

# 2013 Standards Program Research

July-October 2013



## Museums & Galleries NSW

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# Introduction

- This report gives the background of the *Standards Program for Community Museums* and outlines the methodology and results for research project into the legacy of this program. The program is funded by the NSW Government through Arts NSW and managed and implemented by Museums & Galleries NSW (M&G NSW).
- The data for the study was collected in the period July – October 2013.
- This report provides quantitative data on the success of program.

Images used by permission. Cover images L to R *Pioneer Women's Hut, Tumbarumba; Dobell House, Wangi; Old Court House, Batemans Bay; Valley Heights Locomotive Depot, Valley Heights; Eden Killer Whale Museum, Eden; New Italy Museum, Woodburn; Age of Fishes Museum, Canowindra; Powerhouse Museum, Tamworth & Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, Bathurst.*

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# Acknowledgements

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- The organisations and individuals who provided the data
- M&G NSW staff for their insights into the operations and evolution of the program

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Museums & Galleries NSW is supported by the NSW State government through Arts NSW



*Report written by Michael Huxley - January 2014*

# Background

## NATIONAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

- In 2003 M&G NSW ran its first *Standards for Sustainable Community Museums Program (Standards Program)*. At this time, an accreditation program was being offered in Victoria and South Australia but it was recognised that this program was not always suitable for volunteer managed and operated museums. The participants in the pilot scheme identified the act of participating as more important than necessarily being “accredited”.
- In 2005, M&G NSW partnered with Museum & Gallery Services Queensland (M&GSQ) to develop the same *Standards for Sustainable Community Museums* program (as opposed to accreditation) to museums and galleries throughout Queensland. They have continued to delivered the program in separate regions each year. The participants of both the M&G NSW and M&GSQ programs have been listed in the Standards Community directory since 2006.
- In 2006 a national taskforce was established to create a framework that could operate across both accreditation and the *Standards Program*. The task force consisted of Collections Council of Australia Ltd, History Trust of South Australia, M&GSQ, Museums Australia (Victoria), Western Australian Museum and M&G NSW. In 2008 these organisations were joined by ACT Museums & Galleries Arts Tasmania and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.
- In 2008 the first *National Standards Framework for Museums and Galleries* was agreed and published. The Framework were revised in 2010, 2011 and again in 2013.

# Background

## NATIONAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

- The *National Standards Framework for Museums and Galleries* related to the following core principles of museum practice, operation and governance.<sup>1</sup>
  - MANAGING THE MUSEUM
    - The museum has a sound legal and management framework that follows recognised museum ethics and protocols.
    - The museum is effectively managed, sustainable and publicly accountable.
    - The museum manages its workers to make the best use of their skills and knowledge, and to achieve the museum's purpose.
    - The museum is a secure, well-managed facility that presents a positive public image.
  - INVOLVING PEOPLE
    - The museum is used, supported and valued by diverse communities as a worthwhile place where people can express, share and discover significant stories, ideas and objects.
    - The museum presents its most significant collection items, stories and themes through engaging exhibitions and programs.
    - The museum is committed to its current and potential audiences, and caters for their needs and interests through its communications, programs and services.
  - DEVELOPING A SIGNIFICANT COLLECTION
    - The museum's collection represents the significant stories and interests of its diverse and changing communities.
    - The museum preserves its significant collections for future generations.

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<sup>1</sup> *National Standards For Australian Museums And Galleries - V. 1.3 (2013 The National Standards Taskforce)*

# Background

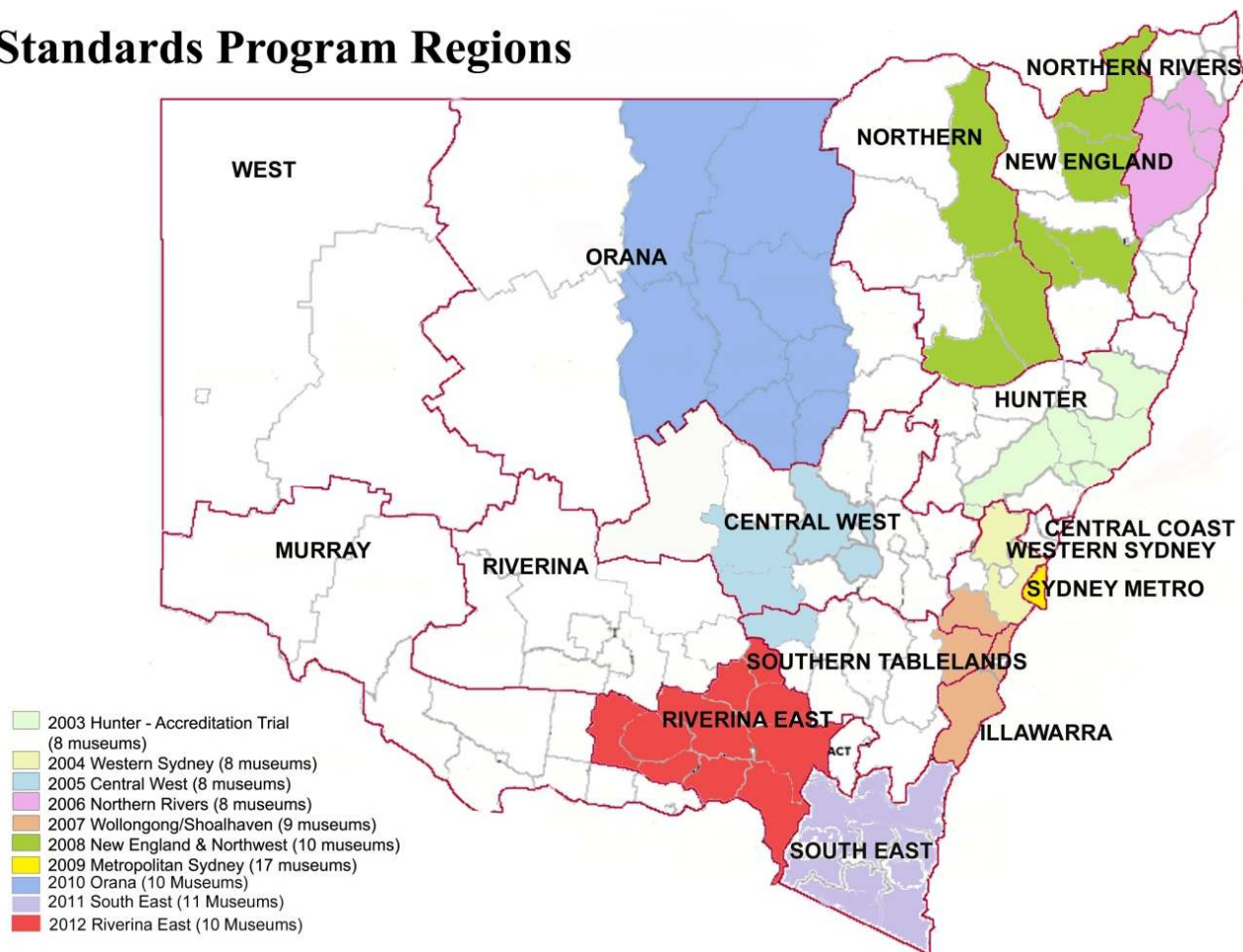
## STANDARDS PROGRAM FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY MUSEUMS

