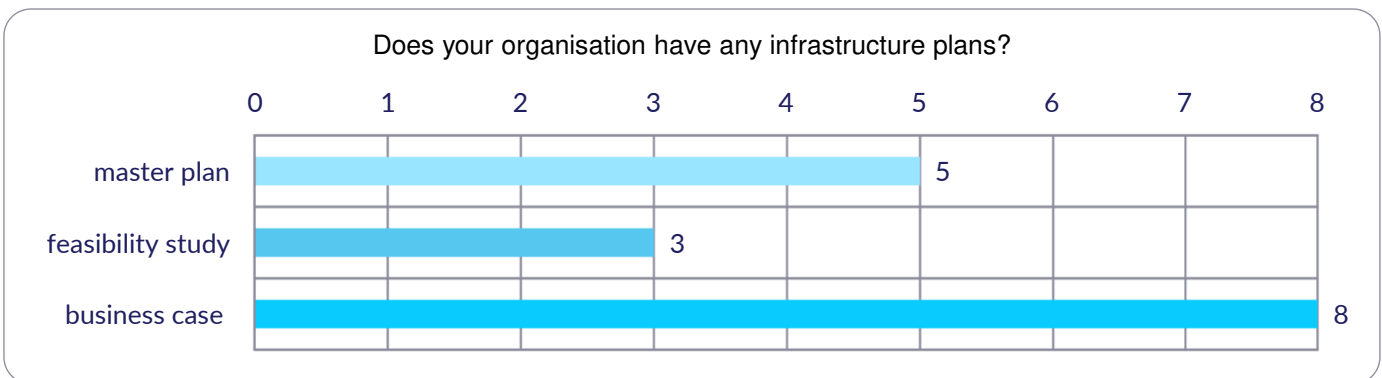




- Art and culture centres are proactive in applying for funding for infrastructure planning or works when programs are available and 64% (21/33) have received funding for infrastructure planning or works from NT Government Departments, Australian Government programs or other sources over the last 10 or more years.

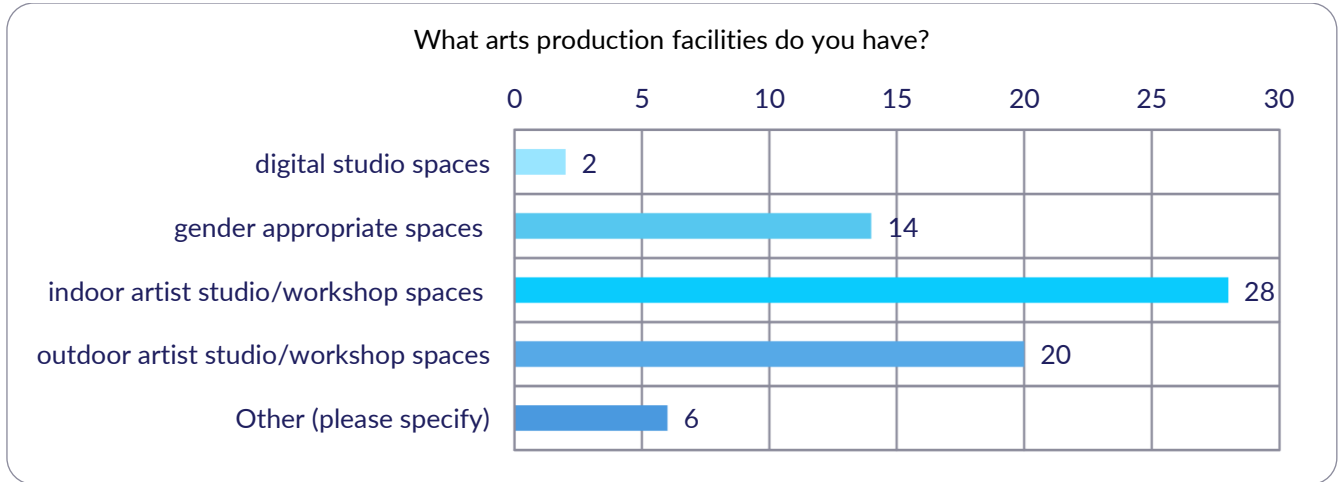


- Some respondents have infrastructure plans in place to inform future applications for infrastructure funding as it becomes available such as business cases (24%), masterplans (15%) and feasibility studies (9%).



- 85% of art and culture centres have indoor studios for arts production (such as for painting, textile printing, paper print making, ceramics, sewing, fashion and jewellery making, photography and film editing); 61% have outdoor studio and workshop spaces for arts production (such as for wood carving,

welding and weaving); 42% have gender appropriate spaces (for example, separate spaces for genders) and 6% have digital studios. Some art centres selected they have other facilities but did not specify what they are.

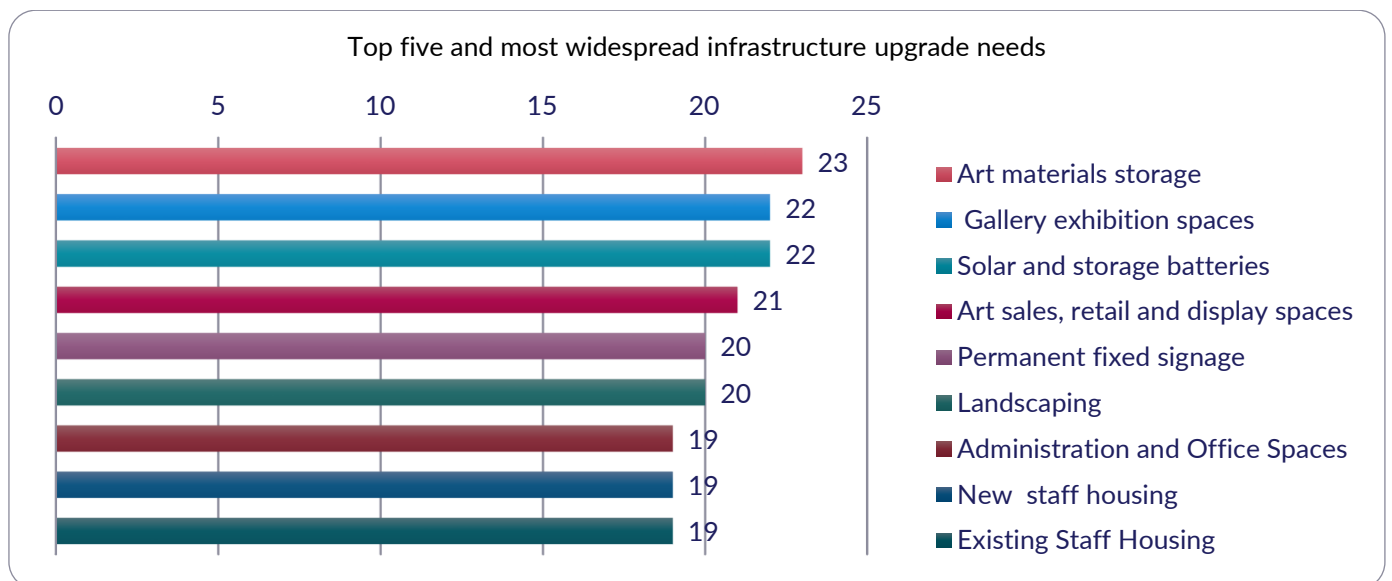


4.3. Infrastructure needs

4.3.1. Top five most widespread infrastructure upgrade needs

The 33 respondents identified that the need for infrastructure upgrades is widespread across art and culture centre facilities. The top five most common infrastructure upgrades needed across all art centre facilities include:

1. Art materials storage (70% - 23/33)
2. Gallery exhibition spaces (67% - 22/33) and Solar and storage batteries (67% - 22/33)
3. Art sales, retail and display spaces (64% -21/33)
4. Permanent fixed signage (61% - 20/33) and Landscaping (61% - 20/33)
5. Administration and office spaces (58% - 19/33); and New staff housing -for example, for staff from outside the community on contract in manager or art coordinator roles at (57% - 19/33) and Upgrades to existing staff housing (57% - 19/33)



These upgrades were considered important to achieve fit for purpose facilities that strengthen business efficiency and professionalism and support the art and culture centre to be viable, sustainable and fulfill its cultural and arts development priorities. The priority areas identified for upgrades support: professional production, display and storage of art works and materials; the marketing, sales and promotion of arts and cultural products and services; critical Aboriginal cultural maintenance, sharing knowledge and skills and providing appropriate community access to cultural materials, collections and services; increased income for artists and art workers; increased capacity to meet market demand, grow visitation and increase awareness of Aboriginal culture and authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts.. The priority upgrades would also provide essential, secure housing accommodation to attract and retain local Aboriginal and external staff who are critical to the ongoing sustainability of the Aboriginal art and culture industry in the Northern Territory.

4.3.2. Top five infrastructure upgrade priorities

4.3.2.1. Number one priority identified

Each art and culture centre was also asked to provide further details of their specific top five infrastructure upgrade priorities (from one to five - with one being the most important). Of the 33 respondents 30 art and culture centres provided further detail about their specific priorities. The following infrastructure upgrade priorities were identified by each of the 30 respondents as their number one / most important priority:

1. Critical and substantial upgrades needed to achieve fit for purpose, safe and usable art and culture centre facilities that meet basic Work Health and Safety, compliance requirements and arts production needs was identified as the number one priority for a third of respondents (33% - 10/30); Four of these centres specified that substantial upgrades, repairs or building replacement is needed. Others specific priorities included: operational budgets are not adequate to be able to afford expensive maintenance for ageing facilities; need for basic power, water and sewerage connections; insulation and climate control for workshop spaces; need dedicated spaces suitable for both men and women's art and culture production across a range of art forms and cultural services and to reduce overcrowding; and

Housing for outside contracted staff and local Aboriginal staff (33% - 10/30). Centres report that staff housing is very old and needs replacing; housing supply is inadequate to house contracted local Aboriginal staff and staff contracted from outside the community; need more and improved houses; local Aboriginal staff live in overcrowded houses; existing houses need upgrades and can limit centres to employing couples to fill manager and art coordinator roles; no accommodation for visiting professionals; housing is not in a safe or accessible location; once centre does not have a separate house for staff and they live in the art and culture centre.

