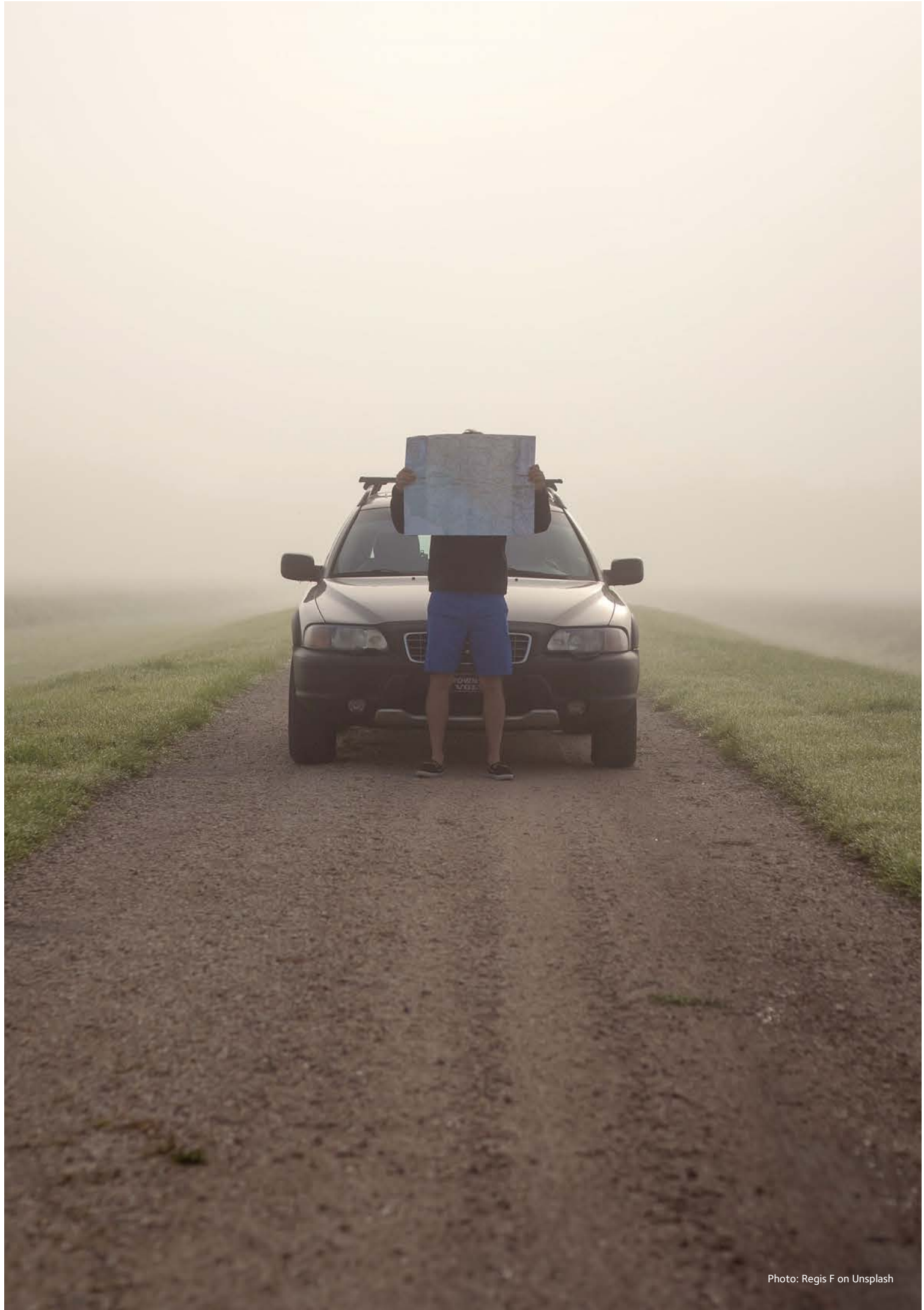


AUSTRALIAN SILO ART AND WELLBEING

First Public Report
August 2021

*Dr Amelia Green
Professor Scott Weaven
Department of Marketing
Griffith Business School*



CONTENTS

Report Summary	6
Introduction	13
Findings Part One: Five elements that distinguish Australian silo art	20
Findings Part Two: Visitor perspectives and impacts	27
Emotional and cultural wellbeing of visitors	29
Social wellbeing of visitors	37
Emotional and social wellbeing of visitors	38
Six main silo art visitor appeal dimensions and tourist groups	40
Three main trip design types	45
Key issues and opportunities identified by visitors	49
Findings Part Three: Local community perspectives and impacts	53
Emotional and cultural wellbeing of residents	57
Social and community wellbeing in silo art towns	60
Financial wellbeing of local communities	65
Residents experience silo art in a variety of ways: Multiple audience groups within the community	72
Key issues and challenges identified by residents and local business owners/managers	77
Findings Part Four: Broader critical issues, challenges and opportunities identified by both visitors and local communities	80
Summarising implications and recommendations	86
Limitations of this stage and future research priorities	88
Next stages of this project	88
References	89
Appendix: Completed Australian silo art site list	90

Foreword

In just a few short years, the silo art movement in Australia has captured the imagination of locals and visitors alike. When organised in partnership with local communities, silo art can become a vehicle for fostering community connectedness and collective pride, as well as a drawcard for tourists.

Whilst the social and economic benefits of silo art to regional and remote places has been subject to extensive commentary, there is a dearth of robust, empirical data on the subject. This research goes a long way to addressing that gap.

As the world endures a pandemic, the foundations of the Australian economy, and in turn where and how we live, are undergoing an enormous shift. The competition to attract visitors, businesses and residents has never been greater. But, whilst daunting, these shifting times also represent a unique opportunity for Australian communities to re-position themselves for the future.

This research provides regional communities across Australia with an invaluable dataset that goes beyond simply looking at the impact of silo art. It puts forward silo art as a platform for delivering community cohesion and collective pride, two foundation stones of an attractive place to visit, work, and live. To that end, it's an essential resource that Australian communities, particularly those in rural and remote areas, can and will derive enormous value from.

Stu Speirs

Australian Tourism, Event and Place Branding Specialist
Director of the major events strategy and evaluation firm, Silver Lining Strategy



Acknowledgements

The authors would like to sincerely thank the 1,200 plus citizens from across Australia who participated in an interview or survey for this research. The authors are also grateful to the many various Visitor Centres, Local Councils, Shires, Community Centres, tourism groups, Regional Development Associations, arts organisations, artists, Facebook Group administrators and citizens who assisted with sharing information about the interviews and the online surveys with potential participants. The authors wish to also extend their appreciation to the staff at some Community Centres and Visitor Centres who also kindly assisted participants who were unable to access the main survey online. Finally, the authors thank the photographers whose images are included in this report.

Funding

This Griffith University research project did not receive any grant or funding from any public, commercial or not-for-profit group or organisation.

About the authors

Dr Amelia Green

Dr Amelia Green is an Adjunct Research Fellow in the Department of Marketing at Griffith Business School. Amelia's PhD (completed 2018) in place branding examines how people develop perceptions of and relationships to the places they live and visit. She has been researching and documenting Australian silo art since early 2019. Her first paper about silo art was published in the *Journal of Place Management and Development* (2020) and she has presented her earlier silo art research at international conferences in Adelaide (2019) and Copenhagen (2019). Amelia has also worked across various other academic and community organisation research settings. Her prior research is published in top international journals including *Marketing Theory*, the *Journal of Brand Management* and *Arts and the Market*.



Professor Scott Weaven

Professor Scott Weaven is Head of the Department of Marketing at Griffith Business School. He has a PhD on asymmetric marketing exchange relationships and firm performance, and has active research interests in relationship marketing, 'big data', customer engagement and the behavioural aspects of consumers and sellers in offline and online contexts. His research has been published in various leading international journals including the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Retailing*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Journal of International Marketing* and *International Small Business Journal*.



Griffith Business School

Griffith Business School is committed to high-quality business and public sector education and research, with a special focus on sustainable business development and responsible leadership. Griffith Business School is an accredited member of AACSB International—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. It is also an active partner in the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative, a signatory to the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education and the UN Global Compact. This engagement demonstrates the School's strong commitment to sustainable enterprise development and corporate responsibility.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on this report and any suggestions for particular issues that should be addressed in future research. Please get in touch via email amelia.green@griffith.edu.au

REPORT SUMMARY

Background and aim of this research

Six years have passed since Australia's first silo art site in Northam, Western Australia (completed March 2015). The Australian silo art phenomenon continually attracts widespread media coverage and public attention throughout the country and overseas. Silo art has even been referred to as a 'media darling'.

With 48 completed sites across five states as of June 2021, and at least a further 15 additional sites in the planning stages, there is no sign of this movement slowing down.

Many small towns undertake silo art projects to attract visitors to places they have never heard of, to create a lifeline for struggling local businesses and to revive community pride. Public and media discussion often emphasise tourist attraction and immediate local business stimulation as the primary outcomes of these projects for rural and regional towns, many of which are home to several hundred residents or less.

However, public and independent evaluation of silo art projects is lacking. Therefore, the many community groups, Local Councils, Shires, tourism boards, funding bodies, arts organisations, artists and citizens involved in (or impacted by) these projects are presently unable to access a solid evidence-base to guide future organising and action.

This report represents the first step in providing much needed empirical and critical investigation into the social and economic impacts of Australian silo art. Specifically, the aim of this research is to explore (1) how visitors and local communities experience silo art and (2) the impacts of silo art experiences on the wellbeing of visitors and communities.

The data: Interviews and the first national Australian silo art survey

In this report, we focus on the experiences and perceptions of silo art visitors, residents who live in silo art towns, and local business owners. Specifically, the findings are based on 61 video and phone interviews (Stage One), and a combined total of 1,140 responses to the first national silo art survey (Stage Two). 714 visitors participated in the survey. 243 residents (i.e. equivalent to an average of 5 residents per silo art site) and 183 local business owners/managers (i.e. an average of 4 per silo art site) participated in the survey.

Crucially, the findings of this report draw on both quantitative and qualitative data. Indeed, quantitative results (percentages etc.) of multiple choice survey questions provide instrumental insight. However, responses to open-ended survey and interview questions that allow participants to respond in their own words (i.e. qualitative data) are necessary to delve deeper, and build a more comprehensive understanding of silo art from both visitor and community perspectives.

The findings

The findings presented in this report are structured in four main parts: (1) the five distinguishing elements of Australian silo art, (2) visitor perspectives and impacts, (3) local community perspectives and impacts and (4) broader critical issues, challenges and opportunities identified by both visitors and local communities.

Part 1: The five elements that distinguish Australian silo art in the eyes of visitors and local communities

To provide a guiding framework for future discussion and projects, we collated and analysed how all participants surveyed and interviewed in this stage of the research (a combined total of over 1,300 visitors and residents) described and talked about Australian silo art, and what makes Australian silo art different to other art forms, other tourism experiences and other community projects.

- Element 1: Silo art tells genuine local stories in ways that ‘wow’ audiences
- Element 2: Silo art should develop through sound community consultation, and artist–community engagement
- Element 3: Silo art is inherently public, accessible and for everybody
- Element 4: Silo art is located in small previously drive-by or forgotten towns
- Element 5: Silo art invokes a desire amongst many visitors to ‘give back’ to local communities

These findings highlight several key considerations to assist with preserving the essence of Australian silo art as a unique form of public art and art tourism in the minds of visitors and local communities (e.g. prioritising small towns, not large regional centres, in funding decisions).

Part 2: Visitor perspectives and impacts

Understanding the impacts of silo art on visitors can inform evidence-based strategies to maintain and grow visitor interest over time. The findings of this research show that silo art has a largely positive impact on the emotional, social and cultural wellbeing of visitors.

Evidenced benefits for visitors include expanding arts access and engagement amongst citizens not otherwise interested in art, inspiring amateur and professional arts participation, visitor self development (e.g. learning about oneself), rewarding interactions with the natural environment, positive re-discovery of Australian art, culture, history and towns, positive social interactions, enhanced social relationships, and positive emotions stimulated by opportunities to ‘give back’ to struggling rural and regional communities in small yet symbolic ways (e.g. coffees, bakery items, overnight accommodation).

Six main silo art visitor appeal dimensions and corresponding tourist groups

Overall, visitor participants emphasised six main benefits of silo art. Each main benefit represents a different dimension of silo art’s appeal to visitors and each dimension corresponds to a different tourist group:

1. *Art*—the Art Lovers
2. *Local Stories*—the Local Story Seekers
3. *Cultural Learning*—the Cultural Explorers
4. *Place*—the Place Explorers
5. *‘Giving Back’*—the Socially Conscious
6. *Human Connection*—the Interaction Seekers

Although visitors may perceive many benefits, between 2 and 3 dimensions dominate each visitor's experience of silo art. For instance, as well as providing a visitor with an awe-inspiring art experience, visiting silo art can also open up opportunities to support struggling communities, and a means of spending quality time with other people.

Therefore, silo art tourists are not a homogenous group and each visitor is motivated by several benefits.

As silo art's appeal to visitors is multi-layered, silo art towns should consider tailoring strategies, campaigns, messages and other initiatives intended to promote existing sites and build visitor interest by tapping into multiple dimensions of silo art's appeal, rather than pursuing 'one size fits all' approaches.

More broadly, the findings reinforce that visitors experience Australian silo art as a distinct/particular form or genre of art and, and art tourism. Hence, irrespective of whether all individual sites and branded trails or clusters work directly together or not, all silo art sites scattered around the country are interconnected in the eyes of visitors.

Three main silo art trip design types

Analysis of visitor survey and interview data indicates three main silo art trip design types that also correspond with nuanced motivations: (1) Trip initiators, (2) Pit/Rest Stoppers and (3) Trip variers. Identifying these three main trip design types provides a further resource for communities, Local Councils, tourism boards, arts organisations and other groups involved in developing and executing strategies to promote existing and future silo art sites, extend visit duration and encourage return visits.

Other key survey findings – Silo art visitor behaviour and perceptions

- 59% of visitors reported that they spend between 10–30 minutes looking at each silo art. A total of 80% of visitors spend an average of 30 minutes or more at the silo art site.
- 29% reported that they spend between 30 and 60 minutes in each town with silo art. Slightly less (26%) spend between 1 and 2 hours in the town.
- 44% spend between \$11 and \$50 in each town they visit with silo art. 25% spend between \$51 and \$100.
- 54% of visitors would have probably not otherwise visited these towns. 34% may have visited. 12% would have definitely visited anyway.
- 48% visited multiple silo art sites or a trail in one journey. Almost the same amount (47%) visited silo art as a 'pit stop' within a longer journey with multiple purposes. 26% journeyed specifically to visit one particular silo art.
- Average time spent at each silo art site and in the town about the same across different trip types.
- Average spend in each town about the same across trip types (e.g. 'pit stoppers' don't necessarily spend less).
- 38% of visitors would like to visit more silo art in the future although they are not planning a particular trip at the moment. 25% are currently planning a trip involving silo art beyond their own state. 20% would like to visit more silo art, but are delaying such travel until COVID-19 restrictions ease.
- 97% of visitors recommend other people visit silo art.
- 96% of visitors consider silo art a worthwhile investment for regional Australian towns/communities.

Visitor identified issues and opportunities

According to visitors, multiple critical issues that should be addressed in order to optimise the tourism potential of silo art (see pages 49–50). Issues discussed include absent, poor and out-of-date online and print information about the town and local businesses (with opening hours listed) to enable trip planning, minimal or no road signage and a lack of place-specific local produce or home-made products. More broadly, the perception that towns paint their silos to attract tourists sets up visitor expectations when they arrive, in turn leading to frustration if few or no businesses are open.

Part 3: Local community perspectives and impacts

The findings of this research indicate that, from the perspective of local communities, the specific social and economic impacts of silo art vary between towns, between individual businesses, and between individuals within each community.

Local community—Social impacts

Some of the benefits of silo art for local communities evidenced in this research include happiness stemming from enjoyable interactions with high quality art (70% of all resident participants), beautification of the everyday environment (72%) and reinforced or increased town pride (65%). Looking beyond more specific and immediate benefits, other survey results indicate that many residents consider silo art a worthwhile investment:

- 68% of resident participants reported that they value how silo art is helping to develop the art scene/community in their town.
- 75% reported that they value how silo art is helping to transform their town into a tourism destination.
- 59% reported that the silo art in their town makes them feel part of something ‘bigger’.
- 88% of residents consider silo art a worthwhile investment for regional Australian towns/communities.

However, in isolated cases (between 3 and 4 sites/projects in total), some resident participants reported that the silo artwork in their town embodies an extremely limited connection to the local community, or no local connection at all. Data underpinning this finding pertains to clear indications of artworks with a limited or no local connection, rather than individual assessments of artistic style/s or colour choices. Difficult or uncomfortable encounters with visitors who ask about how the artwork relates to the local community underscore the potential for this issue to adversely impact residents’ emotional wellbeing. Some participants also discussed more generalised negative emotions surrounding everyday interactions with large-scale artwork that lacks a local connection, particularly given the physical prominence of many silos in the township or district, and that both residents and visitors have come to expect that silo artworks represent the local community.

Highly variable levels and forms of community consultation emerged as another key issue shaping the extent to which local communities identify with and enjoy the silo art in their town. Residents who discussed artworks that lack a local connection often related this issue back to limited or no community consultation.

Further, some resident participants discussed several isolated cases (i.e. between 2 and 3 sites/projects in total) in which one particular group inhibited or disregarded all community consultation regarding a silo art project. According to participant descriptions, community members’ attempts to provide input or have any say in the processes or outcomes of the project were ignored, in turn resulting in an artwork that depicts phenomenon that are not present in the town (i.e. no local

connection). Particularly pertinent in terms of community wellbeing, these residents expressed a loss of trust in the group that inhibited or disregarded community consultation.

Hence, together, these findings indicate that key factors shaping how local communities experience silo art and the potential social impacts of these projects include: (1) levels and forms of community consultation and engagement and, relatedly, (2) silo artworks that embody elements of the local community which residents enjoy talking about.

Local community—Economic impacts

The overwhelming majority of local residents reported that silo art consistently attracts visitors to silo art in their town. However, what happens 'next' (and the extent to which silo art directly stimulates local businesses) varies greatly across towns and individual businesses, and is largely oriented around what visitors interact with when they arrive.

Indeed, a marked contrast between business owners/managers who attributed the survival of their business entirely to silo art visitors, and those who reported that silo art has made no difference whatsoever to their trade, is evident throughout the data. Survey results such as the following percentages illustrate this variation:

- 47% of the 183 business owners/managers responded that, regarding stimulation of local businesses in their town, silo art has had a *Noticeable/observable positive impact*. 34% responded *Some indications of positive impact*. 11% responded silo art has had *No impact on local businesses*.
- Overall, 64% of local business owners/managers responded that silo art attracts customers to their business.
- Some variation by state in the business owners/managers who responded that silo art attracts customers: Victoria 76%, New South Wales 67%, South Australia 58%, Queensland 55% and Western Australia 38%.
- Some variation by business type in the business owners/managers who responded that silo art attracts customers to their business, for instance: Grocery/corner store 86%, Café etc. with in-house dining 83%, Art-focused business 83%, Accommodation/Tourist service 77% and Take-away food/beverage 70%.
- Of those who responded that silo art attracts customers to their business, 70% responded that the art attracts some customers. 26% indicated the art attracts a lot of customers.
- 43% reported that, overall, the number of silo art visitors who visit their business increased during COVID-19.

Analysis of survey and interview comments indicates that key factors shaping variable town- and business-level economic impacts include: (1) ongoing site activation and management 'after the paint dries', (2) the nature and number of businesses operating in the town and (3) the extent to which promoting silo art, and partnering with local businesses is considered part of longer plans to utilise the art as a launching pad for broader tourism development and economic revitalisation.

Factors shaping the extent to which individual businesses benefit from silo art visitors include business's specific location within the town (e.g. main street, side street or outskirts), whether other businesses are closer to the silo art site, and whether the business offers facilities such as toilets.

Therefore, more broadly, these findings reinforce that the act of painting a silo, in isolation, will not necessarily or automatically 'save' local businesses, and ongoing activation and development of the site (and the town) is crucial to realising the potential economic impacts of these projects.

Multiple audience groups within the community

Analysis of how resident participants talk about silo art and the benefits and drawbacks of these projects in interviews and survey comments shows that different residents perceive and experience the silo art in their town in different ways.

Specifically, this research identifies 11 main ways of thinking about silo art within local communities: (1) the Art Lovers, (2) the Beautifiers, (3) the Proud Locals, (4) the Business-Focused, (5) the Future-Focused, (6) the Concerned, (7) the Disappointed and/or frustrated, (8) the Everyday Place Ambassadors, (9) the Local Experts, (10) the Opposed and (11) the Indifferent.

Identification of these groups provides a valuable resource for tailoring community engagement strategies, before and after a silo art project.

Key issues and challenges identified by residents and local business owners

The third part of the report concludes by identifying six key issues and challenges involved in realising the potential social and/or economic benefits of silo art for local communities. In addition to sound community consultation, community members highlighted absent, poor or out-of-date information about the art and local businesses (with opening hours), poor or incomplete site infrastructure and limited or incomplete site activation strategies. Business owners/managers also discussed practical challenges involved in extending opening hours and recruiting additional staff.

Part 4: Broader critical issues, challenges and opportunities identified by both visitors and local communities

Both visitor participants, and participants living in towns with silo art, discussed nine broader critical issues, challenges and opportunities in survey comments or interviews:

1. Cultural representation and the inherent selectivity of art;
2. Use of silos as canvasses;
3. Longevity of the paint and ongoing site maintenance;
4. Public safety issues, enhanced by the variable nature of each site;
5. Originality and differentiation of the artworks;
6. Audience desire to preserve originality and push boundaries creatively by combining unique artistic styles and genuine local stories that only certain towns can tell;
7. The extent to which silo art currently appeals to children and younger audiences;
8. Re-framing and activating silo art as a launching pad and strategic asset that can reposition small towns in a new competitive arena; and
9. Constellations of small towns (with and without silo art) working together as networks or 'webs'.

Outlining these issues, challenges and opportunities provides a further resource for towns to consult when undertaking or considering a silo art project, and when designing strategies to activate and manage existing sites.

Implications and recommendations

The report makes a number of recommendations for the planning, implementation and management of silo art projects. For instance, it is recommended that silo art towns:

- Direct greater attention to and investment in the ongoing activation, promotion, maintenance and stewardship of existing (and new) silo art sites.
- Seek to collaborate with local businesses in these towns as strategic partners in the development of deeper and more varied tourism offerings.
- Seek to proactively address the 'return visits challenge' (see page 36) that stems from continual visitor emphasis on discovering 'new' artworks and 'new' places (e.g. What would make silo art visitors visit again? And how can you make visitors fall in love with your town?).
- Address the disconnect between: (1) visitors eager to 'give back' (but frustrated nothing is open when the visit), and (2) local businesses who would like more customers (e.g. ensuring visitors can access up-to-date information about businesses and opening hours before they travel, and also providing information about businesses, opening hours, walking/driving distances etc. at the silo art site).
- Actively consider the different ways local residents think about the silo art in their town (see pages 72–76), and opportunities to develop ongoing community engagement strategies (i.e. after the artwork is complete).
- Engage with the multiple dimensions of silo art's appeal to visitors (see p. 40–44) and tailor strategies, campaigns, messages and other initiatives intended to promote existing sites (rather than pursuing 'one size fits all' approaches that assume all silo art visitors experience silo art in the same way).

Recommendations for towns considering or undertaking such projects include:

- Community consultation before and throughout the silo art planning process is essential to facilitate artworks that tell genuine local stories, and to foster broader engagement with the project amongst the community. Ensure budget components of funding applications include resource allowances for consultation with the community, and artist-community engagement.
- Ensure community consultation enables local business owners and managers to share their specialised knowledge of the area, and provide input towards key decisions during planning and development phases that can in turn facilitate the potential for silo art to benefit local economies.

Concluding note

Together, the findings of this report reinforce the potential for silo art to benefit visitors and local communities alike. As noted above, over six years have passed since Australia's first silo art project in Northam, Western Australia. Now is the time to plan strategically and make informed actions to foster the potential and longevity of this art tourism movement. We hope this report provides a valuable resource towards this end.

Introduction

The Australian silo art phenomenon

Silo art, the practice of painting large-scale murals on existing silos, is spreading across Australia. These mammoth structures, many of which stand over 30 metres tall and in clusters of two or more, originally stored wheat, various grains and raw materials for cement and other production processes.

Artists Phlegm (UK) and Hense (USA) painted Australia's first silo art site in Northam, Western Australia. Completed in March 2015, this first site attracted immense interest, far beyond the expectations of the artists and the organisers (cultural organisation FORM WA and silo owners CBH Group). Australia's silo art phenomenon has burgeoned over the six years since this first site.

Success stories of once 'drive-through' rural and regional towns established 'on the map' circulate through traditional and social media. As of July 2021, Australia is home to 48 silo art sites across five states, with at least and additional 15 sites in the planning stages. The Appendix to this report provides a full list of current silo art sites in Australia.

Communities without silos increasingly make use of similar-shaped yet smaller water towers and building walls around the town. Thus, silo art also appears to be serving as the linchpin of a more expansive movement of contemporary Australian public art.

A brief history of Australia's silos: Sites of economic and social exchange

First appearing in 1981, many of Australia's silos were originally constructed to provide bulk storage for the wheat and other grain produced by local farmers until

subsequent transport via rail or road trucks [1]. These structures were also centerpieces of social exchange. Local communities came together around the base of grain silos during harvest time to 'exchange news and stories and reconnect with old friends while the grain was unloaded' [2, p. 273].

Although some of Australia's silos are still in operation, farming and manufacturing practices have evolved considerably over the past century. As such, the remaining silos vary widely in current usage and private or corporate ownership. For example, grain-handling companies (GrainCorp, Viterra, the CBH Group etc.) own many of Australia's silos. However, these corporations decommission certain sites that are no longer required within their networks. Other silos reside under the private ownership of individual farmers and community members.

Silo art: Massive canvas—Massive project

The owner of the silos (corporate or private) often provides an in-kind donation by granting permission to use the structure as a canvas. Even so, the average total cost of these projects remains between A\$50,000 and A\$100,000. Projects that involve multiple artists, murals that wrap around all sides of the silos and/or upgrades to surrounding areas can reach A\$150,000. Thus, especially given small size of many of Australia's silo art towns (under 1,000 people), silo art projects usually demand considerable effort on behalf of local communities, volunteer groups and/or Local Councils in fundraising and securing grants. The many economic, legal and logistical complexities involved also mean that most silo art projects take several years from initial idea, to the first coat of paint.

Aim of this report and the ongoing research project

Many towns undertake silo art projects in the hope of attracting visitors, stimulating local businesses and reviving town pride.

The media coverage and public discussions around silo art currently emphasise indications of tourist attraction and thus immediate economic stimulation of local businesses as the primary outcomes of these projects. Such short-term economic benefits represent pertinent outcomes for regional and rural Australian towns experiencing long-term drought, natural disasters such as bushfires, industry closures, population attrition and more recently, the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. Some media and public discussions also propose silo art has social and cultural benefits such as enhanced community morale and togetherness.