- The principles outlined in the *National Standards Framework for Museums and Galleries* and their supporting standards are used as guidelines for self assessment and peer review of individual museum practice, within the context of the scale and scope of the organisation. As such, the *Standards Program* is about recognising and acknowledging essential practice within a museum or gallery, rather than judging or comparing institutions to each other. The development of plans for future improvement is also a key element of the *Standards Program*.
- The *Standards Program* focuses on:
  - Acknowledging achievements and raising confidence
  - Supporting leadership and team effort
  - Guiding goal setting and creation of incentive for effective planning
  - Identifying needs and solutions (and options to address these)
  - Facilitating networking and access to resources
  - Raising the profile of participating museums
  - Developing tools to assist community museum development and sustainability
  - Promoting the value of National Standards Program, to achieve effective outcomes for museums and their communities

# Background

## STANDARDS PROGRAM FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY MUSEUMS

### Standards Program Regions



The *Standards Program* has been delivered by M&G NSW in the following regions of NSW with 2014 marking its tenth year:

- 2003 (pilot) Hunter Valley
- 2004 Western Sydney
- 2005 Central West
- 2006 Northern Rivers
- 2007 Bathurst & Illawarra & Southern Highlands
- 2008 New England and North West
- 2009 Metropolitan Sydney
- 2010 Dubbo and Orana
- 2011 South East
- 2012 Riverina
- 2013 South West  
*(not shown on map)*



# Background

## STANDARDS PROGRAM FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY MUSEUMS

### How is the *Standards Program* implemented?

- The essential stages of the *Standards Program* are:
  - Promotion to and selection of participants
  - Developing regional partnership and network support
  - Self-reviews
  - Advising and supporting opportunities to ‘raise the bar’
  - External peer review
  - Action plans developed by each participant to achieve their outcome/s
  - Promoting the participants and the program
- Each year Museums & Galleries NSW (M&G NSW) identifies a region to run the program.
- M&G NSW’s role is focused on facilitation. It arranges support and engagement with the Local Government Authorities, selects and manages the volunteer reviewer’s onsite visits, works with the participant organisations to assist them to complete a series of self-assessment tasks and co-ordinate a series of workshops that address particular needs identified within the program.
- The structure of the program itself emphasises planning activities. This commences with a strategic/forward planning workshop run in the selected region the year prior and culminates in an action plan drafted by each museum with the peer reviewers; a practical tool for their on-going development.

# Background

## STANDARDS PROGRAM FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY MUSEUMS

### How is the *Standards Program* implemented? (cont)

- The *National Standards Framework for Museums and Galleries*, agreed in 2008 and revised annually, is used as a guide for participating museums to recognise and review essential museum practice. The 2013 *Framework* can be found on the M&G NSW website at <http://mgnsw.org.au/sector/support/standards-program>
- Each participant completes six activities by themselves which are designed to identify areas of strengths and weakness. These are then discussed with the M&G NSW staff and with the peer reviewers during either one or both of their two onsite visits.
- Peer reviewers do not undertake comparisons between institutions, but assist each museum to establish goals in reference to its scale and scope. The implementation of these goals can then be determined by each museum in consultation with M&G NSW, a museum advisor and/or the peer reviewers.
- The program delivery has been reviewed each year using feedback from the *Standards Program* review committee and the participants.

# Objectives

- **The objectives of this study were to:**

- Quantify any long term benefits of the *Standards Program* in the following areas:

- Increased value of successful grants
    - Increased number of volunteers
    - Increased number of opening hours
    - Increased number of visitors.

- Collect data on the effectiveness of the *Standards Program* in the following areas:

- Policies – collection development and collection management policies, preservation policies, volunteer management policies
    - Plans – strategic plans, business plans, interpretation plans, volunteer recruitment plans
    - Regional Networks
    - Volunteers
    - Funding
    - Visitation.

# Methodology

- Data was collected from a variety of sources including:
  - *Standards Program* Community Directory
  - M&G NSW 2013 Sector Census and Survey
  - Program worksheets returned to M&G NSW during participation with the program
  - Grant applications received by M&G NSW from *Standards Program* Participants

This provided information on 74 of the organisations who had participated in the *Standards Program* program between 2003 and 2012. It should be noted that some participants of the program are ineligible to apply for the Arts NSW devolved grant program for museums managed by M&G NSW due to levels of paid staff.

- In addition to this a short questionnaire was distributed by email to the *Standards Program* participants. It was also followed up by phone. 64 organisations responded to the short questionnaire. A copy of this is in the appendix of this report.
- This data was then entered into an online survey tool to assist with analysis.

# Definitions

- *Community museum* - a museum generally managed and operated by volunteers for the benefit of the community. Often run by historical or heritage societies.
- *FTE* - full time equivalent. This may be 38 or 35 hours worked per week, dependent on award.
- *Gallery* - a place that primarily collects and/or exhibits visual arts, craft and design.
- *Heritage organisation* - though it may collect and/or exhibit artefacts and objects, it is more concerned with cultural traditions, physical place and historic buildings.
- *Local History* - objects and artefacts that reflect or record the immediate local history and environment.
- *Median* - the data point which is the middle of the response range i.e. 50% of responses are above and below this point.
- *Mode* - the most frequently cited response.
- *Museum* - a place that primarily collects and/or exhibits objects and artefacts. This may include paintings, sculpture and artworks that are held for their significance and meaning rather than only their artistic merit.
- *Natural science* - objects and artefacts that reflect or record the natural world. This may include botany, geology and anthropology.
- *Small to medium* - the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines organisations with 5 or less employees as micro, 6-20 employees as small and 21-200 employees as medium enterprises (1321 Small Business in Australia). For the purpose of this study: small refers to organisations with 5 or less employees and medium to those organisations with 6-50 FTE staff.

## Definitions (cont.)

- *Social History* – objects and artefacts that reflect or record a particular social movement or pastime that is not place specific.
- *Technology & Science* – objects and artefacts that reflect or record the application of science and technology. These may include equipment or machinery which show the industrial advance of civilisation and the development of inventions and manufactures.
- *Public and regional gallery* – a gallery that maintains publicly owned collections/exhibition spaces and serves a particular geographical region. They run educational and access programs and have paid staff.
- *Public and regional museum* – a museum that maintains publicly owned collections/exhibition spaces and serves a particular geographical region. They run educational and access programs and have paid staff.
- *Volunteer run and managed* – organisations that may have a volunteer board and are staffed and operated primarily by volunteers.
- *Visual Arts, Crafts and Design* - such as ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, video, filmmaking and architecture. These categories should not be taken too strictly as many artistic disciplines (performing arts, conceptual art, textile arts) involve aspects of the visual arts. Also included within the visual arts are the applied arts such as industrial design, graphic design, fashion design, interior design and decorative art.

# Executive Summary



# Museums & Galleries NSW

*Exterior: Carisbrook House, Sydney*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### VALUE OF M&G NSW GRANTS RECEIVED

- The majority of organisations (79%) have seen an increase in the value of the grants they receive from M&G NSW *after* participating in the *Standards Program*.
- Only a small proportion (7%) have seen no change in the value of the grants they receive.

