

**"DAGGERS IN THE HEART  
OF BLOKEY BLOKES"(RESEARCH RESPONDENT)**

**RESEARCH REPORT  
DESPERATELY SEEKING THOMMO  
SEPTEMBER 2021**

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**A STUDY ON WHY MEN IN REGIONAL AREAS  
REJECT FUNDED PERFORMING ARTS**

**Introduction**

This research had a simple intention; to ask males over 18 in regional areas why they are rare to non-existent as ticket buyers for funded performing arts.

The profile of the research subjects was built on intelligence gathered from regional presenters which identified our subject was most likely to be working-class male, agricultural or trades employed, with a high propensity towards club sport.

The style of the research was small, face to face 1:1 or 2:2 in depth conversations with the intention of gathering narrative storying on the research topics. Narrative storytelling offered us a different way of investigating the lived experiences of individuals, and of exploring common understandings by capturing the rich data within stories and experiences. It allowed us to take account of the relationship between individual experience and the wider social context.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This research had a simple intention; to ask males over 18 in regional areas why they are rare to non-existent at funded performing arts.

The profile of the target research subjects was built on intelligence from regional presenters; (characterised as 'Thommo') most likely to be working-class male, agricultural or trades employed, with a high propensity towards club sport.

The style of the research was conversational, face to face 1:1 or 2:2 'chats' with an interviewer experienced in gathering personal stories. This provided a bespoke way of investigating the lived experiences of individuals with (or without performing arts). We even allowed them to bring a beer and a mate if it made them more comfortable to tell their stories.

## Executive Summary

After hearing from more than 85 interviewees across 5 Western Australian regions, the research team discovered a nagging consistency. So many respondents reflected on their lives and told us that.

- Funded performing arts was considered a negative experience.
- It was seen as elitist and "not for people like me; and
- Many openly influenced others with their negative view

### -From the mouths of Thommos

*(Researcher: so, words like theatre ballet opera) "those three words are basically daggers in the heart of any blokey bloke ..." research respondent"*

*"My conception would be – I'm not sure exactly the term – like a little bit upper echelon – lah de dah when you put your little finger up with you drink your cocktail -high end – golden triangle sort of people – flash car maybe a chauffeur' research respondent*

*"Blokes enjoy rough and tumble football we don't enjoy watching people dance" research respondent*

The study demonstrated that **anti (funded) performing arts sentiment also had no boundaries of age, education or geographic location.** The sample was hugely diverse from 16-84 years old, a massive mix of metro and regional people (despite being conducted in regional areas) with a vast array of occupations from manual to professional but a chemist from Perth working in the Pilbara was every bit as likely to reject performing arts as a farmer from Beverley.

At the end of the study, the factor that was most common to the negative majority of the subjects was a lack of performing arts experiences in teenage years. There seems to be a direct link between performing arts positivity and high school arts experiences. So many had simply no experience as a youth and in adulthood had formed often cynical perceptions based entirely on guess work.

Another significant problem was that there was risk to engaging. It may have led to bullying or ridicule and this was a clear deterrent for some.

-From the mouths of Thommos

*"I think growing up if someone at school found out you went to phantom of the opera you wouldn't be a very like sort of a person. And it would have the stigma going around it as well, the same as the ballet. Even though there is massive talent in it, there is stigma I think, for most boys"*  
research respondent

There was one a very positive finding. A small part of the cohort that had been part of a community arts engagement (The Beauty Index – Annette Carmichael Projects) dance project not long before this research. It had transformed their views in a positive direction. It made some Thommos see performing arts through a very different lens because they had first-hand experience. Whilst the sample was small, the impact seemed huge.

### **Recommendations and reflections**

1. There needs to more investment in performing arts for young people. We risk losing the next generation of arts people to Netflix. During this research, we could find no youth focussed performing arts choices for audiences in WA.
2. Schools – where are you? It seems performing arts, especially theatre, is slowly disappearing in the public system when most research says it's essential to education.
3. Funded performing arts is often seen as dull when we know it is a deeply emotional interaction with the world. The brand needs serious reimagining.
4. Are we addressing "not for people like me" class perceptions – we all know they exist?
5. Removing Barriers–how can we create more engagement work in communities that brings Thommo into the conversation like The Beauty Index

-From the mouths of Thommos "being in the change room after the show felt like we had just won the grand final" – Beauty Index dancer –

### **A final thought**

Thommos won't change and why should they? We all know a Thommo or two, they are the quintessential Aussie bloke from popular culture. Everyone hates something, it's just normal. This research was never intended to see how to change Thommo, it was meant understand the gap in audiences with the subject most presenters felt was absent from venues. The research aimed to understand what made Thommo have Thommo's views on performing arts to see if there were pathways to help the sector reach new markets.

