

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ticket²Research

National Market Research and Development for the Regional Performing Arts Industry

"The volume and composition of the audience for the arts in Australia continues to be questioned in studies such as the "Major Performing Arts Inquiry" (the Nugent Report), the "Australians and the Arts" report from Saatchi & Saatchi Australia, and other more commercially focussed research. This Ticket2Research is indisputable evidence of performing arts consumption."

"Tim and David have produced a comprehensive profile of the audiences, based on actual attendance. Until now there has been no concerted effort to quantify and research the audiences attending the regional arts centres. This project should open doors to a range of opportunities for the continued development of marketing techniques and analysis. It highlights many issues that must clearly be addressed - audiences appear to be on the increase, but venues need to work actively to secure repeat attendances."

Roger Tomlinson: Author of Boxing Clever and the Box Office Marketing Guides published by Arts Council of England

Background

National Market Research and Development for the Regional Performing Arts Industry was a research project funded by the Audience and Market Development Division of the Australia Council for the Arts in 1999/2000 and resulted in the publication *Ticket2Research*. The ticketing transaction and customer data of twenty eight (28) regional performing arts centres throughout Australia was collated for longitudinal behavioural analysis and cross-sectional descriptive analysis. Behavioural variables were analysed along the dimensions of recency, frequency, value and volume and the descriptive picture provided by geodemographic analysis using the MOSAIC classification.

The 28 ticketing databases detailed a three-year consumption survey of over 1/4 million customers, 1 million transactions and 2.8 million tickets for 6,500+ performing arts events. Analysis was conducted individually for each venue as well as aggregated on a state and national basis to provide a detailed national picture of regional performing arts consumption for the three-year survey period 1996-1998.

THE COMPLETE PUBLISHED REPORT IS AVAILABLE NOW AT:

<http://www.artsoz.com.au/Ticket2Research.pdf> (80 pages 2.4MB in size)

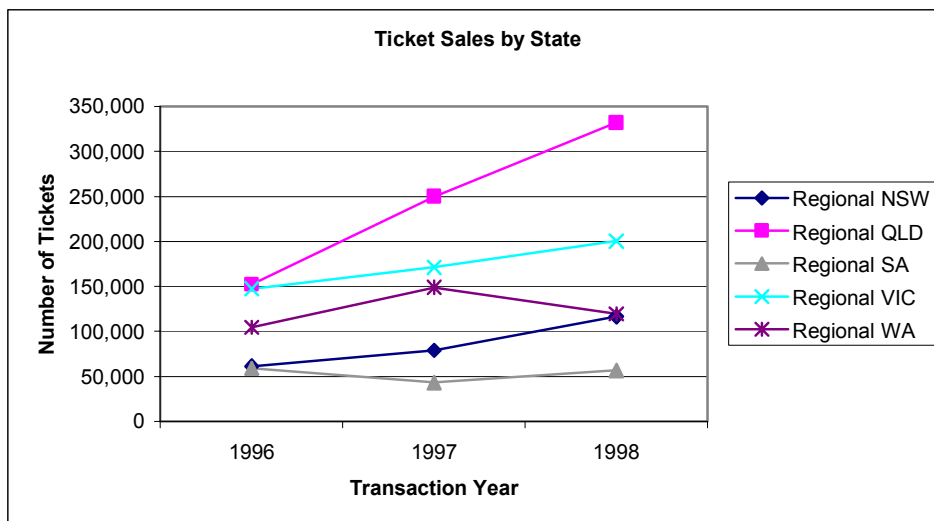


Findings

Behavioural Analysis

All States other than Western Australia recorded an overall increase in tickets sales over the survey period as detailed in Figure 1