2. Security and accessibility requirements (10% - 3/30). Security upgrade priorities include fencing for art and culture centre and housing; lockable doors, windows and security screens; alarm systems and cameras; repairs from previous break ins; and improved ground level access to art and culture centre buildings; and

Arts business services (10% - 3/30) such as reliable and adequate IT and Wi-Fi to meet business needs; fit for purpose office space; canvas preparation and storage area for artworks and materials.

3. Upgrades for arts presentation and showcasing (7% - 2/30) including completion of existing Arts Trail Gallery Extension Program investment; separate gallery and arts production / workshop spaces.
4. One art and culture centre identified the building of a keeping place to retain cultural knowledge and create an immersive space for visitors as their number one priority. (3% -1/30); and one art and culture centre identified all infrastructure upgrades were the number one priority (3% -1/30).

Given the age of art centre buildings and the challenges identified in providing art and culture centre housing in remote communities with only two out of 33 respondents providing housing for local Aboriginal staff it follows that the number one shared priority for a third of respondents is for both critical and substantial art and culture centre upgrades and housing. The increasing incidence of reported break ins and damage to property has also resulted in need to upgrade and strengthen art and culture centre and housing security and this is the number one priority for approximately 10% of respondents.

4.3.2.2. Second priority identified

Twenty one respondents identified their second most important priority for infrastructure upgrades including:

1. New, upgraded and maintenance of staff housing for external and local Aboriginal contracted staff to attract and retain management and local Aboriginal staff critical to the art and culture centre operations and purpose (33% - 7/21); housing maintenance and costs is an ongoing issue; also identified were renovation of amenities for artists such as food and drink preparation areas, improved disability access and landscaping to make the art and culture centre more welcoming and a comfortable environment for workers and visitors.
2. Upgrades to art presentation and showcasing spaces (19% - 4/21) including specialised facilities for displaying cultural collections, materials and artefacts and professional dedicated gallery spaces with hanging and lighting systems; and outdoor performance and showcase facilities. One remote art and culture centre identified opportunity for a high-profile art gallery space in Darwin.
3. Upgrades to improve access, safety and compliance (14% - 3/21) and art services (14% - 3/21) including new electricity services and wiring; crim-safe security screens, reinforced doors, locks and external security cameras and alarms for art and culture centres and staff housing; IT system and Wi-Fi access improvement; climate-controlled environment for artwork and natural materials storage; improved secure and private spaces for women artists.
4. Upgrades for specific art form production such as printmaking, textiles and batik (10% - 2/21; and upgrades for cultural services (10% - 2/2) such as to dance sites and sorry business grounds; digital archives and collections storage and appropriate facilities to manage and provide access to repatriated objects and materials.

Further detail about the remaining top three priorities for infrastructure upgrades is provided in detailed survey results reports to both ANKA and Desart.

4.3.3. Goals and objectives of priority infrastructure upgrades

The 33 respondents identified the following six most important goals and objectives of infrastructure upgrades (ranked 1-6 with 1 the most important):

1. Achieve fit for purpose arts and cultural centre facilities
2. Promote or enhance arts production

3. Meet core business needs
4. Support business development opportunities
5. Meet minimum safety, compliance, or professional standards
6. Provide staff housing (for external contracted staff)

4.4. Art and culture centre core business - products and services and supporting infrastructure needs

4.4.1. Arts production

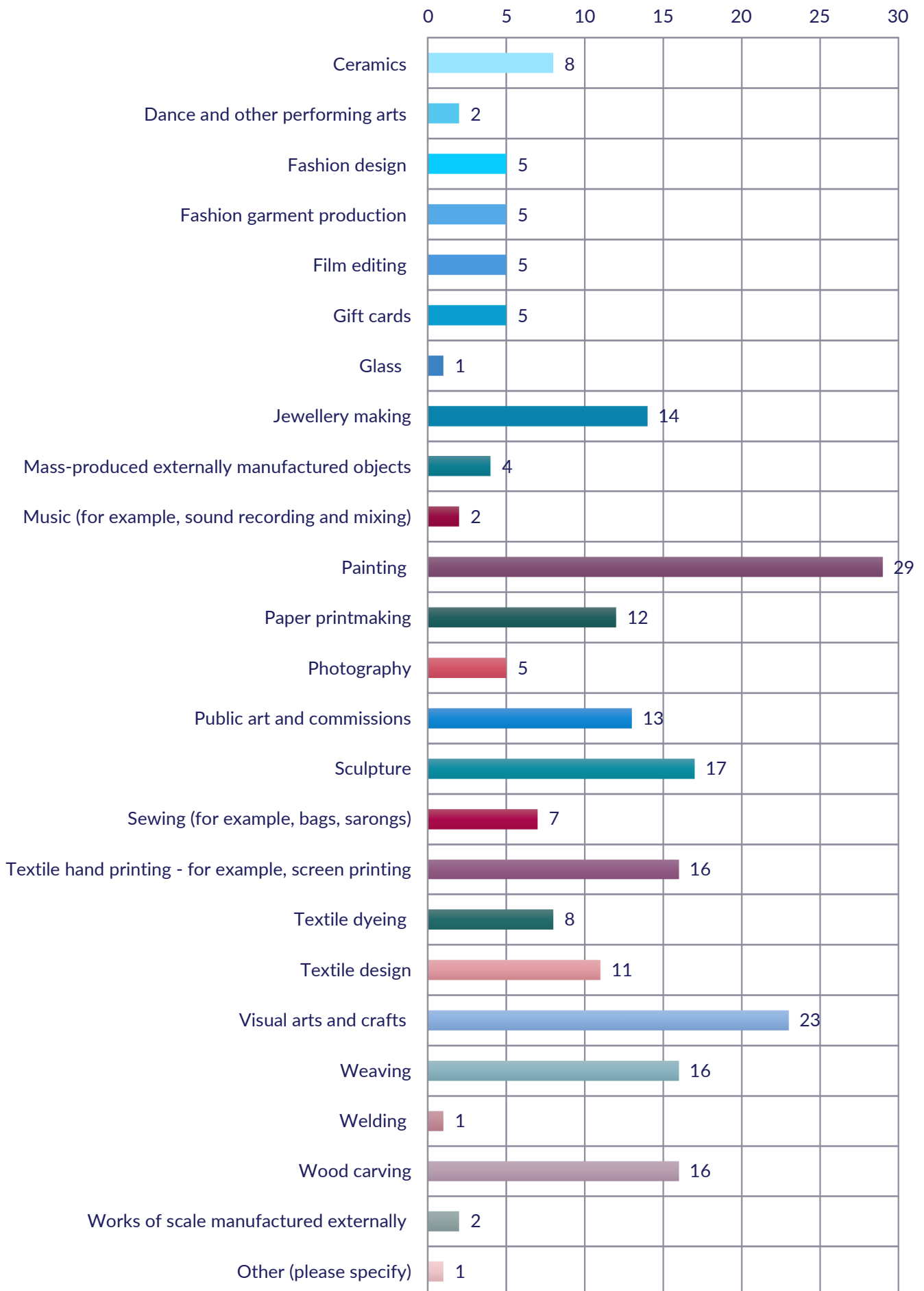
Art and culture centres produce a diverse range of art across more than 25 different art form categories including painting and paper printmaking; textile printing, dyeing, design and sewing; weaving; fashion design and garment production; sculpture, woodcarving and casting; ceramics, glass and jewellery making; dance, music and cultural performances; virtual reality and other multimedia digital content; public art; mass-produced externally manufactured objects made to artists designs; photography and film.

Centres produce unique contemporary works of fine art; art products, designs and merchandise for retail, gift, fashion and tourism markets; traditional cultural objects and materials; public art and works of scale and will continue to innovate, develop and incorporate new skills, art forms and materials into their practice.

- The survey indicates that the most common art forms produced across the 33 art centre respondents include:
 1. painting (97%);
 2. sculpture (52%); (which may overlap with woodcarving)
 3. hand textile printing (48%); weaving (48%) and woodcarving (48%)
 4. jewellery making (43 %)
 5. paper printmaking (40%) and public art commissions (40%).

