

 midsumma  
festival



**PARTNER  
WITH US  
2019**



## WHAT IS MIDSUMMA FESTIVAL?

Midsumma Festival is Victoria's premier queer cultural festival, for and by communities who live with shared experiences around diverse gender and sexuality (DGS or LGBTQIA+).

We champion queer cultures, conversations and events.

Although the primary festival is held in summer each year, Midsumma works nationally year-round to provide artists,

social-changers and culture-makers with support and tools to create, present and promote their work.

**Did you know Midsumma raises 70% of its total income annually through sources outside of state or local government?**

This means we rely on the generosity of corporate and commercial businesses, patrons and donors to support us in producing this much-loved annual festival.

This page: DJ Jen Moore at *Midsumma Horizon* 2018  
Photo: Alexis D. Lea Photography

Cover image: Zelia Rose performing in *The Cocoa Butter Club: Midsumma Special* 2018. Photo: Alexis D. Lea Photography

# 2018 MIDSUMMA FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

## Our Audiences

# 264,895

Attended Midsumma Festival 2018,  
with 42% new attendees.

# 105,000

Midsumma Carnival  
estimated attendance

# 75%

Increase in attendance for the  
2018 arts and culture program  
and an overall festival  
attendance increase of 41%

# 25%

Audiences who identify as  
'families' representing a 5%  
increase on previous year

# 3

Average number of events  
attended by each festival  
attendee

## Our 2018 Program

# 180

## Events

Representing a 40% increase  
on the 2017 program

# 50

Sold-out events

# \$26

Average ticket price

# 54%

Increase in Auslan  
interpreted or audio  
described events

# 50%

## Free events

## Our Communities' Commitment

# 265

## Volunteers

# 2,310

Volunteer hours over 22  
days of the festival – a 17%  
increase on 2017

# WHO ARE OUR AUDIENCES?

## Sexual Diversity

Lesbian	14%
Gay	30%
Bisexual	10%
Heterosexual	25%
Asexual	1%
Queer	9%

## Gender Diversity

Transgender	2%
Male	47%
Female	43%
Non-binary	5%
Prefer not to say	1%
Other	1%

## Diversity (other than sexuality or gender)

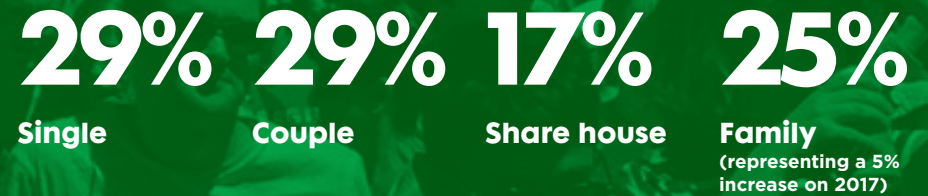
24% of those surveyed also answered the following questions (an increase of 26% on 2017). Of them:



## Age



## Household Structure



## Income (per annum)



## Residence



## WHO ARE WE?

- We are a **cultural connector** and **influencer**.
- We are the **intersection** between people, ideas, stories and experiences.
- We are simultaneously a **thought-leader** and a **learning** organisation.
- We are active and **constantly evolving**. Progression and development lies at our core.
- We are a focal point for **connections and belonging**.
- We are **globally relevant** and connected.
- We value **diversity** and embrace **difference**.

## WHAT DO WE DO?

- We promote, develop and celebrate **queer arts and culture**.
- We create **inclusive, safe cultural** and social **spaces**.
- We **lead conversations** and **we listen**.
- We **champion collaboration**.
- We provide platforms for **shared experiences**.
- We **increase visibility** in a world that often under-represents us, and **amplify voices** that might otherwise not be seen or heard.
- We imagine **positive futures**. We **challenge, inspire and take risks** in pursuit of these.
- We seek **new perspectives** and paradigms; yet never forget the **value of our past**.
- We offer **time, place and space** for our communities and allies to **engage**.