Figure 1

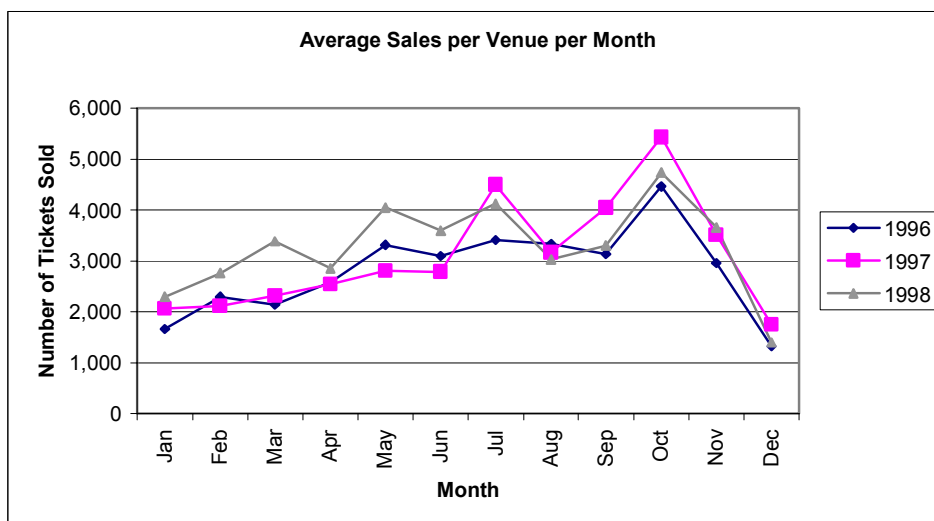


An average growth across the country of approximately 15% between 1996 and 1998, comprised a growth in average sales in 1997 – 1998 of 10%, and subsequently 6% for 1998 – 1999.

Average ticket sales revenues also grew proportionate to the rise in ticket volume, with an average growth across the three years of about 20%.

An analysis of average sales at each venue for each month of the year highlights a strong seasonality as displayed in Figure 2, with a general trend of growth through the year, falling sharply in November then December.

Figure 2

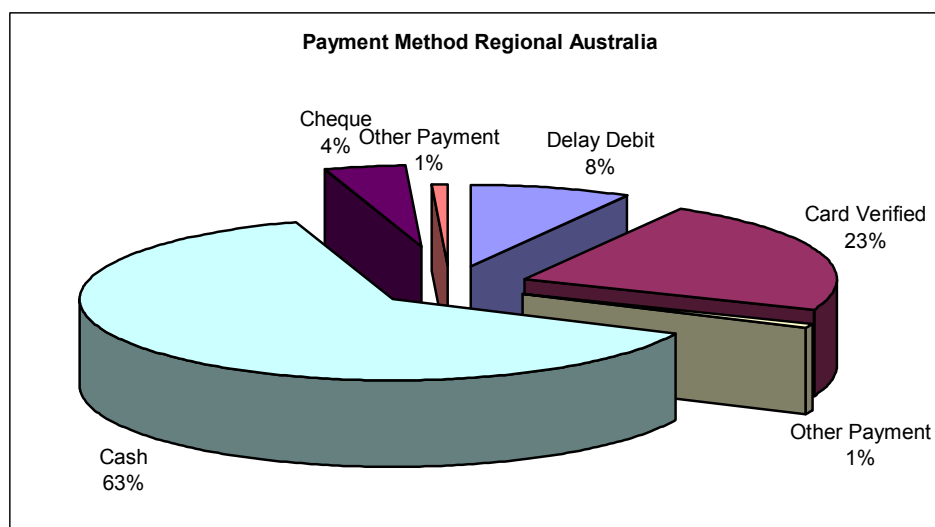


Analysis of the frequency of purchase at the venues is revealing with over 80% of all customers in the venue ticketing databases making two or less purchases in the life of the venue's box office system up until the end of 1998. This is discussed in more detail in the complete publication.

The poor recency of attendance evinced in the study, combined with the frequency and volume analysis, strengthens the finding that the venues in general have several fundamental issues to address with regard to securing customers, creating a pattern of attendance, and engendering repetitive attendance and consequent loyalty.

The most popular payment method is cash, with nearly two-thirds of all customers recorded as using cash and about one quarter using Credit card.

Figure 3



Over three quarters of transactions in the regional venues are conducted over the counter, with 14% by telephone.

The great majority of tickets (nearly three quarters) at the participating venues, were purchased less than one month prior to the performance date.

The analysis for this project examined 3,765 events across the participating venues. Each event was assigned to an event category, using the categorisation scheme detailed in full report.

There is some ebb and flow amongst the proportion of each category for each of the survey years, reflecting the varying nature of venues' programs year to year, and their dependency on supply of product.

When the number of purchasers, and ticket sales, are correlated to the event categories, Music Contemporary – Popular was ranked at the top for all three years, resulting in over a quarter of all ticket sales at the end of 1998. In 1998 this category comprised 21.6% of events staged.