### VOLUNTEERING

- Around a third of organisations (36%) have seen the number of volunteers increase after participating in *Standards Program*
- Around a quarter of organisations (26%) have seen the number of volunteers hold steady after participating in *Standards Program*
- Just over a third of organisations (29%) have seen a decrease in the number of volunteers since participating in *Standards Program*

### VISITATION

- Around a half of organisations (51%) have seen the number of visitors increase after participating in *Standards Program*
- Around 1 in 5 of organisations (21%) have seen the audience numbers hold steady after participating in *Standards Program*
- Under a third of organisations (29%) have seen a decrease in the number of visitors since participating in *Standards Program*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### OPENING HOURS

- Almost 3 in 4 organisations (73%) have not changed their opening hours since participating in *Standards Program*
- 15% of organisations have increased their opening hours since participating in *Standards Program*
- Just over 1 in 10 organisations (12%) have seen a decrease in their opening hours since participating in *Standards Program*

### ADOPTION OF POLICIES

- There has been an increase in the adoption of key policies both during the participation and after the *Standards Program*
- An Audience Development policy has the smallest implementation both before, during and after the program.
- Collection Policies are most commonly in place before the program and most commonly maintained
- Strategic plans are often implemented within the program

### REGIONAL NETWORKS

- The majority of organisations (69%) believe that *Standards Program* has enabled them to have better regional networks. Only 25% of the organisations are currently or have been part of the Regional Museum Advisor Program

### DIVERSITY OF FUNDING BASE

- The majority of organisations (70%) believe that *Standards Program* has helped them develop a more diverse funding base

# Results



# Museums & Galleries NSW

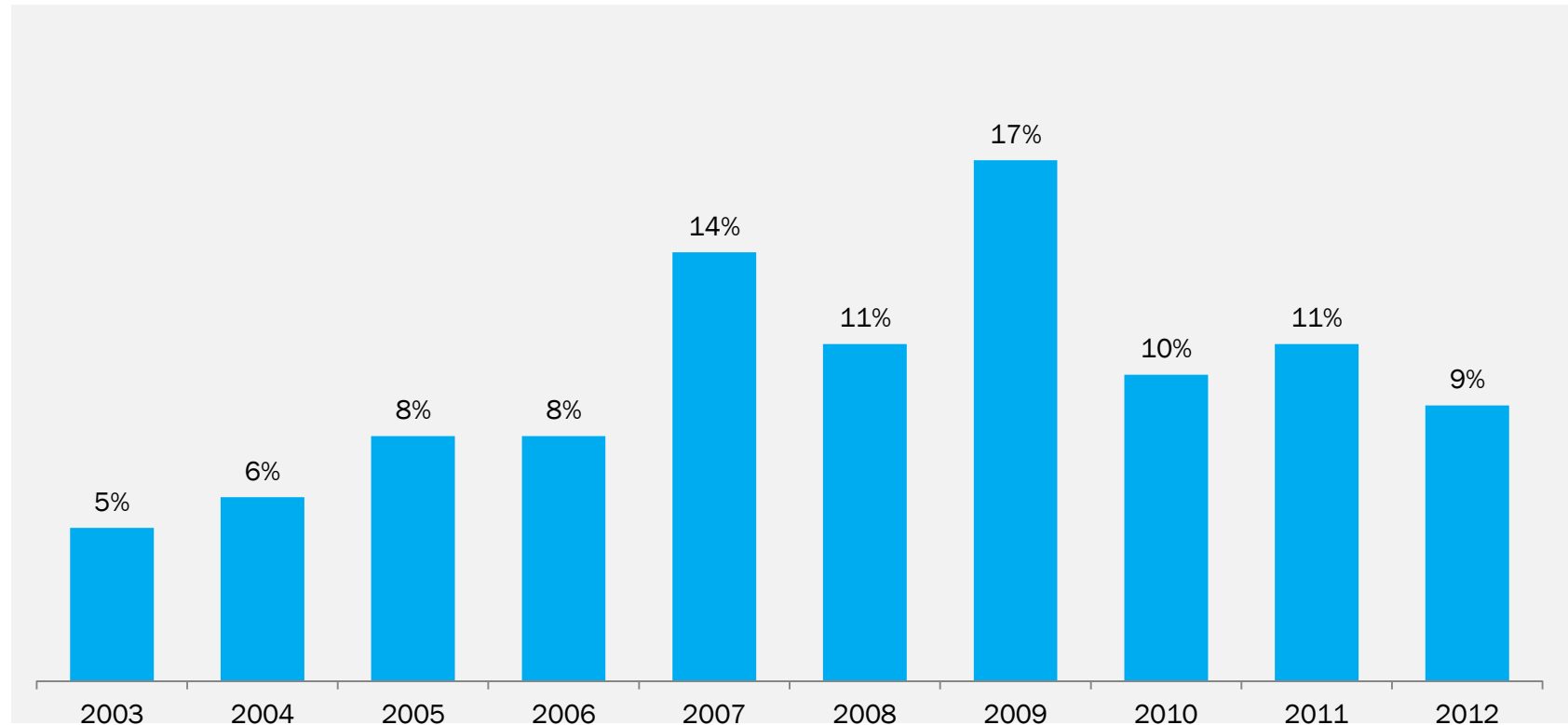
Image: Exterior, Armidale Aboriginal Keeping Place and Cultural Centre

## NOTES ON READING CHARTS

- All figures are presented as percentages unless otherwise noted.
- Where multiple responses were allowed, the total may add to more than 100%.
- The number of responses is indicated by “n = ”.
- When data has been cross-tabulated all valid responses are shown.
- Individual bases for the data are shown with a description of any applied data filters.
- Where a percentage label is small, i.e. less than 5%, it may be omitted from the chart for ease of reading.
- Note: Whole number rounding error may account for when charts do not add to exactly 100% (e.g.: 101% or 99%).
- For the total sample size, n=74, the figures are presented with a 95% confidence level and a +/- 5% margin of error.