However, public and independent evaluation of the social and economic impacts of silo art from visitor and local

resident perspectives is lacking. As such, community groups, the general public, local government, arts organisations, tourism boards and funding bodies and the myriad of other stakeholders involved in (or impacted by) these projects are presently unable to access a solid evidence base to guide future organising and action.

Therefore, this report represents the first step in providing much needed empirical and critical investigation into the social and economic impacts of Australian silo art.

Specifically, the aim of this research is to explore:

- How visitors and local communities experience silo art; and
- The impacts of silo art experiences on the wellbeing of visitors and local communities.

Figure 1. Aim of the research





GrainCorp's Patchewollock silos, Victoria – Artist: Fintan Magee – Photo: Adrian Tusek

Defining art tourism

This research approaches silo art as a form of art tourism.

'Art tourism should be defined broadly as any activity that involves travel to see art and would include those people who travel specifically to see art somewhere else as well as those who often or occasionally include visits to see art among other activities during tours, holidays or trips away from home' [3, pp. 399-400].

Defining silo art

In this research, 'silo art' refers specifically to artwork painted on silos previously used to store wheat, various

grains and raw materials for cement and other production processes (rather than art on water tanks, other building walls etc.).

Simultaneously examining the impacts of water tower art, and other murals throughout rural and regional Australia is beyond the scope of the current research project.

However, research participants often discussed a diverse range of public art in interviews and survey comments. Associated insights into how silo art can foster appreciation for a broader sphere of rural and regional public artworks as points of interest for tourists, and meaningful artistic and cultural forms in their own right, are also presented in this report (see page 32).

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is notoriously difficult to define, or pin-down, in one sentence. The term wellbeing is often also used in close association with ‘quality of life’, ‘happiness’ and ‘flourishing’ [4].

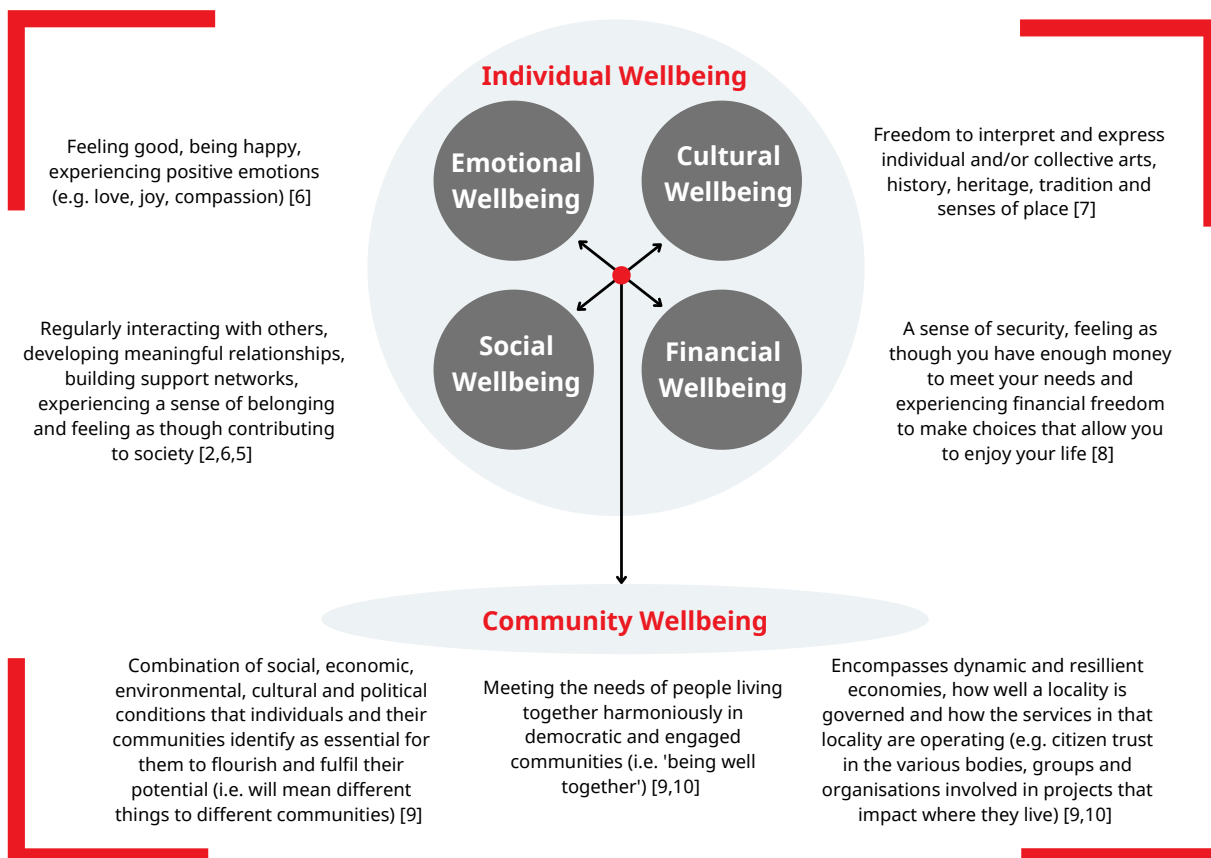
However, wellbeing researchers and experts generally agree that wellbeing is multifaceted.

‘Wellbeing is more than just happiness. As well as feeling satisfied and happy, well-being means developing as a person, being fulfilled, and making a contribution to the community’ [5, p. 9].

Figure 2 identifies the main facets of wellbeing considered in this research project. These facets provide a general framework for organising and focusing the research, and to help ensure the study considers how silo art could impact visitors and local communities in a range of ‘economic’ and ‘non-economic’ ways.

Further, as the arrows in Figure 2 reinforce, different facets of wellbeing are interrelated [4, 5]. For instance, regularly interacting and developing meaningful relationships with others (i.e. part of social wellbeing) can be related to finding or maintaining stable employment (i.e. part of financial wellbeing).

Figure 2. Main wellbeing dimensions under investigation in this research



Research methodology

Stage One: Interviews

Stage One involved 61 video and phone interviews with silo art visitors, residents living in towns with silo art and people who own or manage a business in silo art town. Interviews commenced in October 2020 and ranged from 15 minutes to 2 hours in duration.

Analysing interview data involved grouping participant statements and responses according to the particular elements and impacts of silo art that each participant discussed, as well as other factors and issues raised by the participant. Ultimately, the purpose of these grouping processes is to identify common themes and patterns (e.g. benefits that participants discussed most often), without losing sight of variability in the data (e.g. layers within each participant's perspective and nuances of each comment or statement). The findings of Stage One interviews informed online surveys developed for Stage Two.

Stage Two: Online surveys

Stage Two comprised of two online surveys. The first and more detailed survey (approximately 20 minutes) targeted both (1) silo art visitors and (2) people who live in towns with silo art (with questions tailored to each group). The second much shorter survey (approximately 5 minutes) specifically targeted business owners/managers within and surrounding silo art towns.

The data analysis software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) facilitated statistical analysis of responses to 'multiple choice' survey questions.

Additionally, the online surveys included multiple open-ended questions that required participants to respond in their own words. The latter were analysed in the same way as interview transcripts in Stage One.

Combined total: 1,140 survey participants

- Visitors = 714 participants
- Residents = 243 (equivalent to an average of 5 participants per silo art site)
- Local business owners/managers = 183 (equivalent to an average of 4 business owners/managers per silo art site)

Further details of each survey participant group (e.g. demographic factors such as gender, age) are provided in later sections of this report (see pages 27, 53 and 54).

Invitations to participate in interviews and the online surveys were distributed via various Facebook pages, Facebook groups, Visitor Information Centres, Community Centre staff and email.

All interview and survey participants remain anonymous in this research. Direct quotes from survey respondents are denoted as either Visitor, Resident or Local Business Owner/Manager. Direct quotes from interview participants are specified as such (e.g. Resident Interview Participant). Survey and interview comments are quoted exactly as per the data, except for the removal of details that could directly or indirectly identify the participant (e.g. town or business names).

Note: Investigating economic impacts

It is important to clearly reiterate that investigation of economic impacts in this study is based on business owner/manager and resident perceptions of the impacts of silo art on local economies and individual businesses, not actual objective economic figures (e.g. business turnover or profit).

Note: The COVID-19 pandemic

In-depth investigation of how the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped the Australian silo art phenomenon is beyond the scope of this research.

Moreover, given Australia is currently home to 48 silo art sites across five states, future research into COVID-19 and silo art ought to consider the particular and variable ways the pandemic has impacted travel, everyday life and business operations in each state and region.

Nonetheless, the interviews and online survey conducted for this stage of the Silo Art and Wellbeing research project provide key insights regarding COVID-19 from the perspective of silo art visitors, and communities living in towns with silo art (see pages 39 and 71 of this report respectively).

Photos

We have endeavoured to represent a range of silo art sites and towns in the photographs within this report. However, we are unable to include an image of every silo art site and town due to space limitations, and the need to vary the nature of the photographs presented in line with the various topics discussed.



Avoca, Victoria – Photo: Adrian Tusek

Report structure

The findings presented in this report are structured in four main parts.

1. Findings Part One: Five elements that distinguish Australian silo art
2. Findings Part Two: Visitor perspectives and impacts
3. Findings Part Three: Local community perspectives and impacts
4. Findings Part Four: Broader critical issues, challenges and opportunities identified by both visitors and local communities

The final sections of the report summarise implications and recommendations stemming from the findings, limitations of this stage of the research and key priorities for future research.

*I go to the art gallery often
in Brisbane, but nothing
has moved me like silo art.*

Visitor



Findings Part One: Five elements that distinguish Australian silo art

What distinguishes Australian silo art in the eyes of visitors and local communities?

The data and the analysis:

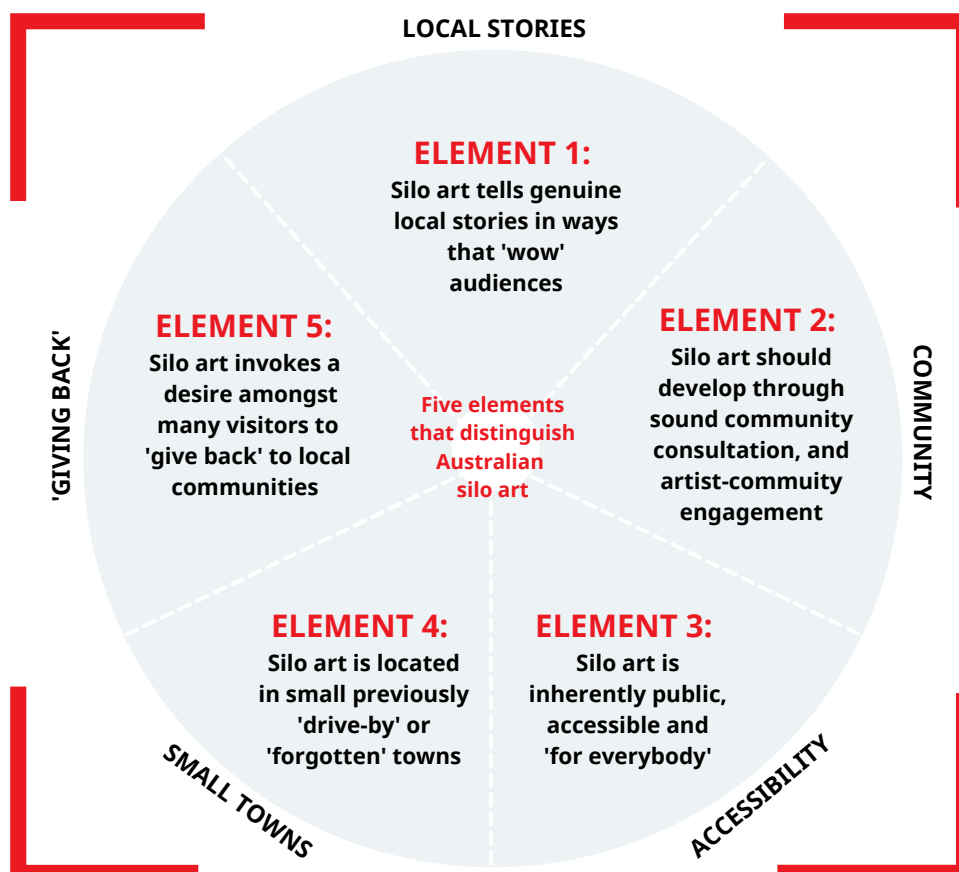
To provide a framework for future discussion, projects and research, we collated and analysed how all participants surveyed and interviewed in this stage of the research (a combined total of over 1,300 visitors and residents) described and talked about Australian silo art, and what makes Australian silo art different to other art forms, other tourism experiences and other community projects.

Specifically, this analysis involved collating and analysing all survey comments and interview transcripts in order to identify the most commonly discussed 'features' or 'components' that distinguish Australian silo art.

The findings:

Figure 3 highlights the five fundamental elements that distinguish Australian silo art, according to the visitors and residents who participated in this stage of the research.

Figure 3.



Visitors and residents who participated in this research also pointed out instances that deviate from or contradict one or more of the five elements in Figure 3.

I believe that silo art projects were meant to help small struggling rural and regional communities. Not for larger centres to jump on the band wagon because they see economic benefits. Visitor

Crucially, the elements identified in Figure 3 distinguish silo art from other forms of public art and roadside tourist attractions such as the Big Banana in the minds of both visitor and resident participants.

However, as reinforced throughout this report, no two silo art projects (or towns) are the same.

Therefore, it is important to clarify that these elements primarily represent visitor and community views regarding what silo art should involve (based on how the Australian silo art phenomenon has developed and evolved since the first site at Northam six years ago), rather than what silo art is in every case.

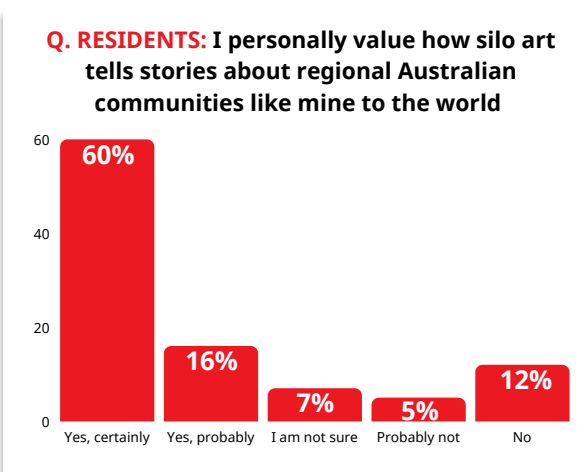
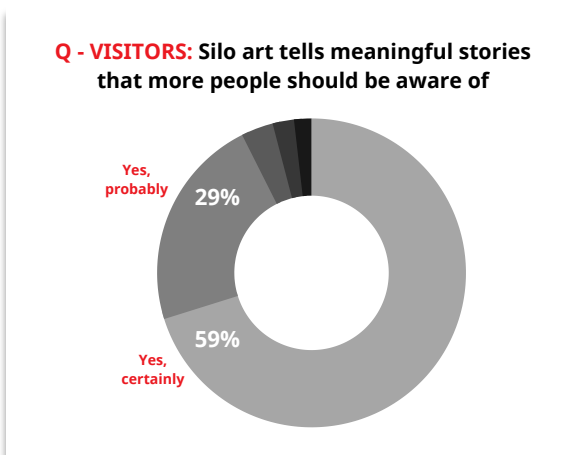
Implications for communities, Local Councils, funding bodies and other groups involved in silo art projects:

These findings highlight several key considerations that could assist with preserving the essence of Australian silo art as a unique form of public art and art tourism in the minds of visitors and local communities:

1. Ensuring silo artworks tell genuine local stories that local communities want to talk about for years to come.
2. Fostering and advocating for project management processes that involve sound community consultation, opportunities for residents to participate more directly, and first-hand interactions and mutual knowledge exchange between the artist and community members.
3. Ensuring silo art remains publicly accessible in terms of cost (i.e. no entry fees) and physical access (albeit with certain restrictions necessary to maintain public safety).
4. Prioritising small towns (rather than larger regional centres) in the development of new sites and funding schemes/decisions.
5. Seeking to connect visitors with local businesses in silo art towns (e.g. providing information about local businesses, and opening hours, on websites etc. that visitors can access as part of trip planning).

These considerations remain common threads throughout the remainder of this report.

Element 1: Silo art tells genuine local stories in ways that ‘wow’ audiences



The majority of visitors and residents emphasised that silo art tells genuine (i.e. real, factually correct) stories about the communities and towns where the art is located. By combining genuine local stories and detailed artworks expertly executed on an immense scale, silo art provides a ‘window’ into a community. Some of these participants also explicitly noted that silo art works are not ‘just’ beautiful awe-inspiring artworks (i.e. this art tells stories too).

Silo art always produces a sense of awe in my heart and soul. Invariably the subject matter is linked to the place so silo art provides a window into the community we are visiting. Visitor

A glimpse into the districts past or a snapshot of the heart of the community as it is now. Resident

Element 2: Silo art should develop through sound community consultation, and artist-community engagement

Across both interview and survey data, many visitor and resident participants discussed silo art as projects that involve communities, and communities and artist, working together to identify, develop and execute design ideas, concepts and broader strategies (i.e. both ‘the art’ itself and ‘the story behind it’).

The artist spent time in the community to find out what our interests are and what the community wanted to say about the town. Resident

The perception amongst visitor participants that silo art develops through community consultation and artist-engagement adds to the perceived benefits of visiting silo art for visitors.

I love seeing silo art because it shows important local stories, it's like a local museum & art gallery in one go. Locals are also passionate about their sites, how they were painted, who did it and how the images were chosen. It adds whole other dimension to a country town. It's definitely worth the drive & I plan visits to spend as much time there as possible. Visitor

To reiterate again, such comments indicate a generalised perception that silo art projects involve both (a) communities working together, and (b) artists who are genuinely interested in and spend time interacting with local communities. As discussed in detail later in this report (see pages 61–62), the extent to which artists engage with communities, and the overall manner in which silo art projects involve members of the local community, varies.

Element 3: Silo art is inherently public, accessible and 'for everybody'

The location of silo art outdoors, in a public space, makes this art physically accessible any time of day or night (albeit with some restrictions to ensure public safety). The opportunity to get close, or fairly close, to the silos at many sites adds to the overall 'awe-inspiring impact' of the art, while also inviting people to interact with the silos for longer periods of time.

For instance, many participants recalled walking around the site to take in the artwork from different angles and experiment with unique photographs. The lack of restrictions typically associated with museums or art galleries also creates a sense of freedom (e.g. quiet areas, confined indoor spaces, no photography). Further,

visitors and residents also commented that the location of silo art outside of a museum or art gallery, and without admission fees, symbolises that silo art is 'for everybody'.

And there's no admission charge. There's no "gates are open between six and four". You can go anytime. And it's really amazing to go to the same silo with different times of day, especially if you are taking photos, you can capture totally different aspects. Visitor Interview Participant

Element 4: Silo art is located in small previously 'drive-by' or 'forgotten' towns

Visitors and residents continually identified the small rural and regional towns where silo art is located as part of what distinguishes silo art from other art, and other tourist attractions. More specifically, visitors and residents described small, previously 'drive by' or 'forgotten' towns that may be struggling due to factors such as drought or industry closures.

Magnificent, stirring, heartfelt, respectful, hugely talented artists, a dedicated committed community effort and a much needed additional tourist attraction to often drought affected towns who have been doing it tough. Visitor

Conversely, visitor and resident participants pointed out instances of larger regional centres pursuing silo art projects as a disjunction or contradiction.

Towns with 20,000+ people painting silos is creating a few issues for us. Firstly it dispersed widely the bulk of the traffic and we were fighting for traffic. Secondly we became a pass through on the way to somewhere else bigger with more eateries etc. Thirdly we now miss the financial catch of tourists spending as we aren't seen as a place to stop and spend. Big towns painting, devalued us overnight. Local Business Owner/Manager

Element 5: Silo art invokes a desire amongst many visitors to ‘give back’ to local communities

Many visitors described how silo art invokes a desire to ‘give back’ to communities in local communities living in these towns. These visitors also described ‘feeling good’ when giving back in small yet symbolic ways such as purchasing food from a local bakery, or staying in a local caravan park or motel.

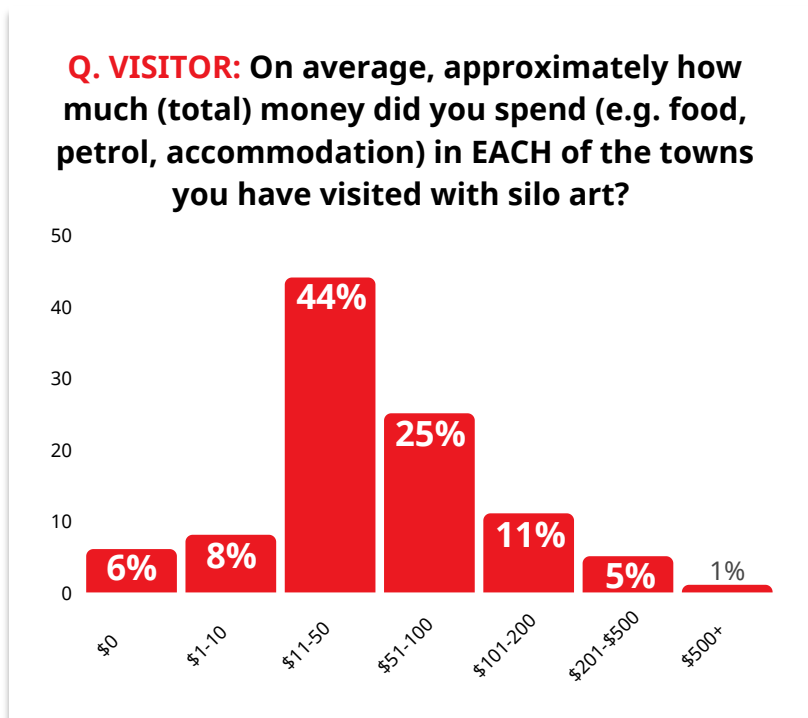
Indeed, many purchases made in the town maybe low in economic value (e.g. coffee, cake, counter meals). However, the majority of visitors who participated in this research indicated that doing ‘something’ to give back to each local community while visiting was part of the silo art experience, almost as if there was an ‘unwritten rule’ that making local purchases is the ‘right thing to do’ given these communities, many of whom are ‘doing it tough’

socially and economically, has offered the art for all to enjoy for free.

In the survey, 44% of visitors responded that, on average, they spent between \$11 and \$50 in each silo art town they have visited. Many visitor participants explicitly pointed out that the specific amount spent in each town varies depending on the businesses open during their visit.

Many visitor participants also highlighted that they derived satisfaction from giving back in ways that involve direct interactions with members of the local community (i.e. the employees who serve visitors in local businesses).

I get a sense or feeling to give back to that community. I've been drawn there for a reason. So don't just stand there, take a photo and race off, again. Talk to a local, fill up with fuel or buy a pie, or a schooner or, you know, something like that. Just do a little bit for while you are there. Cause those communities have done it hard for a long time. And that also gives you ability to speak to somebody locally. Visitor Interview Participant

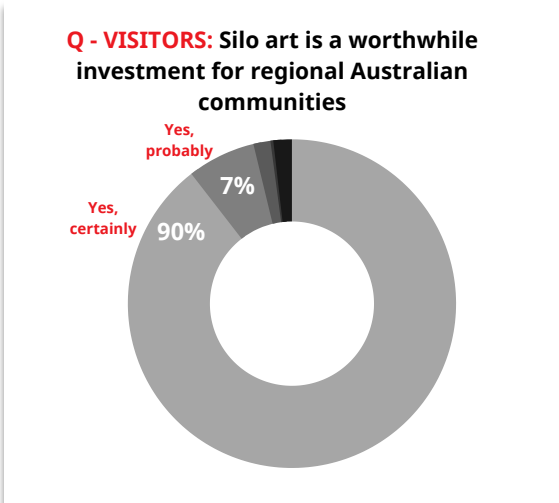
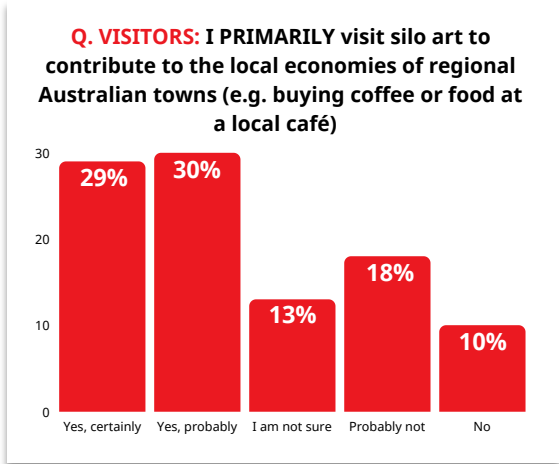


Although many visitor participants identified opportunities to ‘give back’ as a benefit of visiting silo art, it is important to underscore that supporting local communities represents one of many components that draw visitors in.