We can't change Thommo at 40, but can we change him at 14. That requires a much more concerted effort on you from arts

*"Growing up we didn't have much opportunity to engage in the arts just because of the demographic that we lived in"*

## Research Method

This research gave us several challenges:

1. It is not always easy getting those who have zero connection with a topic to answer questions on the topic in one-on-one research.
2. Our respondents were particularly hard to get (previous CircuitWest research proved this to us).
3. It is very complicated to gather the narratives of respondents unless they are in a comfort zone, away from any traditional research setting.
4. Despite the 'blokey' nature of the subjects respondents were deeply respectful of the interviewer and did not wish to offend anyone. This meant finding a solution to ensure honesty and frankness in the stories even if they were negative.

CircuitWest designed a bespoke research method that recruited based on intelligence we gathered. This told us that our subjects had a high propensity to be part of a sporting club and that those clubs were always in a tough financial position and needing to raise funds. The study offered fund raising funds to clubs and sports people who participated. This brought a very positive result.

For those who were not involved in fundraising we were able to offer cash.

The research team recognised that focus groups, intercept research and online questionnaires would get a poor response from the target. It brought in a specialist in gathering stories and a very visible caravan 'sound studio' (*the Chin Wagon* from "Bare Face Stories") that made the process amusing and private. Local presenters made connections in their communities in Ravensthorpe, Beverley, Geraldton, Harvey and Port Hedland. The team took the sound studio to clubs and bars and sporting grounds to engage respondents in their comfort zone.

The research was conducted as narrative story telling, asking the same questions time and time again and hearing people's stories, perceptions and beliefs. The team identified common narratives along many stories to discover if there was consensus on funded performing arts perceptions.

Andrea Gibbs, WA broadcaster, actor and comedian was brought in as the research interviewer. Gibbs was asked to lead the interviews because of the very grounded and approachable style she has used over the past decade, bringing hundreds of stories to the stage through Barefaced Stories. Andrea was able to make respondent feel comfortable so the team could the most detailed and honest narratives.

The honesty factor was also assisted by allowing the respondents to bring a mate along. The dynamics between mates was very powerful, because one respondent often acted as a "bullshit spotter" to the other's answers if they felt they were not telling the truth. They also became a support network for each other to allow them to express negative views.

After interviewing 80 subjects, we gathered the intelligence see the common threads, and there were clear commonalities that should provide opportunities for funded performing arts to consider strategically.

It was very clear that many of our respondents will never engage with funded performing arts, but in explaining why, they gave us great opportunities to evolve to a model that considers the factors that preclude much of the population from funded performing arts.

However, there was considerable upside with some new and creative community thinking and art that is making changes around the state.

*I'm not sure if it's the country so of don't do that you weakling, your father or your grandfather wouldn't have done that, don't buy ballet shoes buy football boots*

*Growing up we didn't have much opportunity to engage in the arts just because of the demographic that we lived in*

## **Reality Check**

The research was conducted with 'eyes wide open'. The team understood that some people have preferences other than funded performing arts and that is life. The research accepts that having preferences other than funded performing arts is not fundamentally problematic. However, after so much commonality in responses it became clear that some parts of our society are not even on the fringe of arts.

The research also looked towards those who are disengaged with funded performing arts, so theatre, dance, classical music etc. If they liked contemporary music or reading books or other areas of arts, this was identified but not prioritised in interviewing. They were questioned on entering performing spaces for arts experiences that were outside commercial entertainment or supporting family and friends in community events.