## YEAR OF PARTICIPATION IN STANDARDS PROGRAM

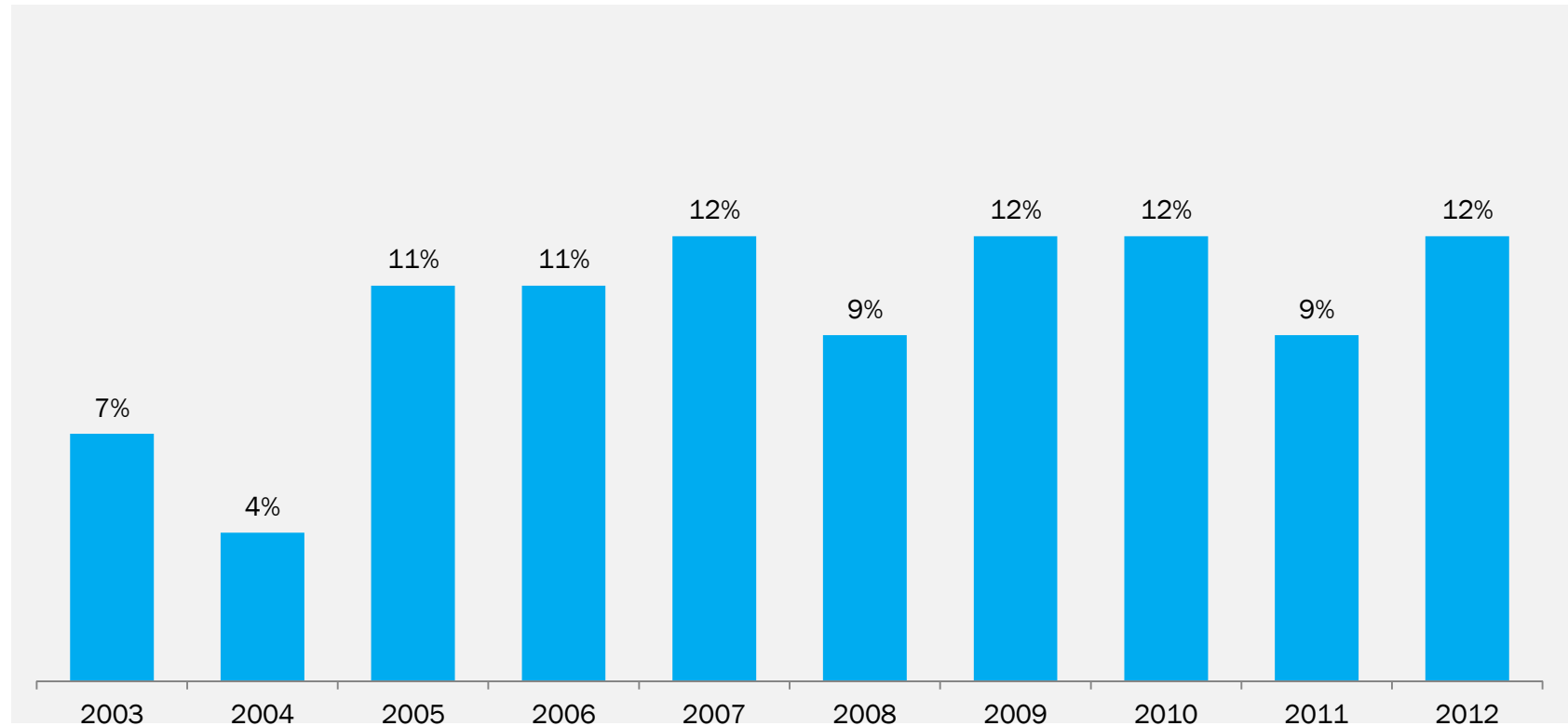
### Year of Participation



- A total of 99 organisations participated in the *Standards Program* between 2003 and 2012
- 2007 had a higher than average number of participants as the program was run in 2 regions
- 2009 had a much higher than average number of participants as the program was run in the Sydney metropolitan area.

## YEAR OF PARTICIPATION IN STANDARDS PROGRAM

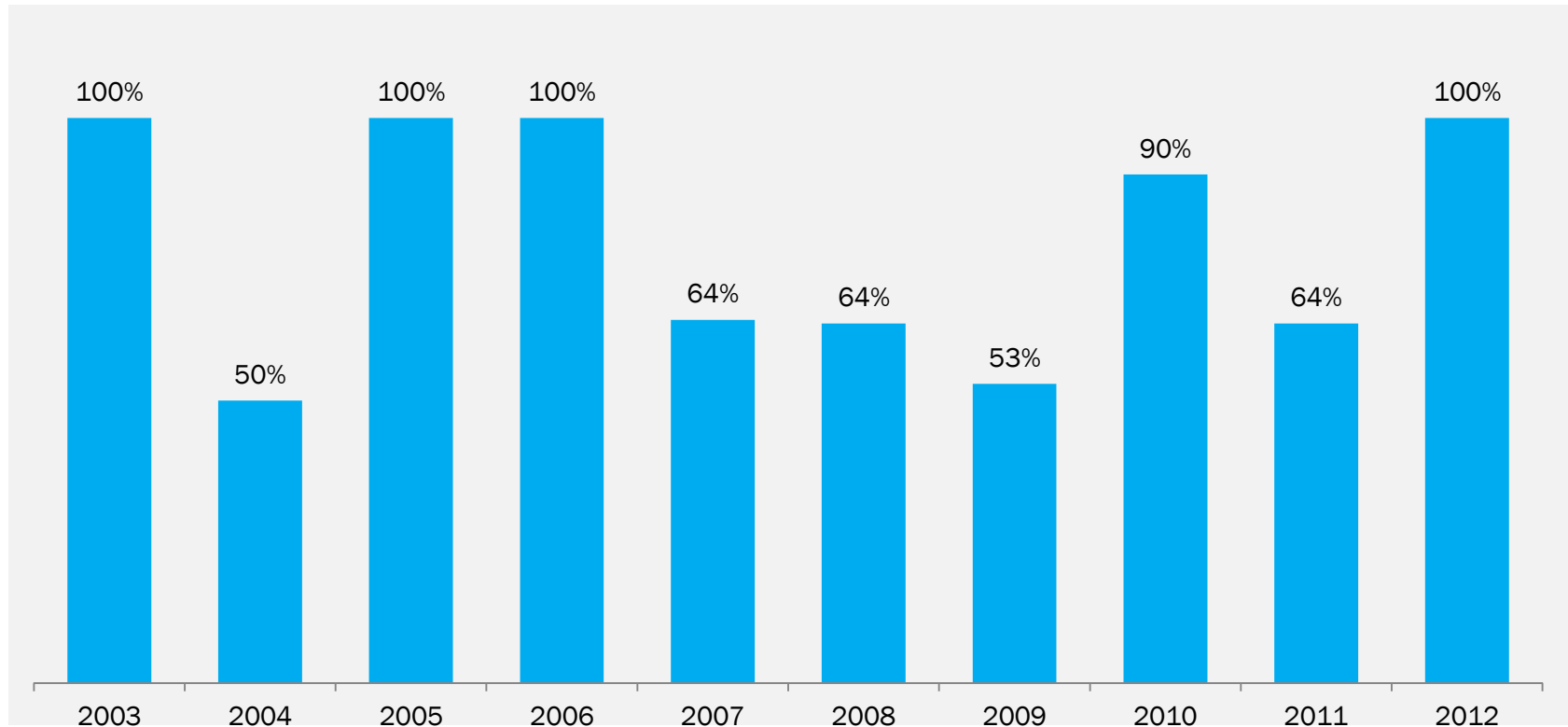
### Year of Participation by respondents



- Data was collected on 74 of the organisations who participated in the *Standards Program* between 2003 and 2012