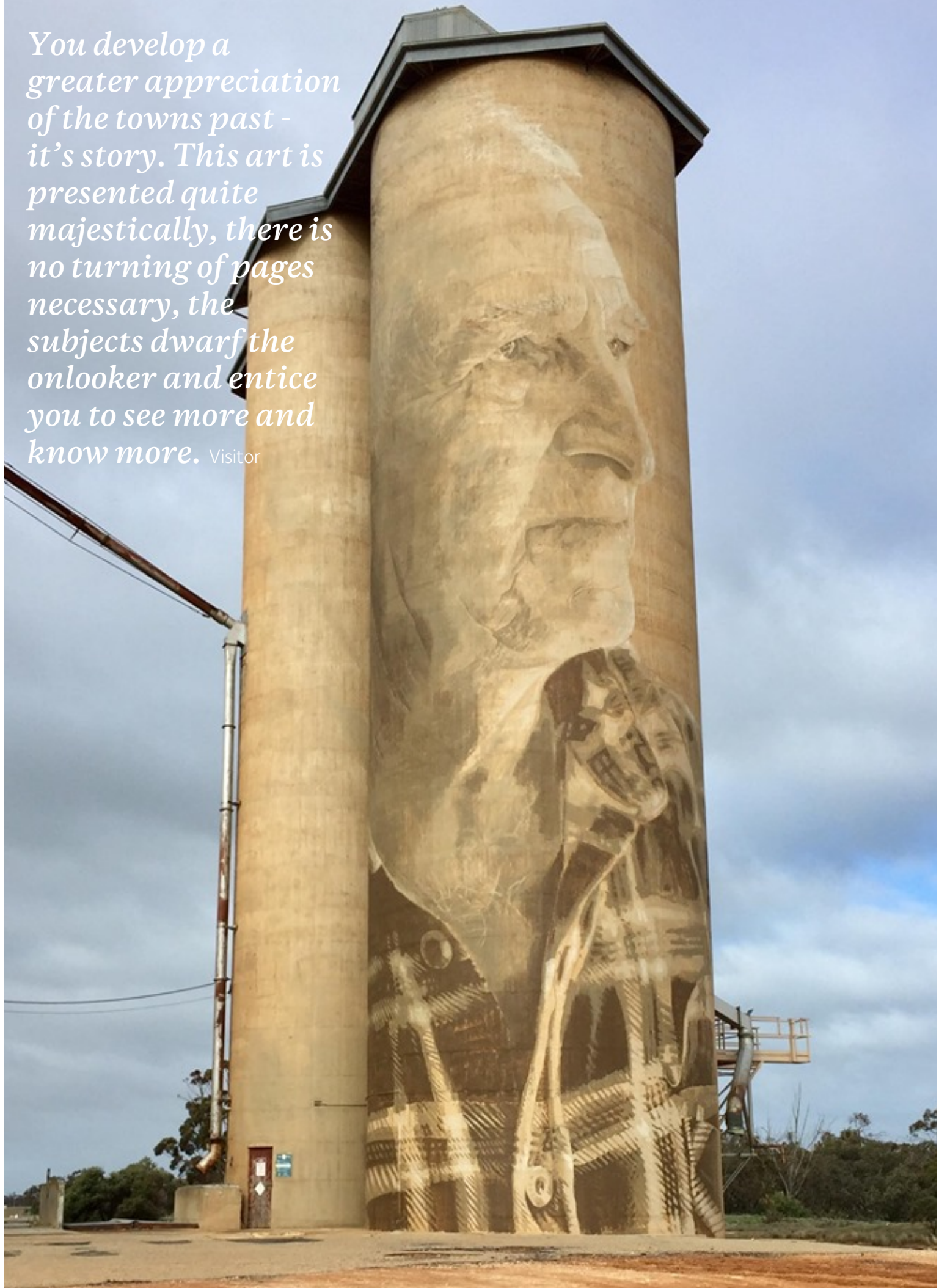
For instance, in the online survey, a total of 59% of visitor participants selected either ‘Yes, certainly’ or ‘Yes, probably’ in response to the statement *I PRIMARILY visit silo art to contribute to the local economies of regional Australian towns (e.g. buying a coffee or food at a local café)*. However, many visitor survey participants who disagreed with this statement, or were not sure, further clarified their response to this question by highlighting that contributing to local economies was one component or layer of their motivations for visiting silo art in the comments section below this question.

My primary reason for visiting the silo art is to see the art work. With that comes a sense of doing something worthwhile if I can further contribute to the local community. I love to meet new people and learn more about this beautiful country of ours too.

Visitor

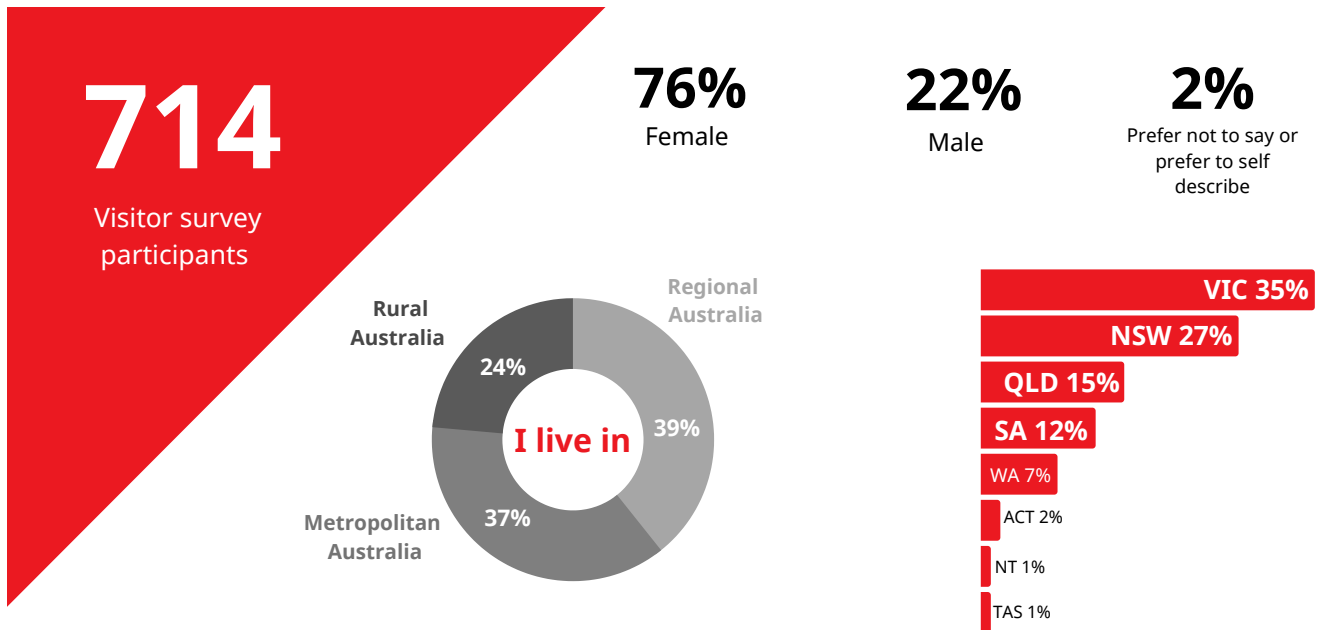


You develop a greater appreciation of the towns past - it's story. This art is presented quite majestically, there is no turning of pages necessary, the subjects dwarf the onlooker and entice you to see more and know more. Visitor

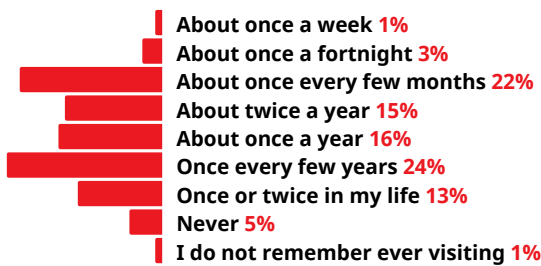


Findings Part Two: Visitor perspectives and impacts

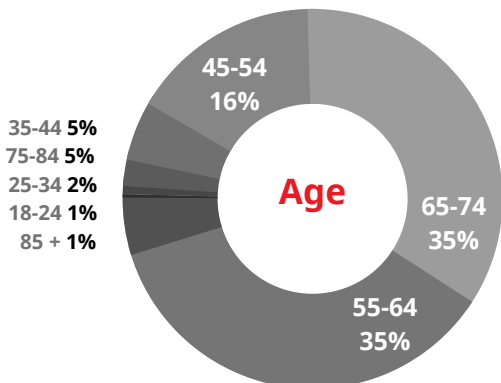
Who participated in the visitor survey?



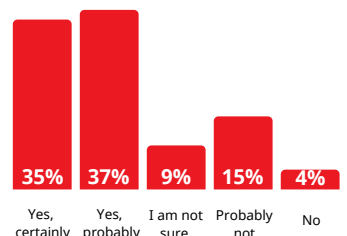
Q. How often do you visit art galleries or art musuems



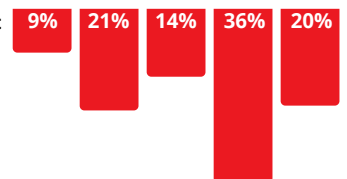
Q. Is the town where you live considering, planning or campaigning for a silo art project?



Q. I am generally interested in art (of any kind)



Q. I am knowledgeable about art generally



Yes 14% **No 86%**

Q. Do you work or have you previously worked in an artistic or creative role or industry?

Introduction

Understanding the impacts of silo art on visitors can inform evidence-based strategies to maintain and grow visitor interest over time.

This part of the report (Part Two) presents findings of survey and interview data collected from visitor participants.

Overall, these findings show that silo art has a largely positive impact on the emotional, social and cultural wellbeing of visitors (see overview Figure 4).

However, analysis of visitor perspectives, experiences and feedback indicates multiple critical issues that should be addressed in order to more effectively attract and engage visitors.

This part of the report encompasses the following sections:

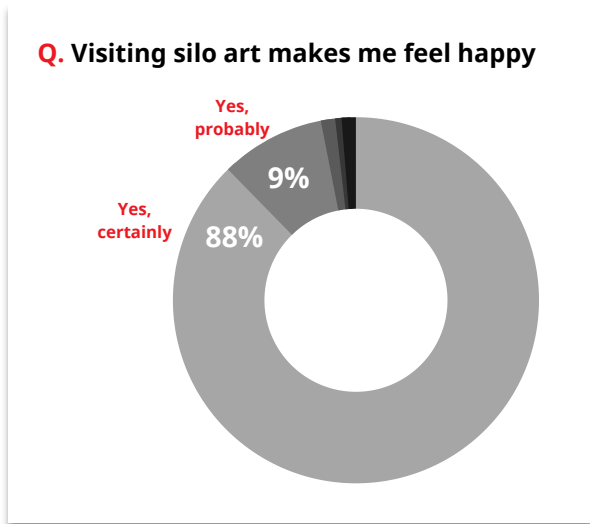
- 11 Impacts of silo art on the emotional, cultural and social wellbeing of visitors.
- Insights into how COVID-19 has shaped visitors experiences of silo art to date.
- Findings regarding the 6 dimensions of how silo art appeals to visitors (and 6 associated tourist groups).
- Findings regarding three main silo art trip design types.
- 10 main challenges and opportunities identified through analysis of visitor perspectives on how to enhance visitor experiences of silo art, extend visit duration and encourage return visits.

Figure 4. Benefits - Emotional, social and cultural wellbeing of visitors



Emotional and cultural wellbeing of visitors

1. Benefit: Expanding arts access and engagement



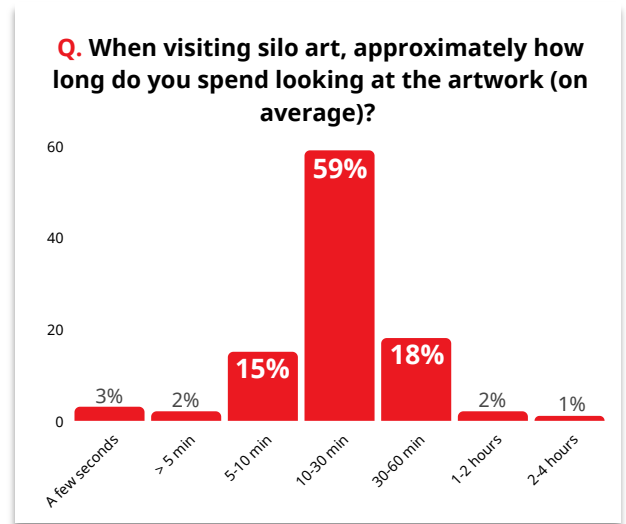
The overwhelming majority (97%) of visitor participants responded that silo art makes them feel happy. Many visitor participants explicitly described senses of happiness, excitement, joy, awe and fun.

Its uplifting to our day and I can feel my excitement building as we drive towards towns that I know have silo art. Visitor

We love to admire the workmanship of the artist. It makes us happy. Visitor

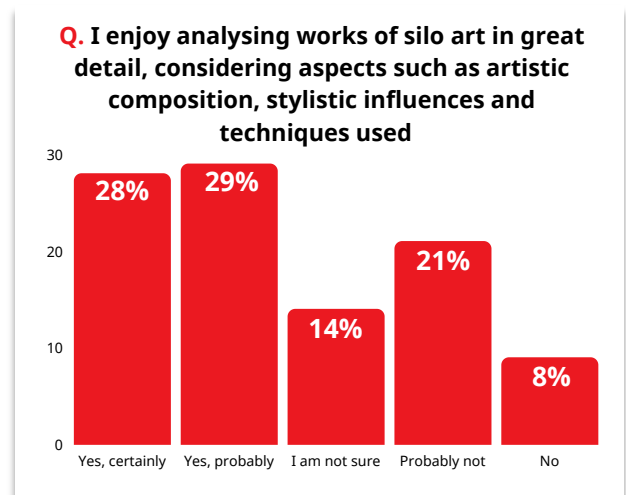
Many also commented that silo art engages people who may not engage with art in traditional galleries or museums. Further, some participants identified developing appreciation for new artists, or art in general, as a benefit of visiting silo art.

I am an artist with a studio practice. My partner was an engineer, with a remote rural childhood on a wheat farm. He connects with the grain silos themselves and their history, as well as being able to readily access the silo art subject matter. I would never be able to get him into a gallery to see work by these artists unless he had seen the silo first. Visitor



80% of visitor participants reported that they spent an average of 30 minutes or more looking at each silo artwork. Some visitor participants particularly enjoyed engaging with the nuances and specifics of each artwork. However, not all are necessarily interested in analysing or critiquing artworks in detail.

I do not analyse art in great detail. I just like looking and enjoying. I'm not into navel gazing or introspection. Visitor



2. Benefit: Social media increases access, awareness and interest

Social media and other online mediums such as blogs increase the accessibility of silo art. Participants continually referred to user-generated content, photos especially, reviving their interest in new and existing sites. As the most commonly referred to social media account, the Australian Silo Art Trail Facebook Page and Group appears particularly influential in these respects. Social media channels also enable visitors to locate information about and ‘follow’ individual artists.

People post beautiful photos that vary depending on the light or the weather. It might have all the puddles in front where it's reflected or something. So it is changing landscape really. Whereas in a gallery it is static. Visitor Interview Participant

I follow the Australian Silo Art Trail Group on FB and for the first time in my life I want to really go exploring locally and interstate and follow the trail of these amazing arts, instead of overseas. Visitor

3. Benefit: Inspiring arts participation

Silo art experiences inspire amateur and professional artists, and visitors with no particular interest in art, to create photographs, blog posts, poems, stories, maps and collages.

I've never really been an arty person, but for some or another reason, silo art speaks to me and I've been painting now. Visitor Interview Participant

Opportunities to photograph these installations and put our “take” on them. Visitor

Opportunity to hone our photography skills. We spent a good amount of time at each place exploring different camera angles and light effects in order to get our “right” shots. Visitor

The following poem, written by a visitor about her journey to several silo art sites in Victoria, illustrates how silo art can inspire creativity:

Awoke to a day that was cold and grey,
The clouds had chased the sun away,
This time behind the wheel I did get,
Since Kim hadn't fully woken up yet.

Drove down the highway, singing in the rain,
Looking for silos that used to hold grain,
Found three Clydesdales at Goorambat,
So very lifelike, how good was that.

Then on to Devenish, which was second,
Where a salute to our fallen proudly beckoned,
Next was St James in all its glory,
Telling of wheat and farmers and the Coles story.

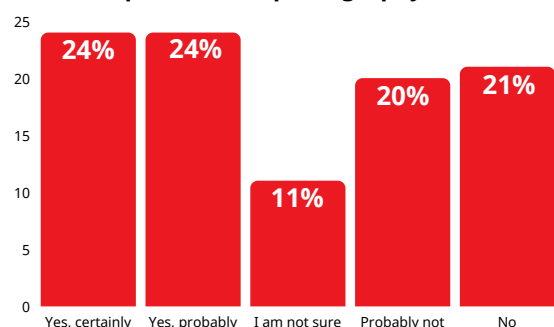
Poor Tungamah's birds stood lost and alone,
The rain had sent the visitors home,
Finally, Deniliquin, and a nice warm bed,
T'was asleep before I lowered my head.

Joanne Carter



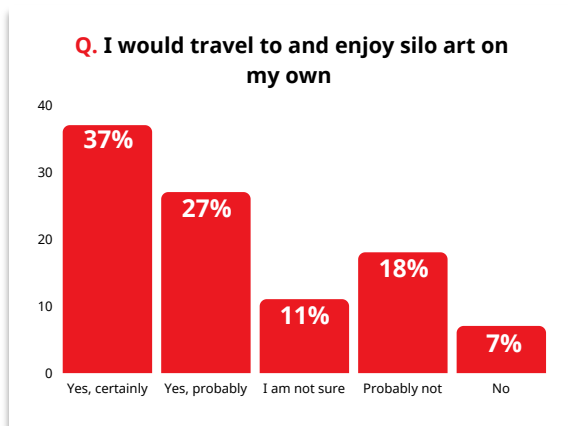
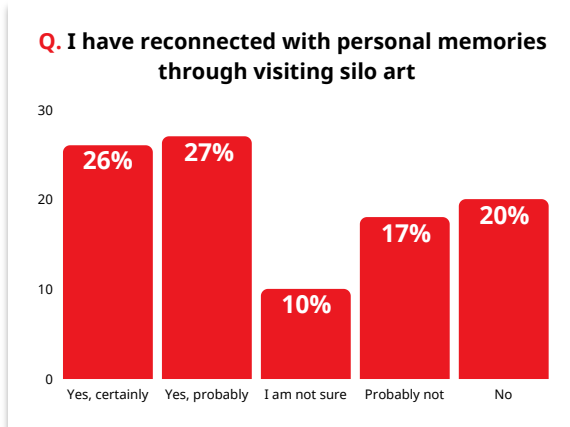
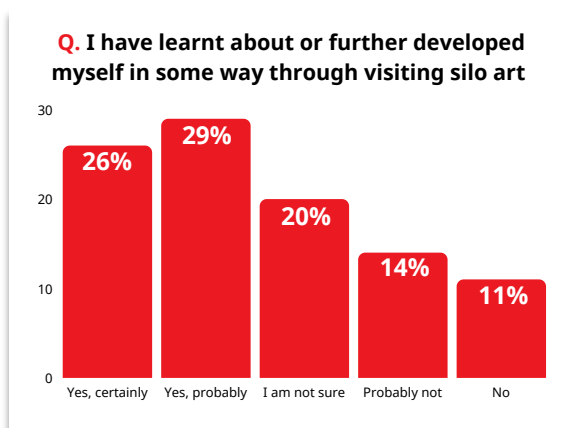
Many visitor participants explicitly identified opportunities to view and take photographs of silo art from different angles, and at different times of day or night, as rewarding experiences. Social media platforms and group such as the Australian Silo Art Trail Facebook Group provide channels to these share photographs with large audiences.

Q. Visiting silo art has inspired my own creative practice (e.g. painting, writing, developing my own maps, amateur or professional photography)



4. Benefit: Visitor self development

Survey responses indicate that visiting silo art can be a more 'self' oriented experience for some visitors. This finding reinforces that silo art is not necessarily always a social activity and thus, more broadly, the importance of not assuming that every visitor experiences silo art in the same way, on every occasion.



5. Benefit: Visitor interactions with the natural environment

Visitors inevitably interact with distinctive natural environments while journeying to and experiencing silo art. However, many visitors highlighted interactions with distinctively rural and regional Australian landscapes and environments during journeys to the art as part of the benefits of visiting silo art. Some visitors also commented that they enjoyed engaging with symbolic representations of the natural environment, landscapes or 'the land' in the mural artworks.

What a wonderful way to explore new landscapes.
Visitor

Silo art develops appreciation and respect for the natural environment depicting a variety of Australian fauna and flora and allows the opportunity to reconnect with the land. Visitor

Emphasising first-hand encounters with distinctive Australian landscapes on route to silo art sites could form part of strategies to stimulate return silo art visits, and proactively counter the potential for the proliferation of silo art images online to act as an alternative to in-person visits.

6. Benefit: Positive re-discovery of a broader sphere of mural, street and roadside art, thus building audiences for public art throughout regional and rural Australia

Rediscovery: Encountering something that is not necessarily 'new' through fresh eyes

Many visitor survey and interview participants discussed discovering various other murals, street and roadside artworks while visiting silo art in-person, and experiencing silo art online. These visitors reported that such other public artworks add to the overall experience and perceived benefits of visiting a 'silo art town' or a 'silo art trip'.

Additionally, the manner and tone in which visitors speak and write about various public art throughout rural and regional Australia indicates that the silo art phenomenon can foster appreciation for this broader sphere of art as points of interest for tourists, and meaningful forms of art and culture in their own right.

More specifically, given many of these artworks existed before the development of silo art, these findings indicate that the silo art phenomenon is stimulating and shaping the 're-discovering' of a broader range of rural and regional Australian public art.

Amazing art drawn on silos, water tanks, buildings across Australia. This art depicts something from the district and draws people to towns they would rarely visit. Visitor



Monto, Queensland – Artists: The Zookeeper and Drapl – Photo: Alana Beutel

As with silo artworks, visitors often emphasised local stories and distinctly rural and regional canvasses or backdrops as defining elements of how they perceive and experience various street, mural and wall art in rural and regional areas. Some participants also specifically stated that they view 'silo art' as a broader category encompassing other mural, street, wall, water tower and/or public art.

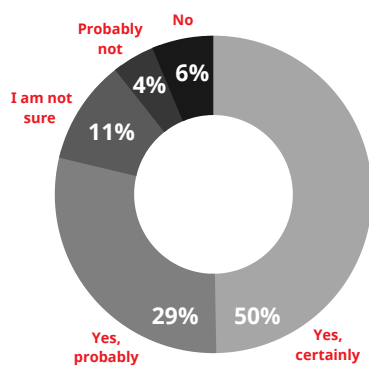
Having now seen silo art in person, I'm keen to ensure future holidays take in any other street / water tank / silo / public art in the local area we intend to visit. Visitor



'Utes in the Paddock' Gallery – Condobolin, New South Wales – Photo: Ann Rutherford

7. Benefit: Positive re-discovery of culture and history throughout rural and regional Australia

Q. I experience a sense of personal freedom while journeying to and visiting silo art



Many visitor survey and interview participants positively discussed discovering elements of rural and regional Australian culture and history such as ‘iconic’ local pubs, statues, old grocery stores, niche speciality shops, antique stores, ‘townsfolk’ (i.e. local people), and town streets, local motels, small churches, refurbished clubs and various ‘quirky things’ while visiting silo art.

Discovering such elements of culture and history, in addition to the artwork, adds further layers to the overall experience and perceived benefits of visiting a ‘silo art town’ or a ‘silo art trip’ for these participants.

The manner and tone in which visitors speak and write when discussing these discoveries indicates that the silo art phenomenon can foster fresh appreciation for culture and history in these areas as unique, important and rewarding.

I like going into a little café, sitting down and seeing what their town runs like. Visitor

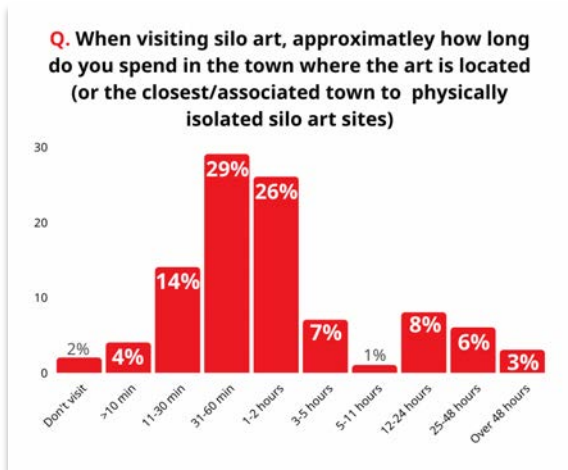
I found the historical connections within the art very interesting, giving me a greater appreciation of the development of rural Australia, and of Indigenous connections to Country. Visitor

You develop a greater appreciation of the towns past - it’s story. This art is presented quite majestically, there is no turning of pages necessary, the subjects dwarf the onlooker and entice you to see more and know more. One can feel such elation from the beauty depicting stories with detailed accuracy, it’s both marvellous and such a fantastic use of these “fortresses” of yesteryear, rising blank towers are now alive, drawing one in. Visitor

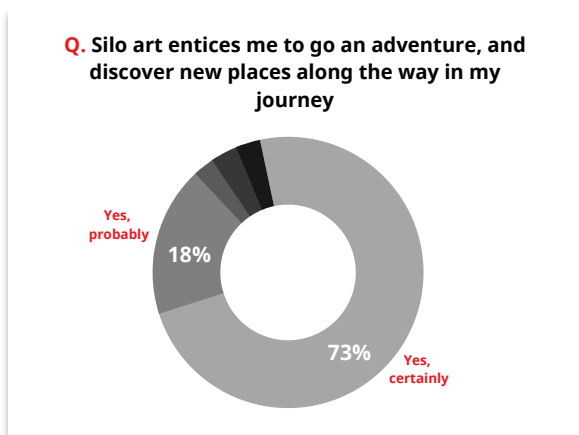
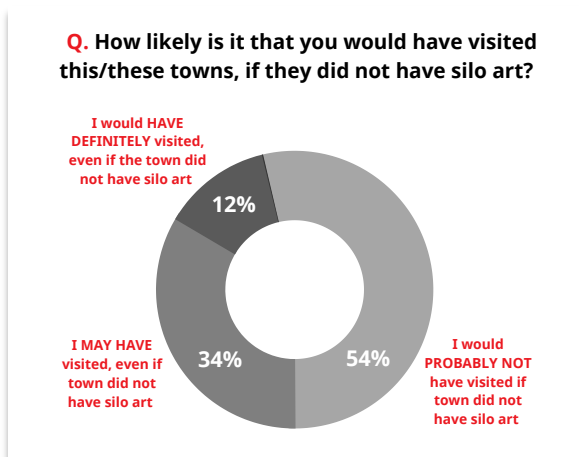


Privately owned silos, Gooramab, Victoria – Artist: Jimmy Dvate – Photo: Trevor Kay on Unsplash

8. Benefit: Positive re-discovery of regional and rural towns



Note: Most visitor survey participants commented that the specific amount of time spent in each town varied depending on the businesses that were open in the town, and other features of each town.



Although related to the previous two benefits discussed (see pages 32–33), this finding pertains to evidence that silo art is stimulating and shaping the positive re-discovery of regional and rural Australia more broadly as ‘destinations’ in the minds of visitors.

Again, the tone and manner in which visitor participants discussed and referred to specific towns, ‘Australia’ or terms such as ‘our country’ indicates that silo art is shaping the way these visitors think about these locations, as well as stimulating actual visitation.

Gives rural Australia a voice, i.e. more status and prestige. Creates more respect for rural Australia in an urban dominated country. Gives city dwellers a goal to explore rural Australia. Visitor

I am more likely to stop in a town that has silo art because I perceive that the town will be a more interesting town to stop in if it has silo art. Visitor

Get out there and explore your own backyard, Australia is an amazing place if you take the time to enjoy it. Visitor

The joy of seeing such huge and magnificent works of art, plus travelling to towns/areas that I have never considered as ‘destinations’ before. Also finding other types of artworks such as water towers, walls, fences etc. And finding other items of interest like sculpture and historic sites. And seeing the changes in the countryside as we travel. Visitor

This finding underscores the potential for silo art to positively shape domestic Australian tourism attitudes and behaviours, and thus the need to closely examine and track such broader potential impacts of the silo art phenomenon over longer periods of time.

Figure 5. Relating silo art to broader perceptions of rural and regional Australian art, culture, history and towns



Brief note: How COVID-19 contextualises the potential broader impact of silo art on domestic tourism attitudes and behaviours

It is important to acknowledge the likelihood that the travel restrictions associated with COVID-19 have reinforced the capacity of silo art to foster the positive re-discovery of rural and regional Australia. Nonetheless, the findings presented throughout this report indicate that the silo art phenomenon has stimulated some Australians to jump in their cars and drive to small towns they would not have otherwise considered visiting (even with current travel restrictions). In other words, silo art has arguably helped to ‘open the door’ for positive first-hand encounters with rural and regional locations during an opportune time of turmoil, uncertainty and evolution in the global tourism industry.

