



The Remedy Project AUDIENCE SURVEY

*Summary of findings for communities
and organisations.*



In September 2022,
The Remedy Project, run by Griffith
University, The University of the
Sunshine Coast, The University
of Queensland, and Edith Cowan
University, collaborated with **The
Desert Song Festival & The Desert
Festival** & other local organisations in
Mparntwe Alice Springs to learn how
First Nations live music affects the
people who attend.

We wanted to understand how listening to First Nations live music events might influence how people felt and acted about things in our communities and Country that shape First Nations health, wellbeing, and healing, such as our experiences of racism, community services, healthy environment, community, and culture. We offer a summary of the survey and research findings below. If you have feedback, questions, or concerns about this research or would like to know more, please visit our website:

www.remedyproject.org

About the survey & the people who completed it

A total of 78 people completed the audience survey after attending The Desert Song Festival, Desert Festival, and other events like open mic sessions in Mparntwe.

Audience members completed the survey using an online form either on their own device (phone, tablet, computer) or with a Remedy Project researcher who wrote their answers into the online form for them.

At the bottom of the survey, each audience member was asked if it was ok for researchers to contact them again in a few months to see if they still felt the same as they did straight after the music event. Eight people ended up doing mini yarns with the researchers about six months after the festivals. Their stories of how the music affected them over the six months are included in our research.

Most of the people who did the survey were Non-Indigenous People (74 people) and women (52 people). A fairly big number of people who did the survey (18 people) identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual or other people (LGBTIAQ+). We note that transgender people are sometimes called sistergirls and brotherboys in First Nations communities. Most of the people who did the survey were aged between 25 and 74.

The survey included some questions about the links between First Nations live music and health, such as:

- ✦ How would you describe your overall feeling of health before and after this event?
- ✦ How would you describe your overall feeling of wellbeing before and after this event?
- ✦ What effect did hearing First Nations languages at this event have on you?
- ✦ Do you feel motivated to change anything in your life or community after listening to First Nations musicians at this event? If yes, what would you like to change?
- ✦ If you feel motivated to change something in your life or community after this event, what do think contributed the most to that feeling? (e.g., the musicians, other audience members, the venue, the overall experience)
- ✦ If you don't feel motivated to change anything at this point, why do you think that is?

The survey also included statements about the links between health and wellbeing and the things that shape health and wellbeing in our communities and Country.

People who completed the survey were asked to pick how much they agreed or disagreed with those statements on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with an option to pick 'neutral' if they did not agree or disagree. The statements that people were asked to agree or disagree with in the survey are listed here:

- ✦ Hearing First Nations music at this event helped me to connect with Country and the natural environment
- ✦ Hearing First Nations Peoples music at this event made me want to look after Country and the natural environment
- ✦ Being part of this event strengthens my connections with friends and family
- ✦ Being part of this event strengthens my connections with leaders in First Nations communities
- ✦ Being part of this event strengthens my connections with First Nations communities
- ✦ Being part of this event helps me to know more about First Nations cultures
- ✦ Hearing First Nations Peoples' music at this event contributes to my spiritual wellbeing
- ✦ I have seen for myself that First Nations music can positively influence the quality of services for First Nations People
- ✦ I believe that First Nations music is an important part of community services for First Nations People
- ✦ I value the stories that were shared through First Nations music at this event
- ✦ First Nations music promotes First Nations self-determination and sovereignty
- ✦ Participating in this event made me feel proud of my own culture
- ✦ First Nations music helps me understand my own cultural identity
- ✦ Music activities like these strengthen collaboration between First Nations and Non-Indigenous People
- ✦ [for Non-Indigenous People only] The music I heard at this event will probably affect how I relate or interact with First Nations People in future
- ✦ First Nations music can help address racism in this country
- ✦ I have seen for myself that First Nations music can influence regional, state, territory, or federal government decision making
- ✦ I would like it if the messages in First Nations music influenced government decisions
- ✦ This kind of musical activity helps heal wounds from the past between First Nations and Non-Indigenous Peoples
- ✦ This kind of music activity is healing for me personally

A graphic showing how many people agreed and disagreed with each of those statements is included later in this summary.

Summary of major findings from the survey

Out of the 78 people who did the survey, only 10 people who attended Desert Festival answered the two questions about their own health and wellbeing before and after the event because the questions were added after most people completed the survey in response to a partner suggestion. Among those 10 people, all felt better after the live music event than before.

Overall, people who completed the survey agreed strongly with the statements about First Nations music. That indicates they felt generally positive about the potential influence of First Nations live music on the things that shape First Nations Peoples' health and wellbeing.

The strongest level of agreement was shown for the statement: *First Nations music promotes First Nations self-determination and sovereignty.*

The strongest level of disagreement was shown for the statement: *Participating in this event made me feel proud of my own culture.* That indicates that the majority of Non-Indigenous People who completed the survey may have experienced something that made them question their own cultural values or inheritance in relation to First Nations cultures and People which can be a positive thing for people to consider.