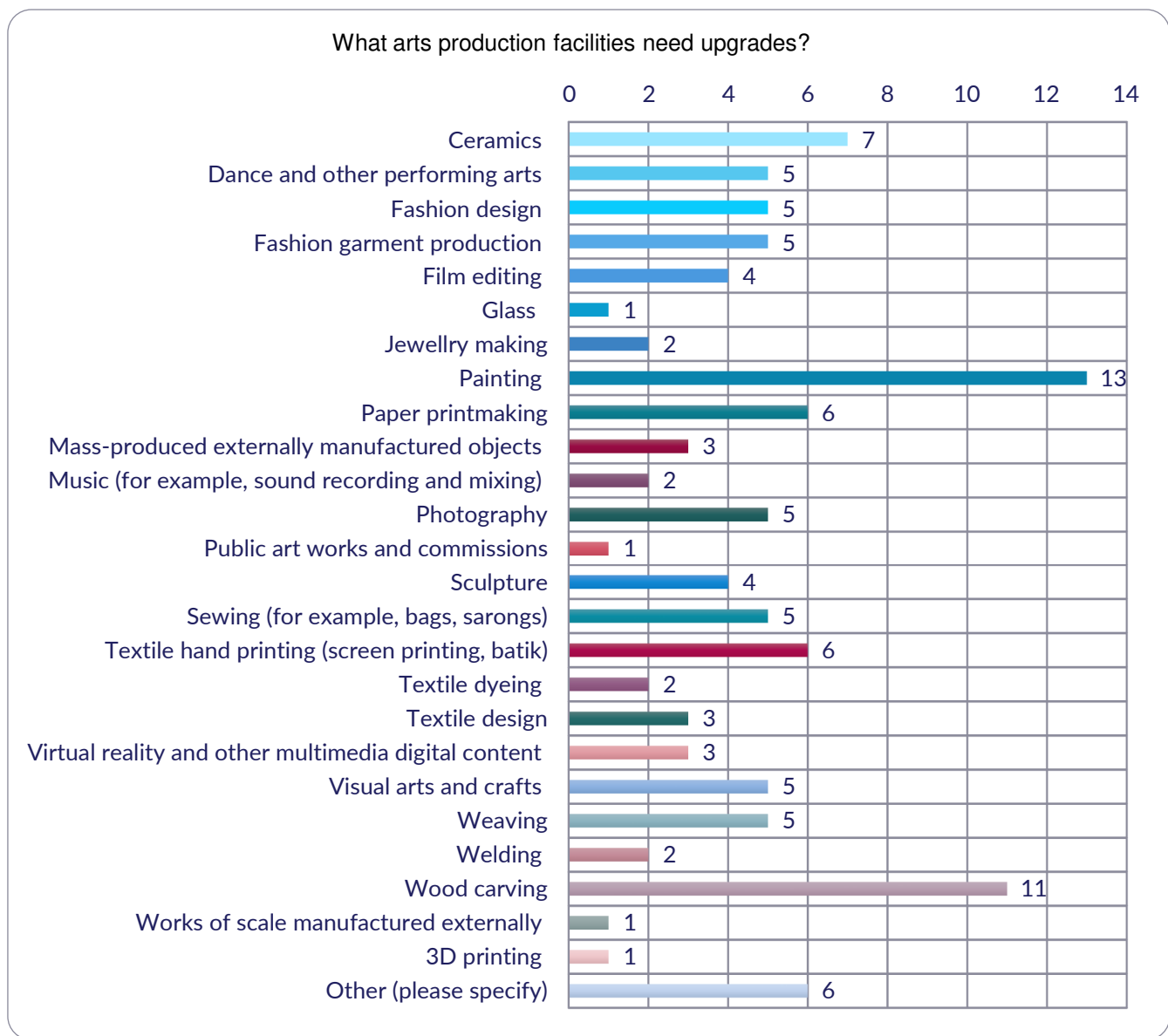
See chart on next page.

What art forms do you produce?



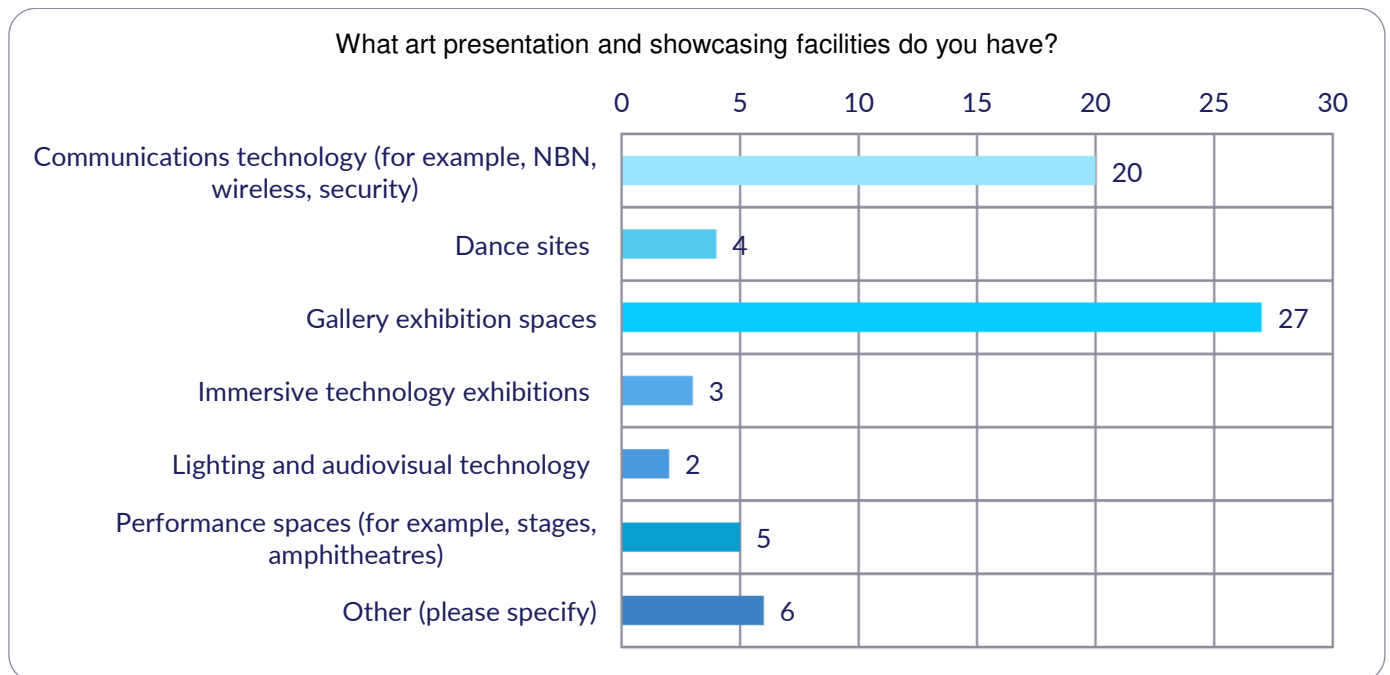
4.4.1.1. Infrastructure needs

- The 33 respondents identified widespread upgrades are required with a total of 124 upgrades needed across 26 identified arts production facilities to be fit for purpose, enhance arts production, meet professional standards and support increased income opportunities for artists and art workers.
- Art and culture centres report that painting and woodcarving facilities are the top two most common arts production areas requiring upgrades. Art and culture centres also provide woodcarving to meet local community cultural needs.
- The top five most common arts production areas/facilities that require new or upgraded infrastructure include:
 1. painting (39% - 13/33);
 2. wood carving (33% - 11/33);
 3. ceramics (21% - 7/33);
 4. paper printmaking, textile printing (18% - 6/33); and
 5. dance, fashion, film, photography, sewing and weaving facilities (15% - 5/33).



4.4.2. Arts presentation and showcasing

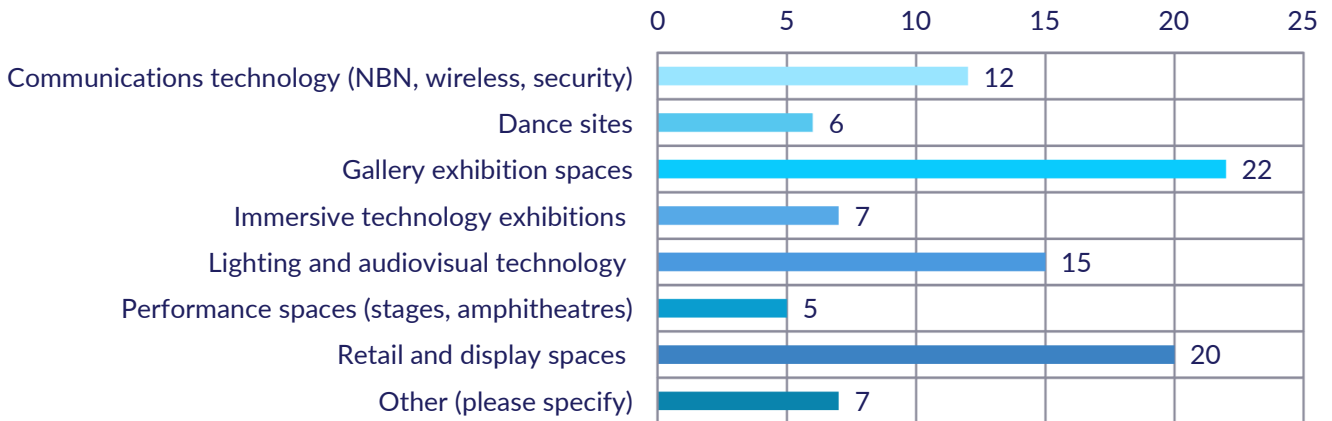
- Most art and culture centres (82% -27/33) have art gallery and exhibition spaces to showcase and exhibit artwork however 67% identify that gallery upgrades are needed to be fit for purpose, enhance promotion and sales and meet market demand.
- Art and culture centres also have communications infrastructure (20/33- 61%) such as NBN, wireless and security with 55% needing security upgrades.
- Only 9% (3/33) have immersive technology exhibitions and only 6% (2/33) have fit for purpose lighting and audio-visual technology.
- Only 12% to 15% have facilities for cultural performances such as dance sites and other performance spaces such as stages or amphitheatres however many art and culture centres report they would need more staff and resources to be able to expand their programs and services and sustain their cultural responsibilities and services.