## YEAR OF PARTICIPATION IN STANDARDS PROGRAM

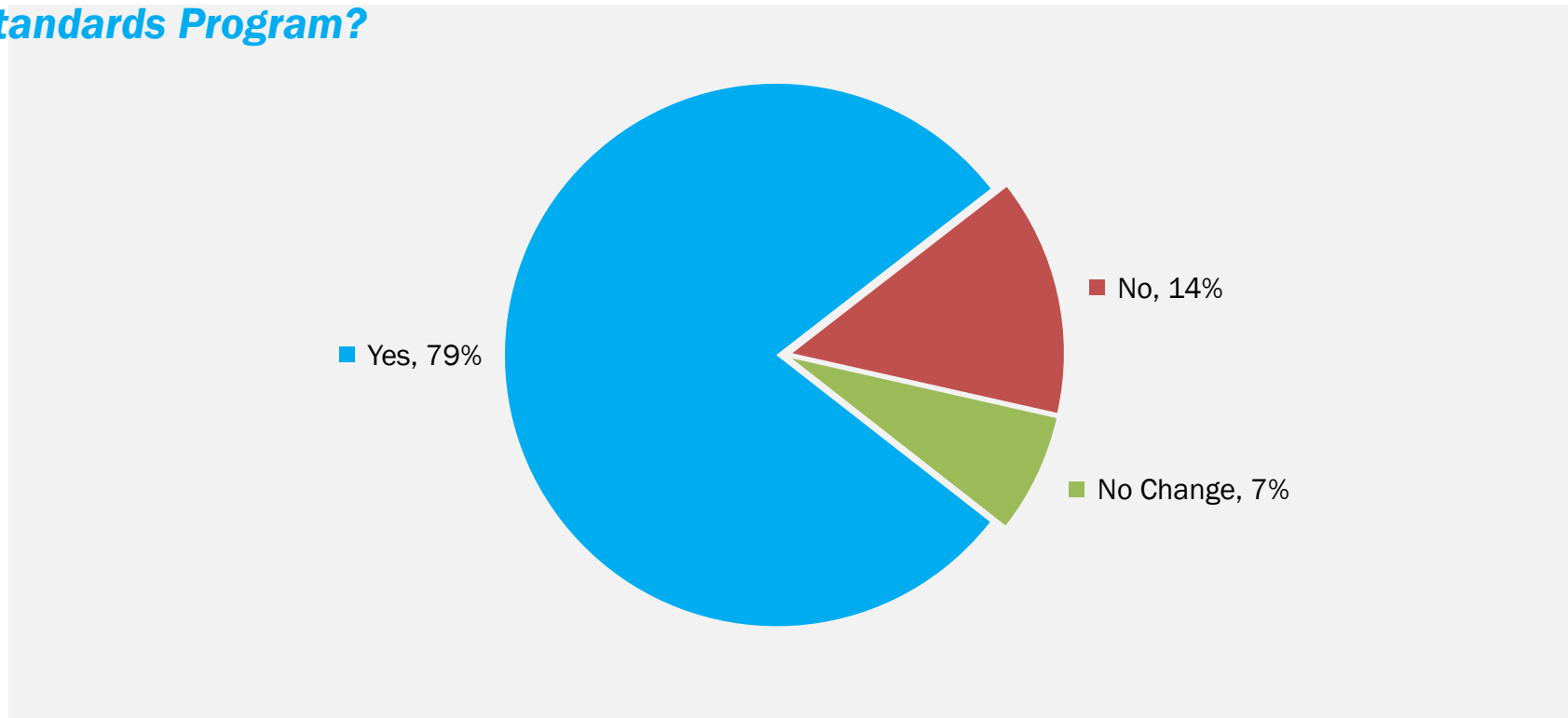
Respondents as a % of the number of participants from each year



- Data was able to be gathered on at least 50% of participants for each year of the program from 2003-2012
- Data sources, such as grant applications, may not have been available for all participants as they may not be eligible for grant programs administered by M&G NSW
- It should be noted that some participants of the program are ineligible to apply for the Arts NSW devolved grant program for museums managed by M&G NSW due to levels of paid staff. This in turn meant that they were excluded from this study

## GRANTS

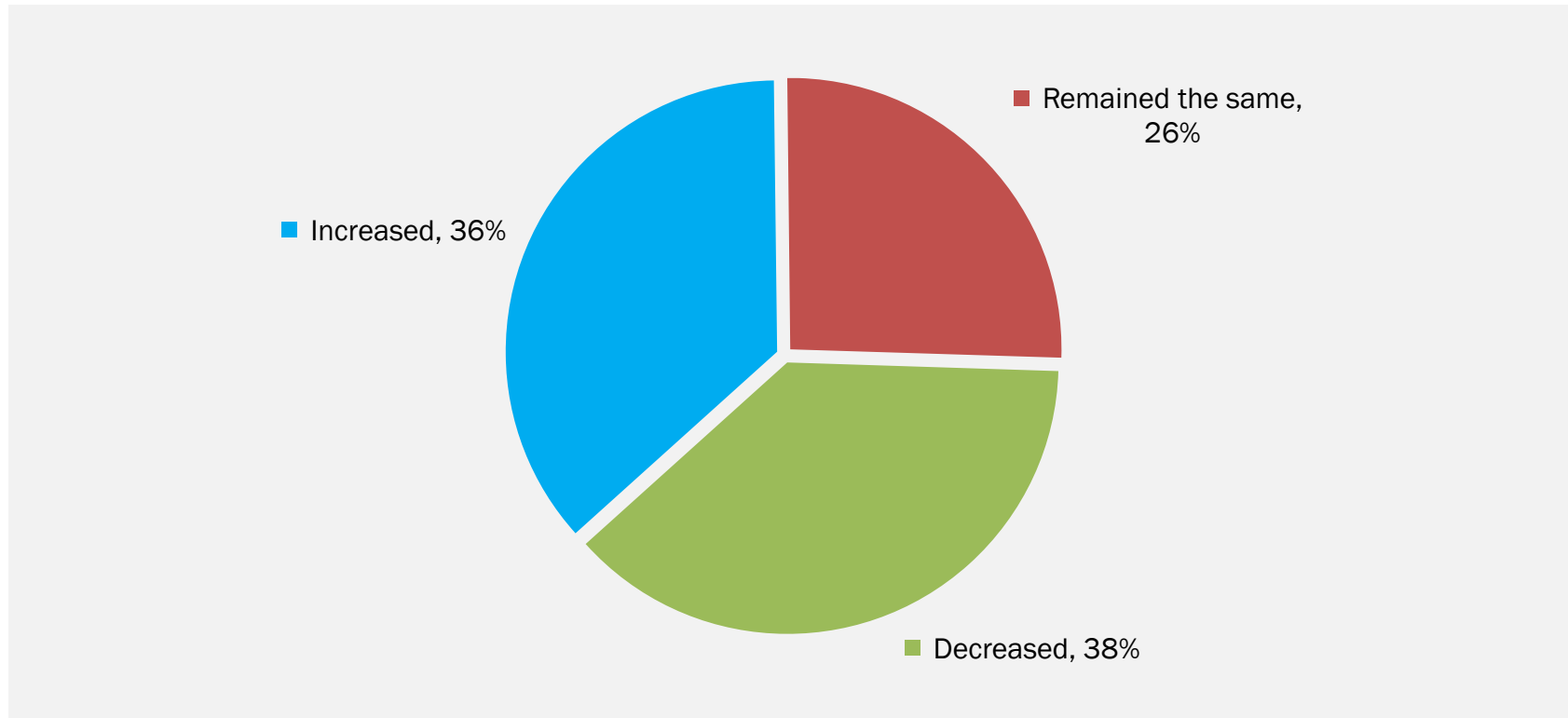
### Has the value of the M&G NSW grants received increased since participation in Standards Program?



- The majority of organisations have seen an increase in the value of their grants awarded after participating in the *Standards Program*
- A small percentage of organisations (7%) have seen no change in the value of their grants

