

# **National Visual Arts Education Conference**

**2016**

**REPORT**

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

From 20-22 January 2016, the National Gallery of Australia hosted the third national conference for visual art educators. The biannual program included national and international keynote speakers including Professor Howard Gardner, John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (appearing via video link) Professor Gardner, Ellen Winner, Professor and Chair of Psychology at Boston College, and Senior Research Associate at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education (appearing via video link) and Rika Burnham, Head of Education at The Frick Collection, New York. Christian Thompson, multidisciplinary artist also gave a keynote presentation as well as numerous other academics and artists that gave presentations or were involved in panel discussions. Over 60 speakers, both Australian and international, gave papers on their research. The 2016 conference was booked out with over 220 pre-school, primary, middle school, secondary and tertiary educators as well as museum educators attended the three day conference from all states and territories in Australia. In addition to keynote papers and panel sessions, the program included studio workshops at the Megalo Print Studio and Gallery, as well as a host of in house workshops provided by artists such as Brian Robinson and Cameron Robbins, NGA educators and Dr Sketchy's.

The National Gallery of Australia has taken an important role in providing national leadership within arts education for school based educators, curriculum experts, artists and academics alike. The national visual art education conference strives to provide an inclusive program; building on our extensive reputation for teaching and learning through our comprehensive collection.

The feedback from the conference has been overwhelmingly positive – the conference organisers are appreciative of all those involved in this project and have extended their sincere thanks via the conference website to all those that attended who helped make the conference such a huge success.

## **2. HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Since its inception in 2012, The National Visual Art Education Conference has been the premiere forum for arts educators, teachers, practitioners, institutional heads and curriculum and arts policy writers to convene. The biannual conference is part of the National Gallery's long term commitment to developing visual art education within Australia as it seeks to '...leveraging the National Cultural Policy and the Australian Curriculum to improve access to the extensive and engaging content of the national art collection' (Strategic Plan 2013–2017: National Gallery of Australia, p. 1). As such the Gallery is able to use its unique position to identify specific learning needs for a range of arts educators. Some of those needs include networking, expanding practical skills and subject knowledge, currency on art education trends and generating new ideas. The program seeks to do this by reflecting up-to-date views through bodies such as the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Art Education Australia and the National Association for the Visual Arts. This year, renowned global academics and practitioners such as Howard Gardner present key ideas relating to the concept of artwork appreciation, 'the properties of beautiful experiences and how they can be cultivated over the course of schooling' (Gardner, 2015): Harvard University) and achieving meaningful encounters with works of art, 'the museum visitor is no longer spectator but participant, the art work is no longer still and inert but active and alive', 'we seek the intense encounter with a single object rather than a casual glance at a hundred artworks.' (Burnham, 2015: The Frick Collection).

## **3. STAFF AND COMMITTEES**

### **NGA Working group**

Michelle Fracaro, Program Coordinator and NGA Conference convener

Jessica Ausserlechner, Coordinator, NGA and Conference logistics coordinator

Katie Russell, Head of Learning and Access, NGA

Rose Cahill, Manager, Access Services, NGA

Mirah Lambert, Manager, Learning Programs, NGA

#### **4. MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA**

##### **Website**

A comprehensive website was developed by the NGA conference team, outlining the key features of the conference including: a program overview, call for papers information, a progressively updated program, online registration, information the venue and transport, workshops, speakers and their abstracts, extra activities on offer and frequently asked questions. In total there were 14 pages of information for delegates. This year the National Visual Art Education Conference collected payment for registrations online using an electronic payment gateway.

##### **Direct marketing**

- Six e-cards were sent (save the date, announcing the call for abstracts, registrations now open, early bird closing and close of all registrations) to 2574 schools across Australia as well as to previous attendees and others who asked to be added to the conference mailing list
- The conference was featured in the September 2015 and January 2016 editions of the NGA e-newsletter *Artonline*
- Social media was engaged to promote the conference including posts on the NGA's Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts, along with regular updates regarding the conference as the date approached.

##### **Advertising**

In addition to the above methods:

- The conference listing was added to multiple websites including NGA and Art Education Australia
- The NGA produced a flyer advertising the call for papers (distributed through NCETP and NGA front desk and education programs)
- *Education Review* distributed e-card to their 36,000 database in early January

##### **Marketing evaluation**

Delegates were asked where they heard about the conference on the conference evaluation form - printed copies and an online version was made available to delegates. The majority of responses indicated that delegates found out about the conference through an NGA email

and the conference website (Flyer 1.69%, Word of mouth 11.86%, Email from NGA 32.20%, Conference website 22.03%, Email through other networks 15.25%, Social media 16.95%)