Silo art takes you into different places that I would not have gone. I went on an overseas trip last year and I came back and I thought, right, I have seen all these amazing places AGAIN. But now I realised, holidays don't have to just be traveling around overseas. I mean obviously our history is different. I was over in Europe and Iceland recently, and I'm not going to see all those sorts of things in Australia, but you can still have that sense of adventure here. And once you get to those little places [silo art towns], there's other little places that might have a waterfall or something like that. And you go, 'oh yeah', I'd be interested in that, if I knew about it. So I think makes people travel a bit more and discover their own country.

Visitor Interview Participant

Key challenge: Continual emphasis on discovering 'new' artworks and 'new' places indicating a growing 'return visits' challenge

How can you make silo art visitors fall in love with your town?

Visitor participants continually emphasised the exploration and discovery of 'new' artworks and 'new' places that one would not have previously considered visiting as key benefits of visiting silo art. This emphasis on 'new' experiences suggests that stimulating return silo art visits could present a challenge.

I love to see parts of Australia that I haven't seen. This gives me a goal to visit. Visitor

We will probably do another road trip, as new silo art works appear. Visitor

Some visitors referred to visiting the same artwork multiple times. However, most discussion of return trips related to opportunities to show silo art to friends or family visiting from other regions, states or overseas.

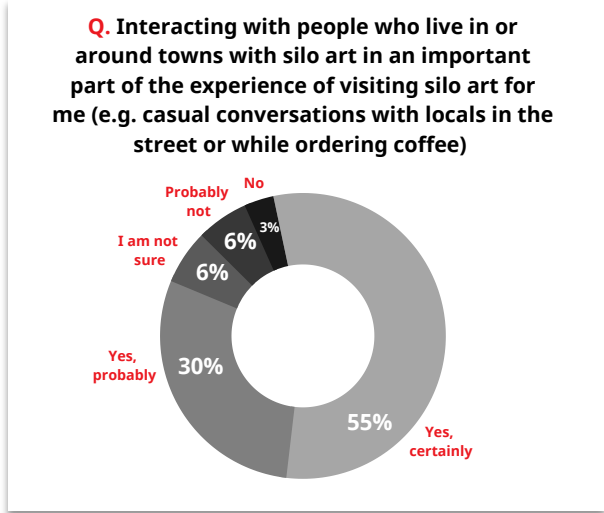
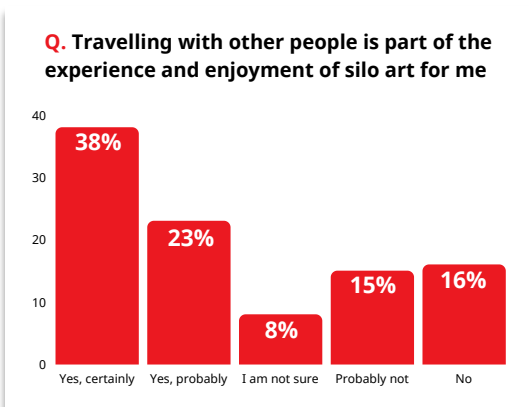
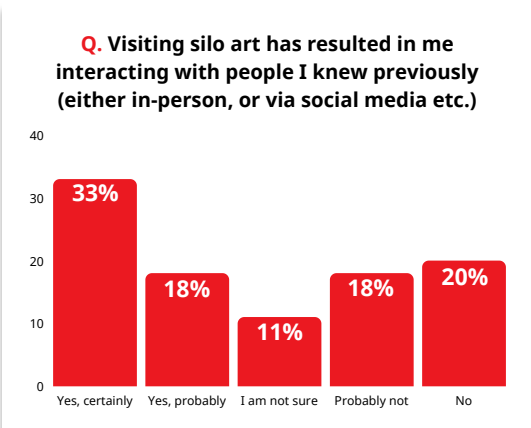
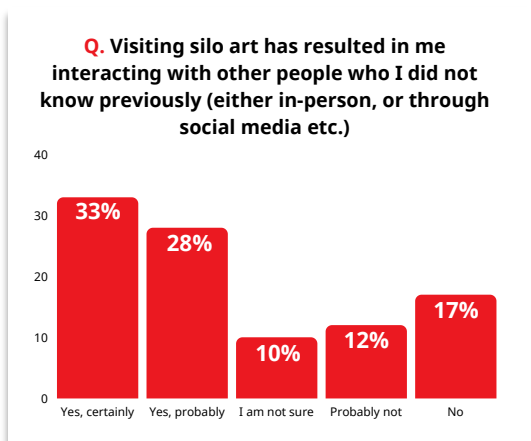
This finding indicates that the willingness of tourists to re-visit silo art sites (and towns) should be a key priority for future research, and a key consideration for ongoing silo art promotional strategies.



Photo: Jay Wennington on Unsplash

Social wellbeing of visitors

9. Benefit: Positive social interactions



Many visitor participants referred explicitly to opportunities to interact with friends, family and other visitors as a benefit of visiting silo art. Many also discussed enjoyable and rewarding interaction with local residents in silo art towns as a benefit of silo art experiences.

I have seen people who have no interest in art, stand and admire, communicate and spend time with complete strangers after seeing silo art. Visitor

You meet like minded people and make new friends. Some days you follow each other all day so you create a new unique bond. Visitor

Interacting with local people who will offer their 'story' of the silo, the town, the artwork subject is more interesting than the sign boards at the silo. We recently discovered, at a small Victorian town, how proud the locals are of their silo. Their willingness to stop us in the street to talk has left a very positive memory with us. We had travelled through this town numerous times and briefly stopped there for a 'pit-stop' but never had any interaction with locals. So the silo has worked both ways ie. locals are now happy to stop and talk to tourists and tourists are eager to find out more about towns. Visitor

Emotional and social wellbeing of visitors

10. Benefit: 'Feeling good' when 'give back' to silo art communities

Many visitor participants explicitly identified that they 'feel good' supporting local businesses in open-ended survey responses and interviews. Some visitor participants also referred directly to feeling as though they are contributing to the survival of small Australian towns by purchasing from local businesses.

Also we love the idea that we are contributing in some small way to struggling country towns. Visitor

Satisfaction of contributing something to that town by buying goods, food, accommodation. Visitor

Pure enjoyment giving back to the local towns. Visitor



Photo: Robert Bye on Unsplash

11. Benefit: 'Feeling good' experiencing something that brings local communities together and symbolises town pride

The perception that silo art projects bring communities together, and symbolises town pride, also adds to the perceived benefits for some visitors.

Some of these visitors referred to conversations with locals as indications that silo art does indeed benefit local communities in these ways. However, it is important to reinforce that this finding pertains to the perception amongst visitors that silo art benefits communities by fostering togetherness and town pride (rather than sound evidence etc.).

I love looking at the great talent and inspiration of the towns which makes me feel that the communities are coming together to stay strong, and bring something back to their towns. It gives me a sense of peace and hope that rural people still believe in their towns. Visitor

I have noted a general sense of pride in their town once others start visiting for art. Many towns have revived and opened other venues and it has revitalised their economies somewhat. Speaking to locals who know the people painted has been inspiring too. They feel connected to the subjects and this translates to a sense of connection and belonging. Visitor

Insights: COVID-19 and visitor experiences of silo art

The survey did not specifically ask visitor participants how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted or shaped their silo art experiences or travel behaviour.

However, the manner in which visitor participants discussed COVID-19 in survey comments and interviews provides some insight.

For instance, some visitor participants highlighted that international and interstate travel restrictions stemming from the pandemic stimulated visits to silo art towns that they may not have considered before COVID-19. Other visitors referred to silo art as a largely 'COVID-19 safe' activity. Additionally, some visitors noted that the pandemic increased their desire to support local businesses in silo art towns.

It is outdoors and away from crowds so a perfect destination for social distancing. Visitor

I'm a big believer in helping country towns out as SO MANY of them are dying due to drought, fires, on line shopping and now COVID-19.. We need to help them where we can. Visitor

However, other visitors explicitly stated that their silo art experiences formed part of a broader and existing interest in regional or rural tourism that began before COVID-19.

Even before COVID, my typical holiday was visiting a regional town for a few days. I stay in town, spend my money there and do some touristy things like visiting local gardens or wineries. Silo art provides an added attraction & would sway a decision between 2 towns. Visitor

Further research is necessary to draw conclusions about how COVID-19 has shaped the development of silo art tourism to date.



Grenfell Commodities's silos, Grenfell, New South Wales – Artist: Heesco Khosnaran – Photo: KDog Photography

Six main silo art visitor appeal dimensions and tourist groups

The data:

Visitor participants responded to two key open-ended questions in their own words before any multiple choice questions about their experiences of silo art:

1. What comes to mind when you see or hear the words 'silo art'?
2. What are the benefits of visiting silo art, for visitors like yourself?

The analysis:

We analysed how each visitor participant talked about silo art and the benefits of visiting silo art in response to the two questions listed above by grouping responses according to the particular dimensions and benefits that each participant emphasised. We also analysed how each participant emphasised particular dimensions and benefits

when responding to other open-ended questions throughout the survey and interviews (e.g. 'Is there anything else you would like to add about Australian silo art?').

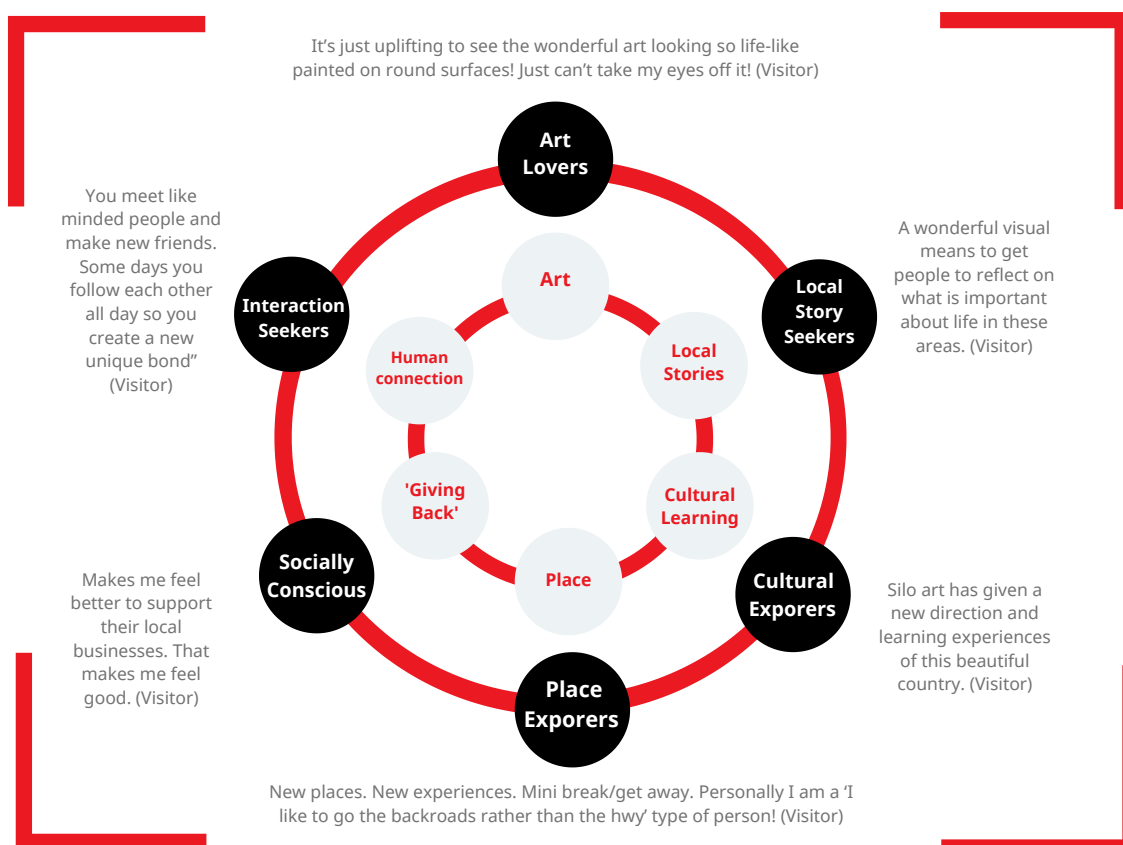
The findings:

Overall, visitor participants emphasised six main benefits of silo art. Figure 6 below identifies these main benefits as different 'dimensions' of silo art's appeal to visitors.

Rather than discussing all six dimensions as of equal importance, each visitor tended to emphasise between 2 and 3 of these dimensions. That is, although visitors may perceive many benefits, certain dimensions or benefits dominate or orientate their experience of silo art.

Visitors can be grouped according to the dimensions/benefits they emphasise (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Six main silo art visitor appeal dimensions (inner) and tourist groups (outer)



For example, silo art may not ‘just’ provide an awe-inspiring art experience, but also an opportunity to support struggling communities, and a means of spending quality time with other people. Put differently, silo art ticks ‘multiple boxes’ for visitors. The following survey comments illustrate how each visitor tends to emphasise between 2 and 3 of the appeal dimensions identified in Figure 6:



The Art Lovers

The artwork is the centrepiece of the silo art experience for Art Lovers.

However, an initial interest in the artwork itself can lead to interest in the structure or ‘canvas’ (i.e. silos), the town and places involved, the stories told through the artwork, or local cultures.

Art Lovers are not necessarily interested in or knowledgeable about art in general. Indeed, silo art can stimulate a new or expanded appreciation of art amongst these visitors.

The Local Story Seekers

Local Story Seekers experience silo art more specifically as a communication device and a learning tool that encapsulates accounts of local events, people and/or places.

Similar to Cultural Explorers (see below), these visitors may also seek out further details about the town and community, and they are interested in learning about the cultures of these places. However, Local Story Seekers especially appreciate the ability of silo art to condense local stories into a single striking image that draws them in on first glance.

The artist’s skill in reducing and synthesising sometimes complex information, symbols and concepts together in one visual medium (i.e. the artwork) that can then be rendered on an immense canvas is thus central to what motivates these visitors to engage with silo art, and subsequent learning about the people and places involved.

In short, silo artworks entices these visitors to ‘dip their toe’ in pools of information about rural and regional Australia that may have never otherwise sought out, and that initial engagement stimulates a desire to learn more.

The Cultural Explorers

The Cultural Explorer group encompasses two main subgroups:

- People who travel from metropolitan areas and learn about ways of life in rural and regional communities (or 'inherently Australian' ways of life) through silo art experiences; and
- People who travel from other rural and regional areas and learn about ways of life, history, environments and stories about particular towns and regions (which they may also describe as 'inherently Australian') through silo art experiences.

Whereas the journey to silo art is key for many Place Explorers, Cultural Explorers focus more on the specifics of each destination (i.e. town) and learning about the nuances of each place and community.

The Place Explorers

For Place Explorers, the journey to silo art can be just as important as the destination, and enjoyment of the journey itself enhances the perceived benefits of the overall experience of visiting silo art.

Some Place Explorers highlight that 'finding' or 'searching' for silo art adds to the journey, and a broader sense of discovery.

Compared to Cultural Explorers, Place Explorers tend to place less emphasis on the nuances of each individual town or community when describing their silo art visits and discussing the benefits of silo art. Instead, these visitors emphasise the distances or expanses of land area covered.

The Socially Conscious

Socially Conscious visitors emphasise that silo art provides an opportunity to economically support small Australian towns by contributing directly to local businesses in these towns through small yet symbolic purchases such as coffee, pies, cakes, fuel and groceries. These purchases stimulate positive emotions for these visitors and the emotional and social reward of 'giving back' becomes a primary benefit of silo art experiences for the Socially Conscious.

Direct interactions with local business owners are central to how these visitors experience silo art. Comments from these visitor participants indicate that immediacy of being able to directly support a local business (and thus a 'real' local person) stimulates positive emotions in a way that donating to a foundation or cause through channels that do not involve direct interaction with local community members (e.g. donations to a charity website or online bushfire appeals) may not.

The Interaction Seekers

Interaction Seekers emphasise silo art as an opportunity to interact with other travellers and/or people who live in the towns.

Developing various human connections represents a primary benefit of silo art experiences for these visitors.

The specific interactions involved vary from more fleeting exchanges with other travellers who happen to be viewing the artwork at the same time, to more in-depth conversations with locals, and the bonding opportunities that come with sharing a silo art journey with friends, partners or family members.

Implications for the promotion of silo art: Relating visitor appeal dimensions to target segments

The six appeal dimensions identified above provide a valuable resource for the promotion of individual silo art sites and trails, and the broader development of silo art tourism as a market.

Specifically, as shown in Figure 6, discerning these appeal dimensions enable identification of silo art visitor groups or segments, based on how visitors emphasised particular perceived benefits (i.e. dimensions). To illustrate, 'Art Lovers' emphasise stimulating and emotionally rewarding experiences of the artwork itself, whereas 'Place Explorers' emphasise the exploration and discovery of new places as a primary benefit of silo art experiences.

Thinking about how different visitors are motivated by different types of 'reward' can assist with designing and implementing strategies to engage visitors once they have arrived at the site or in the town, as well as potential visitors contemplating a future trip or holiday. For example, signage at a silo art site showing a map of the locality with other unique or unexpected aspects to 'discover' around the town is likely to appeal particularly to 'Place Explorers'.

However, the finding that visitors tend to emphasise between 2 and 3 dimensions as the primary benefits of visiting silo art suggests that promotional and audience engagement efforts should not focus on one particular

'group' or 'dimension' in isolation. Rather, the data indicates that community groups, Councils and tourism organisations should consider how these efforts can appeal to visitors as complex beings with multiple 'mindsets' who may perceive multiple benefits in visiting silo art.

Further, while different strategies and initiatives may target or focus on different dimensions or groups, it is not recommended that towns single out one dimension or group to focus on in isolation. Table 1 (over page) highlights examples of how promotional and audience-building strategies could be tailored to each dimension/group.

Identifying six primary dimensions of silo art's appeal to visitor could also provide a basis for evaluating which dimensions/groups previous and current promotional strategies focus on.

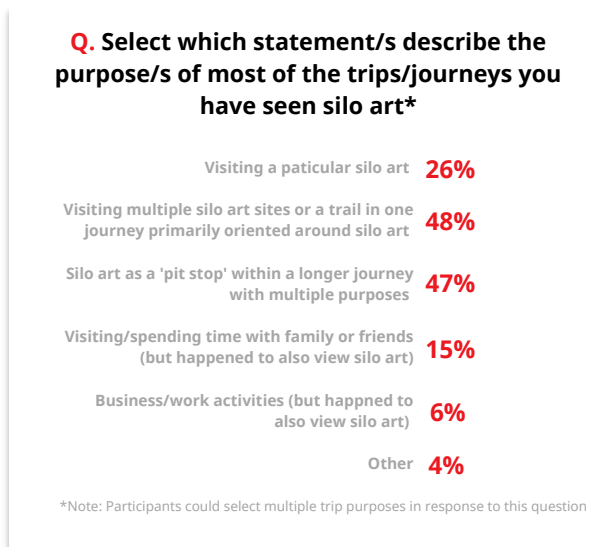
Most broadly, survey responses and interviews provide clear evidence that silo art tourists are not a homogenous group motivated by a singular benefit.

Therefore, silo art towns should consider tailoring strategies, campaigns, messages and other initiatives intended to promote existing sites and build visitor interest, rather than pursuing 'one size fits all' approaches that assume all visitors experience silo art in the same way.

Table 1. Examples of tailored visitor engagement strategies

Dimension	Visitor group	Benefits emphasised	Examples of strategies to engage visitors within each group	
1	Art	Art Lovers	Mentally and emotionally stimulating and rewarding encounters with awe-inspiring artworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Communication strategies that expand on creative / artistic inspiration, processes and the artist through communication channels such as local Facebook pages *Create opportunities for visitors to share how the art makes them feel and their own personalised interpretations of the art in Visitor Books, on social media etc.
2	Local Stories	Local Story Seekers	Encounters with visual storytelling devices that communicate interesting and meaningful accounts of local events, people and/or places in engaging and relatable ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Communication strategies that expand on the story behind the artwork, and various 'background processes' involved in identifying and visualising the story through the art (e.g. artists run community workshops, time spent by the artist in the town) *Communication materials that provide further information about the local phenomena featured in the story (e.g. distinctive ways of life or traditions the natural landscapes that inspired the work, additional details about historical events)
3	Cultural Learning	Cultural Explorers	Discovering and learning new information about cultures and communities that are 'different' to ones own, somehow 'unfamiliar, or inherently 'Australian' ways of life, places and phenomena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Communication materials that expand on other aspects of the town or community (i.e. going beyond aspects featured in the artwork) such as early industries or local personalities *Promotion of various attractions in and around the town at the silo art site (e.g. historical museums, refurbished heritage buildings, iconic pubs) *Information that relates history, achievements and distinct features of the town to broader Australian history and national identity
4	Place	Place Explorers	An impulse or inspiration to explore, wander and discover new and intriguing places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Signage at a silo art site showing a map of the locality with multiple other unique or unexpected aspects to discover around the town *Maps, signage etc. showing walking distances and the formation of walking trails *Promotional campaigns that highlight scenery and landscapes on route to silo art
5	'Giving Back'	Socially Conscious	An opportunity to purchase from local businesses and thus directly support rural and regional Australian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Ensure online information (e.g. websites, social media) that visitors consult before embarking on a silo art trip provide up to date information about businesses town or surrounding area (including driving/walking distances and opening hours) *Signage or other communication material at the silo art site identifying local businesses (including driving/walking distances and opening hours)
6	Human connection	Interaction Seekers	An opportunity to interact with people (and thus develop human connections) in the towns, and along the way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Communication materials (e.g. promotional videos) that feature local residents speaking about the town, the art, the story behind the artwork, everyday life etc. *Promotional campaigns that highlight opportunities to (a) connect with friends and family during long drives and/or (b) meet new people during silo art trips *Consider the development of events or live music nights in the town as opportunities to stimulate evening social interaction amongst visitors and local residents

Three main silo art trip design types



48% of visitor survey participants visited silo art site/s as part of a journey involving multiple silo art sites. 47% visited silo art site/s as a 'pit stop' within a longer journey with multiple purposes.

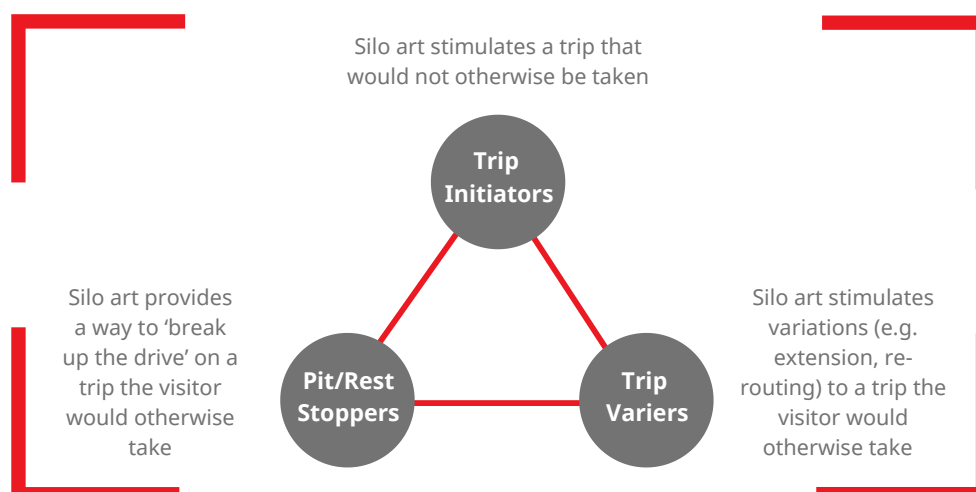
Additionally however, analysis of how visitor participants discussed silo art trips in open-ended survey responses indicates three main silo art trip design types that also correspond with nuanced motivations (see Figure 7 below).

One individual can embody all three trip design types, on different occasions. For instance, a visitor may travel specifically to see some silo art sites, while other sites serve as 'pit stops' in a longer journey with other primary purposes (e.g. visiting family).

However, identifying these types helps to further understand diversity within the silo art tourism market, while also providing an additional basis to guide design of efforts to increase visitation, extend visitation time, and encourage repeat visits.

For instance, Pit/Rest Stoppers emphasised opportunities to 'stretch their legs' and 'recuperate' in silo art towns. Thus, strategies to encourage return visits from these Pit/Rest Stoppers could include signage at the silo art site identifying a nearby café with comfortable seating and warm beverages. Such signage could also identify approximate walking time/distance to the café from the silo art site. Further, strategies to build silo art engagement amongst potential Pit/Rest Stoppers could include poster advertisements depicting an open park suitable for leisurely walking and other imagery conveying that the town is suited to exploring by foot. These posters could be placed at fuel stations on major highways before and after silo art locations.

Figure 7. Three main trip design types



Type 1: Trip Initiators

Many visitor participants journeyed specifically to see silo art. However, trips designed specifically to see silo art may also encompass other activities or attractions.

My friends and I cycled to all the silos in WA. 600kms worth of riding! We had a back up car for those who got weary. We stayed in small towns in caravan park cabins and did a B&B on a farm. It was the best holiday ever and still talk about it. Visitor

Usually I will see a particular image somewhere and that will spark my interest. Then I begin the fun and pleasure of planning a trip, which then leads me to looking into the history of and the other interesting things to see and do in the areas the silo art is. Visitor

Type 2: Pit/Rest Stoppers

Silo art stimulates Pit/Rest Stoppers to pause a journey in a particular town, in order to recuperate from long distance driving. Some visitor participants also noted that silo art encourage them to stop longer in a particular town that would have otherwise have served as a pit or rest stop.