## VOLUNTEERS

### Has the number of volunteers changed since participation in Standards Program?

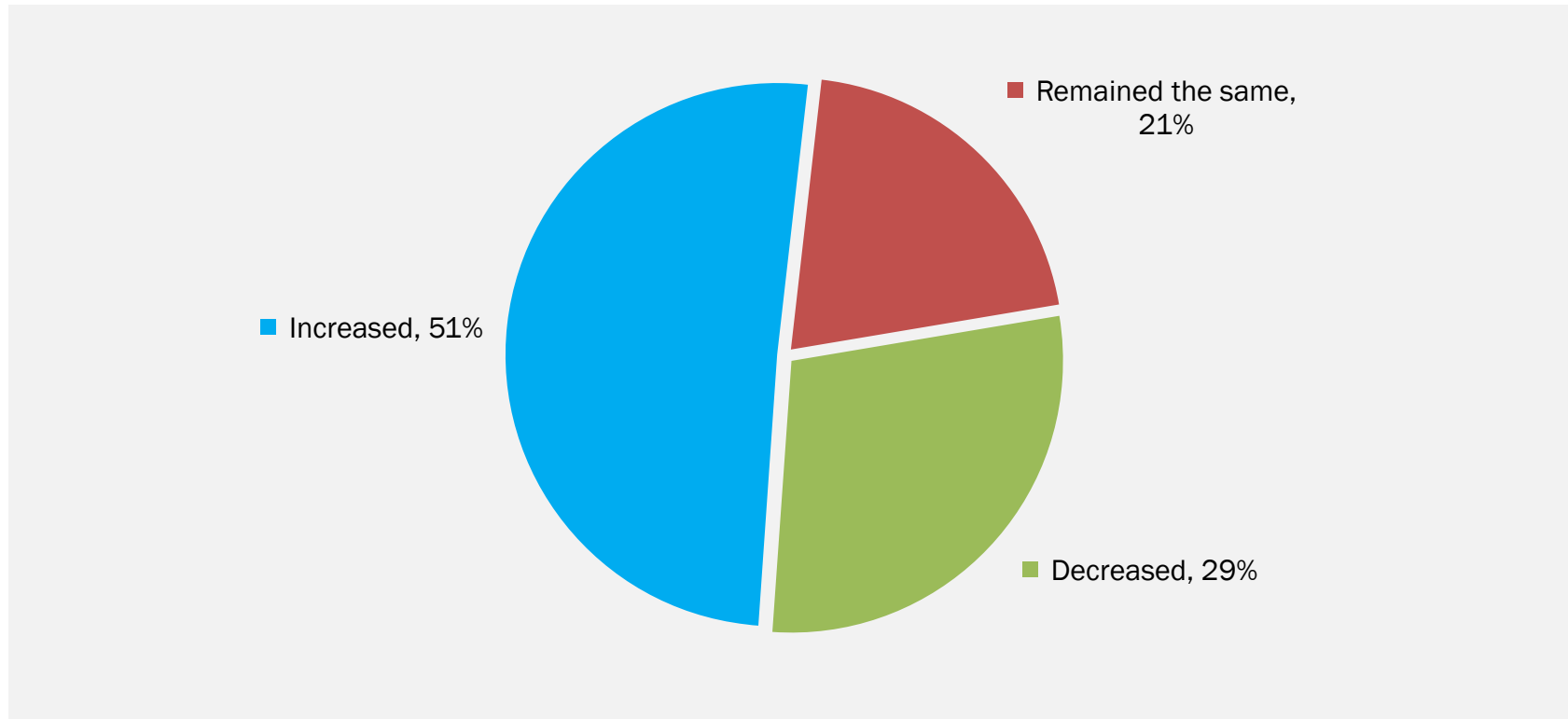


- Around a third of organisations have seen the number of volunteers increase after participating in the *Standards Program*
- Around a quarter of organisations have seen the number of volunteers hold steady after participating in the *Standards Program*
- Just over a third of organisations have seen a decrease in the number of volunteers since participating in the *Standards Program*



## VISITATION

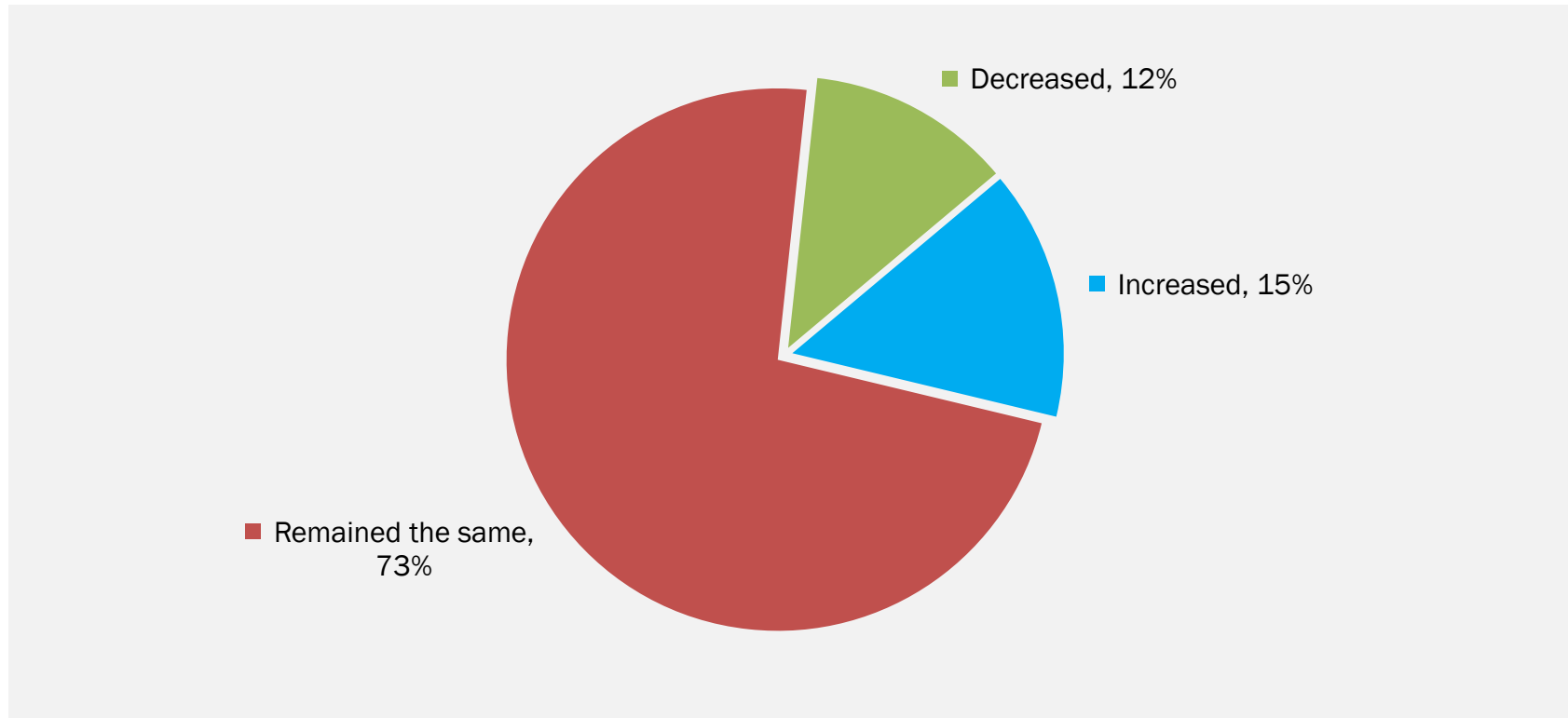
### Has the number of visitors changed since participation in Standards Program?