*I don't understand what's happening and that's why I find it hard to engage in that sort of thing. I don't understand the words and I don't understand what they are doing so.*

## **Detailed Findings**

Whilst the initial survey plan sought to interview males who met the criteria identified by presenters, the final sample was far more randomised. The organisations that partnered with the research team had a far more random approach to finding respondents. Many respondents came to interviews unaware of the nature of the research. This random selection proved to be beneficial to the research as the sample range of age and occupation vastly increased. Despite adding a wide range of males much of the narrative did not change. Most interviewees showed they had limited if any experience with performing arts as well as poor perceptions of what the experience and those who attended.

The sample was majority regional with a percentage of Perth and other city residents who had moved to regional areas or people who had been schooled in the metropolitan area. There was a higher propensity to have performing arts interest from those who had attended private school in Perth where it had formed part of the curriculum. The link between school engagement and adult involvement became increasingly clear throughout the research.

The choices made available to male children were extremely formative. Once a child was made part of a sport that often defined their preferences going forward.

*I suppose from the country you are just thrown into it – your dad says we are going to town today, Auskick is on – and it just grows from that*

Sporting clubs offer a unique family that was seen as supportive and welcoming. It is an environment that many respondents saw as a safe space of belonging.

*I don't know the answer as to why, my answer is football game hands down, I'm not sure what the difference is with ballet, because ballet is females with fit bodies dancing around – why wouldn't I go to that, why would I watch 36 blokes running around as opposed to attractive females? And I don't have the answer.*

But there was a degree of stigma for some respondents. To be part of the 'bloke' club for some meant they felt they could not be seen to be parts of arts.

*blokes enjoy rough and tumble football we don't enjoy watching people dance*

The research on the link between school age experience and adult engagement has been made clear in multiple studies. The New Victory, New York City completed a landmark study with the on the intrinsic impact of live performance on young audiences. One of the most significant findings was this:

*"Children exposed to live theatre before the age of eight report that "Theatre is for someone like me." (The study found that trend to decline in children who are not exposed to live theatre before the age of eight) (Wolfbrown 2019)*

This study really supported this growing body of evidence that if performing arts is not embedded before adulthood, the chances of a person being engaged as an adult is very low. It further indicated that as a person's views form that are likely to be influenced by negative perceptions of performing arts as elitist, boring and difficult understand.

There is an extra layer that provides a barrier to engagement with performing arts which is that some may fear being shamed for engaging.

The study took a snap shot of the performing arts landscape in Western Australia for youth. There was a vast range of possibilities for youth performers across all performing arts, mainly available to metropolitan youth. However, there was no performances identified for youth audiences at the time of publishing this report.

These are the seven key findings:

1. Males who have no experience of funded performing arts in their high school years are incredibly unlikely to engage for the rest of their lives. This refers to engaging by playing the recorder and finger painting at primary school. Research subjects not experienced funded performing arts, in teen years would likely never try.

*No not really, I don't think we have ever been introduced to it, yeh. We have never been around it*

2. Occupation/education is not a strong predictor of who will or will not become a funded performing arts patron. Whilst the plan expected to see trades and agricultural workers, the biggest single occupation interview was school teachers. From business owners to

wealthy farmers, from trades to professionals, people who had not been touched by funded performing arts in formative years were largely not interested.

3. Arts is considered boring, so many subjects said they would expect they would not enjoy an art experience in all regions despite having no frame of reference.

*It's one of those things where you need excitement within it – like not the same old thing time and time again – footy there is something in it where it can change in the game 50 times within the game – whereas theatre is almost like a drama movie you now the start, you know the middle – hey you know what is going to happen at the end of it.*

4. People who attend arts are considered old and wealthy and “not like us” across all regions, with some using popular references such as TV to form opinions (experiences seen on TV of the opera during the show ‘Fraser’ came up).

*my conception would be – I'm not sure exactly the term – like a little bit upper echelon – lah de dah when you put your little finger up with you drink your cocktail – high end – golden triangle sort of people – flash car maybe a chauffeur*

5. There is stigma attached to funded performing arts that a male risks being ridiculed, even bullied if they attend, and this belief seems more relevant during school years.

*I think growing up if someone at school found out you went to phantom of the opera you wouldn't be a very like sort of a person. And kit would have the stigma going around it as well, the same as the ballet. Even though there is massive talent in it, there is stigma I think, for most boys*

6. Young males have sport selected for them at young ages, and that becomes their tribe, and this is often exclusive of other opportunities.