Comments from visitor participants indicate that Pit/Rest Stoppers are not necessarily less engaged with the art or the town. Further, Pit/Rest Stoppers are not necessarily less inclined to purchase from local businesses with the intention of supporting local communities:

They provide a much needed break from driving and bring economic benefits to the towns they are in. We stop in the towns and purchase food and drinks and look elsewhere in the town to see what the town has to offer. Visitor

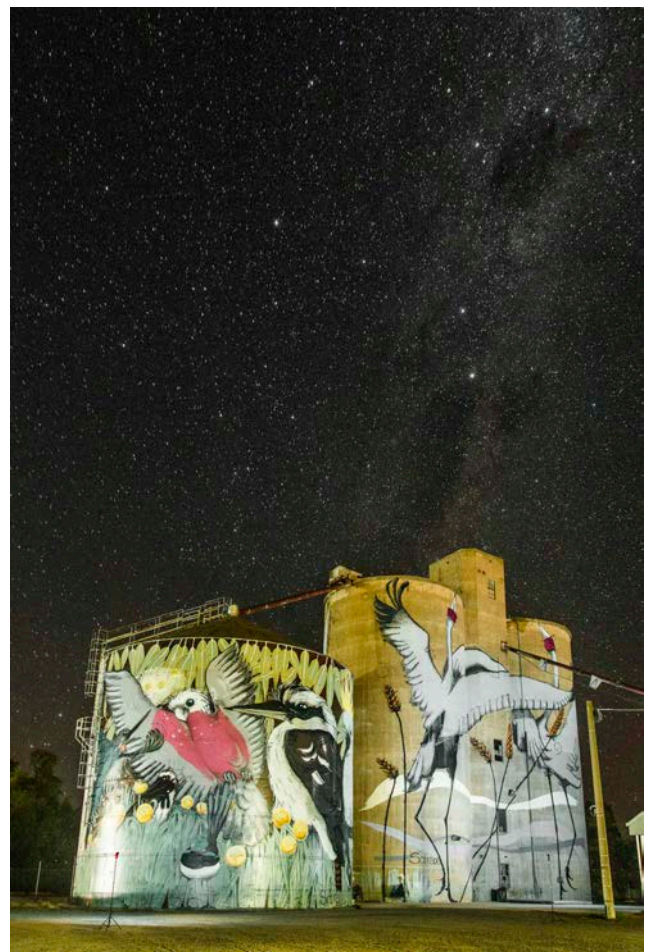
Happy restful distractions from the busyness of life and recuperating places during a long trip. Visitor

Type 3: Trip Variers

Silo art prompts many of the visitors surveyed to extend or vary a trip they would have otherwise taken. However, as with Pit/Rest Stoppers, survey comments indicate that this third design type does not necessarily correspond to less engagement with the art, the town or opportunities to 'give back' to communities by purchasing from local businesses.

We like supporting rural towns. Silo art will have us detour that bit more. Even better if there is a coffee available. Visitor

As an adventure motorcycle rider obsessive about visiting and always loving the journey to remote parts of Australia, I will make detours to view silo art if its in the vicinity (100 to 200k detours). Visitor



Privately owned silos, Tungamah, Victoria Artist: Sobrane Simock – Photo: KDog Photography

Table 2. Comparison – Trip purpose + Time at silo art site

Q. While visiting silo art, approximately how long do you spend looking at the artwork (on average)?

Trip purpose response option*	A few seconds driving past	< 5 minutes	5–10 min	<u>10–30 min</u>	30–60 min	1–2 hours	2–4 hours	Total number participants who selected this trip purpose
Visiting a particular silo art	2%	1%	12%	<u>54%</u>	24%	5%	2%	187
Visiting multiple silo art sites or a trail in one journey primarily oriented around silo art	–	–	9%	<u>66%</u>	21%	3%	1%	346
Silo art as a 'pit stop' within a longer journey with multiple purposes	2%	2%	17%	<u>61%</u>	15%	3%	–	333
Visiting/spending time with family or friends (but happened to also view silo art)	4%	3%	27%	<u>49%</u>	15%	1%	1%	109
Business/work activities (but happened to also view silo art)	15%	5%	23%	<u>32%</u>	22%	–	3%	40
Other	14%	3%	3%	<u>60%</u>	14%	3%	3%	29

Table 3. Comparison – Trip purpose + Time in town

Q. While visiting silo art, approximately how long do you spend in the town where the art is located (or the closest/associated town to physically isolated silo art sites)?

Trip purpose response option*	Did not visit town/s	10 min or less	11–30 min	<u>31–60 min</u>	<u>1–2 hours</u>	3–5 hours	5–11 hours	12–24 hours	25–48 hours	Over 48 hours	Total number participants who selected this trip purpose
Visiting a particular silo art	2%	1%	11%	<u>21%</u>	<u>33%</u>	10%	1%	9%	9%	3%	187
Visiting multiple silo art sites or a trail in one journey primarily oriented around silo art	1%	2%	16%	<u>31%</u>	<u>27%</u>	2%	1%	10%	8%	2%	346
Silo art as a 'pit stop' within a longer journey with multiple purposes	2%	4%	14%	<u>29%</u>	<u>28%</u>	6%	2%	7%	6%	2%	333
Visiting/spending time with family or friends (but happened to also view silo art)	6%	6%	10%	<u>30%</u>	<u>23%</u>	9%	1%	8%	5%	2%	109
Business/work activities (but happened to also view silo art)	3%	10%	<u>20%</u>	<u>25%</u>	17%	8%	2%	5%	5%	5%	40
Other	3%	10%	<u>14%</u>	<u>29%</u>	<u>14%</u>	10%	3%	7%	0%	10%	29

*Note: Respondents were asked to select the statement/s that describe the purpose/s of most of the trips/journeys they have seen silo art (i.e. one participant may have selected multiple trip purposes in response to this question)

Table 4. Comparison – Trip purpose + time at silo art site

Q. On average, approximately how much (total) money did you spend (e.g. food, petrol, accommodation) in EACH of the towns you have visited with silo art?

Trip purpose response option*	\$0	\$1-10	\$11-50	\$51-100	\$101-200	\$201-\$500	\$501-\$1,000	\$1,000 or over	Total number participants who selected this trip purpose
Visiting a particular silo art	4%	6%	<u>40%</u>	<u>28%</u>	16%	5%	-	1%	187
Visiting multiple silo art sites or a trail in one journey primarily oriented around silo art	2%	8%	<u>50%</u>	<u>22%</u>	13%	4%	-	1%	346
Silo art as a 'pit stop' within a longer journey with multiple purposes	5%	9%	<u>44%</u>	<u>25%</u>	11%	5%	-	1%	333
Visiting/spending time with family or friends (but happened to also view silo art)	8%	5%	<u>47%</u>	<u>24%</u>	9%	6%	1%	-	109
Business/work activities (but happened to also view silo art)	5%	10%	<u>45%</u>	<u>16%</u>	18%	3%	-	3%	40
Other	<u>14%</u>	7%	<u>38%</u>	13%	10%	<u>14%</u>	-	4%	29

*Note: Respondents were asked to select the statement/s that describe the purpose/s of most of the trips/journeys they have seen silo art (i.e. one participant may have selected multiple trip purposes in response to this question)

Key issues and opportunities identified by visitors

There is a missing link between silo art, the community and the visitor - something untapped.

Visitor

The online survey asked visitor participants what advice they would give towns with silo art. We analysed the suggestions and advice shared from visitor survey participants, and related discussion with the visitors we interviewed.

Figure 8 (over page) summarises the 9 most commonly identified issues and opportunities that, according to visitors, should to be addressed in order to enhance visitor experiences of silo art, extend visit duration, and encourage return visits.

As well as providing a resource for silo art towns to consult when designing future promotional and activation strategies, these findings raise key issues for small towns contemplating a future silo art project, or similar arts tourism projects.

The issues and opportunities in Figure 8 pertain specifically to silo art visitor perspectives. Part Four of this report outlines issues and opportunities identified by both visitors and resident participants.

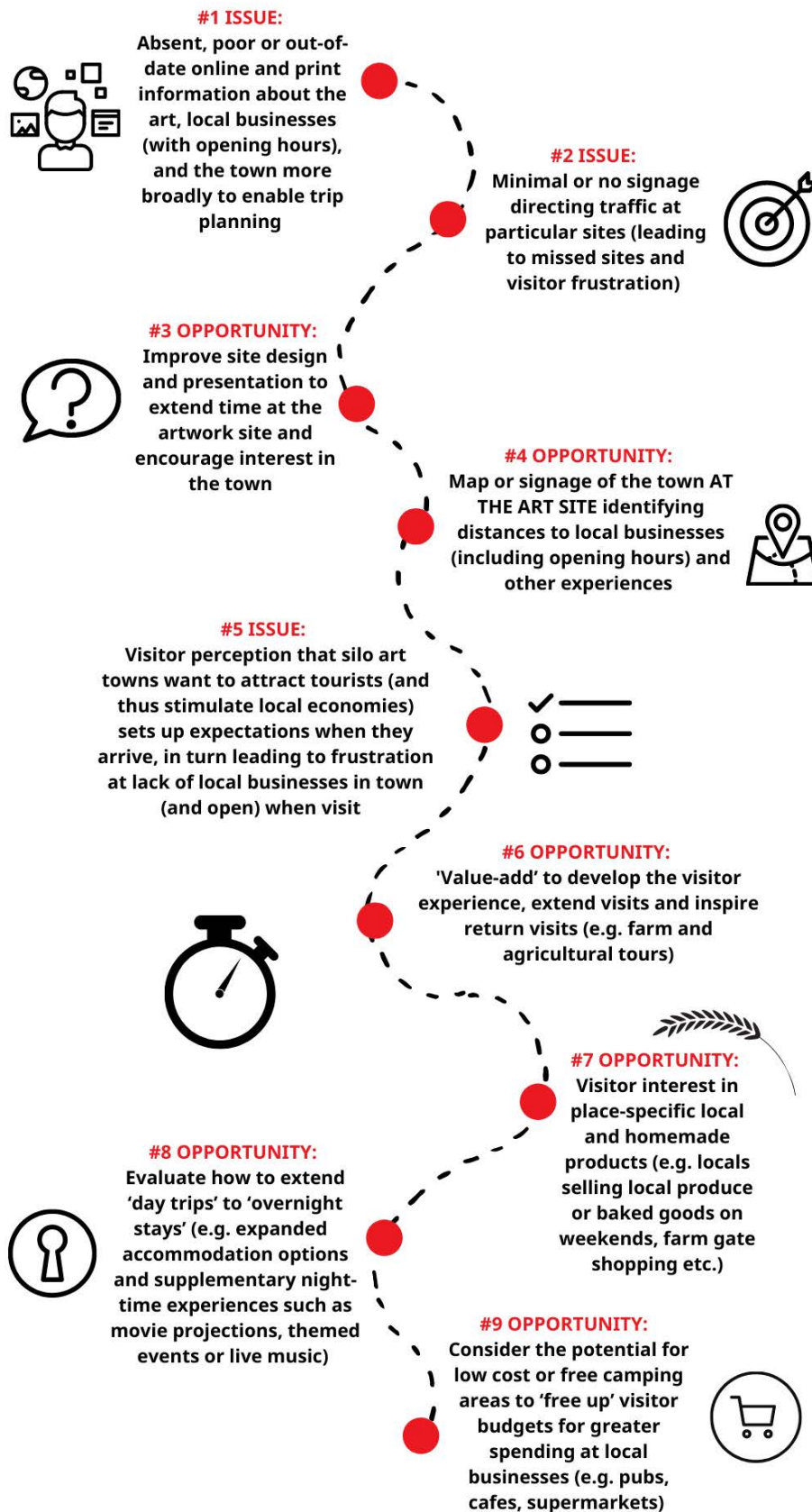
Note about visitor identified issues regarding trails specifically

Some visitors commented that explicitly linking geographically clustered sites together as a branded trail (e.g. the Wimmera Mallee Silo Art Trail in Victoria) can make silo art travel more efficient (e.g. assistance with organising one day trip that encompasses several sites). However, out of date maps, websites and signage offset this advantage, instead leading to frustration amongst visitors who realise that they missed nearby sites (after returning home). Hence, maintain up-to-date information and signage appears especially pertinent for branded trails that seek to link or 'package' multiple sites together.

The 'Silo Art Trail' website needs to be updated when new silos are completed. [...] And all websites need better links to amenities, facilities, local attractions & accommodation. Visitor

Some towns had no signage to the silo, an occasional tourist sign said we were on the 'Silo Art Trail' but no follow up signs in the towns. Very confusing and we actually missed some as they were not on website or well signposted... very frustrating. Visitor

Figure 8. Nine main issues and opportunities identified by visitor participants

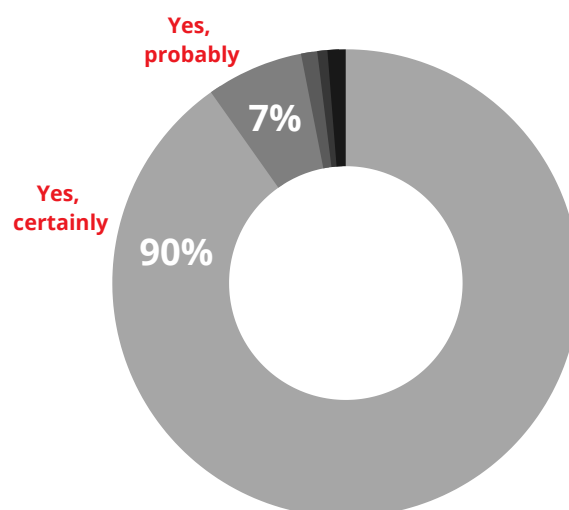


Key visitor survey results reinforcing the potential for silo art tourism to develop further in the future:

Q. Select the statement that best reflects your interest in visiting more silo art in the future



Q. I recommend other people visit silo art



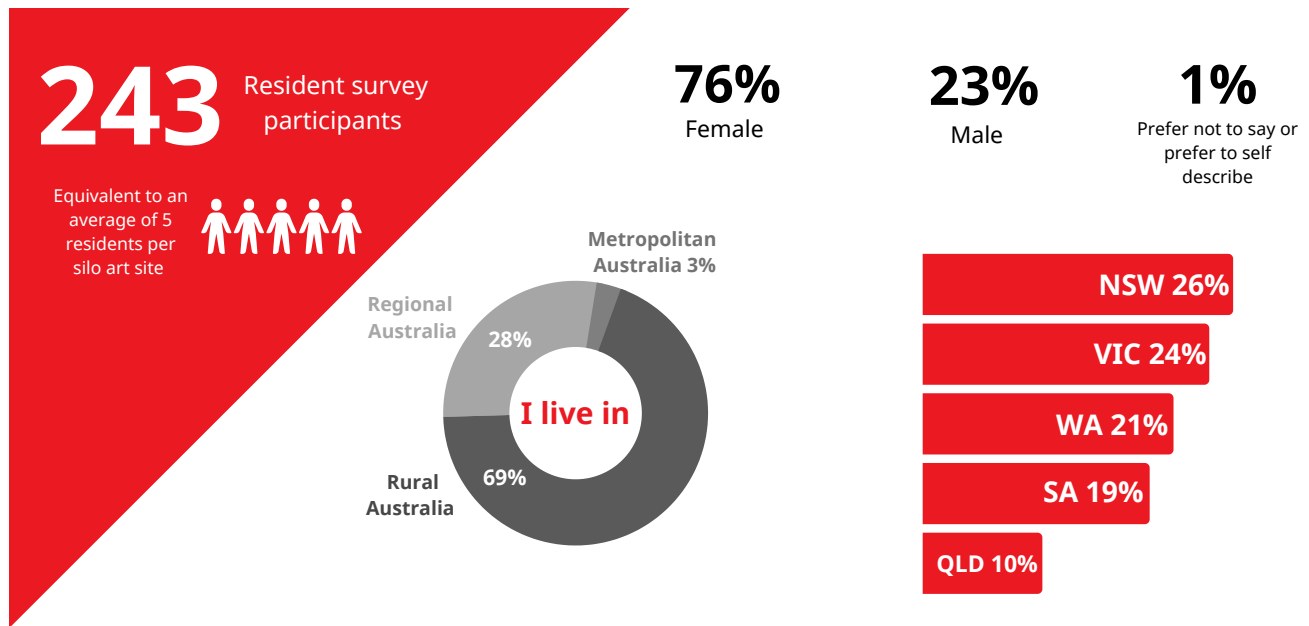
*Silo art is storytelling and
it's a chance for you to tell
your untold stories to the
nation, and the world.*

Resident



Findings Part Three: Local community perspectives and impacts

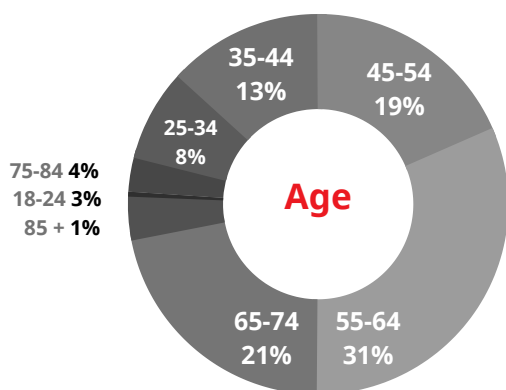
Who participated in the resident survey?



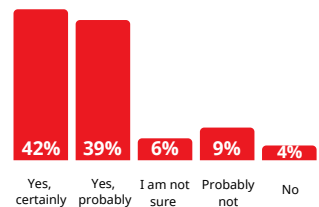
Q. How often do you visit art galleries or art museums



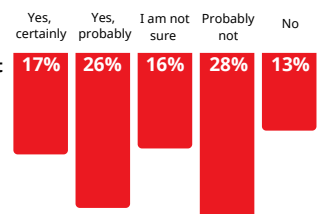
Q. Were you somehow involved in the organisation of the silo at in your town?



Q. I am generally interested in art (of any kind)



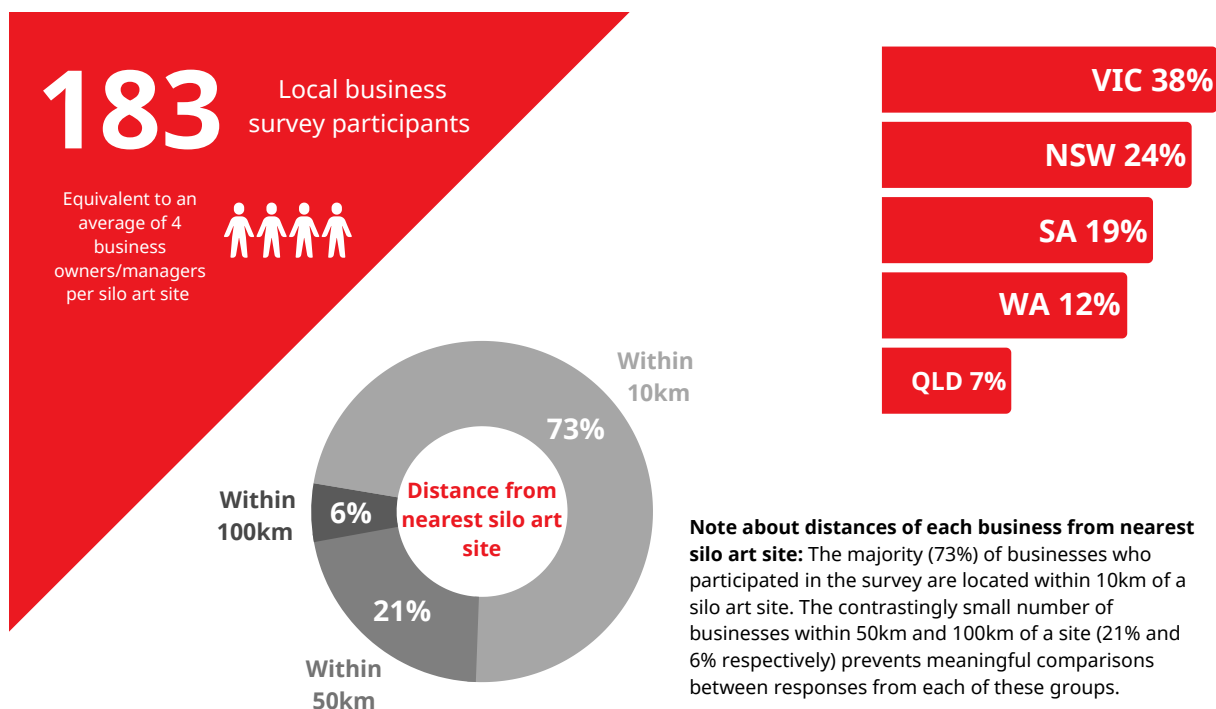
Q. I am knowledgeable about art generally



Yes 25% **No 74%**

Q. Do you work or have you previously worked in an artistic or creative role or industry?

Who participated in the local business survey?



Q. Which of the following categories best describe your business?

Restaurant, cafe, pub, diner etc. with in-house dining	54	30%
Other not listed	48	26%
Tourist service/accommodation provider (e.g. hotel, caravan park, motel, tour guide, bus company)	36	20%
Other retail store (e.g. homewares, fashion retailer, newsagent, antiques)	25	14%
Takeaway food and/or beverage retail (e.g. bakery, coffee van)	20	11%
Grocery/Corner store or supermarket	14	8%
Art-focused business (e.g. art gallery, artist studio selling direct to the public)	12	7%
Petrol/Fuel station	3	2%

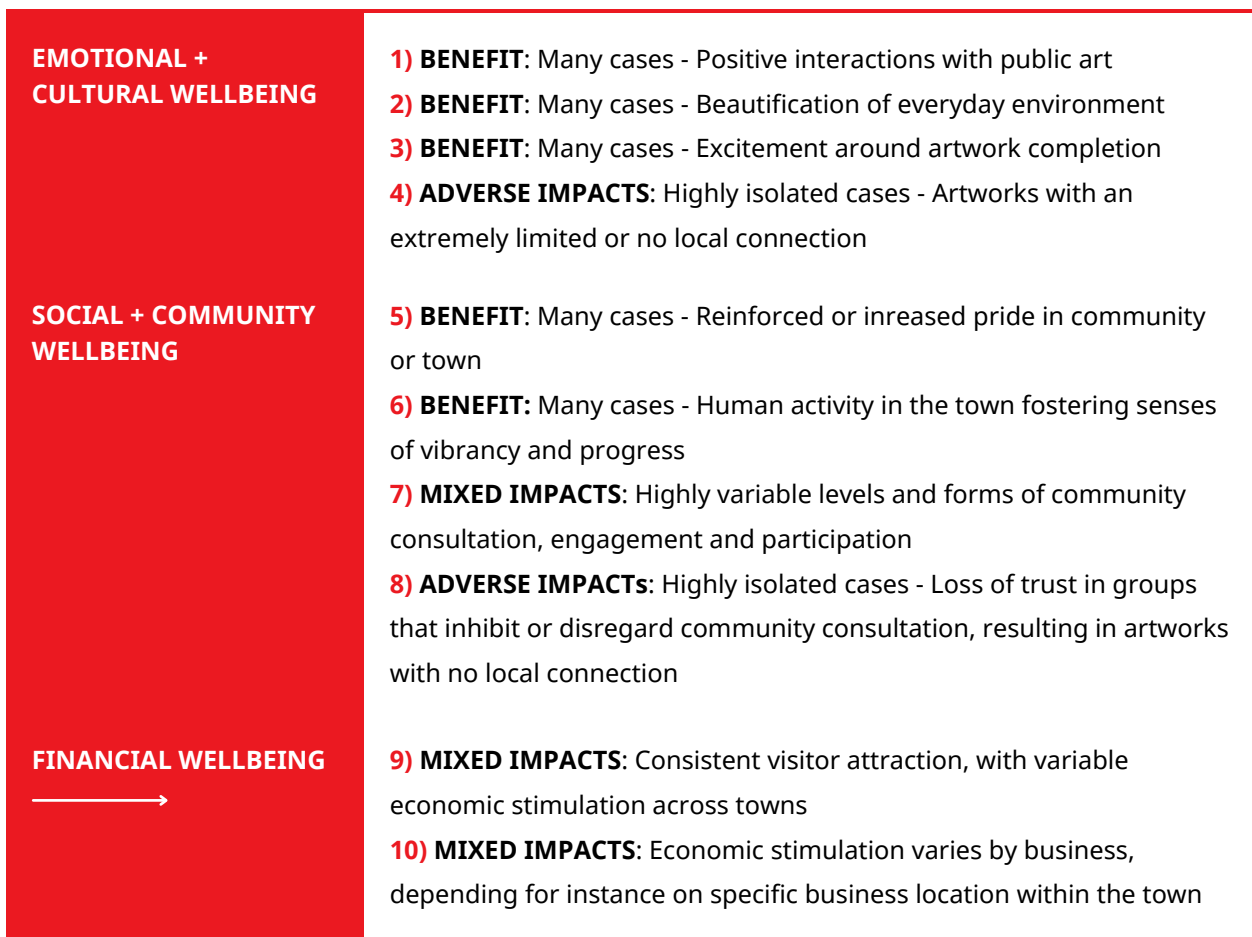
Note: Respondents could select multiple industries/types (e.g. dine-in cafe that also offers takeaway would selected two industries/types)

Introduction

Overall, analysis of interviews with local community members, and local community survey, indicate that the social and economic impacts of silo art vary considerably between towns, between individual businesses, and between individuals within each community.

Indeed, from local community perspectives, no two silo art projects are the same, or yield the same outcomes. Figure 9 summarises the varied benefits and adverse impacts identified.

Figure 9. Impacts - Emotional, social, cultural, community and financial wellbeing of residents



The varied impacts identified in this research reinforces the importance of considering statistical analyses (e.g. percentages of resident participants who agree with a particular statement) in relation to analysis of data in which resident participants are able to respond openly in their own words (e.g. survey comments and interview transcripts).

Further, drawing on both survey and interview data, this part of the report also presents insights into key issues and factors contributing to variable benefits and adverse impacts such as:

1. Varying levels and forms of community involvement and consultation involved in project planning and management (before and after painting)
2. Site activation strategies and management 'after the paint dries';
3. Varying degrees to which artworks tell genuine local stories that resonate with local communities;
4. The nature of existing and new businesses in each town (if present at all); and
5. The extent to which promoting, supporting and partnering with local businesses is considered as part of broader plans to utilise silo art as a launching pad for stimulating social and economic revitalisation (or whether the silo art is undertaken as a 'stand-alone' project that is 'complete' when the paint dries and/or a once-off investment that is expected to reap economic rewards with little or no ongoing management and development).

Specifically, this part of the report is structured according to the following sections:

- Impacts of silo art on the emotional, cultural, social, community and financial wellbeing of residents (9 in total).
- Insights into how COVID-19 has shaped local businesses experiences of silo art.
- Findings regarding how residents experience silo art in a different ways and identification of 11 main audience groups within the community.
- 6 main issues and challenges that, according to local residents and business owners, should be addressed to enhance the potential social and/or economic benefits of silo art for local communities.

Emotional and cultural wellbeing of residents

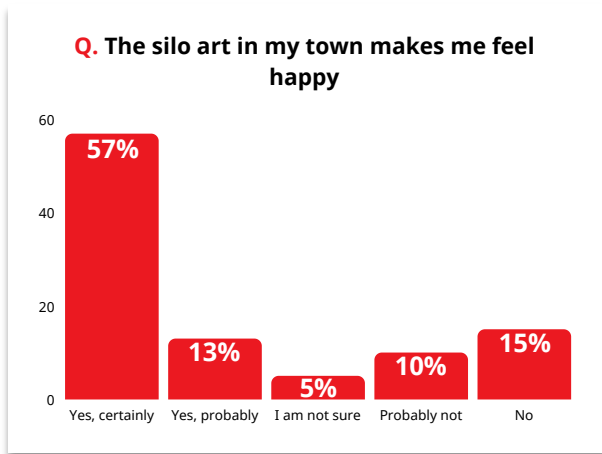
1. Benefit: Many cases—Positive interactions with public art

Many resident participants described positive interactions with the silo art in their town. Quantitative analysis of responses to close-ended survey questions also support that many (but not all) residents enjoy interacting with the silo art in their local area.