## 5. EVALUATION

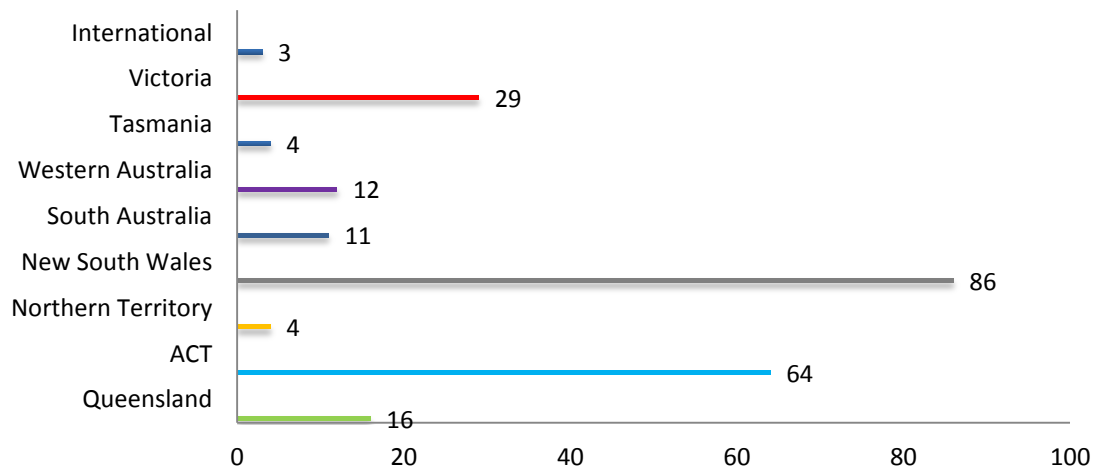
### Survey background and methods

A conference evaluation was produced and made available in both a printed version and an online version. The online version was done through the online tool **Survey Monkey** and was sent to all delegates as an email.

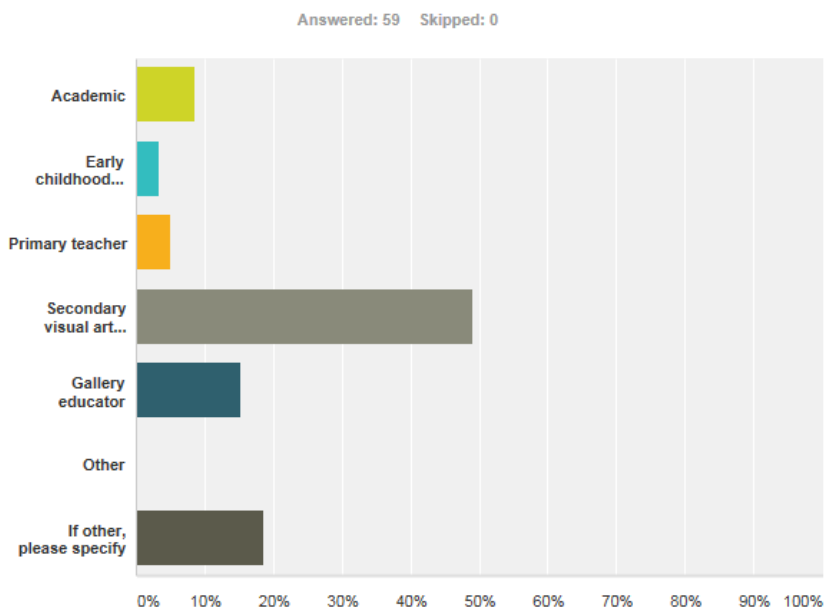
32 hard copies and as of 19 February, 59 online surveys had been received. Therefore, a total of 91 returned surveys. Therefore a sample of 40% of delegates was obtained, 1 in 4.

### Conference demographics

#### Delegates by state (and international)



#### Delegates by profession



## Collated survey analysis

Q1. Which category describes you best?

Answer Choices	Online	Written	Total
Academic	5	5	10
Early Childhood teacher	2		2
Primary Teacher	3	1	4
Secondary Visual Art Teacher	29	19	28
Gallery Educator	9	3	12
Other	11	4	15
<b>Total Respondents: 91</b>			

Q2. How were you funded to attend the conference?

Answer Choices	Online	Written	Total
Self	16	11	27
Tertiary Institution	1	1	2
Employer	19	6	25
Employer School	15	14	29
Other	8		8
<b>Total Respondents: 91</b>			

Q3. Is mid-late January a suitable time of the year for you to attend the conference?

Answer Choices	Online	Written	Total
Very suitable	36	25	61
Somewhat suitable	17	7	24
Not very suitable	6		6
<b>Total Respondents: 91</b>			

Q4. How did you find out about the conference?

Answer Choices	Online	Written	Total
Flyer	1	2	3
Word of mouth	7	10	17
Email through other networks	9	7	16
Ecard from NGA	19	6	25
Conference website	13	3	16

Social Media	10	3	13
<b>Total Respondents: 90</b>			

Q5. How did you find the conference website and online registration process?