Many benefits of attending First Nations live music performances are generalisable across age groups. Examples of benefits reported across age groups were helping to address racism in this country and experiencing spiritual wellbeing. Notably, people across all age groups would like it if the messages in First Nations music could influence government decisions.

Older audience members felt more connected to and responsible for caring for Country and the natural environment after hearing live First Nations music at events.

While we couldn't identify statistically significant differences between the effects of different live music events included in the survey, we noticed that:

- The Children's Ground event, which was a daytime family-friendly event held at Telegraph Station, was the only event where no survey respondents felt neutral or disagreed with the statement *This kind of musical activity helps heal wounds from the past between First Nations and Non-Indigenous Peoples*, indicating that people who did the survey felt healing from attending that event. All respondents at the Children's Ground event agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. In contrast, all other events recorded a minimum of 15.2 per cent (Desert Song Festival) and maximum of 35.3 percent (Desert Festival) neutral responses to the statement.
- The Children's Ground event was the only event where no survey respondents were neutral or disagreed with the statements *Being part of this event strengthens my connections with First Nations communities*, *Being part of this event helps me to know more about First Nations cultures*, and *Music activities like these strengthen collaboration between First Nations and Non-Indigenous People*, indicating that survey respondents at that event felt more connected with First Nations communities, more knowledgeable about First Nations cultures, and more optimistic about inter-cultural collaborations after attending.

People who felt motivated to change something in their life or community immediately following the live music event said that they felt motivated to:

- Learn more about First Nations culture, language, and music
- Advocate for First Nations justice, people, and the environment
- Share First Nations music with family and community, and support First Nations artists by listening to and buying artists' and musicians' work
- Include First Nations elements in their own music and activities, such as their choirs back home

People who wanted to change things in their life or community after the live music event said that the following things had helped them want to make those changes:

- Overall event experience
- Musicians and their stories
- The music itself
- Connections made and felt at the event with musicians and other audience members
- Combination of music and connecting with Country (e.g., at Kwartatuma, Ormiston Gorge) during events

Most people who completed the survey said they felt positive emotions such as awe and respect from hearing First Nations languages at the events.

Some people who did the survey worked in education and health care. They said that First Nations music at the event motivated them to change the way they work. For example, one person wanted to add more First Nations music content to the school lessons where she worked.

An interesting finding is that local people who live in Mparntwe Alice Springs were more likely to answer “neutral” (i.e., they didn’t agree or disagree) to more questions than visitors and tourists. More research is needed to understand why local people were more likely to answer that way.

Most people said that hearing First Nations music made them want to be an ally to First Nations People and help advocate for First Nations Peoples, Country, cultures, and issues. That effect continued after six months for the eight people who did the follow-up mini yarns, which shows that the effects of First Nations live music can be long-lasting.

In general people who did the survey and live in the Northern Territory showed some different answers to people who did the survey and live in other parts of Australia or overseas. For example, in response to the statement *First Nations music promotes First Nations self-determination and sovereignty* almost 20 percent more respondents who were visitors to the NT responded strongly agreed than NT resident respondents. Approximately half the number of visitors to the NT (25.5%) agreed with the statement compared with NT residents (44.4%). Further details are available in our future publications.

There was a statistically significant finding that more men than other gender groups disagreed with the statement *Hearing First Nations Peoples music at this event made me want to look after Country*. More research is needed to understand that difference.

Enduring effects of First Nations live music performance & listening

We asked people who did the survey if they would like to be contacted after six months for follow-up to see if their feelings about the event's effect on them had changed or lasted.

A total of eight people agreed to be part of a mini yarn with researchers six months after the live music event where they did their survey. When we analysed those yarns, we found that:

- ✦ Most of the eight people reported having initial and long-lasting good feelings from the live music events. Some of those feelings included respect and awe, appreciation, calmness, joy, hope, and pride. Some less common feelings were sadness, deep grief, and anger.
- ✦ Many people said they came away with a “deeper understanding” and “more awareness and education” from listening to First Nations languages and music at the events.
- ✦ Audiences reported feelings and senses in their responses more often than mental processes such as awareness and understanding.

Notable differences in effects felt between the time of event and six months later:

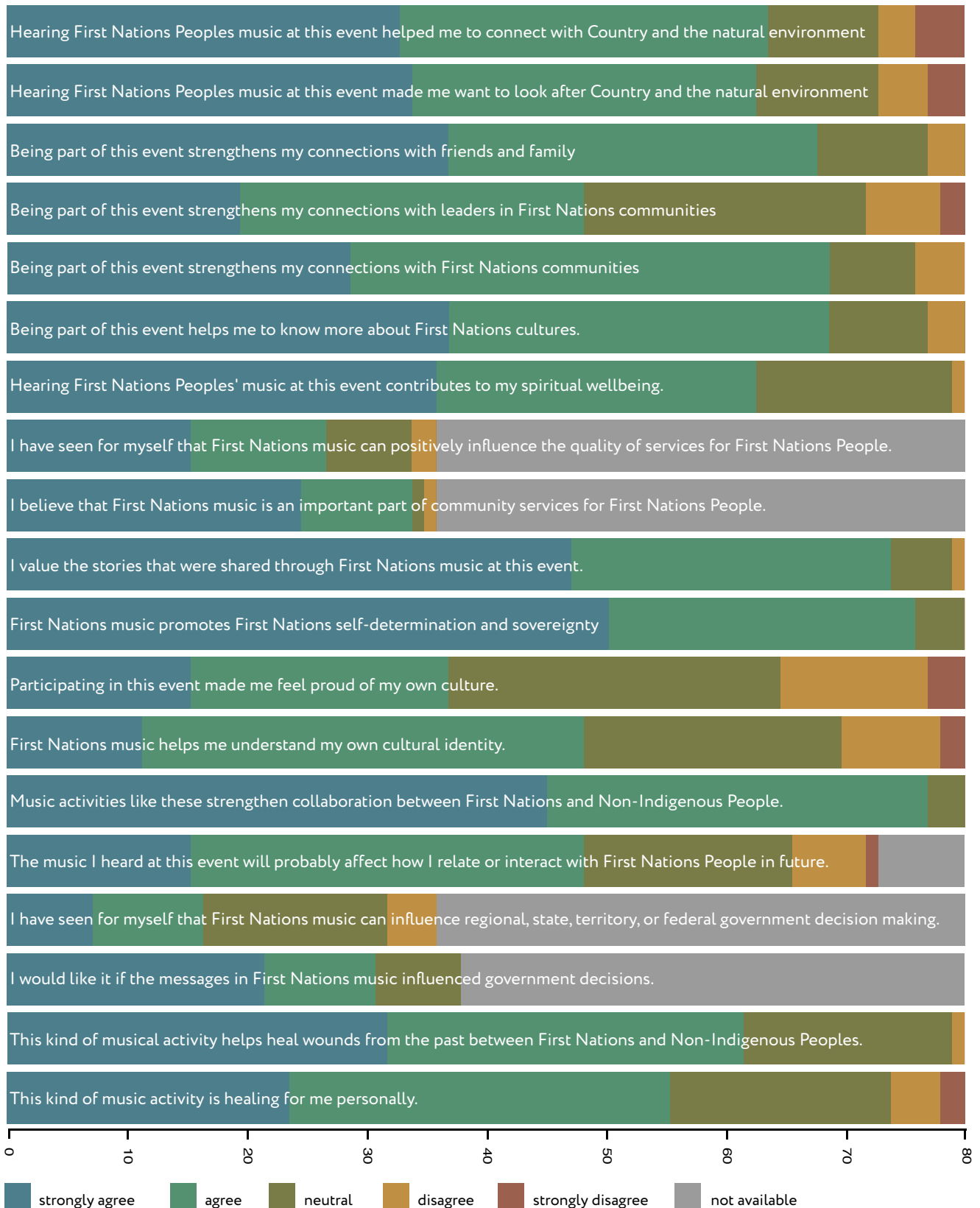
- ✦ Audiences felt they gained a deeper understanding over time.
- ✦ Motivation to change was stronger at the time of event than six months later.
- ✦ Connections made and felt at the event lasted over time.
- ✦ Sense of wellbeing and connection to Country sustained over time.

What does this all mean for First Nations live music & events?

Our pilot survey and follow up mini yarn findings indicate that:

- ✦ First Nations live music performances and events have positive immediate effects on audience members' personal feelings of health and wellbeing.
- ✦ Live music motivates audiences to learn more about First Nations language and culture and share those learnings with family and friends.
- ✦ Audience members felt activated to promote First Nations music and, in particular, the musicians they saw at the events to others for at least six months after they returned home.
- ✦ First Nations music and events increase feelings of connection with First Nations communities for audience members, suggesting that music events can be places for inter-cultural connections, collaboration, and healing.
- ✦ A lot of people said they valued hearing stories through First Nations Music at the events and that they believed that music events can help address racism in this country.
- ✦ First Nations live music events have health, wellbeing, and healing benefits across a holistic spectrum of personal, family, community, and societal levels. Those benefits apply to people of diverse cultures, genders, ages, locations, and sexualities.
- ✦ The image below uses colours to show the level of agreement and disagreement with statements about First Nations music included in the survey. Check out the list of colours at the bottom of the image to see which colour represents each level of agreement.

The image below uses colours to show the level of agreement and disagreement with statements about First Nations music included in the survey. Check out the list of colours at the bottom of the image to see which colour represents each level of agreement.



Contact

Professor Naomi Sunderland - Project Lead (She/her)
n.sunderland@griffith.edu.au
+61 (0)7 3382 1113

Please use the following reference to cite this report:

Sunderland, N., Apps, K., Scarfe, B., Zhang, P., Garvey, D., Cooper, R., Bartleet, B., Graham, P. and Barry, G. (2024). The Remedy Project audience survey: Summary of findings for communities and organisations [Report]. Meanjin Brisbane, Australia. The Remedy Project. Available at <http://www.remedyproject.org>