## MIDSUMMA FESTIVAL

Midsumma Festival is made up of events produced by and for our broad and diverse communities. Each year artists, producers and culture-makers register their events for inclusion in the Midsumma Festival program guide; website; festival promotions; and artists support services. Events include arts and cultural experiences such as **theatre, music, comedy, dance, visual arts, digital arts** and **film** – as well as **forums, sporting, family** and **social** events.

Midsumma plays a significant proactive role in developing the queer cultural footprint of Melbourne. In 2018, Midsumma extended its **'Midsumma Presents'** producing arm to 30 events where in 2017 had produced only six. This complemented the increased participation seen in the open access program – an increase from 125 to 180 events in total for 2018 – and a good sign of community engagement.

The Midsumma presented program included collaborations with significant cultural institutions such as **Arts Centre Melbourne, State Library Victoria, ACMI, Abbotsford Convent, Incinerator Gallery** and the **Australian Gay and Lesbian Archives (ALGA)**. A focus for 'Midsumma Presents' is on making the many diverse queer communities in Victoria more effectively interconnected, and to provide a platform for cultural voices and stories that are often not heard otherwise in the broader community.

For the first time, other prestigious institutions such as Melbourne Recital Centre and The Regent Theatre also joined the Midsumma Festival 2018 program, a good sign of things to come.

**The next Midsumma Festival season will run from 20 January to 10 February 2019.**



## A LONG HISTORY CELEBRATING QUEER CULTURES

In 2018 Midsumma celebrated **31 years** of championing diversity, cultivating queer perspectives and creating experiences that challenge the status quo – all made possible through our annual open access festival and our own presentations and projects.

With such a rich and successful history, the festival both celebrated its past and at the same time focused on opening up the next chapter with a revitalised future.

### Setting The Bar In 2018

In 2018 Midsumma, for the first time, engaged an independent research service. The resulting **Midsumma Audience Survey** included a series of questions focused on Midsumma's impact:

*“90% or more of (survey) respondents agreed that the festival is important for the local area and made them feel safe and welcome. More than 80% also agreed that it helped them feel connected to people in the community, moved and inspired them and had a positive impact on their physical and mental health.”*

**Culture Counts Data and Insights Report,  
March 2018**

# OUR COMMUNITY VISIBILITY

Midsumma attracts broad attendances across age ranges and demographics; truly representing inclusion and diversity in all its forms. For this reason we are ideally placed to make the many diverse queer communities in Victoria more visible and to provide a platform for voices and stories that are often not heard in the broader community.

Midsumma is a festival that intrinsically creates safe and inclusive places for communities, with diversity at its very core. We know that when our communities feel safe and supported they build stronger connections with their own groups and others.

Success in this area was particularly evident in 2018 in the following areas.

## Increased Focus on Young People

In 2018 Midsumma worked to significantly increase the presence of young people actively participating in the festival both in terms of number and depth of engagement. In a brand new initiative produced by Midsumma in partnership with Minus18, *Midsumma Youth Spectacular* showcased the creative talents of individual LGBTQIA+ young people to a near capacity audience at The Melba Spiegelgnt in Collingwood. The young entertainers were provided with Midsumma team's guidance and financial support to make this first time project a reality.

An expanded youth under-18 zone at *Midsumma Carnival*, again in partnership with Minus18 received great feedback and was at capacity throughout the day. Once again a strong contingent of young people marched near the front of *Midsumma Pride March*.

We also saw an increase in dedicated youth events within the open access program, a result of the work achieved in 2017 where this area was a priority for the festival.

## Increased Engagement with Families

For 2018 Midsumma partnered with the City of Melbourne's ArtPlay program to produce *Midsumma at ArtPlay: Our Time to Shine*, a creative workshop for 3 to 5 year-olds and their families. We also extended the footprint of the *Midsumma Carnival* site (our largest and one of our most visible events) to include a new dedicated families area which included storytelling and play/interactive activities. The results of these activities saw an increase of 5% of audiences identifying as Families from the previous year.