Theatre Drama, despite being such a prominent part of the programs, significantly, results in disproportionately fewer ticket sales – only 27.1% of tickets in 1998. This analysis does not take into account the number of seats offered for sale for each performance of each category.

This table also amply illustrates the growth in the number of tickets sold, with the top two event categories accounting for over 500,000 ticket sales in 1998.

Table 1 - Top Event Categories by Purchasers and Ticket Sales

Category	Num of Purchasers	Propn	Num Tix	Propn	Num Tix/Purchaser
<i>1996</i>					
Music Contemporary - Popular	26,688	26.5%	116,863	28.6%	4.4
Theatre Drama	19,916	19.8%	91,201	22.3%	4.6
Theatre Musical – Popular	18,631	18.5%	72,668	17.8%	3.9
Theatre Comedy	7,192	7.2%	25,213	6.2%	3.5
Music Classical	5,308	5.3%	16,380	4.0%	3.1
<i>1997</i>					
Music Contemporary - Popular	40,635	26.2%	166,509	24.2%	4.1
Theatre Musical - Popular	33,635	21.7%	160,449	23.3%	4.8
Theatre Drama	26,559	17.1%	123,298	17.9%	4.6
Theatre Comedy	10,789	7.0%	36,486	5.3%	3.4
Music Classical	10,160	6.5%	43,760	6.3%	4.3
<i>1998</i>					
Music Contemporary - Popular	50,191	25.7%	246,735	26.2%	4.9
Theatre Drama	47,800	24.5%	254,959	27.1%	5.3
Theatre Musical - Popular	36,889	18.9%	152,779	16.2%	4.1
Dance Contemporary	13,090	6.7%	51,171	5.4%	3.9
Theatre Comedy	10,681	5.5%	51,492	5.5%	4.8

Descriptive Analysis

The Pacific Micromarketing classifications: MOSAIC Type, MOSAIC Group and LIFESTAGE Types were appended to the ticketing databases of the 21 venues forming a sample of Regional Australia (as well as 7 venues comprising Suburban/Outer Metropolitan Australia). Chapter 8 contains a detailed description of the MOSAIC and LIFESTAGE classification codes.

The catchment base used for profiling in this project was built on a penetration (at Postcode level) of 90% of the database, which was then modified by Pacific Micromarketing to make the area contiguous and a logical reflection of the population likely to attend the theatre. This base should reflect the best potential contact population for each venue. The final base numbers for the participating venues were as follows:

Venue Name	Purchasers in Catchment	Adult Population in Catchment
21 x Regional Australia Theatres	148,857	2,054,639

The following profiles were created for each theatre and summarised for Regional Australia here:

- Performing Arts purchasers in Catchment vs the Number of Adults in the Catchment for MOSAIC Types
- Performing Arts purchasers in Catchment vs the Number of Adults in the Catchment for MOSAIC Groups
- Performing Arts purchasers in Catchment vs Number of Adults in the Catchment for LIFESTAGE Types