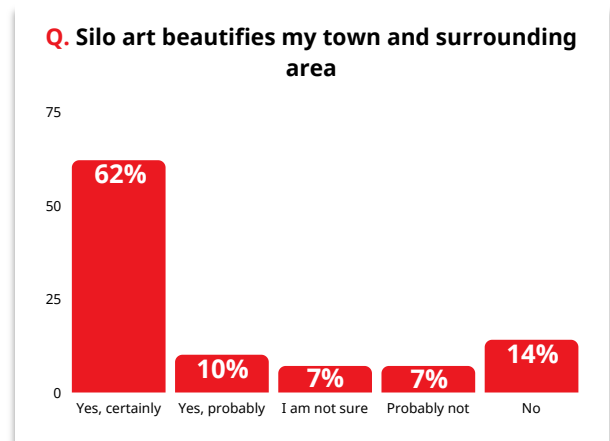
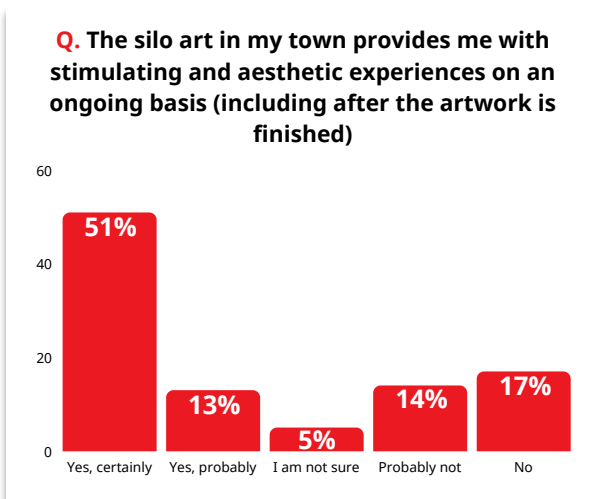
I think they provide a welcome relief from the concrete towers in town and allow people to ‘smell the roses’ during their busy day. Resident

I love the impact silo art has on people who are not normally interested that much in art. Resident

Never get tired of visiting our silo art. Resident



2. Benefit: Many cases—Beautification of everyday environment



Many (but not all) residents agreed that silo art beautifies their town or surrounding area. Beautification also emerged as a major theme within open-ended survey questions.

They make the local landscape more interesting for locals. Resident

Large artworks adorning silos making them a feature of the landscape and not an eyesore. Resident

Beautification of otherwise drab structures, that are normally a joy to look at. Resident

I think they provide a welcome relief from the concrete towers in town and allow people to ‘smell the roses’ during their busy day. Resident

Opens up a discussion. Adds colour and sparkle to daily lives. Resident

3. Benefit: Many cases—Excitement around artwork completion

Residents described a high level of excitement around the planning and/or painting of the silo art in their town.

These comments usually also highlighted that this excitement was enhanced by contrasting events or challenges occurring at the same time.

When the artworks were being delivered it gave our small community a lift in trying times (drought, low cattle prices, general low moral in town). Even if folks weren't 100 percent approving it got people talking and sharing opinions. Resident

4. Some adverse impacts: Highly isolated cases—Artworks with an extremely limited or no local connection

A small number of resident participants identified that the silo art in their town embodies an extremely limited connection to the community, or no connection to the community at all.

These participants identified that they feel uncomfortable and/or embarrassed when visitors ask about how the artwork relates to the community.

Some also discussed more generalised negative emotions surrounding everyday interactions with large-scale artwork that lacks a local connection, particularly given the physical prominence of many silos in the surrounding township or district, and that residents and visitors alike have come to expect that silo artworks represent elements of the local community (see page 22 of this report for discussion of the latter).

Therefore, more broadly, this data indicates that artworks with an extremely limited or no connection to the local community can adversely impact the emotional wellbeing of some residents.

It is embarrassing to have to explain to people that our silo art is not locally based. This should not happen anywhere else ever again. However, I have since heard that one just completed, purporting [an untrue local connection] and if locals had been involved in checking the design, this different sort of error could have been avoided too. Resident

It could be a draw card for tourists, but it's not as it doesn't reflect our community. The painting itself is very clever, I just don't think a silo in the middle of the bush is the right place for it. Resident

The art that has been put on our silos does not reflect the area we live in. I believe they tried to bring the city to the county and that's not what the country is about in my eyes. Resident

I was very excited to hear that [my town] would be getting some silo art as I have seen so many beautiful ones all around. I thought for sure that locals would be involved in some way to share what was important to them about the town. There are so many things that could of been painted ... [describes various unique features of town and community]. It would of been lovely to have something like that on our silos. Instead some artist without any knowledge of our town came out and painted [description of artwork]. I have had friends from [overseas] come to visit and they have taken one look at it and said how it doesn't make sense and has nothing to do with our town. Resident

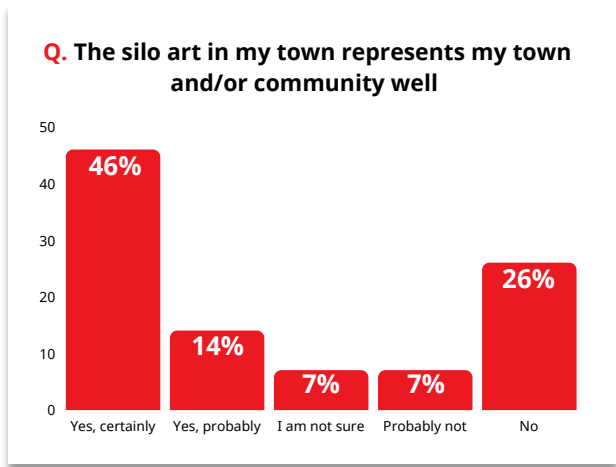
As these participants usually discussed the town they live in, it is possible to identify that this adverse impact applies in highly isolated cases (i.e. between 3 and 4 sites/projects in total).

Indeed, evaluation and enjoyment of artworks is inherently subjective, and no artwork (of any kind) will appeal equally to every individual. Therefore, it is important to clearly reiterate that this finding is based on interview and survey comments that referred to clear indications of limited or no local connection, rather than individual assessments of artistic style/s or colour choices.

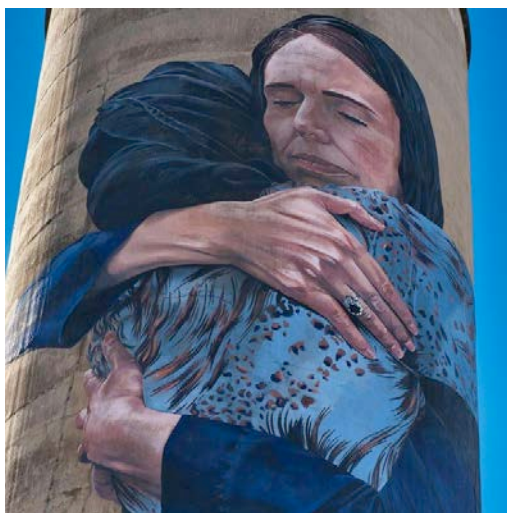
Particularly pertinent in terms of informing future practice, many of the resident participants who discussed these issues, also identified limited or no community consultation as a key factor contributing to artworks with limited or no local connection.

The art, whilst very well done, is not an accurate depiction of our town. [...] Consultation with the artists would have avoided this controversy. Resident

Responses to a close-ended survey question about how well the artwork represents the town and/or community reinforce that findings regarding the adverse impacts surrounding artworks lacking a local connection pertain to isolated cases.



Note: The silo art site in Brunswick (6 km from the CBD of Victoria’s capital city, Melbourne) which depicts the New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern embracing a Muslim woman after the Christchurch mosque attacks was not one of the cases discussed in relation to misrepresentation. Brunswick’s silo art stems from a community-driven crowdfunding effort, the mural design (a copy of a now famous photograph) was chosen before crowdfunding commenced, and the artist was specifically commissioned to paint this mural. The project’s [‘Go Fund Me’ page](#) also highlights relevance of the mural to the local community:



Privately owned silos, Brunswick, Victoria
 Artist: Loretta Lizzio – Photo: @kateisoverseas

‘Our community is a place made up of many cultures and many faiths. It is rich because of its diverse history and community. It is a place that had its heart broken on the day of the Christchurch shootings. [...] The image of Jacinda hugging a Muslim woman has become a beacon of tolerance, love and peace in these devise times. We want this message, this moment in time, remembered. We want to learn from it, we want it to hold us up, to strengthen us. We want everyone to know we are them, and they are thus, and that we are, and always will be, stronger together.’

More specifically, this documentation highlights that, although this artwork does not explicitly depict people who live in Brunswick, or an event that happened in the area, the themes, ideas and messages within the art have relevance to the community.

Social and community wellbeing in silo art towns

5. Benefit: Many cases—Reinforced or increased pride in community or town

Many residents identified that the silo art in their town reinforces or increases a sense of pride in where they live in survey comments. These comments varied in terms of whether participants attributed this increased pride to the achievement of this project as a whole (e.g. *the resourcefulness of our community to make it happen*), or the symbolic representation of the town/community through the artwork specifically (i.e. outcome focused). Further, some of these comments explicitly identified that the capacity of silo art to stimulate external recognition from visitors stimulates a sense of pride.

As a community, there is a newfound sense of pride and also a form of relief, as we are no longer a small rural town that is invisible to tourists and literally forgotten on many maps. There is always a constant run of people staying in our small caravan/camping ground which would otherwise sit quite empty outside of local summer holidays. Locals can now travel away from home, mention where they're from and have others know where 'home' is. Before the silo art was completed, this was definitely not the case. We have also had new people become regular visitors coming back to stay again and again, who have now become good friends of many of the locals. These people first came to town because of the silo art. Resident

6. Benefit: Many cases—Human activity in the town fostering senses of vibrancy and progress

Many residents described how silo art has fostered a sense of vibrancy and progress by attracting visitors to the silo art site, local businesses and the main streets of their township. Other descriptions used include enhanced *optimism*, towns *coming alive* and development of a *fresh inspirational aura*.

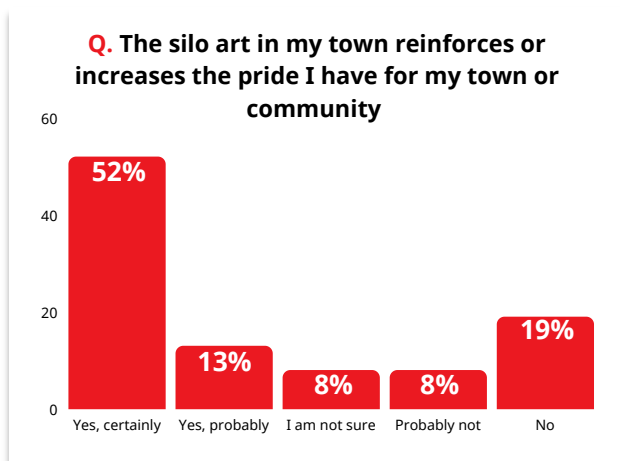
Before the silo was done I used to look down the Main Street and there would be no cars or people around. Now you look down there are people walking around sitting having coffee at the coffee shop, visiting our craft shop and the whole vibe of the town has increased. Resident

New vibrancy & optimism, sense of pride & achievement. Resident

It does draw people in and make an otherwise bypassed town more vibrant. Resident

[The benefits are] having visitors in our town, its alive. Resident

It gives the town identity. Creates spaces for people to appreciate and learn about the town's history. Increases tourism. Town no longer seems as boring. Places to take friends and family. Resident

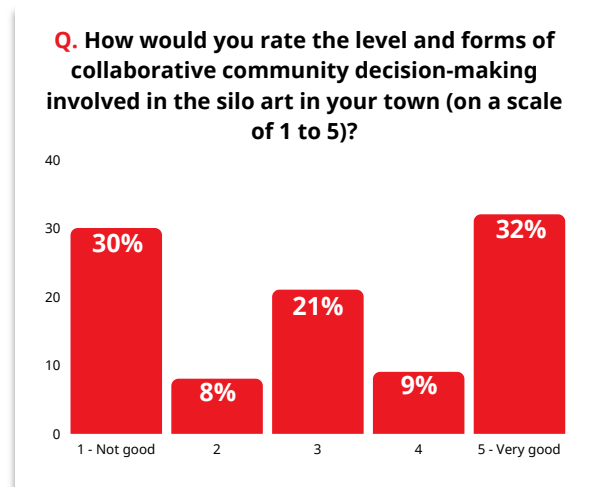


7. Mixed impacts: Highly variable levels and forms of community consultation, engagement and participation

As discussed in Part One of this report (see page 22), many resident and visitor participants identified sound community consultation as a key element of what distinguishes Australian silo art from other public art and art tourism.

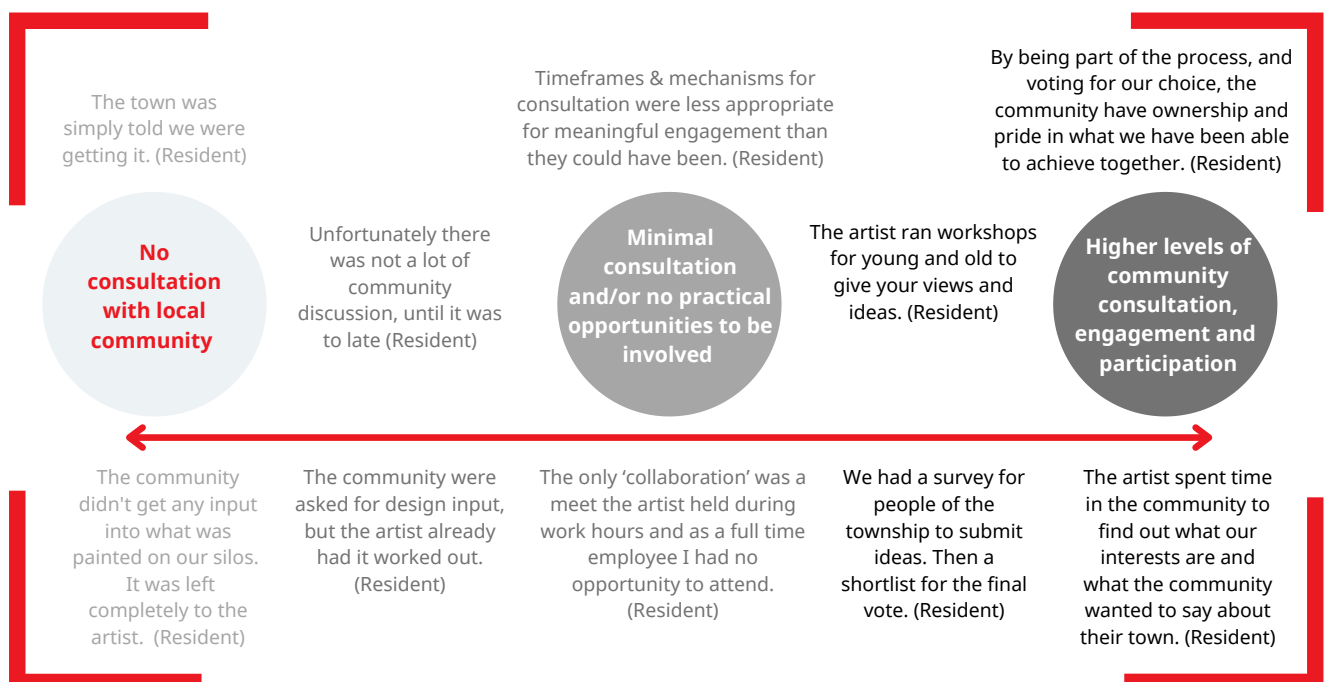
The survey asked residents to rate the levels and forms of collaborative community decision-making involved in the silo art in their town. The following note accompanied this optional question: *Forms of collaborative community decision-making can vary widely. Some examples include holding community meetings for open discussion of plans and ideas and opportunities to submit suggestions or feedback on identified options.*

232 (out of 243) resident participants responded to this optional survey question. The survey also provided space of resident participants to expand on their response.



Analysis of how resident survey and interview participants described the processes involved in organising silo art projects indicates that levels and forms of community consultation, engagement and participation vary widely (e.g. see Figure 10). Resident participants also highlighted that extent to which artists engage with local communities, and partake in community consultation, also varies.

Figure 10. Continuum illustrating variable levels and forms of community consultation and engagement



Resident participants who discussed artworks with extremely limited or no local connection often identified little or no community consultation as a key factor contributing to this issue (see also pages 58–59).

Further, comments from some resident participants highlighted that community and public art projects are inherently complex.

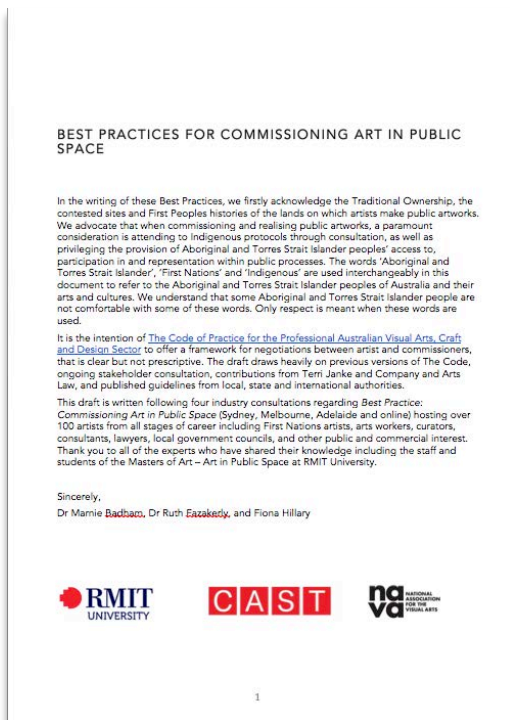
Always a hard one, some get involved to positive contribute to the project others want all the say but do nothing as far as project delivery. Resident

No one ‘right’ or ‘best’ way approach to community consultation and engagement

A range of prior research [11, 12] supports that there is no single ‘right’ or ‘best’ way to consult and engage with communities about the design and implementation of strategies and initiatives that reshape the social and/or

physical fabric of the town or places they live (e.g. community and public art projects, infrastructure projects, street scaping). However, this literature also continually underscores that proactively seeking to involve residents in these processes, and providing avenues for community members to share their thoughts and views even before such projects begin, can foster senses of ownership and identification with the outcomes [13, 14].

Further, benefits such as social networking and local skill development can also stem directly from opportunities for local residents to actively participate in particular projects and surrounding strategies (e.g. community workshops, brainstorming sessions, public town meetings, residents assisting artists, employing local photographers to document creative processes) [11, 15]. In other words, the ‘process’ can be part of the ‘outcome’ when community members are involved in (rather than just ‘informed about’) projects in their town.



Note: In 2019, Australia’s National Association for the Visual Arts published a [‘Best Practices for Commissioning Art in Public Space’](#) co-authored by researchers at RMIT University. The document provides a valuable resource regarding a number of topics and issues pertinent to silo art projects including models of authorship and engagement, principles and models of commissioning art in public space, roles and responsibilities of artists, the commissioning group or organisation and the project manager, and steps in commissioning. Rather than advocating for a *“one-size-fits-all” framework that is both unrealistic and undesirable*, the document instead aims to offer an *‘educational resource to encourage good practice’*.

8. Some adverse impacts: Highly isolated cases—Loss of trust in groups that inhibit or disregard community consultation, resulting in artworks with no local connection

A small number of resident participants described several isolated cases in which one particular group inhibited or disregarded all community consultation regarding a silo art project.

The point at which consultation ceased varied between the cases discussed.

According to participant descriptions of these cases, community members' attempts to provide input or have any say in the processes or outcomes of the project were ignored.

The ensuing artwork in each of these cases depicts phenomenon that are not present in the town (i.e. artworks with no local connection). Further, reinforcing the potential for artworks lacking a local connection to adversely impact the residents' emotional wellbeing (see discussion pages 58–59), residents participants who discussed these cases identified that they feel uncomfortable and/or embarrassed when visitors ask about how the artwork relates to the town (e.g. *What is the story behind the art?* and *Why is your silo painted with that?*).

The [group] then went directly to the artist and gave that one individual full creative control. Resident

We did a lot of community consultation as to what local people would like painted on our silo which was a waste of time, the [group] selected the artist & [he/she] selected the art with literally no concern of what the local community wanted. Resident

Additionally, participants who discussed these particular cases also identified that they had lost trust in the group that inhibited or disregarded community consultation.

The extent to which citizens trust the various bodies, groups and organisations involved in projects that impact where they live forms part of community wellbeing (see page 16 on the latter). Thus, this data indicates that the absence of community consultation in these isolated cases adversely impacted community wellbeing.

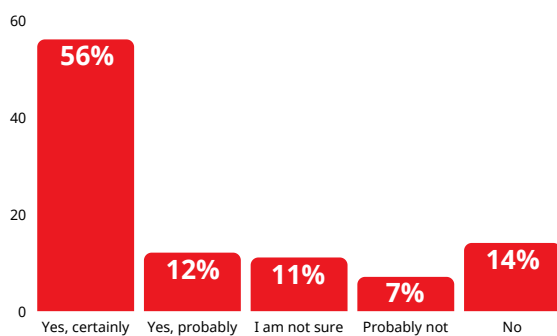
I have lost faith in the process myself. Our town is looking at ways of doing art projects independently rather than relying on the system. Resident

Silo art is a brilliant and fantastic opportunity for any town, but I have been dismayed by the process that was NOT followed and feel that I cannot trust any so called consultative process that is initiated by [particular group/body]. Resident

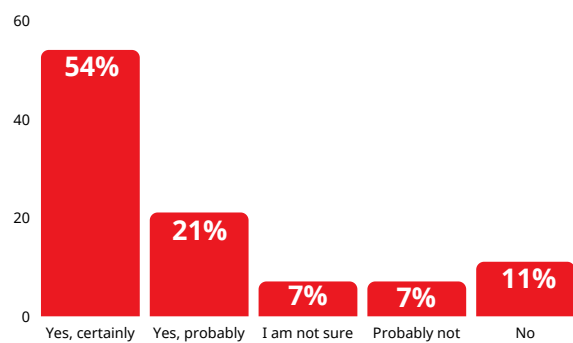
Most participants who described these particular situations identified the town where they live. Therefore, it is possible to identify that this data pertains to highly isolated cases (i.e. between 2 and 3 sites/projects in total).

Additional survey insights—Social and community wellbeing

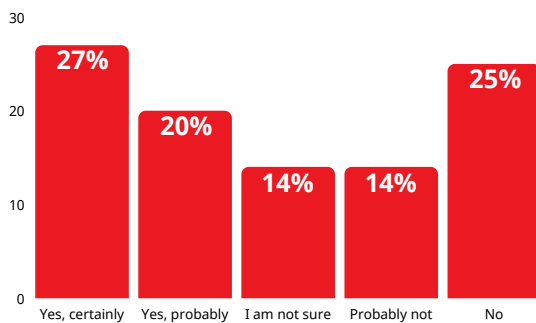
Q. I personally value how silo art is helping to develop the art scene/community in my town



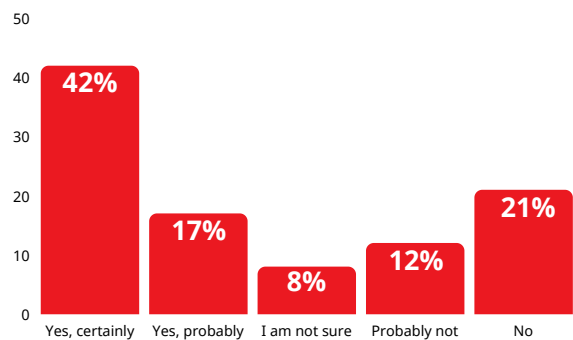
Q. I personally value how silo art is helping to transform my town into a tourism destination



Q. I have developed more or stronger connections with people in my town through silo art (e.g. talking to other residents about silo art)



Q. The silo art in my town makes me feel part of something 'bigger'



Financial wellbeing of local communities

Analysis of survey and interview data pertaining to residents' perceptions of how silo art stimulates local businesses indicates that while silo art consistently attracts visitors to the site of the artwork, what happens 'next' (including economic impacts) varies considerably between towns depending on the dynamics of the silo art site, the layout and location of the town and the businesses operating there.

Further, the data indicates that the extent to which individual businesses benefit from silo art visitors also varies, depending for instance on the specific location of the business within the town.

Indeed, a marked contrast between business owners/managers who attributed the survival to their business entirely to silo art visitors, and those who reported that silo art has made no difference whatsoever to their trade, is evident throughout the data.

Thus, more broadly, the findings show that variability in the extent to which silo art directly stimulates local businesses in each town is largely oriented around what visitors interact with when they arrive.

In other words, the findings indicate that the act of painting a silo, in isolation, will not necessarily or automatically 'save' local businesses, and ongoing activation and development of the site, and the town, is crucial to realising the potential economic impacts of silo art.

The apparent variety in economic stimulation makes generalised conclusions about the impacts of silo art on the financial wellbeing of local communities, or pursuit of single monetary 'amounts', impractical. Moreover, drawing generalised conclusions about financial benefits would require in-depth analysis of individual towns involving economic indicators before, and after, a silo art project, as well as provisions to account for the variable impacts of COVID-19 on travel and business trading in each state and region.

The apparent variation in economic impacts also underscores the importance of considering survey data (e.g. percentages) in relation to qualitative data (e.g. comments from participants who live and/or own businesses in silo art towns). The latter in particular help to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how silo art can support local economies in rural and regional Australian towns.

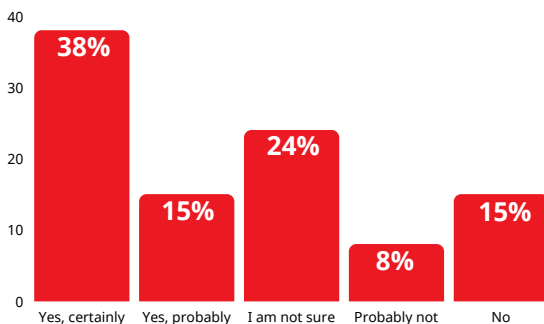
9. Mixed impacts: Consistent visitor attraction, with variable economic stimulation across towns

47% of local business owners/managers responded that the silo art in their town had a noticeable/observable positive impact on local businesses. A further 34% selected 'some indications of positive impact' in response to this survey question. However, survey comments and interview conversations with local business owners/managers and other residents provide a basis for delving deeper into the 'town-level' economic impacts of silo art.

Q. LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER/MANAGER Which of the following best describes what you think about silo art as a way to stimulate local businesses in your town?

Noticeable / observable positive impact	47%
Some indications of positive impact	34%
No impact / difference to local business	11%
I am not sure or I am undecided	6%
Negative impact on local business	1%
Other	1%

Q. RESIDENTS: I know of businesses in my town that have benefited financially from having silo art located here



Most residents and business owners/managers reported that the silo art in their town continually attracts visitors. However, these participants generally emphasised that either:

- Visitors also spend time in the town and purchase from businesses; or
- Visitors observe the art, take photos and drive on (and thus businesses in the town have not benefited).

