

Fact Sheet

Australia Council for the Arts: What is our research program?

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Research Priorities

The Australia Council's research program has a national focus. We aim to generate research that creates value for the arts sector, which adds new knowledge to the field, and provides insight and direction for policy, practice and innovation. We do this through undertaking and commissioning research, as well as developing strategic research partnerships.

In 2009 we re-invigorated our research program and identified the following research priorities:

- the economic performance of the arts
- public participation in the arts
- private sector support for the arts
- the effect and impact of digital technologies in the arts.

In doing this we want to demonstrate the value and application of the research to the arts sector and support arts organisations to put the findings to practical use.

The priorities for the Australia Council's research program are developed within the context of Council's legislated functions and its strategic priorities.

The research program is also informed by:

- the Australian Government's National Research Priorities;
- the Cultural Ministers' Council's research priorities; and
- the priorities identified by the boards and sections of the Australia Council.

The research program is managed by the Research and Strategic Analysis (RSA) team led by Dr Nick Herd.

How we work

Research is conducted in different ways depending on the nature of the project:

- original research is commissioned using consultants or academic researchers
- academic research is supported through partnerships co-funded with the Australian Research Council
- some research is done entirely in-house by the RSA staff, including value-added analysis from other data sources, such as the ABS.

In terms of partnerships with researchers in the academic sector, the Australia Council is currently part of 13 ARC funded linkage projects with tertiary education institutions, and is pursuing more.

Usually, the research reports resulting from the commissioned research are made available to the public, the arts sector and interested researchers via the Australia Council's Research Centre/Hub.

Most of the projects are cross-art form in nature. A small number focus on particular art forms.

Current areas of research include:

Recently published

Artistic Vibrancy

Published in January 2010 this paper looks at what artistic vibrancy means, what the traits of an artistically vibrant company are, how companies might meaningfully assess their artistic vibrancy, and what circumstances foster artistic vibrancy. It draws on ideas from performing arts practitioners and the research. The report can be found at http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/music/reports_and_publications/defining_artistic_vibrancy

Arts Participation

This research measures community participation in the arts to provide a more detailed picture of how Australians engage with the arts. It identifies the factors most important in determining arts attendance and participation, as well as non-attendance and non-participation. It also gives a better understanding of the role that digital technologies are playing in the way people engage in the arts.

Coming soon

Economic study of practicing professional artists

This study by Professor David Throsby involves a survey of 1,000 practicing professional artists. This research is important because it:

- provides the most comprehensive picture of the way Australian artists are working now
- complements data on artists' employment derived from the Census
- contributes to our understanding of the issues confronting artists
- provides a benchmark which will be repeated by the Council in future years.

Economic Fundamentals-Australian Arts Sector Employment Characteristics

The Economic Fundamentals series aims to present current knowledge on the economic performance of the arts sector that can be published, identify gaps and provide the basis for future research.

Arts Sector Employment Characteristics is commissioned from the Centre for Creative Industries (CCI) at QUT, the research identifies analyses and presents all available Census based data on employment in the Australian arts sector in a way that is accessible for Australia Council stakeholders and provides analysis and discussion about the implications of the data.

Business Support for the Arts

This research partnership with the Australia Business Arts Foundation examines the factors that affect corporate support for the arts through in-depth interviews with decision makers in Australian companies. The sample includes companies that currently support the arts and those that do not.

Creative Industries and the Arts

This is a detailed examination of the relationship between the arts and creative industries, based on an extensive review of the literature and depth interviews with practitioners. The work being undertaken by Professor Stuart Cunningham and Dr Justin O'Connor, CCI at QUT.

The research questions being addressed include:

- What unifies the groups of industries collected together under the name creative industries?
- What are the inputs of the arts to the creative industries?
- Are they just a subsidised input to the creative industries?
- Are the arts a part of the creative industries per se?

Sharing the most up-to-date information on the arts

The Australia Council's Research Centre has a unique collection of arts industry journals, monographs and the Research Hub, an online research resource. The Australia Council's librarians guide staff and clients in their research, with their expert industry knowledge and ready access to resources.

The Research Centre can assist you with:

- access to the library collection
- locating information on the arts in Australia
- using the Australia Council's online Research Hub
- undertaking literature reviews and searches.

On the Research Hub you can:

- blog on current issues in arts research
- use the searchable back catalogue
- find links to national and international resources
- get RSS feeds of latest additions to the blog.

<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research>

Contact:

Dr Nick Herd

Director, Research and Strategic Analysis

n.herd@australiacouncil.gov.au

Lindsay Read

Research Librarian

l.read@australiacouncil.gov.au

Bridget Jones

Manager, Research

b.jones@australiacouncil.gov.au

This Fact Sheet has been produced by the Australia Council for the Arts as part of its research project *More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts*.

For more information on the research and to view other fact sheets and resources, go to www.australiacouncil.gov.au/participation.