4.4.2.1. Infrastructure needs

- The 33 respondents identified the need for upgrades to arts presentation and showcasing facilities is widespread with a total of 94 upgrades needed across eight identified arts presentation and showcasing facilities to be fit for purpose, enhance promotion and sales, increase artist and arts worker employment and income opportunities and meet market demand.
- The top five infrastructure upgrades needed to support art presentation and showcasing include:
 1. Gallery exhibition spaces (67% - 22/33)
 2. Retail and display spaces (61% - 20/33)
 3. Lighting and audio-visual technology (45% -15/33)
 4. Communications technology (for example, NBN, wireless, security) (37% - 11/30)
 5. Other (please specify) (23% - 7/30) responses included need for a new gallery space owned by the art centre; outdoor gallery for community events; signage and entrance areas; professional fixtures, fittings and furniture such as drawers to store and display works on paper; and capacity and time to professionalise the website, advertise and host events.

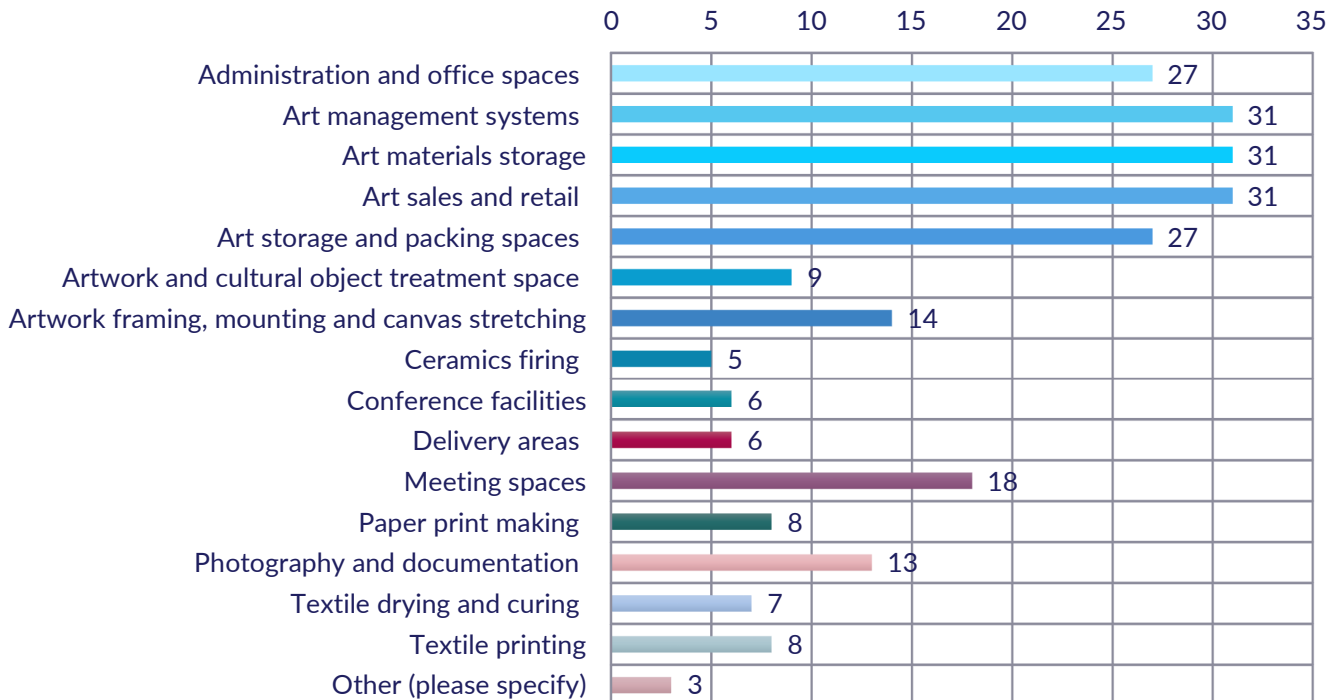
What infrastructure upgrades does your art and culture centre need to present and showcase art work?



4.4.3. Art services

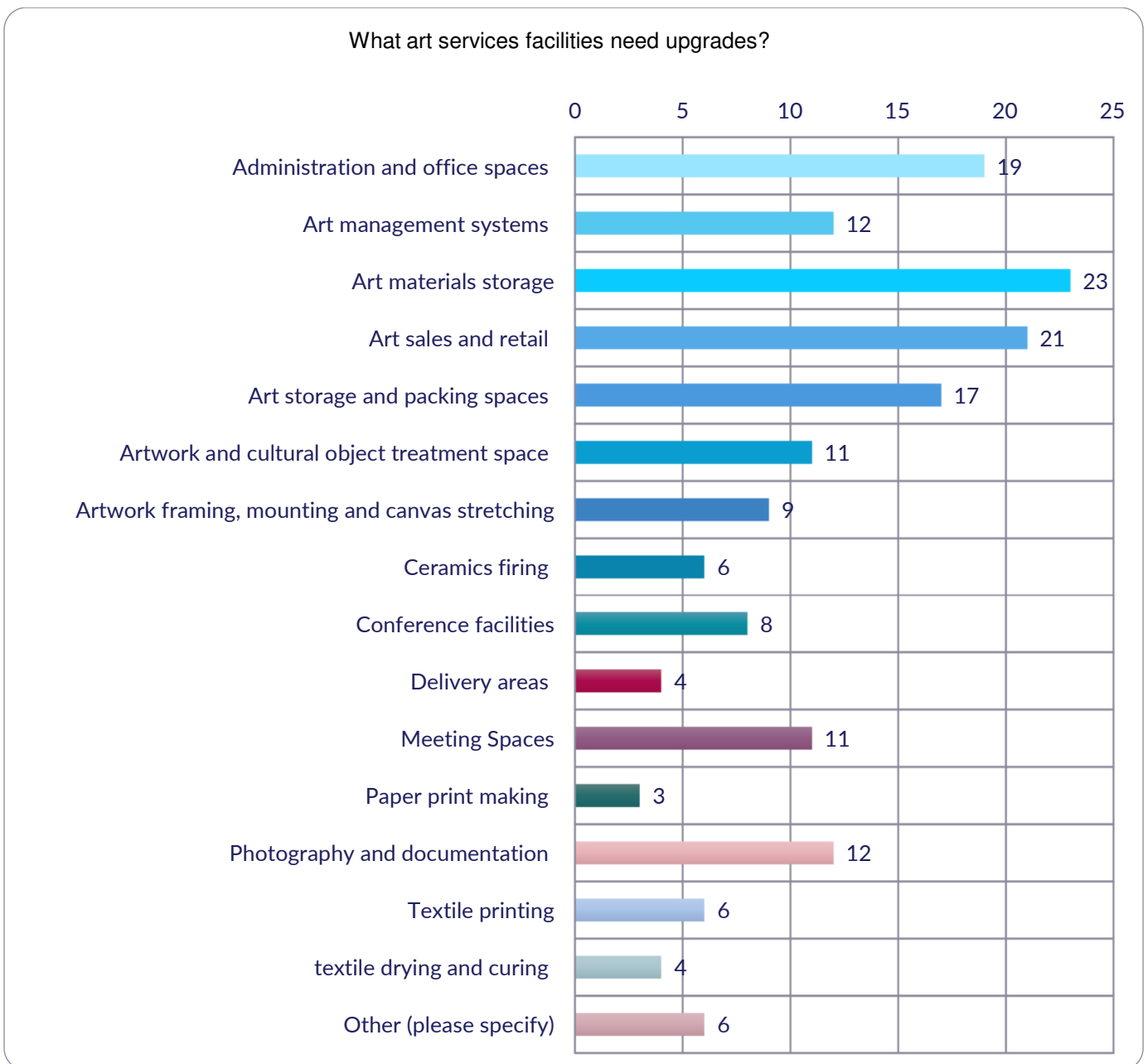
- The top five art services currently provided include:
 - Art sales and retail (94% - 31/30)
 - Art management systems (for example, Stories Art Money database, cataloguing) (94% - 31/33)
 - Art materials storage (94% - 31/33)
 - Administration and office spaces (82% - 27/33)
 - Art storage and packing spaces (for example, to store crates, packing materials) (82% - 27/33)

What art services do you provide?