## Increased Indigenous Engagement

Meaningful engagement with LGBTQIA+ Indigenous communities was achieved throughout the year, culminating in increased participation during the 2018 festival.

Mark Nannup was again employed as Coordinator of Indigenous Engagement for Midsumma Festival, and Indigenous Elders held a traditional smoking ceremony as part of *Midsumma Pride March* for a second year. For the first time, two members of the Indigenous community were 'crowned' during NAIDOC Week in July 2017, a role which allowed them to lead the Indigenous cohort in *Midsumma Pride March* and feature in events throughout the festival.

There was a significant increase in First Nations events in both the open access and 'Midsumma Presents' programs for 2018.

Midsumma collaborated with Incinerator Gallery to produce the *Black Magic* exhibition and subsequent talk *First Nations Pride*; Blak Dot Gallery registered an exhibition event *Blak-Queer Futurism* and another Indigenous exhibition *Shifting Elements and Camp Dogs* by Indigenous performer and artist Kamahi Djordan King. There was also a capacity attendance at *Yirramboi History Salon*, an event programmed as part of Midsumma Festival Bar at Bombini Buzz featuring storytelling with queer Indigenous celebrity Uncle Jack Charles.

## Increased PoC Engagement

There was a significant lift in events representing People of Colour (PoC) more generally.

Midsumma partnered with Arts Centre Melbourne to present sold-out event *The Cocoa Butter Club: Midsumma Special* where we also introduced audiences and performers alike to Arts Centre Melbourne, a venue many had never previously entered. We collaborated with State Library Victoria and ALGA to present *WE ARE HERE* an exhibition

featuring the works by artists who identify as First Nations or PoC. The *Midsumma Australia Post Art Prize* was won by Tama tk Sharman from Aotearoa/New Zealand. Midsumma Futures participant Raina Peterson produced *Bent Bollywood* which enjoyed sold out performances. In the broader open access program *All Sorts* party was highly successful, and *Mama Alto: Queerly Beloved* was very well received.

## Increased Engagement with Disability Cultures

At Midsumma Festival, we recognise our responsibility to achieve genuine outcomes beyond written policies, procedures and legislative requirements. True accessibility and inclusion goes far beyond whether a venue is accessible or not, and we have developed and implemented a broad range of accessibility initiatives to ensure that all Midsumma events are inclusive of the broadest possible participation.

Our approach aims to build new audiences within the various disability communities, helping rebuild the confidence of people with disability, low vision and who are deaf in engaging with arts and cultural events. Our leadership position in this area can become a model of best practice.

2018 saw the first commission of an interactive tactile art installation by Slow Art Collective at Midsumma Carnival, featuring artists with low vision or who are blind, presented in collaboration with Description Victoria.

The 2018 Midsumma Program Guide was made accessible through multiple formats for the first time with plain text, audio described and screen readable versions. Several event listings were also presented in an audio-described format available on the website.

We saw a 54% increase in Auslan interpreted and audio-described events across the program. Not only were there more 'Midsumma Presents' events with active access initiatives but we also saw an increase in open access producers providing such services.

*Homophonic!*, conducted a tactile tour prior to the performance to allow low vision attendees to familiarise themselves with the venue and musical instruments. This is an initiative Midsumma hopes to develop further into the future across the program.

For the first time, event producers were also encouraged to present 'relaxed performances' intended specifically to be sensitive to and accepting of audience members who may benefit from a more relaxed environment, including (but not limited to) those with autistic

spectrum conditions, anyone with sensory and communication disorders or people with learning disabilities.

## Increased Engagement with the Transgender Community

The 2018 program saw a larger number of events with transgender performers and content including headliner Miss Blanks at *Midsumma Carnival*; Mama Alto performed at three Midsumma presented events as well as her own show; Simona Castricum featured in Midsumma Talks event *Bent Lines - Designing a Queer City*; 2017 winner of the *Midsumma Australia Post Art Prize*, J. Rosenbaum presented their own exhibition *Beyond the Binary*; international artist Genesis Breyer P Orridge presented an exhibition *Loyalty Does Not End With Death*; Red Stitch Theatre produced sell-out season of *HIR* written by Taylor Mac and three other open access events *CHINTZ*, *Glitterfist: Libertine* and talks event *Transforming Family Connections - The They Thing*.