*I don't think its bred into them growing up, you don't get introduced to it and you are introduced to your sports and that's what you end up liking – and you'll continue until you are an adult  
It's like walking into your family home you walk in, and everyone greets you, you know just about everyone there. You know the guys who give you praise and then there is the younger guys who look up to you. So, it's sort of like a circle so the guys that are going out that you have looked up to and now you are what they once were. And now in a few extra years I'll probably be the old guy. giving all the wisdom.*

7. There is a possible path to convert some Thommo's to funded performing arts experiences. Many respondents who had been very anti performing arts had their views changed by involvement in high engagement regional dance project *The Beauty Index*. This needs further research but the preliminary responses were a significant change in perceptions.

*I'd say my relationship with the arts is pretty limited, but it's ramped up lately because I was part of the beauty index tour and I think that has sparked a bit of passion in me, helped me connect with other people I wouldn't have normally connected with*

## **Recommendations**

6. Is the sector making funded performing arts for youth? Many subjects had no arts experiences until they were 17. If someone gets to 17 and has not arts experience, then most will make it to 80 without having one. At the time of this research, even in Perth with 2.5 million people, there were no clear funded performing arts experiences aimed solely at youth and nothing available to tour for the age group to the regions. It seems that the experiences available are aimed a very traditional genres dominated by middle aged and older audiences. Without investment in youth focussed program the risk is that number of "Thommo's" per head of population will keep rising.
7. Is the sector focussed on influencing the school curriculum? Theatre is disappearing from the curriculum, many regional schools offer few or no performing choices. The responsibility is by default on the education system to connect students with funded performing art. It would seem from research that high school students are seeing increasingly less. In regional areas many have no experiences available to them.
8. Is the collective 'brand' of funded performing art damaged? Funded performing art is seen as dull. Those who have not seen any are most likely to believe it will be dull. Experiences are sometimes seen through a lens of theatres in movies with audiences in their finery sitting politely and applauding at the end. The *Search For Audiences* research in 2019 also pointed to this perception.
9. Are we addressing the age/class glass ceiling? Subjects consistently saw those who attended arts as old and wealthy. This was the clearest finding, and that arts was "not for people like us". Whether this is a misperception or a fact, is anything being done to address the elitist image that often follows funded performing arts?
10. Addressing stigma - A number of respondents told us they risked being belittled and even bullied for choosing funded performing arts. There is a real stigma. How this is addressed is the role of the bigger bullying strategy. However, performing arts should note the finding was very clear that the negative brand perception can mean risk for young people engaging.
11. Barrier Jumping – throughout the sample there was some interesting examples of average Thommo subjects who had crossed over to the art side. This was those who attended and/or participated in funded performing arts and had made sudden, emotional lasting connections with funded performing arts. All the experiences been driven by work with a powerful community element (e.g., Annette Carmichael's THE BEAUTY INDEX). There was a proviso, and that was that those who were impacted by work created in communities, work that involved people they knew, work that they were in, were not necessarily predisposed to seeing other types of funded performing arts but they were 100% interested in funded performing arts engaging their community, especially other males. Some of those who participated and attended had done so from an totally anti-funded performing arts perspective to help with fundraising and had been transformed.

"being in the change room after the show felt like we had just won the grand final"  
Beauty Index dancer –

### **Next Steps**

In discussing this research across the industry there were a few thoughts that were raised multiple times.

1. Thommos – won't change and why should they? We all know males like this, they are the quintessential Aussie bloke.
2. The schools need to take more responsibility for ensuring the future of performing arts.
3. Everyone hates something, it's normal.
4. Regions can be disadvantaged in terms of many experiences, but they provide different, equally rich life experiences in the sense of community and many other things.
5. This research is not reflective of metropolitan markets.

This research was never intended to see how to change Thommo, it was meant to ask males over 18 in regional areas why they are rare to non-existent in buying tickets to funded performing arts. The research aimed to understand what made Thommo have Thommo's views on performing arts to see if there were pathways to help the sector reach new markets.

We can't change Thommo at 40, but can we change him at 14 to never become Thommo – what can the sector offer to teen males that it does not offer now?