The silo art is most likely the only reason people come to stop in our town. Without it, we would likely have no businesses left. Local Business Owner/Manager

Getting visitors to spend their tourist money is quite difficult. I watch as cars just drive by and don't even get out to take photos, let alone visit the rest of the town. [...] So as far as money being spent in the town, well it's not anywhere near what the outside world thinks. Local Business Owner/Manager

Participants who commented that visitors only observe the art (without purchasing locally) often also identified factors that they perceive to contribute to this behaviour. Four factors were mentioned most often:

1. Proximity of the silo to the town;
2. Whether businesses operate in the town, business opening hours;
3. The nature of advertising and information available before and during visits (if any); and
4. Facilities at the silo art site.

No benefits as the visitors come and have a look and drive away as we don't have much here for them to stop for and they say it was done for tourism and would help the town but that is not so. No cafe or coffee shop here. A small [niche] shop that gets a rare few. There has been more tourists, but that is all.

Resident

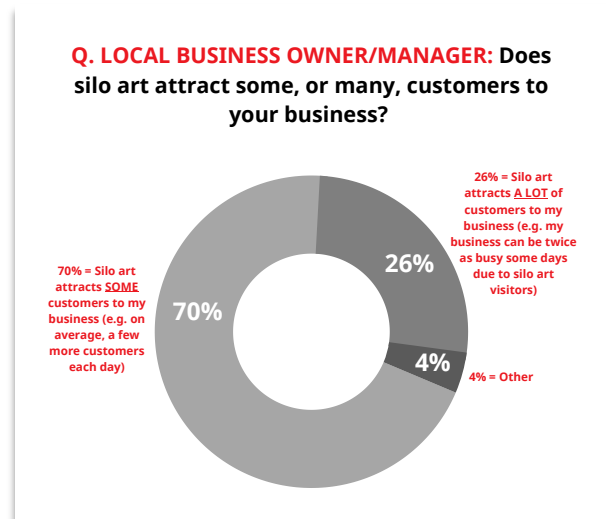
10. Mixed impacts: Economic stimulation varies by business, depending for instance on the businesses specific location within the town

64% (or 118) of the 183 local business survey participants responded either 'Yes, certainly' or 'Yes, probably' to the question: *Would you say that silo art attracts customers to your business?*



Of the 118 owners/managers who responded that silo art attracts customers to their business:

- 26% identified that silo art attracts a lot of customers to their business, and 70% identified that silo art attracts some customers to their business.
- 38% responded either 'Yes, certainly' or 'Yes, probably' to the question: *Has the attraction of silo art visitors to your business enabled you to offer any existing staff more hours?*
- 24% responded either 'Yes, certainly' or 'Yes, probably' to the question: *Has the attraction of silo art visitors to your business enabled you to employ any additional/new staff?*



Residents and business owners/managers often commented on factors that they believe influence whether specific businesses in their town benefit from silo art visitors. Four factors were mentioned most often:

1. Location of the business in relation to the silo;
2. Location of the business within the town (e.g. main street, side streets, outskirts);
3. Number and location of other businesses in the town (e.g. whether other businesses are closer to the silo art site); and
4. Whether the business offers relevant facilities (e.g. toilets).

It is a tourism draw card. It certainly brings people to the town and attracts interest etc. But we are located a few minutes drive away from the town centre, so visitors just don't come here. We are a takeaway shop. If visitors want food they will naturally go to a shop in the main street.

Local Business Owner/Manager

Additionally, some owners/managers who described how the presence of silo art in their town has benefited their business further contextualised their experience by highlighting that Local Councils and/or other local stakeholder groups have utilised silo art as one

component of broader tourism and town development strategies:

The local council have invested more in tourism since the [town] silos opened. They have spent well in our town building interpretive walkways, public toilets and landscaping. We have invested a further half a million dollars in our business in renovating our kitchen and facilities to keep up with the tourism expansion. We were successful before the silos were painted but they are to be credited with at least 25 percent of our annual increase since they were completed. Silo art out here is huge and supported by many travellers and locals alike. They make ordinary towns extraordinary and help them survive. They also teach councils that tourism works and we can not just rely on agriculture out here. Plus think about the fact it is now agriculture working with tourism and in most cases history of our towns. Local Business Owner/Manager

The above comment also reinforces that each individual businesses' financial position 'before silo art' shapes the extent to which they can respond to increased visitors stemming from completion of the artwork.

Such insight again reinforces that a myriad of factors shape what visitors interact with when they arrive in towns with silo art, the manner in which visitor attraction translates into local purchasing, and varied impacts on local businesses.

Table 5. Comparison - Industry/Business type

Q. Would you say that silo art attracts customers to your business?

	Total number of respondents who selected this industry/business type*	Yes, certainly	Yes, probably	I am not sure	Probably not	No
Restaurant, café, pub, diner etc. with in-house dining	54	61%	22%	4%	6%	7%
Takeaway food and/or beverage retail (e.g. bakery or coffee van)	20	55%	15%	10%	5%	15%
Grocery/Corner store or supermarket	14	43%	43%	-	-	14%
Other retail store (e.g. homewares fashion retailer, newsagent, antiques)	25	36%	16%	4%	28%	16%
Tourist service/ accommodation provider (e.g. hotel, caravan park, motel, tour guide, bus company)	36	65%	12%	7%	12%	4%
Art-focused business (e.g. art gallery, artist studio selling direct to the public)	12	50%	33%	-	17%	-
Petrol/Fuel station	3	67%	-	-	-	33%
Other not listed	48	26%	19%	10%	23%	22%

*Note: Respondents could select multiple industries/business types (e.g. a dine-in café that also offers takeaway would have selected two industries/business types)

Table 6. Comparison - State business located

Q. Would you say that silo art attracts customers to your business?

	Total number of respondents who selected this state	Yes, certainly	Yes, probably	I am not sure	Probably not	No
South Australia	31	23%	35%	10%	13%	19%
Queensland	11	46%	9%	-	18%	27%
New South Wales	48	42%	25%	6%	15%	12%
Victoria	71	59%	17%	4%	14%	6%
Western Australia	22	33%	5%	19%	24%	19%

Key implications for new and existing silo art activation, promotion and management strategies

Participant discussion around the roles of broader tourism and town development strategies, and various other factors shaping what silo art visitors interact with when they arrive, underscores opportunities for local authorities (e.g. Councils, Shires) to engage further with silo art as a strategic asset that can be activated and developed on an ongoing basis as part of (or a launching pad for) longer-term plans to stimulate economic revitalisation. Tourism bodies and regional development boards could also be pivotal in realising opportunities to re-frame silo art as part of broader economic development and regional planning. Additionally, funding schemes that acknowledge the importance of ongoing investment in and stewardship of existing silo art sites as part of broader strategies (as well as investment in additional silo art sites) could be instrumental towards greater engagement with silo art as a 'launching pad', and a strategic asset, rather than a once-off and isolated investment that is 'complete' when the paint dries.

Page 84 of this report further discusses opportunities to re-frame silo art as a strategic asset within longer-term tourism planning and economic development.

In terms of recommendations that could be implemented more immediately, identification of business location within the town as a key factor shaping variable stimulation of individual businesses suggests that local stakeholders could consider strategies to direct visitors around the town, and to businesses that may not be visible from the silo art site or upon driving down the main street. For instance, communication materials (e.g. websites) that visitors access before they arrive, and communication mechanisms (e.g. brochures, signage) at the silo art site, should identify walking/driving distances and opening hours for each business or attraction (e.g. museum) throughout the town. Encouraging visitors to explore multiple businesses and attractions also makes

good 'silo art tourism business sense' in terms of adding variety and depth to the visitor experience.

The imperative to invest in the activation and promotion of existing silo art sites is further reinforced by feedback from visitor participants regarding issues such as absent or out-of-date online and print information about particular sites, local businesses and towns, minimal or no road signage, limited or incomplete surrounding site infrastructure, and the absence of information about businesses and the town at silo art sites (see pages 49–50 of this report).

Addressing the apparent issues and opportunities surrounding activation of existing sites, and the current disconnect between visitors and local businesses in silo art towns, may require funding from multiple sources, and collaboration between community groups, arts organisations, Local Councils, Shires and other levels of government, tourism bodies and regional boards.

A further note about local business survival and community wellbeing

Some participants explicitly highlighted that, even when a limited number or variety of businesses that benefit from silo art visitors, the survival of one or two key businesses can have a significant positive impact on certain communities:

We only have one business in our town and that is the pub. It is important that the pub is a viable business as that is the meeting place for the community. [...] If the pub had been closed, it would have been a disaster. Resident

The positive vibe the silos have created in our town cannot be underestimated. Many businesses are naive to how they help ie more customers in the pubs means more food purchased locally.

Local Business Owner/Manager

Main street businesses and hospitality business benefit directly. Overall we all benefit if those businesses thrive and can continue to trade. Business survival is often marginal in small towns.

Resident

Insights: COVID-19 and local business experiences of silo art

As noted previously, in-depth investigation of how the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped the Australian silo art phenomenon, including the impacts of silo art visitors on local businesses in each silo art town, is beyond the scope of this research project.

However, the local business survey asked one specific question about how COVID-19 has influenced the number of silo art visitors who also visit their business.

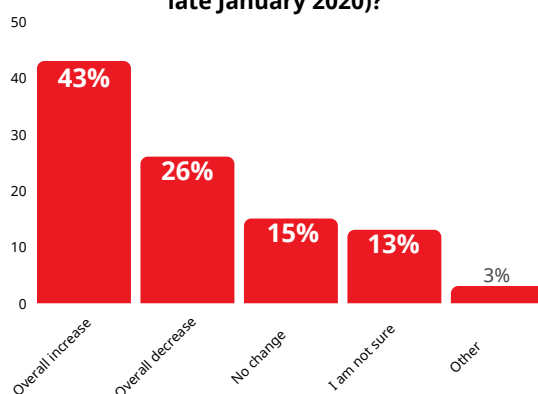
Of the 118 (out of 183) business owners/managers who identified that silo art attracts customers to their business, 43% identified an overall increase in silo art visitors during COVID-19.

26% identified an overall decrease, and 15% identified no change at all.

The relatively high percentage of participants who reported an overall increase during COVID-19 reinforces the importance of further investigating precisely how COVID-19 has shaped the social and economic impacts

of silo art to date (e.g. the extent to which a potential increase in visitors travelling more within their state may have 'offset' a decrease of interstate visitors associated with COVID-19 travel restrictions).

Q. LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER/MANAGER: Has the number of silo art visitors that visit your business changed during COVID-19 (i.e. since late January 2020)?



Rupanyup, Victoria – Photo: Adrian Tusek

Residents experience silo art in a variety of ways: Multiple audience groups within the community

The data:

Resident participants responded to three key open-ended questions before any multiple choice questions about their experiences of silo art:

1. What comes to mind when you see or hear the words 'silo art'?
2. What are the benefits of having silo art in your town, for residents and the community (if any)?
3. What are the drawbacks of having silo art in your town, for residents and the community (if any)?

The same questions formed part of interviews with residents.

The analysis:

We analysed how residents talked about silo art, and the benefits and drawbacks of these projects, grouping responses according to the particular aspects and impacts of silo art that each participant emphasised.

The findings:

Different resident participants perceive and experience the silo art in their town in different ways. Specifically, the analysis identified 11 main *ways of thinking about* or *perspectives on* silo art within local communities (see Figure 11 below).

Figure 11. Eleven audience groups within the local community

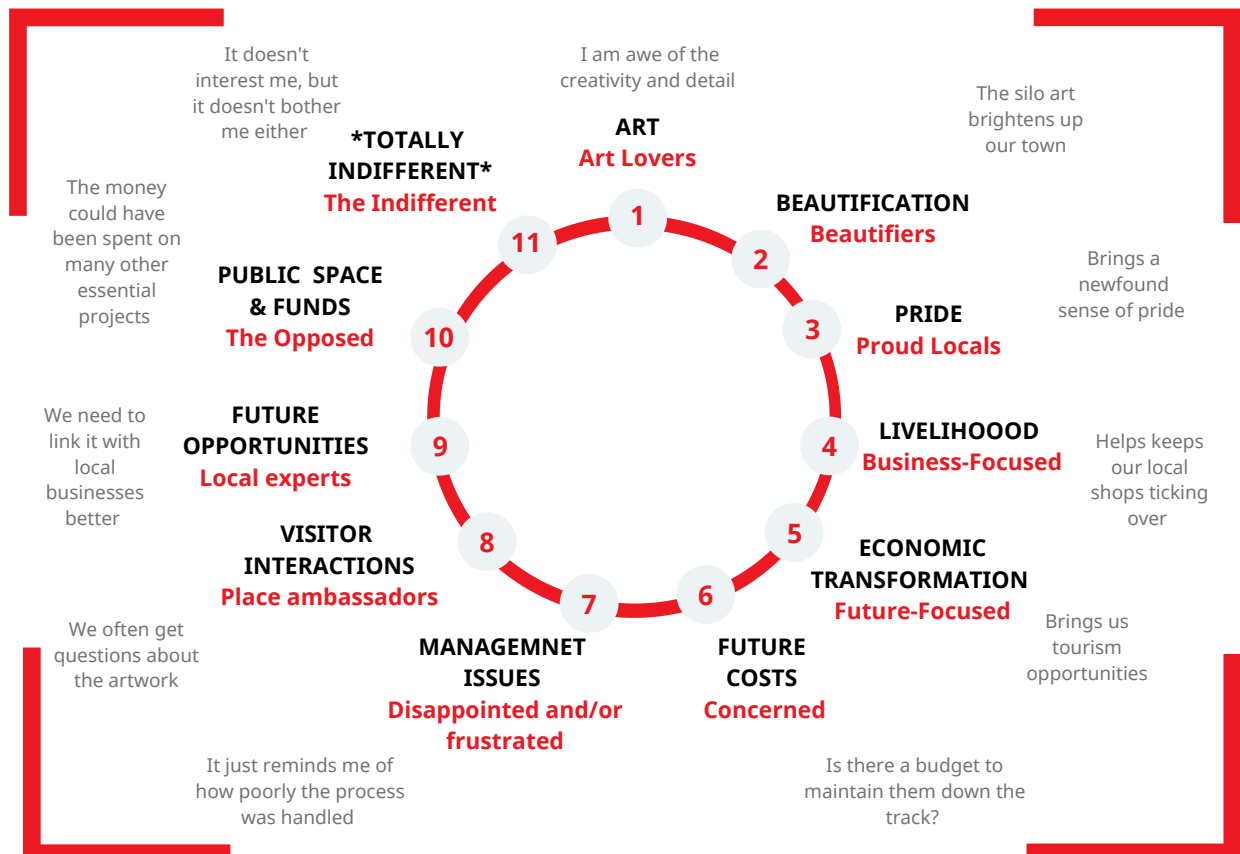


Figure 11 identifies each perspective as a particular resident audience ‘group’ to assist with clearly communicating these findings.

However, as the comments below illustrate, these perspectives are not mutually exclusive.

Rather, most resident participants emphasised between 2 and 3 aspects and impacts of silo art. This finding indicates that individual residents tend to see silo art as a project or initiative that encompasses multiple aspects and can (or should) impact the local community in multiple ways.



Implications for existing silo art sites and towns

Identifying some of the main ways residents think about silo art can inform efforts to enhance the potential benefits of silo art for local communities.

For instance, the finding that there are some members within some communities who are concerned about the future costs of maintaining existing silo art sites indicates that Local Councils and/or other stakeholder groups could consider providing opportunities for local residents to ask questions regarding their concerns, and greater access to relevant information to address (e.g. details of site management strategies).

Further, Local Councils and other groups involved in the ongoing management and stewardship of silo art sites

(e.g. arts organisations, tourism boards, local committees) could consider identifying and collaborating with members of the community who are currently serving as ‘Everyday Place Ambassadors’. Familiar with the particular questions visitors ask about the silo art and the town, these residents may be able to offer valuable insights regarding strategies and initiatives to encourage visitors to spend longer in the town.

Community members within the Local Experts resident group could also provide invaluable input regarding strategies to activate and promote existing silo art sites.

Summary Table 7 below highlights examples of how community engagement strategies (before and after the artwork is completed) could be tailored to each audience group.

Table 7. Examples of tailored community engagement strategies

	Aspects of silo art emphasised	Audience group	Potential and actual impacts emphasised	Examples of strategies to engage community members within each group (before, during and/or after silo art project)
1	Art	Art Lovers	Positive daily or regular encounters with an artwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Expansion on creative / artistic inspiration, processes and the artist through communication channels such as local Facebook pages *Seek input from residents regarding provision of creative activities in conjunction with community centres (e.g. painting classes) *Opportunities to become involved in future community or public art projects (e.g. murals on building walls around the town).
2	Beautification	Beautifiers	Positive daily or regular interactions with an element of the town's physical environment (i.e. silo artwork) that adds to the overall aesthetics of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Seek input from local residents regarding the nature and appearance of areas and infrastructure around the silo art site (e.g. picnic tables, toilet blocks) *Clearly communicate how such surrounding areas and infrastructure will be maintained over time *Consider opportunities to situate new and existing silo art projects within broader town enhancement, streetscape and infrastructure improvement strategies
3	Pride	Proud locals	Investment in a positive symbolic representation of the town and/or community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Promotional strategies that expand on and celebrate how local communities contributed to the silo art project *Promotional strategies that expand on and reinforce local stories told through the artwork
4	Livelihood	Business-focused	Potential and actual immediate or short term economic stimulation (e.g. visitors purchasing from local businesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Implement strategies to connect silo art visitors with local businesses seeking more customers (e.g. identifying and providing directions to local businesses on signage at the silo art site) *Support local businesses who may be experiencing increased customers (e.g. Local Councils sharing advertisements for more employees or assisting local businesses in accessing funds for expansion of seating and other infrastructure) *Other strategies to help realise the economic opportunities of silo art (e.g. investment in events, promotional materials that celebrate both the art and local businesses, strategies to build tourist awareness and interest in silo art)

Table 7. Examples of tailored community engagement strategies cont.

	Aspects of silo art emphasised	Audience group	Potential and actual impacts emphasised	Examples of strategies to engage community members within each group (before, during and/or after silo art project)
5	Local economic transformation	Future-focused	Potential and actual long-term economic stimulation (e.g. tourist attraction supporting diversification of local economy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Consider developing and implementing broader town activation and promotion strategies surrounding silo art that will support the attraction of visitors, and deliver a more complete tourist experience once visitors arrive in the town *Provide information regarding the above broader strategies, and how silo art forms part of such strategies (rather than positioning silo art as a stand-alone project that will create and sustain a local tourism industry/ sector in isolation)
6	Future costs	Concerned	Economic costs related to longevity of the paint, use of silos as a canvas and ongoing site management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide opportunities for local residents to ask questions regarding their concerns (to Local Councils, tourism boards, community groups etc.) *Distribute relevant information to address current concerns accordingly (e.g. details of site management strategies).
7	Management issues	Disappointed and/or frustrated	Apparent issues with community involvement or consultation (i.e. processes involved), the artwork and/or how the artwork relates to the community/town (i.e. the outcomes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Enable opportunities for residents to provide formal feedback regarding their views on the process and/or outcomes of silo art projects *Consider and act upon such feedback when developing strategies to promote and activate existing silo art sites, and when undertaking similar public and community art projects, as well as various other tourism initiatives, infrastructure development projects etc.
8	Everyday firsthand interactions with visitors	Everyday place ambassadors	Everyday firsthand interactions with silo art visitors (e.g. answering questions about the artwork, expanding on stories told in the artwork, providing directions, offering advice on other things to do in the town)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Engage and collaborate with these residents to learn about the particular questions visitors ask about the silo art and the town, and what additions to the site or town would encourage visitors to spend longer in the town *Ensure these residents have access to promotional resources, information packages, pamphlets etc. to share with visitors
9	Future opportunities	Local experts	Opportunities to enhance experiences of silo art visitors, to attract more visitors, and to support potential positive impacts of silo art on the town more broadly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Engage and collaborate with these residents regarding strategies to activate and promote existing silo art sites *Consult with these residents to assist with identifying key issues and resource constraints currently inhibiting or limiting the potential benefits of silo art *Listen to these residents regarding opportunities to collaborate with surrounding towns (with or without silo art) in order to enhance community engagement with the site and/or develop a more comprehensive tourist experience/offering
10	Involvement of public space, funds, resources etc.	The opposed	Various potential/future and actual/present adverse impacts related to the involvement of public/community structure, space and/or themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide opportunities for residents to formally voice opinions *Carefully evaluate, assess and seek to address the issues raised by these residents as part of planning and management strategies
11	*Totally indifferent*	The indifferent	May be aware of the project – but don't see silo art in any particular way (i.e. totally indifferent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Although indifferent, these residents may appreciate being informed of key information before, during and after completion of the project

Implications for towns considering silo art, or similar projects

Identifying multiple audience groups within the communities currently living in towns with silo art also provides a tool for thinking about alternative ways to engage community members in future projects of a similar kind.

For example, the identification of these groups highlights how individual residents are likely to perceive different

concerns, potential benefits, opportunities and challenges when the idea of a silo art project is first proposed.

More broadly, these findings reinforce that:

- Community members do not necessarily see or think about silo art in the same way; and
- For local communities, silo art projects encompass multiple aspects or layers.



Privately owned silos, Weethalle, New South Wales – Artist: Heesco Khosnaran – Photo: Ann Rutherford

Key issues and challenges identified by residents and local business owners/managers

There is a real disconnect between the tourism advertising and promotion and that conversation and support then filtering down to the businesses. The campaigns are fantastic but when people get here, the conversation hasn't been had at town level and often nothing is open leaving tourists disappointed. The issues businesses face rurally haven't been verbalised therefore creating a flow on effect for lack of staff, lack of viability, opening hours not substantial, the list goes on.

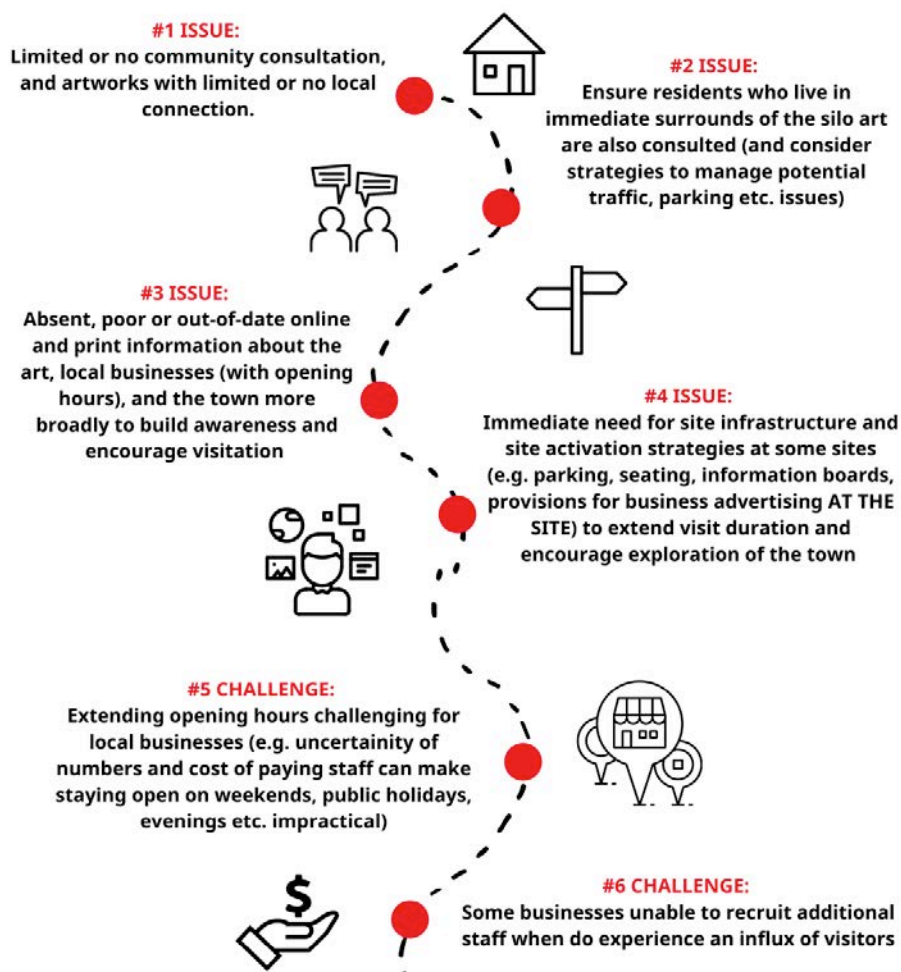
Local Business Owner/Manager

Residents and local business owners/managers often discussed issues and opportunities that, from their perspective, should be addressed to enhance the potential social and/or economic benefits of silo art.

We compiled and analysed discussion of these issues across both survey comments and interviews. Figure 12 identifies the most commonly discussed issues.

As well as providing a resource for silo art towns to consult when designing future promotional and activation strategies, these findings highlight key issues for small towns contemplating such projects to consider.

Figure 12. Six main issues and challenges identified by residents and local business owners/managers



Key challenge: Addressing the disconnect between visitors eager to ‘give back’ and local businesses who would like more customers

As discussed in Part Two of this report (see pages 49–50), some visitor participants expressed frustration that, although they were eager to spend money in silo art towns, few or no businesses were present and open during in the towns visited.

On the other hand, some local business owners/managers who completed the survey expressed that they hoped the silo art in their town would attract more customers to their business (see visualisation in Figure 13 below).

Figure 13. Visualising the disconnect



Indeed, the challenge of addressing the apparent disconnect between visitors and local businesses encompasses multiple layers, including the many practical issues surrounding business survival in small rural and regional towns

However, providing up-to-date information about the location and opening hours of businesses in or around each silo art on websites and other platforms that visitors

interact with before they travel, could contribute towards encouraging visitation when business are open.

Online communication channels offer flexibility in terms of enabling updates as business details and opening hours change. However, printed information (e.g. brochures, magazine advertisements, feature articles) could direct visitors to appropriately maintained websites with current details.

Similarly, signage and/or brochures available at each silo art site could feature a map of surrounding businesses that also identifies walking or driving distances, while still directing visitors to a website listing each business's current opening hours.

The finding of that many visitors are interested in 'giving back' to silo art towns (e.g. see pages 24–25, 38) further reinforces the opportunity for Local Councils, community groups, tourism boards and other stakeholder groups involved in silo art projects to collaborate with local businesses as strategic partners in the development of more comprehensive tourist offerings and broader economic revitalisation strategies.

Moreover, genuine collaboration with local businesses should commence during silo art planning stages. For instance, community consultation should not only enable local business owners and managers to 'have their say'. Rather, community consultation processes should also provide opportunities for these residents to share their specialised knowledge of the area, and provide input towards key decisions during planning phases that can in turn facilitate the potential for silo art to stimulate local businesses.



What is your town's unique front-page story?

Resident

Findings Part Four: Broader critical issues, challenges and opportunities identified by both visitors and local communities

This fourth part of the report outlines nine broader critical issues, challenges and opportunities that both visitor participants, and participants living in towns with silo art, discussed in survey comments and interviews (see Table 8 below).

The purpose of outlining these issues, challenges and opportunities is to provide further a resource for towns to consult when undertaking or considering a silo art project, and when designing strategies to activate existing sites.