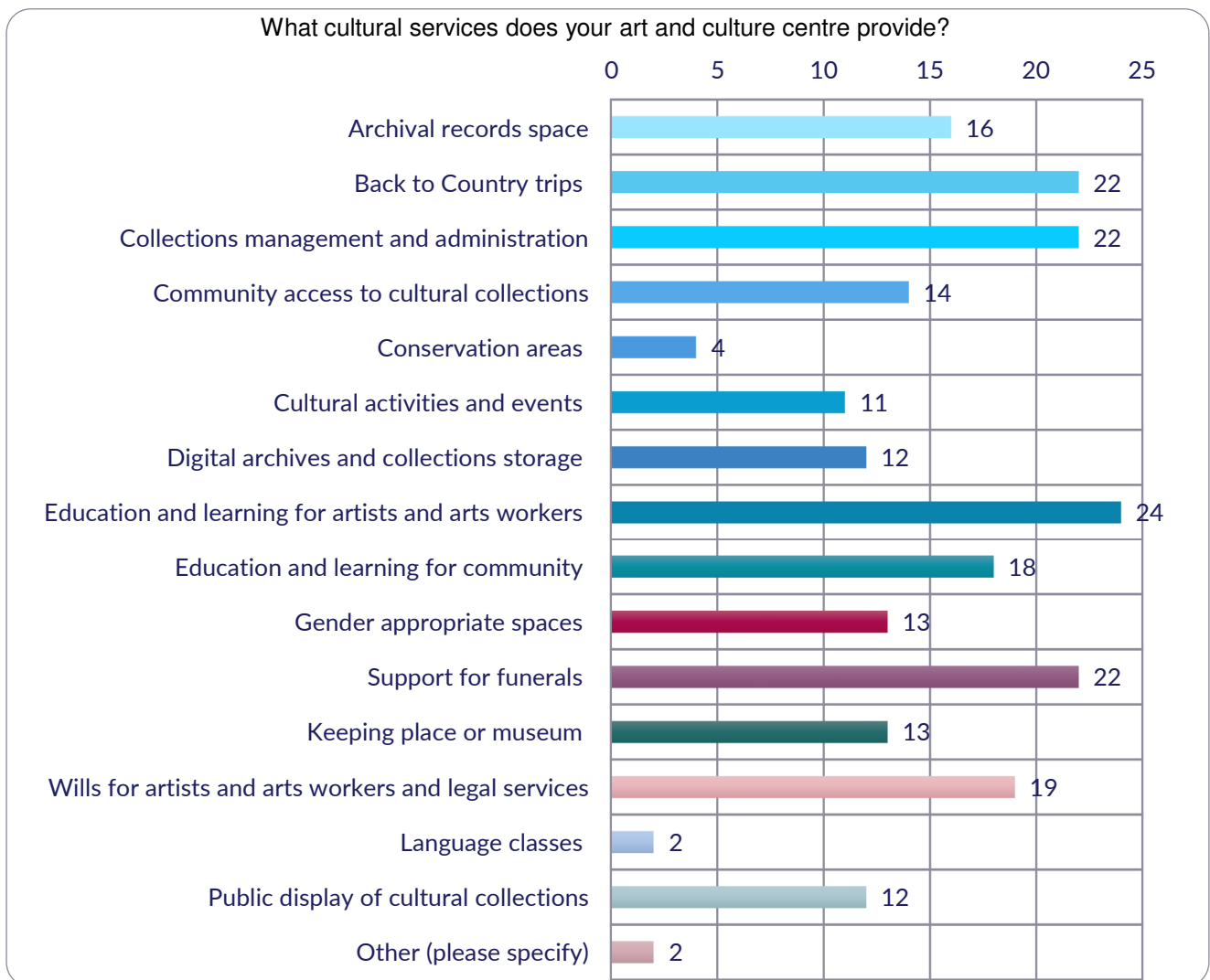
4.4.3.1. Infrastructure needs

- The 33 respondents identified the need for upgrades to art services facilities is widespread with a total of 172 upgrades needed across 15 identified arts services areas to be fit for purpose, meet core business needs or business development opportunities and to meet minimum safety, compliance, or professional standards.
- The top five most common art services areas needing new facilities or upgrades across all the respondents include:
 1. Art materials storage (70% - 23/33)
 2. Art sales and retail (64% -21/33)
 3. Administration and office spaces (58% - 19/33)
 4. Art storage and packing spaces (for example, to store crates, packing materials) (52% - 17/33)
 5. Art management systems (for example, Stories Art Money database, cataloguing), (36% - 12/33); and Photography and documentation (36% - 12/33)



4.4.4. Cultural services

- Art and culture centres provide a range of cultural services such as the management, conservation, repatriation, community access and public display of art and cultural collections; education and learning for artists and arts workers, the community and future generations; back to Country and Homeland trips; and cultural activities such as spaces for dance and cultural practices.
- The top five cultural services most commonly provided across all respondents include:
 1. Education and learning for artists and arts workers (73% - 24/33)
 2. Back to Country trips (for example, to share and maintain knowledge including with upcoming generations, visit homelands and inspire new work, to collect materials for arts and culture practices (67% - 22/33)
 3. Collections management and administration (67% - 22/33)
 4. Support for funerals (for example, monetary or support for cultural practices, preparation of cultural materials, making of clothing and textiles) (67% - 22/33)
 5. Wills for artists and arts workers and other legal services (58% - 19/33)

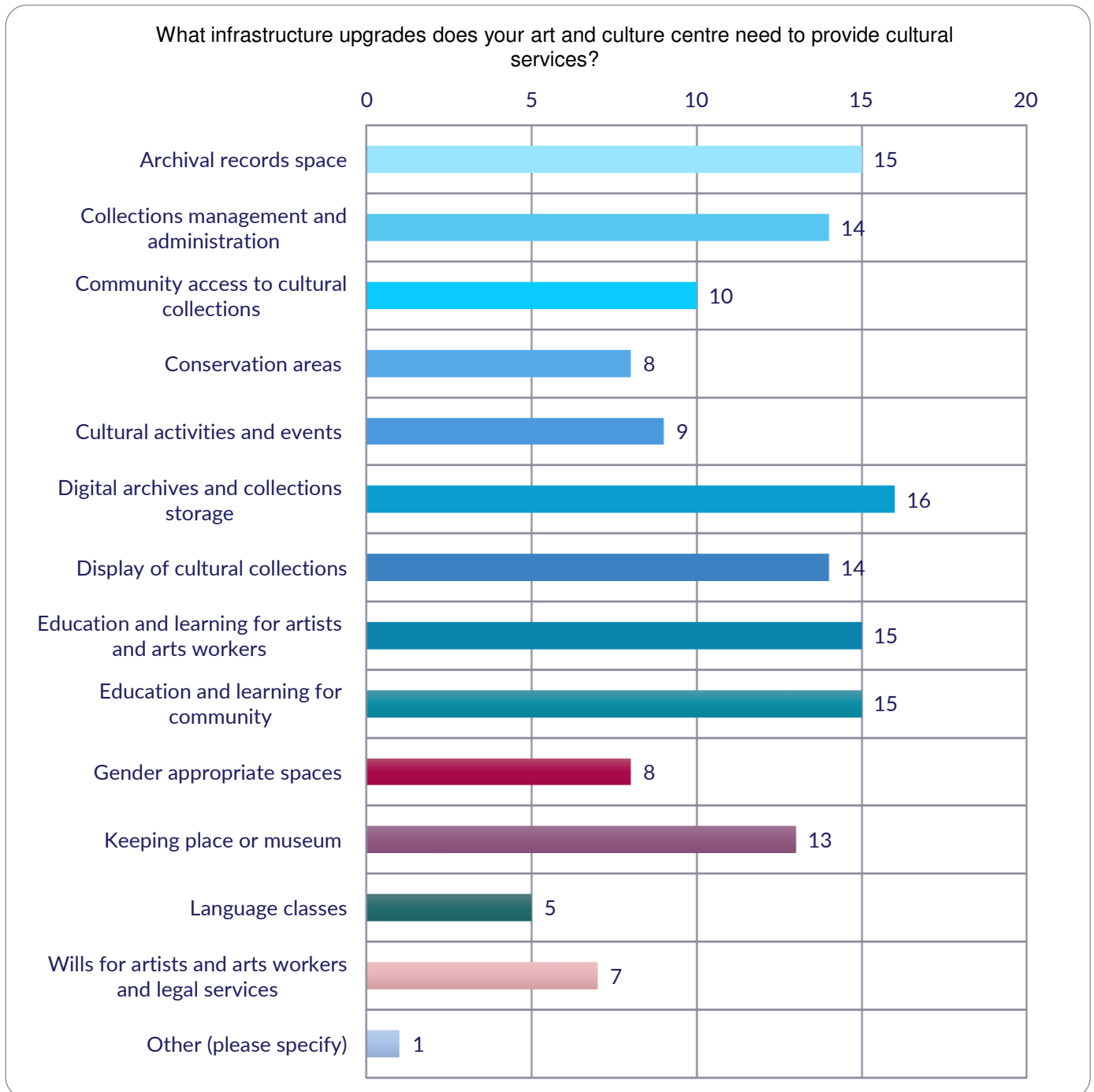


4.4.4.1. Infrastructure needs

- The 33 respondents identified widespread infrastructure upgrades are needed to provide cultural services with a total of 150 upgrades needed across 14 identified cultural services facilities to be: fit for

purpose; fulfil cultural maintenance, conservation and collection management responsibilities; and provide appropriate community access to cultural collections and materials; education and learning and other services outlined below.