We can't program for schools but performing arts needs to be more influential, especially in the public-school sector. There was an alarming rate of zero exposure in high school and this will potentially increase the size of the "Thommo" market over the coming years.

Hate of something is often a perception cause by lack of experience. This was proven by the impact of the Beauty Index. People changed their view of performing arts 180 degrees because they participated or supported someone who participated.

Many regions have been strong supporters of performing arts and some attract a bigger percentage of the population than metropolitan markets. There is no reason to dismiss this as a regional problem. Metropolitan markets were unwittingly included in this research as so many people had moved to Perth to the regions where the research was conducted. Location is no predictor of being a Thommo.

It is easy to blame distance, attitude, school, sport, and male behaviour on the existence of resistance to performing arts, and they may all play a part. However, if there are no opportunities provided for young people then all of the barriers might be amplified and the segment of Thommos will increase in size.

# From the mouths of Thommos

*What's your experience with performing arts?*

*but no, I had nothing in performing arts growing up in Beverley*

*I'm not sure if it's the country so of don't do that you weakling, your father or your grandfather wouldn't have done that, don't buy ballet shoes buy football boots*

*Since I have left home probably next to nothing*

*I suppose from the country you are just thrown into it – your dad says we are going to town today, Auskick is on – and it just grows from that*

*– virtually non-existent I'm sorry – but I think that's just me*

*Distant at best – I appreciate that sort of stuff – but I have never been around that sort of culture – never been fully involved*

*I wasn't brought up to be a man, you know, but I wasn't brought up to watch the ballet either*

*Honestly non-existent, and I'll leave it at that ...I wouldn't go any further, otherwise I'd be lying –  
we never ever really got involved in the arts on our own accord*

*I can't say much about theatre because I just haven't been there –*

*Growing up we didn't have much opportunity to engage in the arts just because of the demographic that we lived in*

*Very, not good at all, haven't done much art never, ever*

*No not really, I don't think we have ever been introduced to it, yeh. We have never been around it*

*No, I've never engaged with performing arts or going to a theatre*

*nup never, no interested in performing at all*

*I think I did one year of drama when I was in year 8 – if I'm lucky*

*when mum realised, I could sing a bit she was like – join the school choir and when you are 7 years old you don't say no to your mum ....and then sport took over from there so there was no time for it*

*very limited I would say I have never participated in it very rarely watched performing arts and performing arts was more a laughable event and an enjoyable event*

*Nup, nup, basically zero eh. Never been to a concert or nothing*

*anything's less exciting or fun if you're an outsider if you don't have any friends doing it*

*minimal – my daughter dances and that is about as close as I have got*

*limited very limited actually*

*I really only do it to help donate around her and just get drunk*

*I don't understand what's happening and that's why I find it hard to engage in that sort of thing. I don't understand the words and I don't understand what they are doing so...*

*pretty distant really ...pretty distant arts and that*

***What are your perceptions about going to performing arts?***

*(so words like theatre ballet opera) those three words are basically daggers in the heart of any blokey bloke unless they are encouraged by their partner who's into those things*

*It's one of those things where you need excitement within it – like not the same old thing time and time again – footy there is something in it where it can change in the game 50 times within the game – whereas theatre is almost like a drama movie you now the start, you know the middle – hey you know what is going to happen at the end of it.*

*You can be involved in it you know; you don't have to sit there and be quiet – you can let go, and have a laugh, it's always good to have a laugh*

*classical music ...fingernails down a black board, pain and misery – something to take my fiancé to on her birthday*

*Just uncomfortable I'm just sitting there. I can see myself doing it I don't know anyone who's done it like in a sporting way where you see people grow and get better – so it's a very foreign thing for me*

*blokes enjoy rough and tumble football we don't enjoy watching people dance*

*I am going to have to say footy – it's just one of those things where I have seen instructive dance on like Australia's got talent I got no idea, no idea what they are doing – I just see someone on the stage doing bugger all – what the hell are they doing*

*ballet, fuck where do I start...*

*I have never been to see an orchestra or anything like that but from what I can see it's very stiff and you are just sitting there in the crowd and you keep your mouth shut*