- Around a half of organisations have seen the number of visitors increase after participating in *Standards Program*
- Around 1 in 5 organisations have seen the audience numbers hold steady after participating in *Standards Program*
- Under a third of organisations have seen a decrease in the number of visitors since participating in *Standards Program*

## OPENING HOURS

*Has the number of opening hours changed since participation in Standards Program?*



- Almost 3 in 4 organisations have not changed their opening hours since participating in the *Standards Program*
- 15% of organisations have increased their opening hours since participating in the *Standards Program*
- Just over 1 in 10 organisations have seen a decrease in their opening hours since the *Standards Program* since participating in *Standards Program*

## POLICIES

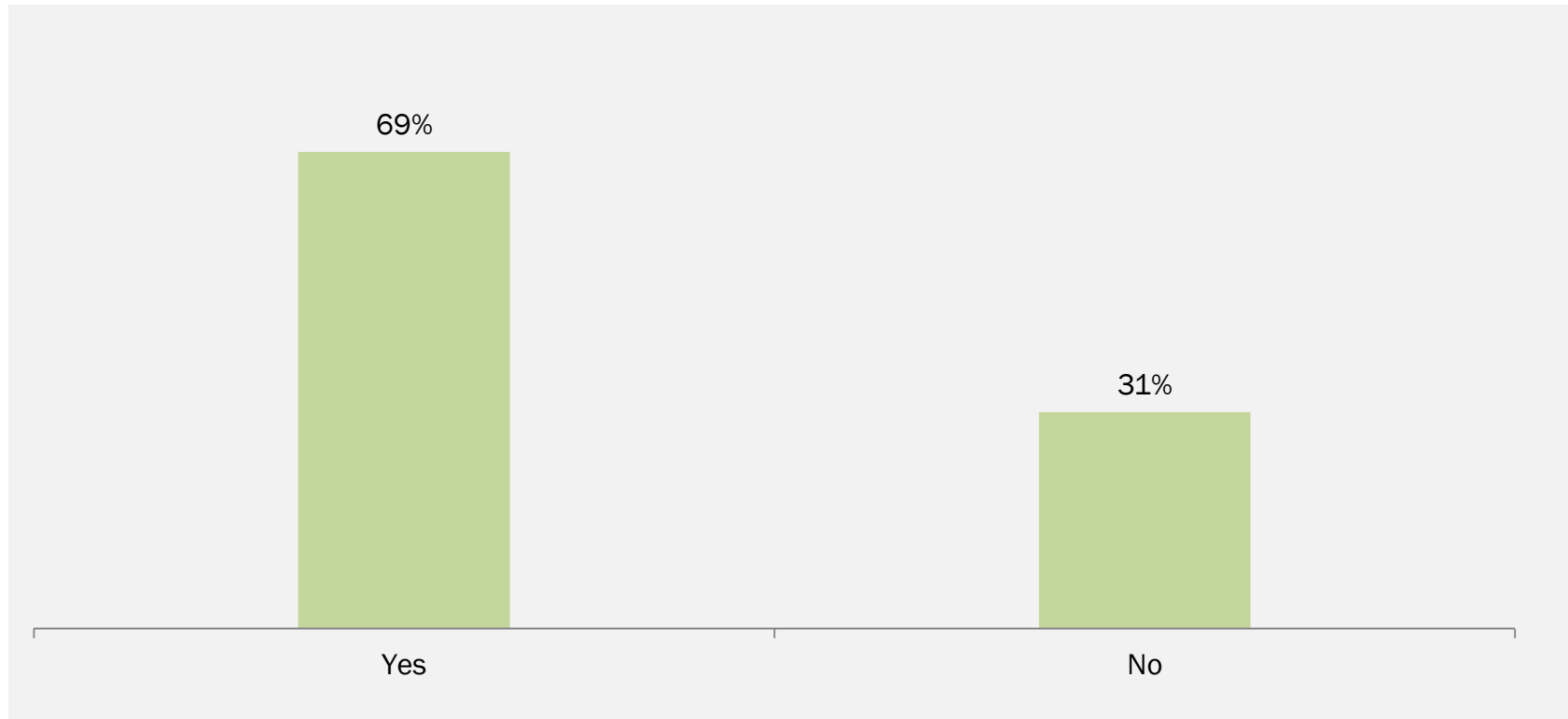
### Has there been an increase in the adoption of key policies?

Were the following policies .....	in place before Standards Program?	In place at the end of Standards Program	Is the policy still current?
<b>Collection Policy</b>	67%	97%	95%
<b>Volunteering Policy</b>	39%	64%	67%
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	54%	90%	89%
<b>Preservation Policy</b>	26%	49%	49%
<b>Audience Development Policy</b>	8%	26%	30%

- There has been an increase in the adoption of key policies both during the participation and after the *Standards Program*
- Audience Development policy has the smallest take up both before, during and after the program.
- Collection Policies are most commonly in place before the program and are most commonly maintained
- Strategic plans are often implemented within the program

## REGIONAL NETWORKS

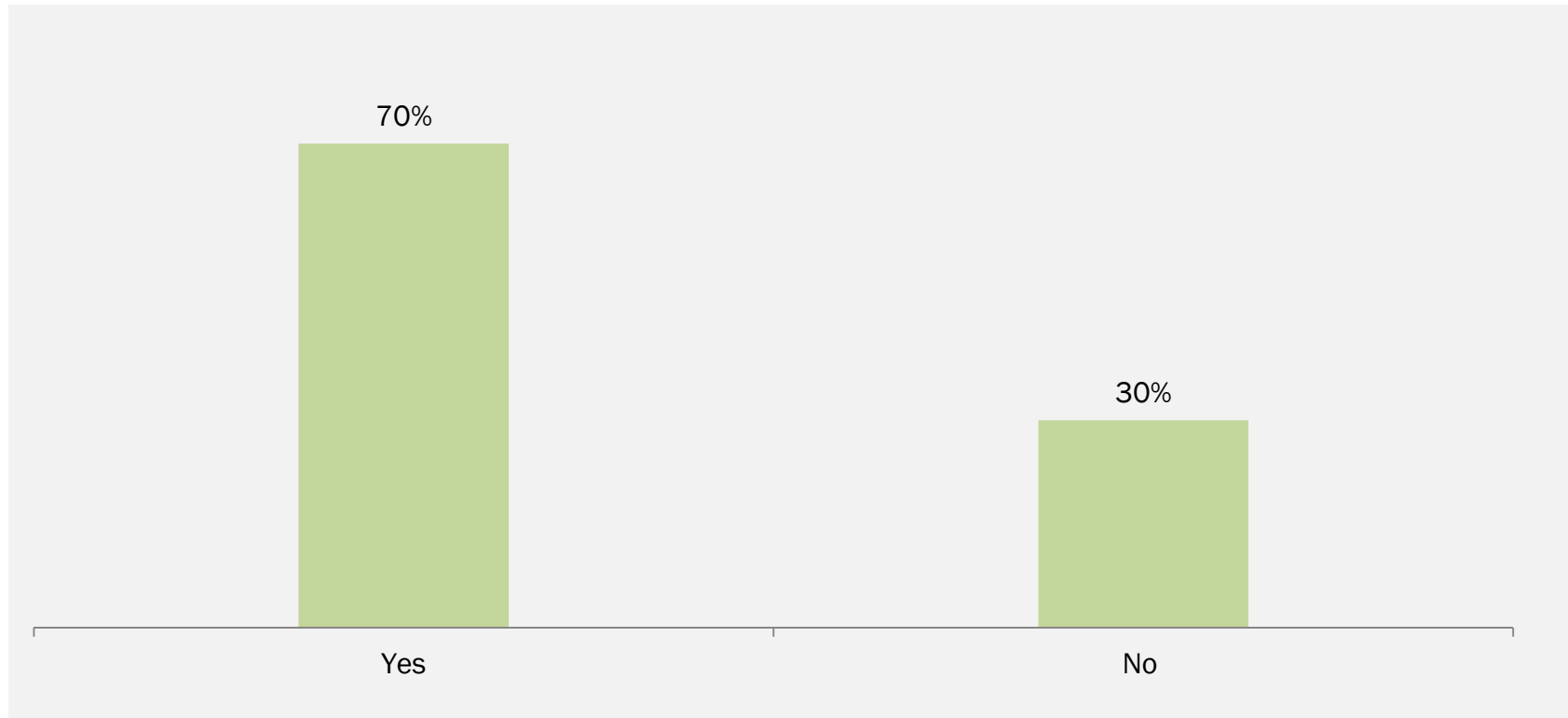
*Has Standards Program enabled you to have better regional networks?*



- The majority of organisations believe that the *Standards Program* has enabled them to have better regional networks

## FUNDING BASE

*Has Standards Program helped you have a more diverse funding base?*



- The majority of organisations believe that participating in the *Standards Program* programs has helped them develop a more diverse funding base

# Conclusions



# Museums & Galleries NSW

Image Yamba Museum – The Story House, Yamba

# Conclusions

## GRANTS AND OTHER INCOME SOURCES

- Participation in the *Standards Program* appears to increase the organisation's awareness of a greater diversity of funding sources but also enables them to increase the value of grants that they received from the Arts NSW devolved grant program managed by M&G NSW. What is anecdotally noticeable is that post-participation in the *Standard Program*, organisations feel better equipped to take on more complex projects and consequently require higher levels of funding for the delivery of the project. They also seem to be less daunted by the funding application process.
- The success rate for the grants also appears to increase as participants become more aware of the requirements for each project and grant application.