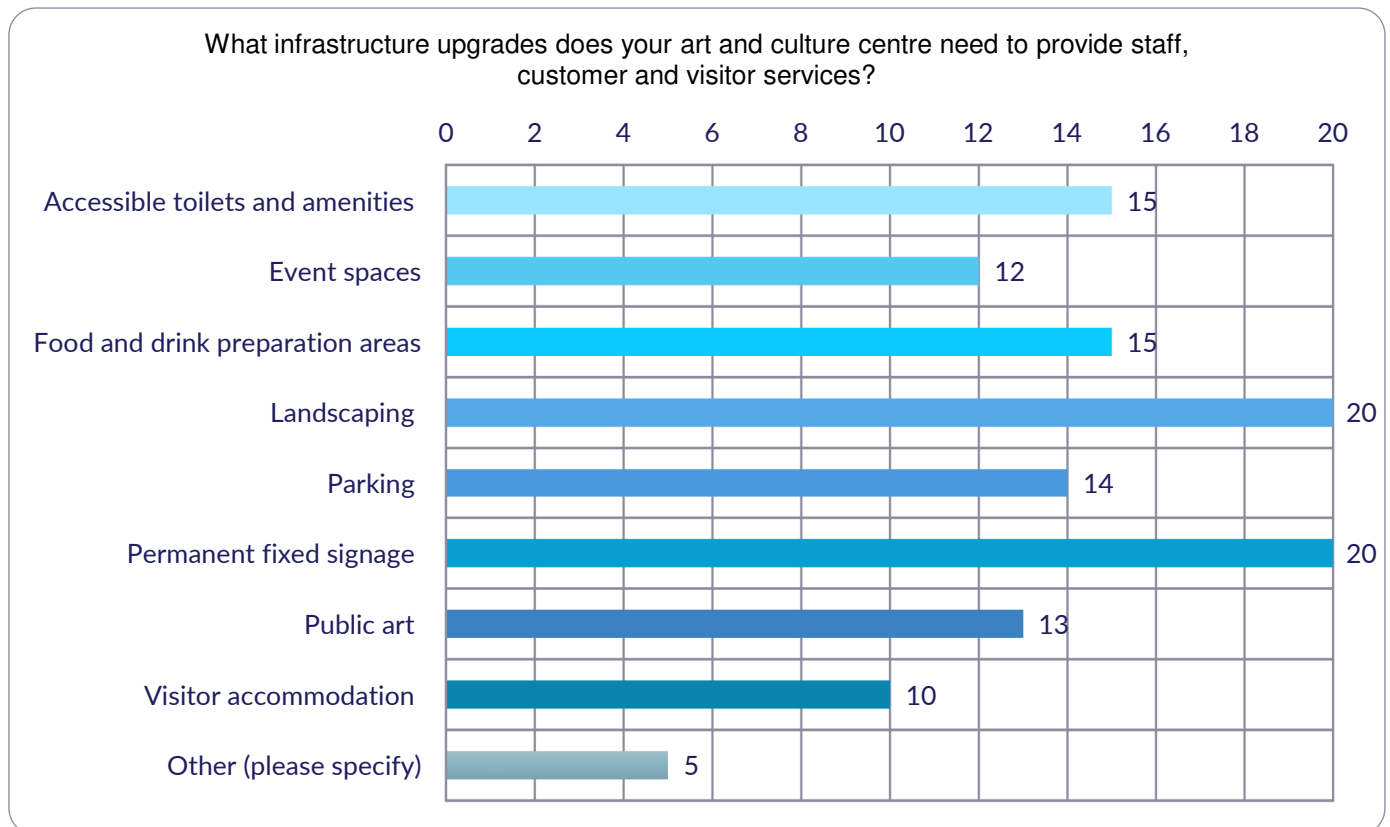
- The top 5 and most widespread infrastructure upgrades or facilities needed to provide cultural services include:
 1. Digital archives and collections storage (48% -16/33)
 2. Archival records space (45% - 15/33); Education and learning spaces for artists and arts workers (45% - 15/33); Education and learning spaces for community and future generations (45% - 15/33)
 3. Collections management and administration spaces and facilities (42% - 14/30)
 4. Display of cultural collections (42% - 14/30)
 5. Keeping place or museum (39% - 13/33)



4.4.5. Staff, customer and visitor services

4.4.5.1. Infrastructure needs

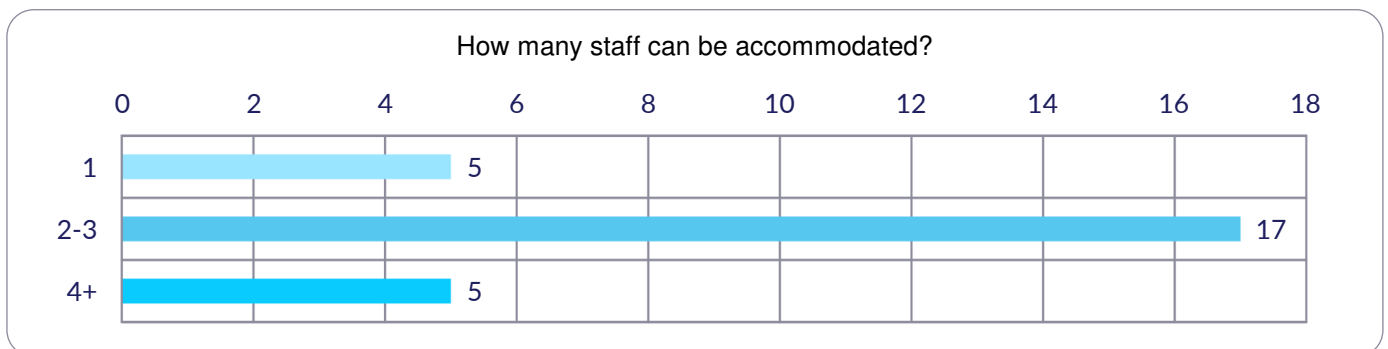
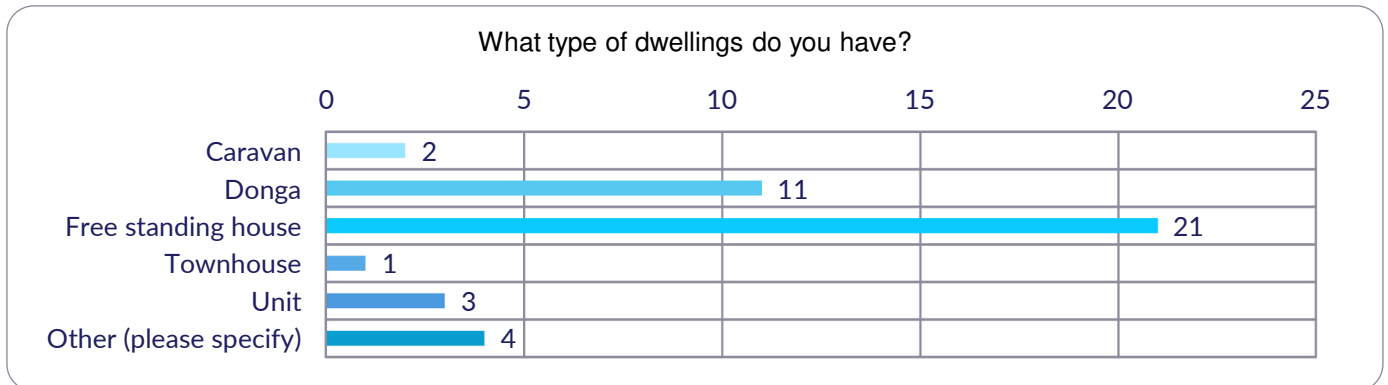
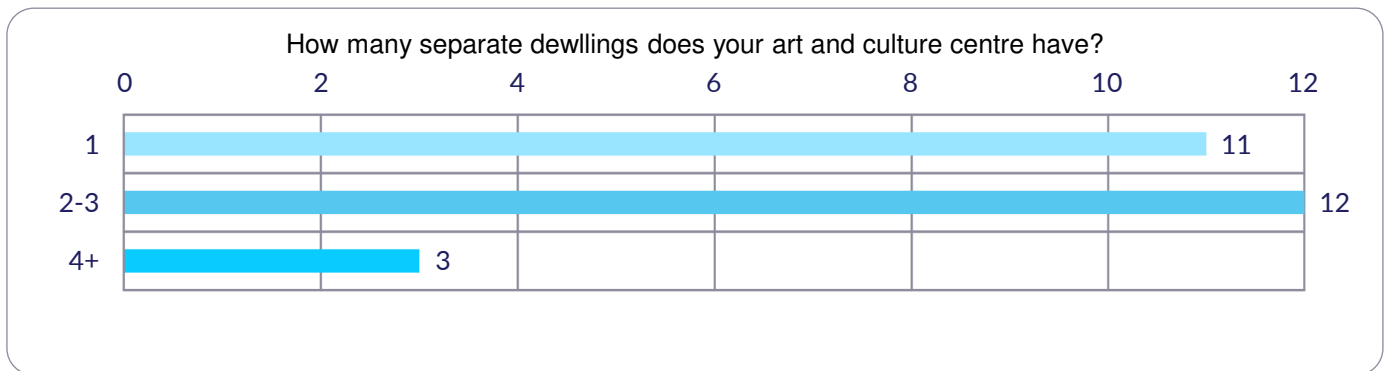
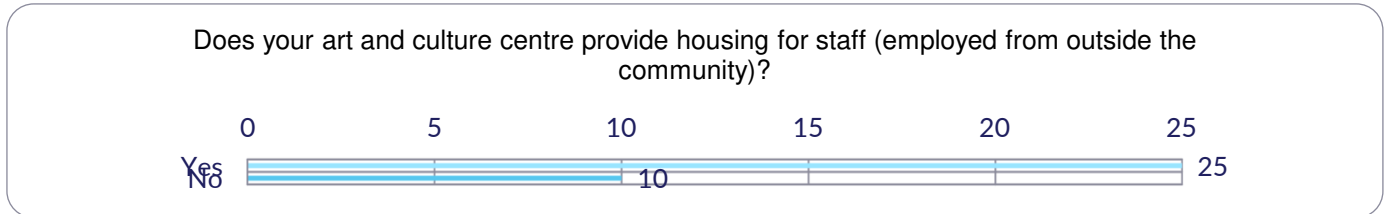
- Art and culture centres provide the following staff, customer and visitor services: accessible toilets and amenities; event spaces; food and drink preparation areas; landscaping; parking; permanent fixed signage; public art; visitor accommodation and other services.
- The 33 respondents identified widespread infrastructure upgrades are needed with a total of 124 upgrades needed across nine identified staff, customer and visitor service facilities to be fit for purpose, meet core business needs, improve accessibility, enhance visitor experience and engagement and to raise profile and promotion of the centre to increase sales and visitor numbers.
- The top 5 infrastructure upgrades needed to provide staff, customer and visitor services include:
 1. Permanent fixed signage (61% - 20/33) and Landscaping (61% - 20/33)
 2. Accessible toilets and amenities (45% - 15/33) and Food and drink preparation areas (45% - 15/33)
 3. Parking (42% - 14/33)
 4. Public art (39% -13/33)
 5. Event spaces (36% - 12/33)