*have been to a few football games and gone to the derby and all that and always have fun – but it's not necessarily about the football the culture, the atmosphere you are there is its high energy and everyone is having a great time ...that atmosphere as opposed to sitting there in silence just seeing what there – which is fine but it's just the atmosphere around it it wouldn't make and different is there was 10 people in the crowd or 1000 because it's just going to be stone cold silent for the entire time until the inevitable round of applause at the end of it*

*...that wouldn't happen at a symphony orchestra, and I can't imagine you're allowed to sit and have a beer while you are watching – it's so focused that if you were to turn and talk to someone you'd have quite a few people look at you like what are you doing*

*The only time I have seen a bit of opera was Julia Roberts and Richard Gere in that movie*

*Musical theatre – just reading it, it sounds boring –*

*To be brutally honest there is just noting that attracts me to go and watch ballet*

*There's no teams to back. in theatre there is one team where there are two teams in sport the home team and the away team*

*One is noisy activity and one you gotta be quiet*

*slow boring, it's not boring, it is boring*

*yes, I think because they (females) understand it more. I reckon they'll choose to understand it more than we will do. We would go oh yes that's a cool picture and that's it we won't really want to go much in depth with it. My family is like that they like listening to the stories behind it, but I don't care*

*We like drinking beer getting drunk mainly that's what we're into and I wouldn't want to go there and listen to people dance and sing. When I could watch footy and drink beers.*

*I believe it's the advertising and what you see on TV and that we don't get shown into it. .... I think that growing up for males the advertising is about sport and mostly contact sport*

*I think we just don't see the excitement in it or have the encouragement to see plays like that*

*I don't have much relationship at all. I have been to the arts centre in Bunbury and walk through there just recently. I have been in Bunbury for 6 years and it was my 6th year I visited there, and I find it hard to connect sometimes with artists because the way they think is different to the way I think...*

*Like a library, quiet. I'd imagine it's pretty quiet you could clap every now and then but otherwise you could hear a pin drop*

*To me just the word theatre from someone...because it just doesn't interest me ...the actual word theatre I just zone out. But if was an actual theatre but it was worded like a footy, I don't know. If it was a theatre think about footy of hockey or basketball or something I'd be more interested ...but just when I hear theatre I just zone out*

*I think it's a cultural thing as well we choose to dabble in gatherings with alcohol or gatherings at the pub and at other places versus something which is potentially on the surface less socially inclined. If you go to an event like an arts event for example, we are sitting there watching the event and we are not socialising with our friends so it seen to be not so much so a social aspect or a social gathering which is something that our generation tend to be more inclined to do which is generally socialise a lot more*

*plus, a bit of laughter softens the mood of the environment a bit more and I don't think the same could be said to ballet or going to the opera*

*I like to say something that entertains me rather than something that's deep dark and meaningful. If I am going out, I want to be entertained. When we were back in the uk we said let's go and see a show and we went to Mamma Mia and I thought it was great.... I'd much rather see that than something which is deep dark and meaningful. I want to be entertained I don't want to think too much. I don't want to interpret all this*

*It is a bit of a girly thing I suppose. Whether you like it or not people are going to see it like that, I don't know. That's shown be female thought*

*And again, the content and the advertising it's not geared up in any way to encourage men. It's very generic and it's not something that says, hey lads come and have a laugh at this place ...*

*To try and get people this age it needs to be something that they will engage in they are not just going to rock up you and (name) and (name).and say what are we going to do on a Friday night.*

*There is a play on at the rec centre. It's never going to happen. Unless it's something of interest just a lot of slow dancers and something I would not enjoy*

*Yes 100% I reckon when you go to stand-up comedy you can talk to each other you interpret the joke and then you just laugh together – classical music you are meant to be quiet you are not meant to be doing much*

*(About the queens park theatre) I haven't been I in there...to be honest it does look much chop from the outside...like an old brown building*

*It's quite imposing inside as well, how can I describe it, almost intimidating (so it's not a very welcoming venue) no its not welcoming, it's a little confusing with the levels. You know, where do I go...they ways it's set up its almost like you are intruding into it*

*probably not interested really – most people are more interested in the footy can't really be bothered with the arts and stuff and culture and all that stuff they've got to think about...*