## VOLUNTEERS

- 3 in 5 organisations reported an increase or have maintained the number of volunteers since participation in the *Standards Program*. A key element of the Standards Program relates to the management and retention of volunteers. This may be a factor in volunteer retention and growth.

## VISITATION

- Just over 70% of organisations have increased or have maintained their levels of reported visitation since participation in the *Standards Program*. This may be a result of an improved level of visibility of the organisation as well as better understanding of the need for marketing and promotion.

# Conclusions

## OPENING HOURS

- Participation in the *Standards Program* does not appear to automatically lead to an increase in the hours the organisations are open to the public. This is not surprising as opening hours are often dependant on levels of available human resources.

## POLICIES

- Participation in the *Standards Program* has a clear positive impact on the creation, implementation and maintenance of key policies. Though around two-thirds of organisations have a collection policy in place prior to commencing the *Standards Program*, this rises to just over 95% by the end of the program and at the time of survey.
- Volunteering policies increase from just under 2 in 5 organisations to around two thirds of organisations by the end of the program and at the time of survey.
- Strategic plans are reported by 90% of the organisations by the end of the program and remain current at the time of survey. This is an increase from a base of just over half of the organisations.
- The number of organisations with a preservation policy in place almost doubles from a base of 26% prior to undertaking the program to just under half the organisations (49%).
- Audience development plans start at a very low base of around 1 in 10 organisations (8%) prior to participation in the program. This increases to just over a quarter of organisations (26%) by the end of the program and to just under a third at the time of survey (30%). The *Standards Program* has a positive impact in this policy area but its impact is not as wide-spread when compared to other policy areas.



# Conclusions

## REGIONAL NETWORKS

- 69% of organisations acknowledge that participation in the *Standards Program* improves their regional networks. It should be noted that in some geographical areas, existing networks such as a Museums Australia chapter, help connect organisations and so the benefit from participation in the *Standards Program* may not be as apparent.
- Though the *Regional Museum Advisor Program* is promoted as a follow up to the *Standards Program*, only a small number of organisations appear to be located in areas where the Local Government authority is a participant in the *Regional Museum Advisor Program*. One explanation for this is may be that the *Standards Program* is regionally based and cost local government a small amount of money <sup>1</sup> whereas the *Regional Museum Advisor Program* requires a greater commitment, in terms of both financial and other resources from Local Government.

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<sup>1</sup> Since 2008 Local Government has contributed, on average, \$1000 (ex GST) per organisation to the costs of the delivery of the program

# Appendix

**APPENDIX ONE :** List of Standards Program

Participants

**APPENDIX TWO:** Short Questionnaire

**Museums  
& Galleries  
NSW**

## APPENDIX ONE : Standards Program Participants 2003-2012

Adaminaby Snowy Scheme Collection Inc	Chifley Home (Education Centre)
Adelong Alive Museum	City of Canada Bay Museum
Age of Fishes Museum	Coo-ee Heritage Centre
Alumny Creek School Museum	Cootamundra Heritage Centre
Armidale Aboriginal Cultural Centre & Keeping Place	Corrective Services Museum
Armidale Folk Museum	Crawford House Museum
Arms of Australia Inn Museum	Don Bank Museum
Australian Country Music Hall of Fame	Dungog Museum
Australian Fossil & Mineral Museum Home of the Somerville Collection	Eden Killer Whale Museum
Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum Inc	Emmaville Mining Museum
Bathurst City Library	Eryldene Historic House & Garden
Bathurst District Historical Society Museum	Fairfield City Museum and Gallery
Batlow Museum	Fitzroy Falls Visitor Centre
Bega Pioneers Museum	Forbes Museum
Bega Valley Regional Gallery	Gilgandra Rural Museum
Bermagui Historical Society	Glenalvon Museum
Berrima District Museum	Glenreagh Memorial Museum
Bingara Museum	Greens Gonyah Museum
Boorowa Museum	Grenfell Museum
Breakwater Battery Military Museum	Gulgong Pioneer Museum & Historical Society
Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum	Hambledon Cottage
Camden Museum: Cowpastures Heritage Centre	Hornsby & District Historical Society Museum
Canowindra Museum	Hunters Hill Museum
Carisbrook House Museum	Hurstville City Library Museum & Gallery
Casino Folk Museum	Illawarra Aboriginal and Keeping place

## APPENDIX ONE : Standards Program Participants 2003-2012 (cont)

Illawarra Museum	Sketchley Pioneer Cottage and Museum
La Perouse Museum	Sutherland Shire Historical Society & Museum
Lambing Flat Folk Museum Inc	Sydney Tramway Museum
Land of the Beardies History House Museum & Research Centre	Tamworth Powerstation Museum
Lightning Ridge Heritage Cottage Hospital Gallery	Temora Rural Museum - Temora Historical Society Inc
Manly Art Gallery & Museum	Tenterfield & District Historical Society
McCrossin's Mill Museum and Function Centre	The Australian MOTORLIFE Museum
Molong Museum	The Cottage Museum
Morpeth Museum	The Evans Head Living Museum & Community Technology Centre Incorporated
Moruya Museum	The Nutcote Trust
Museum of Education UNE	The Oaks Historical Society Inc.
Museum of Fire	The Old Courthouse Museum
Museum of the Riverina	The Pioneer Women's Hut
Narromine Aviation Museum	Thredbo Ski Museum
National Motor Racing Museum	Tongarra Museum
New Italy Museum	Tumut & District Historical Society Musuem
Newcastle Museum	Up to Date Store
Old Dubbo Gaol	Valley Heights Locomotive Depot Heritage Museum
Old School Museum	Willoughby District Historical Society Inc
Oxley Museum	Wingham Museum
Parramatta Heritage and Visitor and Information Centre	Wyalong Museum
Penrith Museum of Printing	Yamba Museum - The Story House
Queanbeyan & District Historical Museum Society	Yass & District Museum
Queanbeyan Printing Museum	Bulli Miners Closed
Quirindi and District Historical Society Inc	

## APPENDIX TWO : Short Questionnaire

### Question One

Please place a Y or YES in the appropriate box. If the policy or plan has never existed please leave blank

	In place BEFORE the Standards Program	In place by the END of Standards Program	This policy is still current
Collections Policy			
Volunteer Policy			
Strategic Plan			
Preservation Policy			
Audience Development Plan			

### Question Two

Please answer or YES or NO in the appropriate Box

Has Standards enabled you to have better regional networks?	
Has Standards helped you identify a greater range of funding sources?	