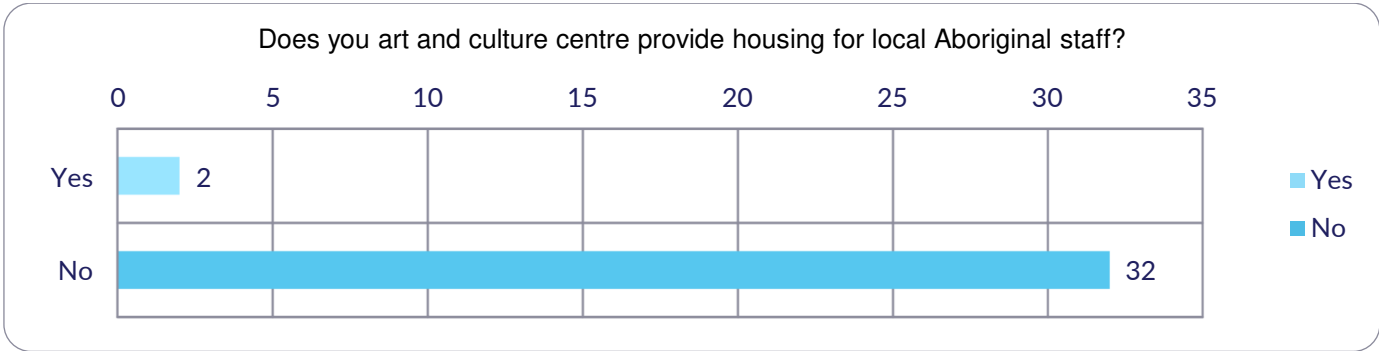


4.4.6. Art Centre Housing

- The majority of art and culture centres (25/33 - 76%) provide housing for staff employed from outside of the community. Of the art and culture centres that do not provide staff housing, some of these centres are based in regional centres such as Alice Springs.
- 33% (11/33) have one dwelling; and 36% (12/33) have 2-3 dwellings and 9% have more than 4 dwellings; the majority are free standing houses - 64% (21/33) and dongas at 37% (11/33).

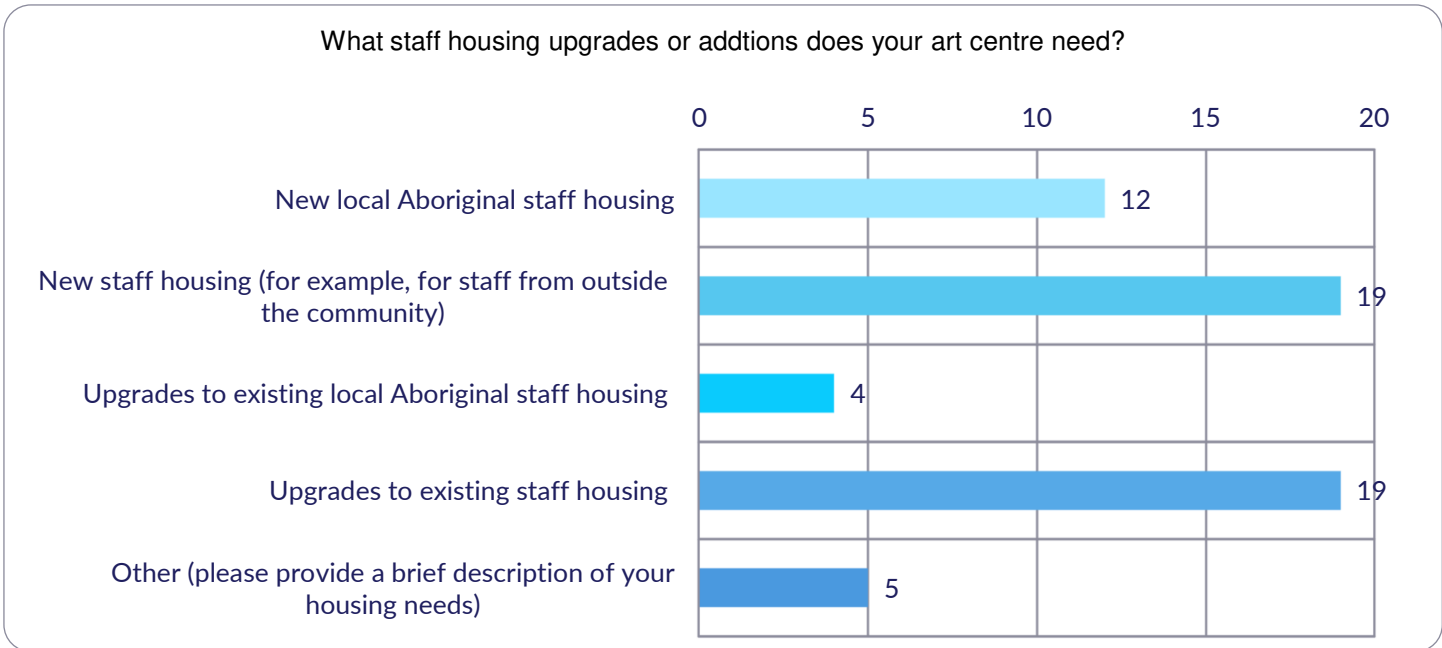
- Half the respondents (52%) can accommodate 2-3 staff; 15% can accommodate one and 15% can accommodate four or more.
- Only two survey respondents provide housing for local Aboriginal staff employed at the art and culture centre and the dwellings can accommodate 1 and 2-3 people. The need for new housing for local Aboriginal staff is identified as the top priority by around 33% of respondents, impacting on the ability to attract, increase employment of and retain critical local Aboriginal staff at the art and culture centre.





4.4.6.1. Infrastructure needs

- The top three most common staff housing upgrades needed to attract, employ and retain staff and provide safe and appropriate housing including for staff contracted from outside the community as well as local Aboriginal staff include:
 - New staff housing (for example, for staff from outside the community on contract in manager or art coordinator roles) (57% - 19/33)
 - Upgrades to existing staff housing (57% - 19/33)
 - New local Aboriginal staff housing (for example, for local staff on contract in manager, art coordinator, arts and cultural worker roles) (36% - 12/33)



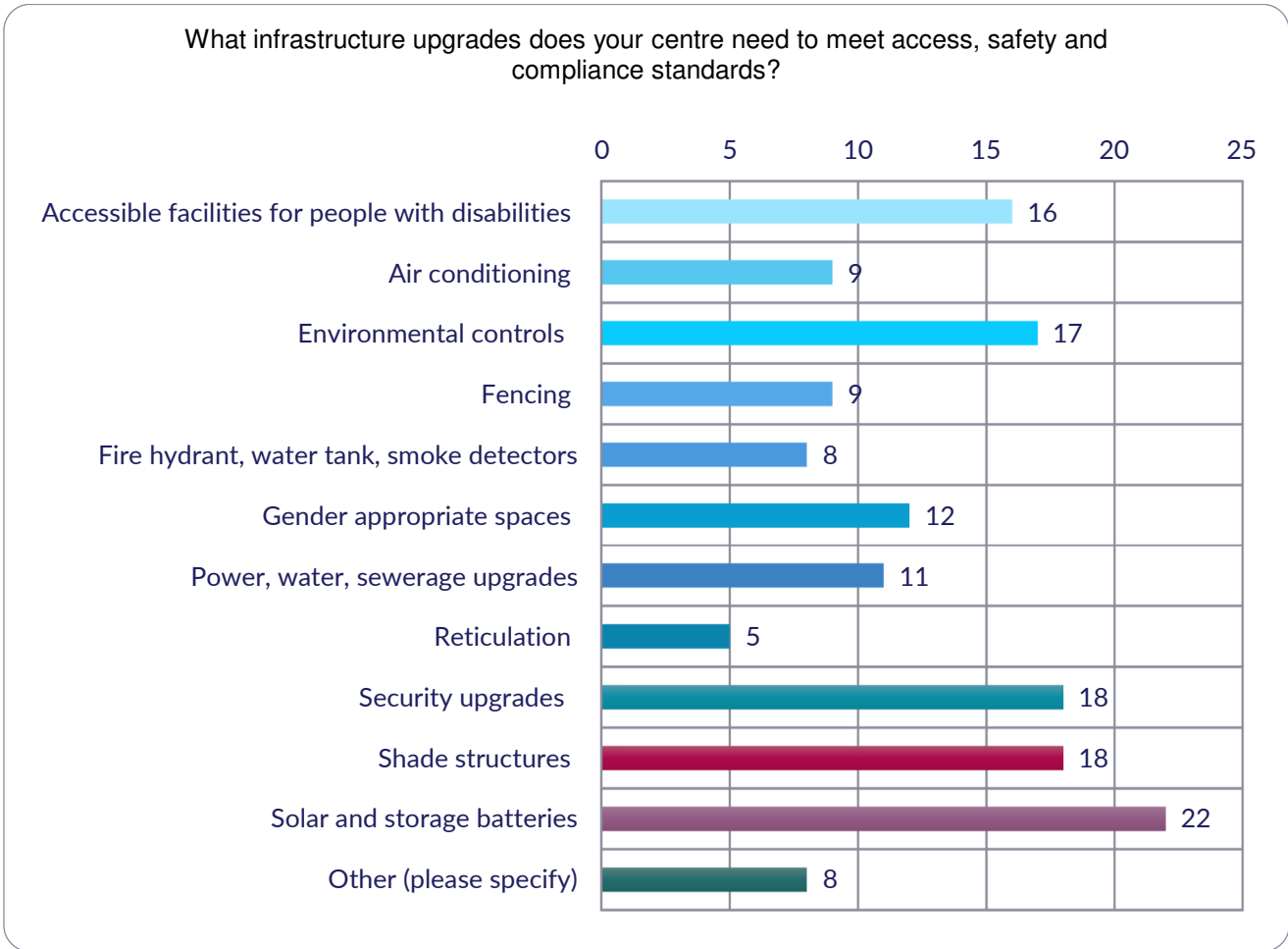
4.4.7. Access, safety, compliance standards and efficiency

4.4.7.1. Infrastructure needs

- The 33 respondents identified a total of 66 upgrades are needed across the 12 identified access, safety compliance and efficiency areas which include: accessible facilities for people with disabilities; air conditioning; environmental controls for arts and collections storage and presentation (for example, temperature, humidity, pests); fencing; fire hydrant, water tank, smoke detectors; gender appropriate spaces (for example, separate spaces for genders); power, water, sewerage upgrades; reticulation;

security upgrades (for example security screening, alarms and cameras); shade structures; solar storage and batteries; and other specified areas.

