

## Fact Sheet

# Arts participation: How do young people compare?

**Young people in Australia displayed higher levels of creative participation than the rest of the population.**

New research from the Australia Council for the Arts found that young people are more engaged in the arts than any other age group.

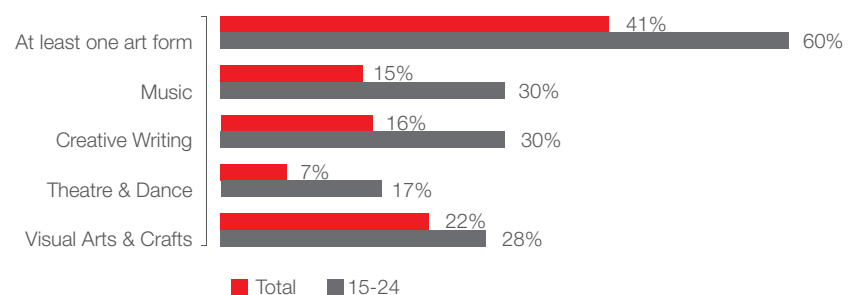
Young people appeared to be taking advantage of the endless possibilities presented by the teaming of two opposing realms; the 'technological' internet and the 'creative' arts. Australia's educational curriculum also had a part to play, with engagement levels shown to be higher among high school and tertiary students.

With the release of *More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts*, Australia has for the first time a complete picture of arts participation, from people attending arts events to creating their own arts experiences.

### Engagement with the arts

Young people in Australia displayed higher levels of creative participation than the rest of the population. They were more likely to be creatively engaged in visual arts and crafts, theatre and dance, creative writing and music. This was to some degree a reflection of education, with young students more active in creative participation than young workers.

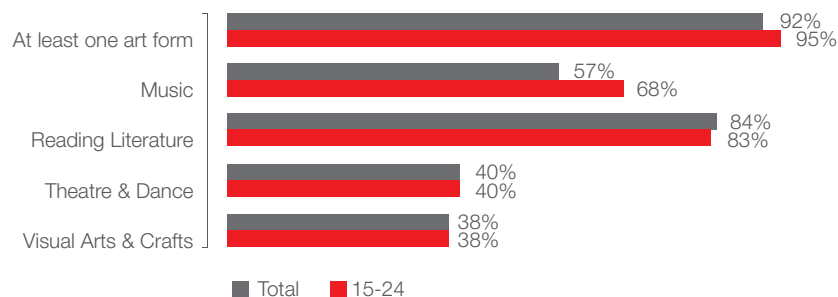
Levels of creative participation in the arts by age



Arts participation:  
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However, in terms of receptive participation the results were mixed. The 55-64 year group had higher levels of receptive participation in visual arts and crafts and theatre and dance while the youngest group (15-24 year old) had higher levels of receptive participation in music and overall.

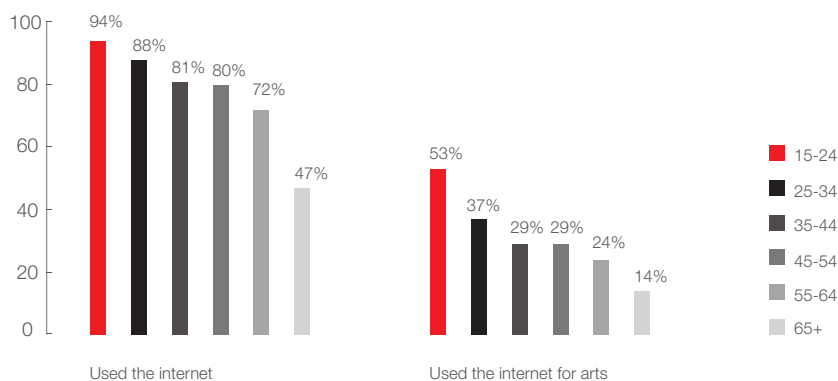
Levels of receptive participation in the arts by age



**The internet**

In the last year fifty three per cent used the internet to; research artists and performances or download music, while 28 percent used the internet to; create or promote their own music, writing or video art, engage with a social network, or learn about art.

Creating art online was the domain of the young, with 41 per cent of all online creators aged 15-24 years.



*"I will sit in the mall and log on to my writers group and we'll write a story together ...I just lose myself for hours"... focus group, Melbourne.*

## How do young people compare?

There was a hint of diversity in the ways Australians of all ages were creating works of art online. The most widespread online art creations were writing (eight per cent of all internet users) and visual art/film/video online (seven per cent of all internet users), while the most frequent mode of participation was being involved in an online community or social network concerned with art in some way (average of 82 occasions per year).

### **Employment status**

Of all those aged 26 and under, secondary school and tertiary students reported significantly higher levels of creative participation in the arts (than employed or unemployed). A total of 71 per cent of secondary school students and 68 per cent of tertiary students aged 26 and under had been involved in at least one art form over the 12 months leading up to the survey. This compared to 51 per cent of those employed and to only 36 per cent of those unemployed 15-26 year olds. Secondary school students also reported higher levels of creative participation in theatre and dance. However, even with high school and tertiary students removed, young people continued to exceed the rest of the population in terms of creative participation and attendance at music events.

Despite lower levels of creative participation, young employed people were more likely to attend music events than young students (76 per cent compared to 59 per cent of secondary school students and 69 per cent of tertiary students). This may in part be due to young employed people having higher disposable incomes than their peers who were studying.

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Both creative and receptive arts participation levels among the younger cohort appeared to be on the rise, with this group more likely than the rest to say their involvement in the arts had increased in the last year. With a higher concentration of internet users, young people were engaging with the arts in new and evolving ways.

**Creative participation – 26 years and under**

	Secondary school students %	Tertiary students %	Employed %	Unemployed** %	Total %
Visual Arts & Crafts	33	28	24	22	22
Theatre & Dance	33	17	12	3	7
Creative Writing	43	38	21	24	16
Music	33	30	28	31	15
<i>Creatively participated in at least one art form</i>	71	68	51	36	41

\*\*Caution, small base size

**Receptive participation – 26 years and under**

	Secondary school students %	Tertiary students %	Employed %	Unemployed** Total %	Total %
Visual Arts & Crafts	35	46	37	29	38
Theatre & Dance	41	46	41	20	40
Reading	80	89	84	72	84
Music	59	69	76	48	57
<i>Receptively participated in at least one art form</i>	92	97	96	88	92

\*\*Caution, small base size

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](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/participation).