Table 8. Nine critical issues, challenges and opportunities identified by both visitors and communities

Issue / Challenge / Opportunity			Examples of participant comments
1	Mixed views	Cultural representation and the inherent selectivity of art	<i>It [silo art] currently concentrates on narrow selection of white history.</i> Visitor
2	Mixed views	Use of silos as canvasses	<i>I have mixed feelings - I know it's only paint, but I do regret the demise of the beautiful silos - they are our vernacular architecture and should be left alone.</i> Resident
3	Uncertainties	Longevity of the paint and ongoing site maintenance	<i>I have read that at most this artwork will last for 5-10 years and need maintenance, refreshing. Who is going to fund this, particularly in small communities where money is tight? Will the artwork fall into disrepair and simply look sad and neglected?</i> Resident
4	Concerns	Public safety issues, enhanced by the variable nature of each site	<i>Many believe road-rules do not apply in the "sticks" so there are near-accidents almost daily. Also, visitors follow their GPS & leave our town via a dirt back-road, then they get bogged & require us to pull them out.</i> Resident
5	Mixed views	Originality and differentiation of the artworks	<i>I think that silo art shouldn't become predictable however. Towns could or should make their silo art highly individualized not merely in the imagery but perhaps also via techniques used. I wouldn't like to see repetition into a generic silo art form occurring. There is so much potential for interpreting what silo art is and what it can or could be. I'm not sure that that has been fully explored yet.</i> Visitor
6	Opportunity	Audience desire to preserve originality and push boundaries creatively by combining unique artistic styles and genuine local stories that only certain towns can tell	<i>Let artists be inspired by stories and allow them to find imaginative ways of depicting things.</i> Visitor
7	Mixed views	The extent to which silo art currently appeals to children and younger audiences	<i>I think of art produced for older Australians. I think it's been 'done to death' and now time for something new! My young kids don't even flinch when we pass it.</i> Visitor
8	Opportunity	Re-framing and activating silo art as a launching pad and strategic asset that can reposition small towns in a new competitive arena	<i>Its a worthwhile investment if the towns also have the other infrastructure and programs ready to back up the tourism attraction potential and encourage revitalization.</i> Visitor
9	Opportunity	Constellations of small towns (with and without silo art) working together as networks or 'webs'	<i>Each town sees themselves as individual and no need to promote the entire region. When in reality visitors don't come to only see 1 silo, they come to see them all in the region.</i> Resident

1. Mixed views: Cultural representation and inherent selectivity of art

Each silo artwork tells a story of some kind. However, this first issue pertains to how the silo art sites around the country collectively tell a broader story about Australia.

Specifically, whereas some visitors and local residents identified silo art as a 'showcase' of 'iconic Australian life', others emphasised that key elements of Australia have thus far been omitted from the broader collective story crafted.

For instance, limited representation of Indigenous Australians, and women, were often discussed.

I am disappointed that like so much other silo art across the country our town artwork depicts a white man. It's as if no one other than white men live in rural Australia, or more likely only the white men and what they do is important. Resident

Indigenous culture more than "deserves" a place in silo artworks. Resident

Other participants discussed the extent to which silo artworks celebrate the past, present and/or future, expressing concerns that historical representations currently dominate.

I'm a bit ambivalent about ideas commemorating the past as a default good thing to do, especially in rural places which can seem too mired in ideas of lauding history as their only possible identity avenue. I think an interest in history is good but can also be stagnating if the needs of contemporary residents in country areas aren't included or met.

Visitor

This finding suggests a need to actively consider opportunities for silo art works, and surrounding materials and initiatives (e.g. promotional videos, social media content, signage), to highlight and celebrate the many varied elements of Australia's past, present and future in unique ways.

Try and be adventurous with the design. Familiarise yourself with the silo art that is already out there and try and portray a different aspect of your town or area that other places have not highlighted already. Don't be afraid to show what is happening today and what you hope for the future rather than just reflecting the past. Visitor



Viterra's Coonalpyn silos, South Australia – Artist: Guido van Helten– Photo: Karen Simpson

2. Mixed views: Use of silos as canvasses

Some visitors and local residents identified the symbolic 're-birth' of existing silos as a cause for celebration.

Resurrection- bringing something forgotten back and giving it a new life. Visitor

These structures [the silos] are saved from the scrap heap and become iconic features themselves, I feel like I am helping save a piece of Australia's history by visiting. Visitor

Others expressed appreciation and preference for the silos 'as they are'. Some participants within the latter group adamantly opposed the painting of any silo, whereas others were particularly concerned that the ongoing rise of silo art would result in unpainted silos becoming a rarity.

Our silos have beautiful silhouettes of gum trees when the sun is setting. It is Mother Natures work! Not many people see this or realise it happens. Resident

They are hideous eyesores ruining the extraordinary beauty of the silo engineering in the landscape. Visitor

Additionally however, it is important to also note that many visitor participants (including those in support of silo art) expressed interest in the historical emergence and original functions of silos in Australia.

Hence, more broadly, this finding reinforces potential opportunities to celebrate and develop unpainted silos as heritage sites and unique tourism experiences.

There is the potential to have tours in the future to see the Australia of the past - the one with silos, standing tall and majestic without a dab of paint.

Resident

3. Uncertainties: Longevity of the paint and site maintenance

Many visitors and residents expressed concerns about how long the paint used to create a silo artwork lasts, and more general questions about how each site would be maintained over the years and decades to come.

I am concerned about the art's longevity in the harsh sun. What will happen in the long term? Will the art fade and evoke negative emotions in the future? I am curious/interested in the logistics of this art form. Visitor

More specifically, these comments indicate uncertainty (i.e. a lack of information) about the longevity of the paint and 'what will happen next', that in turn had resulted in confusion and concerns.

Therefore, this finding reinforces the importance of clearly communicating information about the longevity of the paint, steps taken to preserve or extend the 'paint-life' and other aspects of ongoing site management with both residents and visitors.

4. Concerns: Public safety issues at some sites

Both visitors and residents identified public safety issues. Many of these participants acknowledged that silos were not originally constructed or located with 'tourist access' in mind, each site is unique, silo art visitors are usually encountering associated roads for the first time. These participants often identified appropriate road signage leading to the site (e.g. 'Silo Art 10km on Left) and space for visitors to park and view the art safely as the two most pressing issues to be addressed in this regard.

Councils need to organise parking, signage & information boards BEFORE art is completed. We have people stopping in the middle of the highway, getting out & taking photos, while traffic is continuing on around them. Resident

5. Mixed views: Originality and differentiation of the artworks

This fifth issue again involves contrasting views. While some visitors and participants commented that each current silo art site is highly unique, other participants commented that an increase in sites has resulted in a collection of 'more or less the same' art telling similar stories. Further, some participants expressed more general concerns that the spread of silo art could erode the originality and overall appeal of this art form.

The artwork is generic. The imagery is limited. These are sentimentalist views of the bush. Visitor

It really depends on both the link to place and the stories to be told. Too much 'silo art' because other towns have it dilutes the appeal. It should be clearly linked to place and tell the story of community, it should also be different to what others have... unique stories ... Visitor

6. Opportunity: Audience desire to preserve originality and push boundaries creatively by combining unique artistic styles and genuine local stories that only certain owners can tell

Discussion around this sixth issue pertains specifically to silo artworks that balance, interweave or marry (a) the unique artistic styles of the artist/s and (b) unique and genuine local stories.

To these participants, the rise of the silo art phenomenon has forged a unique opportunity for small rural and regional communities to engage with highly talented world-leading artists, with the objective of imagining and visualising unique aspects of their local identity and culture in innovative ways. Further, these participants contended that combining unique artistic styles and genuine local stories is central to preserve the originality and overall appeal of Australian silo art.

Silo art, in my mind, is starting to represent a dulled down version of what an artist would usually produce. Visitor

I want to see the artist's interpretation of what is important to the area. Visitor

Be adventurous. Don't just come to the artist with set ideas. [...] Also let the artist speak to locals and present you with their ideas and inspiration. It often takes the eyes of an outsider to show us ourselves. Visitor

7. Mixed views: The extent to which silo art currently appeals to children and younger audiences

Participants expressed highly varied views regarding the current capacity of silo art to appeal to children and younger audiences, and conversely, whether silo art currently appeals primarily or 'only' to mature audiences. For instance, some participants cited that their own children are completely disinterested in silo art. In contrast, others discussed visiting silo art as an enjoyable family trip.

My grown son usually doesn't like detouring too much during travel, but a recent long road trip saw him become interested in the silo art with me & requesting certain silos to visit together which was wonderful to do together. Visitor

I took my 10 year old son there with his two grandmothers (81 and 88) who were both nurses. It was wonderful to see them with the images of the two nurses and for us all to reflect on their achievements in their younger days and on those of others in the same profession. Visitor

The following comment from a visitor interview participant highlights that, rather than concluding silo art is inherently uninteresting to children, expanding on and further enlivening the stories told through silo art could form part of broader strategies to engage children:

I'm actually a school teacher, so I research the artwork and write a story about my adventures to then show the kids on Monday morning. They are like, 'Wow, we'll have to get our parents to go there' and that. You know, just tell the stories that way as well. So as they're learning that sort of stuff as well. They love it. They love different stories, but anyway, and asked about 50 million questions.

Visitor Interview Participant

8. Opportunities: Re-framing and activating silo art as a launching pad and strategic asset that repositions towns in a new competitive arena

Its a worthwhile investment if the towns also have the other infrastructure and programs ready to back up the tourism attraction potential and encourage revisitation. Visitor

Visitors, residents and business owners/managers discussed opportunities to re-frame silo art as part of broader tourism and economic development strategies. According to these participants, realising the potential economic and social benefits of silo art involves thinking about silo art as key part of an ongoing process, rather than an isolated project 'finishes' when the paint dries. In other words, to these participants, there remains 'much work to be done' in terms of the ongoing activation, stewardship and development of all sites, even those sites that both already engage visitors and residents.

These participants often also highlighted that, by attracting visitors to previously forgotten or drive-by areas, silo art re-positions towns amongst new competitors (i.e. rural and regional tourism 'destinations'), while also invoking higher visitor expectations.

Each project must be linked with a tourism plan and ensure businesses are linked in to service visitors so they have a good experience and return. Preparing them for what's available, where and when is necessary and ensures they have a safe and comfortable visit. Websites must be intuitive, well linked between regions and updated. Links to Facebook pages of the local supermarket with opening hours is an example. Art can provide links to many opportunities and creative individuals given funding and structure to consult can bring communities together with their energy. Councils need to provide long term support for strategy, states need to fund councils to maintain services due to more people from populated areas using less populated places. There needs to be monetary recognition. Resident

9. Opportunity: Constellations of small towns with and without silo art working together as networks or ‘webs’

Small towns have got to work together. You’ve got to try and bring everyone along for the journey so to speak. You say, “Look, we are open these days, and another store in a other town 20km away is open these days.” Its about information and communication. Then you’re not so isolated.

Resident Interview Participant

Some visitors, residents and business owners/managers discussed opportunities for groups of small towns in (with and without silo art) to work together as networks in order to overcome resource constraints and offer visitors a more varied and complete experience.

Specifically, these participants advocated that towns within a particular area could work together to produce and promote a ‘region’ or ‘area’ based tourism offering encompassing multiple activities or ‘layers’ for visitors to explore once they arrive in the town. For instance, in addition to listing businesses and attractions within the

town, a website or brochure could also identify businesses and attractions in surrounding small towns (with opening hours and driving distances).

Group together with other nearby towns to create and promote a tour or local map. Visitor

Towns in these areas could coordinate a calendar of range of special ticketed events to encourage people to come stay a while. Visitor

To reiterate further, the data collected in this research indicates that small, previously drive-by and forgotten towns represent a distinguishing element of Australian silo art (see page 23 of this report). Therefore, encouraging silo art visitors to explore other small towns can represent an extension of the ‘silo art experience’. Accordingly, this recommendation refers specifically to development of networks or webs between small towns (not large regional centres) within regions or proximity.

A [report published by the Victoria Tourism Industry Council in 2018](#) reinforces how collaboration between Local Councils, Shires and Local Government Areas can help small towns to overcome resource constraints and offer deep, varied and engaging visitor experiences:



‘Effective Local Government investment in the visitor economy is best achieved in partnership with other stakeholders. Councils cannot operate in isolation. Visitors do not see Local Government boundaries, they are instead attracted to destinations and experiences. Councils must therefore cooperate regionally and focus on the visitors as the customer. In today’s digital age the customer is in complete control of market communications (before, during and after visit). The impacts of neighbouring Councils and regions in attracting, or not attracting, different mixes of visitors will flow over into neighbouring areas. The tourism industry is also highly competitive and constantly adapting, so staying up to speed, and sourcing expertise and insights means most Local Governments work with other parties to maintain effectiveness.’ (Victoria Tourism Industry Council, 2018, p. 14)

Summarising implications and recommendations

The implications and recommendations discussed throughout this report present key considerations for Local Councils, Shires, community groups, tourism boards, local businesses, funding bodies, arts organisations, artists and indeed all stakeholders with an interest in supporting and sustaining the potential benefits of silo art for visitors, local communities and Australia.

Ongoing activation, promotion and stewardship of existing sites

	Implication / recommendation	Pages
1	Direct greater attention to and investment in the ongoing activation, promotion, maintenance and stewardship of existing (and new) silo art sites.	49–50, 70, 77, 84
2	Evaluate opportunities to re-frame silo art as a launching pad and strategic asset (rather than an isolated project that is ‘complete’ when the paint dries).	65, 70, 84
3	Consider working together with other nearby small towns (with and without silo art) as networks or webs in order to overcome resource constraints and offer deeper, more varied and engaging visitor experiences.	85
4	Seek to proactively address the ‘return visits challenge’ (e.g. What would make silo art visitors visit again? How can we make visitors fall in love with our town?)	36, 45, 49–50
5	Seek to collaborate with local businesses in these towns as strategic partners in the development of a deeper and more varied tourism offering.	70, 77–78
6	Address the apparent disconnect between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors eager to spend money in local businesses once in the town, and • Local businesses that would like more customers (see also Figure 13, Page 78). 	49–50, 77–78
7	Actively consider the different ways local residents may think about the silo art in their town, and opportunities to develop ongoing community engagement strategies (i.e. after the artwork is complete) Consult the 11 resident audience groups discussed to assist with this process (see Table 7 for examples).	72–76
8	Engage with the multiple dimensions of silo art’s appeal to visitors and tailor strategies, campaigns and messages and other initiatives intended to promote existing sites (see Table 1 for examples), rather than pursuing ‘one size fits all’ approaches that assume all silo art visitors experience silo art in the same way.	40–44
9	Consider the three main silo art design trips identified in this research when designing strategies to increase visitation, extend visitation time and encourage repeat visits.	45–48
10	Maintain <u>up-to-date</u> online and print information about silo art, local businesses (and opening hours) and the town, and ensure visitors can easily locate this information when considering and planning trips.	49–50 77–78
11	Provide information about local businesses and attractions (and opening hours) <u>at the art site</u> (e.g. signage with a map identifying walking distances to each business and attraction).	49–50 77–78

Silo art planning, funding and project development of new sites

	Implication / recommendation	Pages
1	Actively seek to preserve the distinctiveness of Australian silo art as a unique form of public art and art tourism in the minds of visitors and local communities. For instance, prioritise small towns (rather than larger regional centres) in the development of new sites and funding schemes/decisions.	20–25
2	Sound empirical evidence regarding the impacts of silo art on visitors and residents (to assist with funding applications for new sites, as well as the promotion of existing sites).	27–39
3	Community consultation before and throughout the silo art planning process is essential (to facilitate artworks that tell genuine local stories, and to foster broader engagement with the project amongst the community). Ensure budget components of funding applications include resource allowances for consultation with the community, and artist-community engagement.	22–23, 58–59, 61–63, 77, 83
4	Actively consider the different ways members of local communities may think about silo art when consulting with community members and developing community engagement strategies. Consult the 11 resident audience groups discussed to assist with this process (see also Table 7 for examples).	72–76
5	Ensure community consultation enables local business owners and managers to share their specialised knowledge of the area, and provide input towards key decisions during planning and development phases that can in turn facilitate the potential for silo art to benefit local economies.	70, 77–78
6	Ensure artists engage with the local community, in person, on multiple occasions (e.g. workshops with interested residents to discuss design options, invite artists to spend time living in the town before painting begins etc.). Utilise interactions with artist as opportunities for mutual learning and knowledge exchange. Consider specifying particular forms of artist-community engagement in Artist Briefs and contracts.	22–23, 61–62
7	Actively engage with the specialised skills, abilities and styles of artist/s and pursue opportunities to combine (a) unique artistic styles of each artist and (b) unique and genuine local stories.	22–23, 83
8	Ensure silo artworks tell genuine local stories* that local communities want to talk about for years to come (not only to foster positive community engagement with the art, but also as a key reason visitors engage with the art and develop interest in the town) *Note: A ‘genuine local story’ refers to stories involving landscapes, flora, fauna, people, lifestyles, traditions and other phenomena actually present in the town, or events that actually occurred in the town.	22, 40–44, 58–59, 63, 83
9	Reflect on how design options for future sites differ from existing silo artworks (and how the story told through a proposed design adds to the broader collective story told through Australian silo art).	81, 83–84
10	Install signage to direct traffic to silo art sites, and guide vehicles to safe parking areas etc. <u>before the art is complete</u> . Ensure budget components of funding applications include signage and related site infrastructure.	49–50 77–78

Limitations of this stage of the research and future research priorities

As noted at the outset, this report focuses on the experiences and perceptions of: (1) silo art visitors, (2) residents who live in silo art towns, and (3) local business owners. Given the highly unpredictable travel restrictions and social distancing requirements surrounding the current COVID-19 pandemic, this research primarily involved online data collection.

More specifically, the findings presented are based on self-reported data (i.e. interviews and online surveys) pertaining to these three key participant groups.

Hence, future research should consider integrating other data collection methods such as direct observation of visitor behaviour silo art sites and within silo art towns (e.g. main/business streets) and in-person survey distribution (e.g. handing out paper surveys at each site).

Additionally, while Community Centres and Visitor Centres staff kindly assisted with distributing paper versions of the main survey in some location, future research should consider wider paper survey distribution.

In terms of the survey participant sample, visitor and resident respondents were predominantly female, and between 45 and 74 years. Therefore, future research should prioritise greater participation amongst:

- Children within the community and children who visit silo art;
- Young adult residents and visitors; and
- Male residents and male visitors.

Further, it is important to further reinforce that findings regarding economic impacts are based on business owner/manager and resident perceptions of the impact of silo art, not actual economic figures (e.g. business turnover or profit).

More broadly, a case study research design involving in-depth study of specific silo art projects or towns could be instrumental to advancing knowledge of the specific factors that shape variable social and economic impacts. Data collection before, during and after the artwork is complete would be preferable, if/when funding permits.

Finally, in terms of COVID-19, in-depth investigation of how the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped the Australian silo art phenomenon is beyond the scope of this stage of the research. Moreover, given Australia is currently home to over 48 silo art sites across five states, future research into COVID-19 and silo art ought to consider the particular and variable ways the pandemic has impacted travel, everyday life and business operations in each state and region with silo art.

Next stages of this project



The next stages of the Australian Silo Art and Wellbeing research project will be based on available funding. Updates about future stages of the project will be shared via the 'Silo Art Survey' Facebook page.

References

1. Pratt, H. (2006). Wheat silos of NSW. *Kunapipi: Journal of Postcolonial Writing and Culture*, 28(2), 138-148.
2. Tsakonas, A. (2019). Victoria's Silo Art Trail. *Fabrications: The Journal of The Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, 29(2), 273-276.
3. Franklin, A. (2018). Art tourism: A new field for tourist studies. *Tourist Studies*, 18(4), 399-416.
4. Dodge, R., Daly, A.P., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. D. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(3), 222-235.
5. Marks, N., & Shah, H. (2004). A well-being manifesto for a flourishing society. *Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 3(4), 9-15.
6. Coverdale, G.E., & Long, A. T. (2015). Emotional wellbeing and mental health: An exploration into health promotion in young people and families. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 135(1), 27-36.
7. New Zealand Ministry for Culture & Heritage. (2021). Cultural Well-being: What is it? Available from <https://mch.govt.nz/files/437441-CWB%20-%20What%20is%20CWB.pdf>
8. Netemeyer, R.G., Warmath, D., Fernandes, D., & Lynch, J.G. (2018). How am I doing? Perceived financial well-being, its perceived antecedents, and its relation to overall well-being. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45(1), 68-89.
9. Wiseman, J., & Brasher, K. (2008). Community wellbeing in an unwell world: Trend, challenges, and possibilities. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 29(3), 353-366.
10. Atkinson, S., Bagnall, A., Corcoran, R., & South, J. (2017). What is community wellbeing? Conceptual review. Retrieved from <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/what-is-community-wellbeing-conceptual-review/>
11. Jackson, M.R., Kabwasa-Green, F., & Herranz, J. (2006). *Cultural vitality in communities: Interpretation and indicators*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
12. Johnson, K. A. (2010). Community engagement: Exploring a relational approach to consultation and collaborative practice in Australia. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 16, 217-234.
13. Kay, A. (2000). Art and community development: The role the arts have in regenerating communities. *Community Development Journal*, 35(4), 414-424.
14. Madyaningrum, M. E., & Sonn, C. (2010). Exploring the meaning of participation in a community art project: A case study on the Seeming project. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 21(4), 358-370.
15. Balfour, B., W-P Fortunato, M., & Alter, T.R. (2018). The creative fire: An interactional framework for rural arts-based development. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 63, 229-239.

Appendix: Completed Australian silo art site list

As of July 2021. Based on publicly available information accessible at the time of compiling the present report.

	LOCATION		ARTWORK COMPLETED		LEADING ARTIST/S		SILO OWNERSHIP
1	Northam	WA	2015	Mar	Phlegm HENSE	CORPORATE	CBH (Co-operative Bulk Handling)
2	Brim	VIC	2016	Jan	Guido van Helten	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
3	Ravensthorpe	WA	2016	Aug	Amok Island	CORPORATE	CBH
4	Patchewollock	VIC	2016	Oct	Fintan Magee	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
5	Sheep Hills	VIC	2016	Dec	Adnate	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
6	Coonalpyn	SA	2017	Mar	Guido van Helten	CORPORATE	Viterra
7	Rupanyup	VIC	2017	Apr	Julia Volchkova	CORPORATE	Australian Grain Export
8	Weethalle	NSW	2017	Jun	Heesco Khosnaran	PRIVATE	Paul and Jenny Northey
9	Lascelles	VIC	2017	Jun	RONE	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
10	Thallon	QLD	2017	Jul	The Zookeeper Drapl	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
11	Merredin	WA	2017	Aug	Kyle Hughes Odgers	CORPORATE	CBH
12	Kimba	SA	2017	Sept	Cam Scale	CORPORATE	Viterra
13	Rosebery	VIC	2017	Nov	Kaff-eine	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
*	Fyansford SINCE DEMOLISHED	VIC	2017	Dec	RONE	CORPORATE	ICD Property Supalai
14	Goorambat	VIC	2018 2019	Feb – Stage 1 Apr – Stage 2	Jimmy Dvate	PRIVATE	Kelvyn and Judi Greaves
15	Tungamah	VIC	2018 2019	Feb – Stage 1 Oct – Stage 2	Sobrane Simock	PRIVATE	Will Cooper
16	Devenish	VIC	2018 2019	Apr – Stage 1 Apr – Stage 2	Cam Scale	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
17	Tumby Bay	SA	2018	Apr	Martin Ron	CORPORATE	Viterra
18	Albany	WA	2018	Mar	Yok Sheryo	CORPORATE	CBH
19	Newdegate	WA	2018	May	Brenton See	CORPORATE	CBH
20	Portland	NSW	2018	May	Guido van Helten	CORPORATE	AWJ Civil

	LOCATION		ARTWORK COMPLETED		LEADING ARTIST/S		SILO OWNERSHIP
21	Rochester	VIC	2018	May	Jimmy Dvate	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
22	Pingrup	WA	2018	Sept	Evoca1	CORPORATE	CBH
23	Wirrabara	SA	2018	Oct	Smug (Sam Bates)	CORPORATE	Viterra
24	Grenfell	NSW	2019	Mar	Heesco Khosnaran	PRIVATE	Grenfell Commodities
25	Barraba	NSW	2019	Apr	Fintan Magee	PRIVATE	Simon and Amanda Koopman of Barraba Stock and Crop
26	Merriwa	NSW	2019	Apr	David Lee Pereira	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
27	St James	VIC	2019	Apr	Tim Bowtell	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
28	Waikerie	SA	2019	May	Garry Duncan Jimmy Dvate	CORPORATE	Viterra
29	Brunswick	VIC	2019	May	Loretta Lizzio	PRIVATE	Unknown private owner
30	Yelarbon	QLD	2019	Jun	The Zookeeper Drapl	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
31	Nullawil	VIC	2019	Jul	Smug (Sam Bates)	PRIVATE	Humphreys Haulage
32	Karoonda	SA	2019	Jul	Heesco Khosnaran	CORPORATE	Viterra
33	Cowell	SA	2019	Sept	Nitsua Austin Moncrief	CORPORATE	Viterra
34	Sea Lake	VIC	2019	Oct	The Zookeeper Drapl	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
35	Colbinabbin	VIC	2020	Apr	Tim Bowtell	CORPORATE	Vic Feeds Pty Ltd
36	Monto	QLD	2020	July	The Zookeeper Drapl		<i>Unable to confirm silo ownership status</i>
37	St Arnaud	VIC	2020	Aug	Kyle Torney	CORPOATE	Ridley Agriproducts
38	Dunedoo	NSW	2020	Aug – Stage 1	Peter Mortimore	PRIVATE	Brett Yeo
			2020	Sept – Stage 2			
			2021	Jun – Stage 3			
39	Kaniva	VIC	2020	Oct	David Lee Pereira	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
40	Goroke	VIC	2020	Nov	Geoffrey Carran	CORPORATE	GrainCorp
41	Farrell Flat	SA	2020	Nov	Jarrod Soden Matthew Knights (Perplswet Designs)		<i>Unable to confirm silo ownership status</i>
42	Picola	VIC	2020	Nov	Jimmy Dvate	PRIVATE	Owners wish to remain anonymous

	LOCATION		ARTWORK COMPLETED		LEADING ARTIST/S		SILO OWNERSHIP
43	Gunnedah	NSW	2020	Dec	Heesco Khosnaran	PRIVATE	Stephen Dangerfield
44	Harden- Murrumburrah	NSW	2021	Feb	Heesco Khosnaran	PRIVATE	Greg and Robyn Medway
45	Paringa	SA	2021	Ma	Jack Fran	CORPORATE	Yates Electrical
46	Avoca	VIC	2021	Apr - To be developed further	Jimmy Buscombe		<i>Unable to confirm silo ownership status</i>
47	Owen	SA	2021	May	Robert 'Alf' Hannaford Cam Scale	CORPORATE	Viterra
48	Albacutya	VIC	2021	May	Kit Bennett	PRIVATE	Adam Gould