- The majority of art centres identify the need to install solar panels to reduce operational costs and the rising cost of power in communities and to achieve more energy efficient buildings. to reduce impacts of climate change. Other needs such as shade structures, air-conditioning and environmental controls and infrastructure planning to adjust to the impacts of a changing climate and conditions are also becoming increasingly important to secure and protect artworks and cultural collections of significant cultural value.
- The top five infrastructure upgrades identified below are needed to meet compliance standards; improve operational and energy efficiency, security and professional standards; meet cultural collections management responsibilities and standards to appropriately secure and protect materials and objects, enhance community and visitor engagement, accessibility and inclusion and improve public amenities and visitor experiences.
- The top five upgrades needed to improve art centre access, safety, compliance and efficiency include:
 1. Solar and storage batteries (67% - 22/33)
 2. Shade structures (55% - 18/30) and Security upgrades (for example, security screening, alarms and cameras) (55% - 18/33)
 3. Environmental controls (52%17/33) (for example, to control temperature, humidity and pests and protect artworks and cultural materials and objects)
 4. Accessible facilities for people with disabilities (48% - 16/33)
 5. Gender appropriate spaces (for example, separate spaces and facilities for genders) (36% - 12/33)



5. Evaluation Summary

The survey has identified widespread, important and priority art and culture centre infrastructure upgrades needed to support Aboriginal art and culture centres and their fundamental purpose to keep Aboriginal culture and heritage safe and strong for future generations, to maintain and transmit traditional Aboriginal knowledge and to support the growth and profile of Aboriginal art and culture for the benefit of all Australians.

Both ANKA and Desart report that strong and sustainable Aboriginal-owned art and culture centres supported by fit for purpose infrastructure are integral to Aboriginal self-determination and cultural maintenance to support a strong, safe, ethical Indigenous visual arts and culture industry, and the continued sustainable development of Aboriginal culture and art.

As expressed by Mr Djambawa Marawili AM, Arnhem, Northern and Kimberley Artists (ANKA) Chairman, and Yolngu Madarrpa Clan Leader, 'We need wider Australia to properly understand that in homelands, in our communities on Country, we are caring for the oldest living culture on earth; and we are the only people qualified to look after this global inheritance. These are not just words about a distant, imagined past. We need support for our self-determination to care for the seeds of a shared future for all Australians⁴.'

The evaluation report aims to contribute to a solid base and understanding of the infrastructure needs and priorities of Aboriginal art and culture centres to inform ANKA and Desarts sector strengthening plans and to acknowledge that Aboriginal cultural strength is the foundation of the art industry.

The majority of art centres (75%) are more than 21 years old and of these 45% are more than 40 years old (15/33 - 45%) and 30% are between 21-40 years old (10/33 - 30%) and are either at the end of their useful life requiring replacement or significant upgrades and expensive maintenance to be fit for purpose, effectively meet core business needs and identified development opportunities across arts and culture programs and services.

The age of art centre buildings, and the scope and scale of upgrades required indicates that many art centres have not been specifically designed as art and culture centres or built to be fit for purpose – rather are an adaptive reuse of other existing buildings.

The scope and scale of infrastructure upgrade needs identified to meet core business needs and development opportunities in order to support professional viable and sustainable Aboriginal art and culture businesses that are fit for purpose, accessible, safe and compliant is significant.

The respondents identified the importance of infrastructure upgrades to achieve the following objectives: (ranked 1-6 with 1 the most important):

1. Achieve fit for purpose arts and cultural centre facilities
2. Promote or enhance arts production
3. Meet core business needs
4. Support business development opportunities
5. Meet minimum safety, compliance, efficiency or professional standards
6. Provide staff housing (for example, for external contracted staff)

The majority (76%) of respondents do not have a current asset management plan (25/33 - 76%). And less than half (48% - 16/33) conduct regular cyclical maintenance. Respondents describe the age of the

⁴ Djambawa Marawili AM, ANKA Chairman and Yolgnu Madarrpa Clan Leader, "Support for Cultural Legacy," ANKA Arts Backbone, 2018

buildings, the cost of maintenance and the lack of available contractors to provide maintenance in remote communities as barriers to maintaining ageing facilities.

Some respondents have infrastructure plans in place to inform future applications for infrastructure funding as it becomes available such as business cases (24%), masterplans (15%) and feasibility studies (9%). It is important that any future art and culture infrastructure upgrades are informed by planning to ensure upgrades are feasible, viable and sustainable and will maximise opportunities to meet core business needs, professional standards and development opportunities. It is important that infrastructure planning and designs are aligned to strategic business planning and consider governance, operational resources and staffing capacity required to manage and maintain upgraded facilities and to support art and culture programs and services to be delivered. The Survey also identified the need for art centres to consider climate change mitigation in planning and future infrastructure development to mitigate and adjust to the impacts of a changing climate and to protect and secure valuable artworks and cultural collections.

The most commonly identified art and culture centre upgrades needed by the 33 respondents across all facilities include:

1. Art materials storage (70% - 23/33)
2. Gallery exhibition spaces (67% - 22/33) and Solar and storage batteries (67% - 22/33)
3. Art sales, retail and display spaces (64% -21/33)
4. Permanent fixed signage (61% - 20/33) and Landscaping (61% - 20/33)
5. Administration and office spaces (58% - 19/33);
6. New staff housing (for example, for staff from outside the community on contract in manager or art coordinator roles) (57% - 19/33) and Upgrades to existing staff housing (57% - 19/33)

The art and culture centres were also asked to provide further detail about their specific top five priorities for infrastructure upgrades. The priority and most important upgrades identified by 30 respondents include:

- A third of respondents (33% - 10/30) identified both critical and substantial upgrades and housing for outside contracted staff and local Aboriginal staff as their number one priority. This is understandable given the age of art centre buildings and the challenges identified in providing art and culture centre housing in remote communities, with only two out of 33 respondents providing housing for local Aboriginal staff.
- Ten percent of respondents (10% - 3/30) identified both security and accessibility upgrade requirements for the art and culture centre and staff housing and arts business services as their number one priority. This may reflect an increasing incidence of reported art centre break ins and damage to property as well as need for reliable IT and fit for purpose spaces to deliver art and culture centre business management and administration in remote communities. The need to provide facilities that are accessible for artists, arts workers and visitors is also a priority and a challenge to adapt existing infrastructure to meet current standards.
- Two art centres identified upgrades for arts presentation and showcasing (7% - 2/30) as their number one priority including completion of existing Arts Trail Gallery Extension Program investment; and need for separate gallery and arts production / workshop spaces.
- One art and culture centre identified the building of a keeping place as their top priority to retain cultural knowledge and create an immersive space for visitors. (3% -1/30); and one art and culture centre identified all infrastructure upgrades were the number one priority (3% -1/30).

Further detail about art and culture centre top five priorities for infrastructure upgrades is provided in survey result reports to both ANKA and Desart.

These upgrades are all important to achieve compliant, safe, secure and fit for purpose facilities that are suitable to fulfil cultural and arts development priorities; enhance efficiency and professionalism; and support the art and culture centre to be viable and sustainable. Priority areas provide essential and secure art and culture centres and housing accommodation to attract and retain staff who are critical to the ongoing sustainability of the Aboriginal art and culture industry. Only two survey respondents provide housing for local Aboriginal staff employed at the art and culture centre. This is an area of need to be considered that may support local Aboriginal workforce development and an increase in Aboriginal employment in Aboriginal owned art centres.

Priority areas to be upgraded will also support the viability of art centres and enhance marketing, sales and promotions of arts and cultural products and services to increase income for artists and art workers; to meet market demand and increase visitation. Upgrades also support professional business standards and arts and cultural management practices to manage, maintain and share important arts and cultural collections for the community.

Art and culture centres report that while capital upgrades are critical and important, centres also need business capacity building, through business and workforce development to generate the income and resources needed to sustain operations; employ capable staff; manage and maintain facilities and develop and deliver viable businesses and future growth for a viable and sustainable Aboriginal art and culture industry.

The NT Arts and Culture Infrastructure Survey 2023 contributes to an understanding of the status and development needs of Aboriginal owned art and culture centre infrastructure to achieve fit for purpose, compliant, secure and inclusive facilities that support the fundamental priority of Aboriginal cultural maintenance, self-determination and sustainability for the NT Aboriginal art and culture industry.