### **Who goes to performing arts?**

*my conception would be – I'm not sure exactly the term – like a little bit upper echelon – lah de dah when you put your little finger up with you drink your cocktail -high end – golden triangle sort of people – flash car maybe a chauffeur*

*people who have lots of time, not struggling for a dollar – that middle class – female*

*Probably and older crowd compared to the footy, maybe slightly more sophisticated, I don't know, - maybe like the older generation....*

*I am saying the older generation – generation before me and yourself*

*If they have been brought up with it and they are maybe a little bit .... I think it goes on your background ...I don't know where they grew up, like if they grew up in Leederville they are more sort of into that crowd, I don't know*

*It comes down to where you are – if you are in. the heart of Sydney you would have more conversations about tennis and ballet or something like that, where is if you go to Lithgow or somewhere like that somewhere out like that it would be more footy, rugby or afl*

Artsy people 'bigoted **expletive**' - very well dressed

people holding red wine or port or something like that, definitely older – I wasn't going to say older but red wine or port or something along those lines

class probably – level of understanding – their upbringing their background is going to be different – maybe private colleges, or their parents had a background...

you look at things like your ballet your theatre and all that sort of stuff its always upper class...football sports can be anywhere from a yobbo to upper class

TV Frasier, they go to the ballet and (claps) and that sort of thing, you know. The average people that's worked it's like they are toffee nose and if they had to sit beside someone like me and him that were having a beer its different .... you feel like you don't fit in

It's certainly cast in a certain light where it's for a certain niche where you have to be, for the want of a better term – artsy fartsy – you are into the finer arts, have gone to the galleries and things like that

you see snooty Frasier Crane people and Nile Crane that you see on TV

Hard core rock... or guys that have had good families, marriages and children and they have settle down and they are more chilling, so they might be more the opera types

I couldn't image myself meeting a like-minded person – and I mean this in the nicest possible way – meeting a like-minded person at an arts function whereas I could go to a sports club, not just football, and meet a lot more

When I think about it it's probably older people probably because of their interest in it and it may also be in the affordability in terms of affordability. Don't always see a lot of younger people as that classical opera and dance

artsy people -in my mind it's that TRADITIONAL sort of style beret over the, the board of the painting platter

I think of people who wear glasses and who read books and who live in apartments, who are quiet, wine drinkers not beer drinkers, who vote for labour – chardonnay socialists

I believe that when you get more into proper drama that's when I say more towards the older generation because you need to be a lot calmer and more collected. I'm not saying you always need to be that way I'm just saying drama and acting need to include a lot more patience. I'd say a lot more of the action plays, the plays around shows, are more towards kids

I think the social influence and the social image – I think you are more likely to get positive response from being a theatre actress than an actor...a lot of pop culture is feminine and there is not my emphasis on masculine work .... when it's like opera its very high end – the entry level performing arts is very feminine

They probably sit at home all day and do nothing, and they are bored, so they go out whereas the husband or partner is working all day

I don't think I'd describe myself as an artsy Perth (What's an artsy person) hipster looking kind of dude, latte drinks and the kind of stuff I don't know pretty free minded go with the flow kinda

people (what other things do artsy people do besides go to the theatre) all galleries, arts shows that kind of thing, a few museums and that kinds of this. Like Brenno gets involved in some dancing and that kind of stuff.

hipster craft beer drinker

I think older...older than 50 (above 39)

hippy-ish sort of loose like a surfer sort of person if you could describe. Thinks different, we think sporty, and they think different to us

The picture you paint is normally that older person watching from the balcony

Generally, people with money ...that would my opinion (what do they look like what do they dress like) ...a suit or a really fancy dress and wear or their jewellery. Its more about being seen than anything else

You've got to be proper. You got to be dressed correctly and be proper. If you go down the clubrooms you can go in your boardies and things and grab a beer straight away and do whatever you want kind of thing

### **How do other people impact what you do?**

when you get to that certain age probably when you hit high school it's like you don't sing you don't dance you don't do anything because its awkward so therefore those creative sides of you get snuffed out and you end up just kicking the football and tackling people

your peers, perceptions I'd say would be the case. It's something which is changing now I'd say it's a different era and people are more able to express their feelings a bit more in different mediums. I think probably you've got this era of men don't cry, men don't do these men don't do that and I think that era is changing but I think it's always been one of those things. There has been a lot of that stigma across society for a long time