Ranking	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Ease of navigation (online)	20	27	9	1	89
(written)	14	11	6	1	
Useful content	17	33	7		89
	13	16	2	1	
Online registration process	21	23	12	2	90
	12	14	4	2	
Timeliness of program information and updates	12	31	12	2	89
	15	10	5	2	
<b>Total Respondents: 90</b>					

Q6. Which part/s of the conference program did you attend? (*Issue with online survey, only allowed one answer*)

Answer Choices	Online	Written	Total
Keynote speakers	49	32	81
Plenary sessions	3	32	35
Paper sessions	1	24	25
Panel sessions	0	23	23
Showcase sessions	0	19	19
Workshops	2	27	29
Social functions	2	16	18
<b>Total Respondents: 81</b>			

Q7. Please rank these parts of the conference program according to their usefulness

	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful at all	Total
Keynote speakers (online)	38	18	2	1	91
(written)	25	3	2	2	
Plenary sessions	33	18	6		89
	21	9	1	1	
Paper sessions	20	19	13	1	82
	9	8	6	6	
Panel sessions	20	22	14	2	85
	10	11	3	3	
Showcase sessions	20	9	9	9	67
	11	9			
Workshops	19	9	14	4	73
	17	6	2	2	
Social functions	24	19	7	3	70
	11	6			
<b>Total Respondents: 91</b>					

Q8. Will you likely attend another National Visual Arts Education Conference in Canberra?

Answer Choices	Online	Written	Total
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Yes	41	28	69
No	0	0	
Maybe	17	3	20
<b>Total Respondents: 89</b>			

### Q9. Please rank your Professional Development priorities?

Ranking 1 Highest to 7 Lowest	1 Highest	2	3	4	5	6	7 Lowest	Total respond	Over Score Ranking (From 1 – 7 ranked of importance)
Networking (online)	5	7	4	12	8	5	8	75	4
(written)	3	1	4	3	8	3	4		
Furthering subject knowledge	17	11	7	4	6	2		73	1
	7	10	2	3	2	1	1		
Currency in educational trends	17	11	11	2	3	4	1	74	3
	6	4	7	5	1	2			
Expanding ideas and skills	12	12	13	6	4	1		75	2
	12	7	2	3	3				
Understanding the National Curriculum		3	6	10	7	8	15	74	7
		5	2	3	4	3	8		
Engaging with and learning about the NGA collection	2	6	8	8	11	9	7	76	6
		5	4	3	3	8	2		
Developing practical art making skills	3	5	6	8	7	13	13	83	5
	4	3	4	3	1	6	7		
<b>Total Respondents: 83</b>									

### Comments

There were a range of comments, both positive and critically constructive:

- ‘Excellent full program. Will have great impact on my teaching’
- ‘Speakers were uninspiring...overall it was dull’
- ‘This was a thoughtful, stimulating and worthwhile conference – amazing!’
- ‘Please do this again, highlights were Rika Burnham, Julie Rrap and Howard Gardner’
- ‘The conference is brilliant, the NGA staff were outstanding, highly professional and the food was excellent!’
- ‘The food was very boring, the quality was good but unimaginative. Lack of seating, balancing a drink, a plate with bulk of sitting outside in full sun’
- ‘People missed out on food and it felt like it was very much rationed. Coffee cups too small’
- ‘The conference bag was good but hessian handles were most frustrating when wearing a sleeveless top. I saw a lot of people leave them in the cloakroom and I ran down and left it in my car as it was too scratchy to carry’
- ‘Maybe conference should cost less and run over two days? Keynotes were engaging and the highlight of the conference’

- 'Thank you for a great three days'
- 'Conference could be a little more accessible in terms of price'
- 'Marketing this conference more widely. Many international school Visual Art teachers in Asia would be interested in attending this conference if they knew about it'
- 'Possible NSW accreditation' – *Secondary visual art teacher*
- 'Please change the dates, winter holidays'
- 'Some time to brainstorm between delegate teachers and museum educators, possibly groups broken up into states/territories'
- 'Could categorize and/or label speakers in the program according to 'teachers', 'curators' etc, so choices can be made by delegates on relevance'
- 'Perhaps an app with real time updates can be produced for the conference for timing and speaker issues. Will definitely return. Well done to all involved'
- 'Timing issues, please provide time between sessions to get to others areas of the gallery'
- 'Perhaps some of the plenary sessions could be presented in front of some of the examples of the work rather than just slides'
- 'It would have been great if the artists speakers discussed their personal art making processes, as well as their conceptual aspects'
- 'Thank you for the affirmation that Art is key and unique in education, that technology is but a tool (like all others despite the 'trends' and push to make it all) and for the very human, caring and engaging opportunities'