Not only did we see an increase in audience attendance from our transgender communities but our volunteer workforce also rose to 3.5% identifying as transgender.

## Increased Engagement with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Audiences and Artists

With a view to increasing participation for and by Victoria's multicultural communities we embarked on a stronger relationship with Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) by supporting their December 2017 event *Balimbing - Filipino Queerness* a photographic art exhibition by Gregory Lorenzutti and subsequent talks event portraying the unique queer and multicultural LGBTQIA+ community of Tacloban City in the Philippines.

Over one-third of artists programmed by Midsumma Festival for its three signature events identified as culturally and linguistically diverse.

## Midsumma Futures

In its first year Midsumma Futures, a nine-month mentoring program has been extremely successful. This developmental program is designed for LGBTQIA+ early-career artists and future community leaders to advance their vocation, deepen their practice, gain skills and exposure and lead the future of queer culture.

Midsumma Futures brings together a diverse range of artists from across disciplines as well as producers, socially engaged practitioners, community leaders, creative thinkers and culture-makers. Once connections are made between early-career and established practitioners, participants attend a series of five group workshops in professional skill and career development as well as their one-on-one sessions with a mentor. All receive VIP passes to attend the following Midsumma Festival, with increased support for those who may also register an open access event.

Twelve participants took part in 2017/2018 representing young artists and culture makers in the following areas: playwriting; performance; stage design; theatre direction; film making; visual arts; and interdisciplinary arts.

## Midsumma Pathways

In 2018 Midsumma Pathways is the inaugural capacity building and skill development project working with up to ten creative LGBTQIA+ members of the community who also identify as living with disability. Midsumma Pathways is a companion project to Midsumma Futures program and aims not only to develop skills but will also build capacity for participants in a broader context through introducing and interacting with LGBTQIA+ creative communities, venues and networks. The aim is to build skills and networks that can be further built upon by participants in the future.

These important year-round initiatives are just the beginning of our exciting future.

Midsumma Futures participant Raina Peterson 2018  
Photo: Alexis D. Lea Photography



# BUT THAT'S NOT ALL WE'VE DONE

While new initiatives were received well in the 2018 Midsumma Festival program, they provided just a small taste of the more comprehensive creative and cultural strategies that the Midsumma team has planned. We know we can make a difference all year round.

## 2017 Awards

### GLOBE Community Awards 2017

We were thrilled to be awarded the 'Connecting our Community' award at Melbourne's GLOBE Community Awards in October 2017, in particular for the work we had done in the Indigenous, Access and Youth spaces within the LGBTQIA+ communities.

### Melbourne Community Awards 2017

Midsumma was a finalist in the prestigious Melbourne Awards in the 'Contribution to Community by a Community Organisation' category.



## A Refreshed Brand Identity

In 2017 the Midsumma team identified that the Midsumma logo was somewhat dated. It was made of fine lines which 'strobed' visually and was therefore difficult for those with low vision; and also was not considered representative of the large variety of diverse communities we service.

We sought a new contemporary visual identity that our communities could engage with but that remained highly sensitive to the value we place on our past. We also wanted to confidently reflect our organisational values through a new brand identity.

Key words we used for the designer's consideration included: *diversity, inclusion, a cultural change-maker, connector, movement, momentum (not static, solid or heavy), fluidity, forward looking, nimble, flexible, accessible.*

We believe that the resulting logo met all of the above as well as representing the safe inclusive cultural spaces that we create for our communities and events. At the same time the new visuals successfully reflect history by referencing our previous logo. We have received positive feedback from its release in August 2017 and throughout the 2018 festival.

Your support can help us further realise the potential of Midsumma in and beyond our festival each year. We are just at the beginning of an exciting future – come join us!

# WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

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