I think growing up if someone at school found out you went to phantom of the opera you wouldn't be a very like sort of a person. And kit would have the stigma going around it as well, the same as the ballet. Even though there is massive talent in it, there is stigma I think, for most boys

I dunno I think if you said to half the footy boys here you were going to the ballet they'd be like – what are you doing, why are you doing that

I don't know, probably seems not cool ...growing up you are never really encouraged I suppose to go to the theatre or maybe get involved on that side, the arts part of it. Some people gravitate towards it pretty natural, and some people have to be pushed towards. Growing up to you know it depends on who you hang out with. You want to try and fit in and be cool

### **What do you love sport so much?**

I don't know the answer as to why, my answer is football game hands down, I'm not sure what the difference is with ballet, because ballet is females with fit bodies dancing around – why wouldn't I go to that, why would I watch 36 blokes running around as opposed to attractive females? And I don't have the answer.

Brother hood, doesn't matter race, colour anything like that it's a real brotherhood

*It's an outlet I guess you know that many of us men especially in areas we don't have accessibly to things we have in Perth – footy is probably the only thing we got as a physical outlet and camaraderie as brothers*

*– I don't think its bred into them growing up, you don't get introduced to it and you are introduced to your sports and that's what you end up liking – and you'll continue until you are an adult  
It's like walking into your family home you walk in and everyone greets you, you know just about everyone there. You know the guys who give you praise and then there is the younger guys who look up to you. So, it's sort of like a circle so the guys that are going out that you have looked up to and now you are what they once were. And now in a few extra years I'll probably be the old guy. giving all the wisdom.*

### ***The Impact of The Beauty Index***

*At its heart, The Beauty Index is an original dance work, set in a mythical world where men struggle to balance elements of beauty and fear. Local men perform alongside community members from Denmark, all supported by a team of professional artists. The project is something new, it breaks down stereotypes and contributes to the community, it's open to any man who is willing to step forward.*

*I think it did attract a lot of people having locals doing the work which is a good idea. It sold out.....5.39 It was actually enjoyable once we got started. It was just getting us out of our comfort zone. (Would you do again) Yes, I'd probably practice a bit more than I did last time. It got to the last couple of days and I thought Oh shit...better do something, pull my finger out (did it make you think about arts in a different way) yes a little bit. I'd give it those them the hard work those professional dancers put in is mind blowing, it's a lot more physical than on a sports field. It's a lot of learn and the process of learning the coordination of the steps which is great.*

*in saying that when I came and watched the boys dance, definitely I wouldn't have gone if I didn't know they were in it ...but when you are in there you are quite captivated about what's happening. So, it made me really evaluate.... definitely in a small community and people that are non-dancers, people that don't do the theatre it's really good and it would make me go to another one, if the title grabbed me, like if it was something I was interested in ....10.10 (so there needs to be like some point of entry) yes like a crossover*

*If it is community minded and has people from our community in it, I am definitely going to go there and support them.*

*But like I said before as soon as you get somewhere, and you don't want to do it but then you start watching it you just get sucked into it ...if you can get people in the door to start off with it draws then into it. It's something that you don't think you'll be interested in but as soon as you are there you think about it.*

*They had the beauty project recently .... a couple of guys I work with were in and it and it was great to get along and support it ...I would have loved to be involved but I was outside the state when it kicked off.*

*I think the other challenge that you've got is finding a show that does have the broader appeal. The very pure hard musical production won't appeal to most men so how do you find that cross*

*over that inlet into the world of performing arts with something that does appeal to me. That why the beauty index was so good because it got you to go along and see what your mate was up to... I think for me I would if it was something locally what drives me is supporting the community side of things so if it's a fundraiser I'll support it, if it a person I know is participating in it I'll support it would I go and see an opera in Harvey probably no a ballet in Harvey probably not> however, if it was for a cause or someone I know was involved in it I would support it ...*

*I'd say my relation with the arts is pretty limited, but it's ramped up lately because I was part of the beauty index tour and I think that has sparked a bit of passion in me, helped me connect with other people I wouldn't have normally connected with – E*