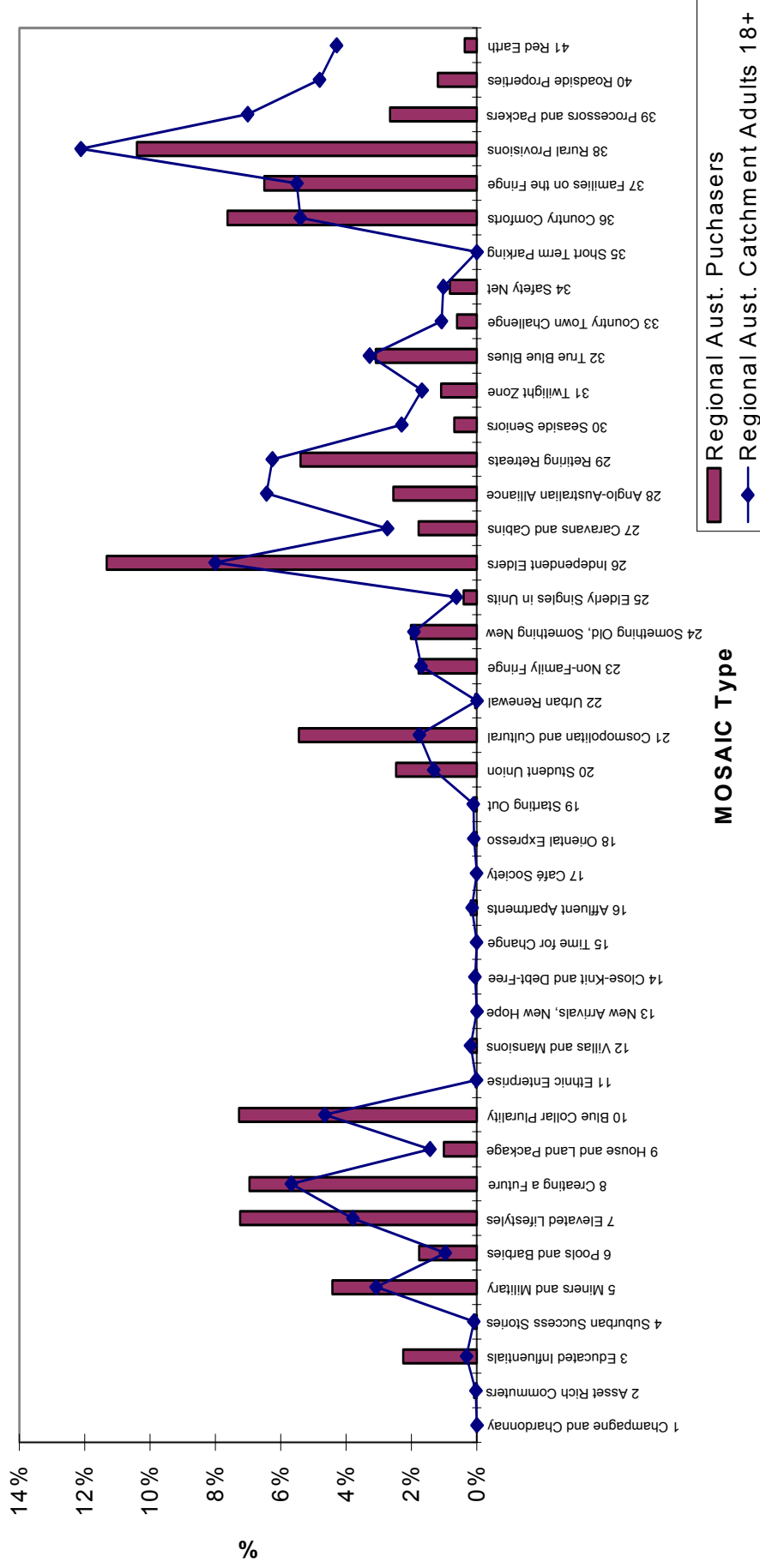
Included over is the chart comparing "Regional Australia Performing Arts Centres: Purchasers vs Adults 18+ in Catchment" and this is also charted for "Australian Suburban/Outer Metropolitan Performing Arts Centres: Purchasers vs Adults 18+ in Catchment" in the publication.

Household Expenditure Survey

Another source of data that provides a means to augment the detail and put the MOSAIC Types in context is the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Household Expenditure Survey (HES). The Household Expenditure Survey Data can be used as an indicator for Market Assessment.

Pacific Micromarketing has modelled Household Expenditure Survey data for each of the 41 MOSAIC Types to provide an indicative spend figure for each MOSAIC Type as detailed in the publication.

Figure 1 - Regional Australia Performing Arts Centres: Purchasers vs Adults 18+ in Catchment



Summary of Recommendations

During the life of the project, and analysis of the research outcomes, a range of key issues became apparent as being applicable and of concern across all of the participating venues, to one degree or another.

1. Capture of Patron and Transaction Information

Consistent data entry is essential to build a valuable marketing resource in the form of a detailed, consistent and accurate marketing database.

To ensure consistent address entry within box offices and between venues and ensure the development of best practice, it is recommended that a standard Data Entry guide be developed and applied.

2. Categorisation of Event Types

The current (1999-2000) revision of the Cultural and Leisure Statistical Framework by the Australian Bureau of Statistics provides a valuable opportunity for the industry to consider how events are classified. But more importantly, to work together to ensure a consistency of classification of the same event from one venue to another.

3. Frequency and Recency - New and Lapsed Attenders

As a matter of priority, venues need to consider how to firstly ensure a new attendee is converted into a repeat attendee, and secondly, to examine ways of addressing long term lapsed attendees.

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