

RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL ARTS PARTICIPATION SURVEY – JUNE 2017

The arts have the power to inspire, entertain and unite. They connect people with ideas, emotions and stories; and spark imagination, creativity and joy. The arts are intrinsically important and contribute to individual and collective wellbeing – they play an essential role in the daily lives of Australians.

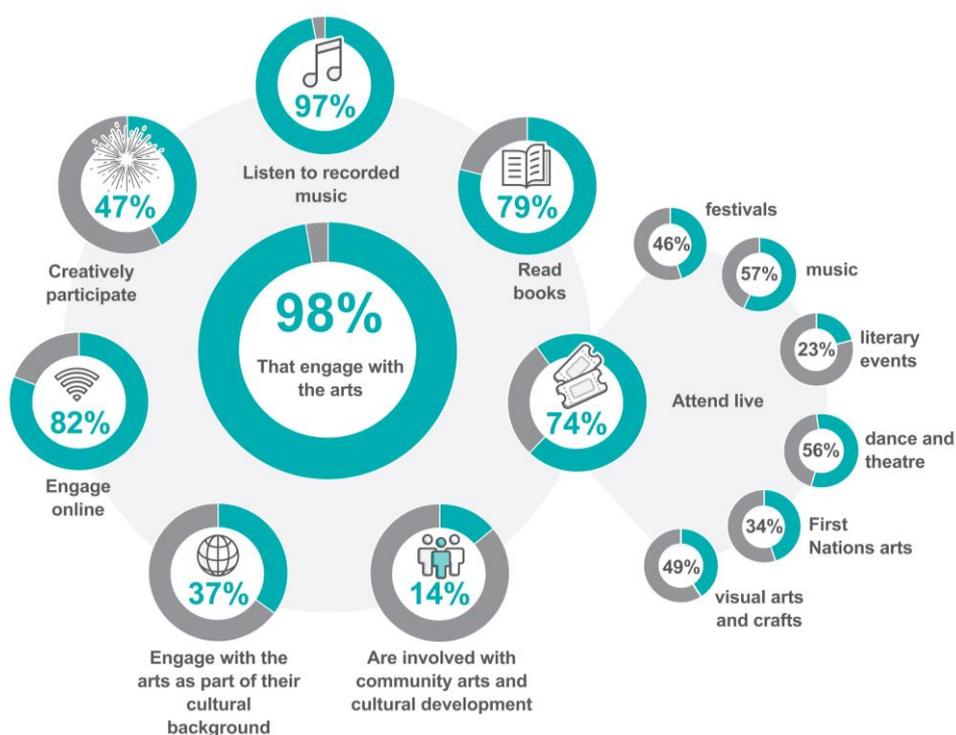
Connecting Australians: Results of the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey is the third in a landmark series by the Australia Council for the Arts. This research is designed to broaden the conversation about the arts, and to inform policy, programs and investment in the arts and well beyond. The findings confirm the significant and increasing personal value Australians place on the impact of the arts, and the ways in which they make our communities stronger and more cohesive.

The research demonstrates that the arts have a unique capacity to connect Australians from diverse backgrounds, help us to understand other people and cultures, and allow us to connect to others. We are highly connected digitally and yet we live in a global era of growing social, cultural and political division that is being evidenced through major social threats. Against this backdrop, the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey found that Australians increasingly believe the arts are critical to social cohesion – the arts reflect Australia’s diversity; shape and express identity; and create empathy, understanding and connection.

For the full report and online resources see: www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research

This fact sheet provides an overview of results for Victoria.

FIGURE 1: Victorians’ arts engagement 2016



Impacts of the arts

More Australians now recognise the many positive impacts the arts have on our daily lives and in our communities.

- In line with national trends, more Victorian residents now believe the arts have a 'big' or 'very big' impact on:
 - their ability to express themselves (71%, up from 59% in 2013)
 - their wellbeing and happiness (61%, up from 52%)
 - dealing with stress, anxiety or depression (61%, up from 56%)
 - shaping and expressing Australian identity (59%, up from 45%).
- Two in three Victorians agree that the arts impact child development (66%), and their understanding of other people and cultures (65%); and almost half of Victorians agree that the arts bring customers to local businesses (45%).

Attitudes about the arts

Australians believe that the arts reflect and contribute to society, to identity and to Australia's international reputation. The arts give life meaning and Australians are proud of their artists.

- Around eight in ten Victorians agree that:
 - First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture (82%)
 - the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life (78%)
 - the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian (78%).
- In line with national trends, there has been an increase in the proportion of Victorians who agree that the arts reflect Australia's cultural diversity (77%, up from 65% in 2013); and that First Nations arts are well represented (51%, up from 43% in 2013).

Victorians are more likely to agree with positive attitude statements about the arts than other Australians.

The vast majority of Australians maintained positive attitudes about the arts in 2016. However, there has been a shift among some towards ambivalence.

- In keeping with this trend, more Victorian residents 'neither agree nor disagree' with attitude statements, such as:
 - there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in the arts (35% neither agree or disagree, up from 10% in 2013)
 - it is exciting to see new styles of art (24% neither agree or disagree, up from 10%)
 - the arts should receive public funding (23% neither agree or disagree, up from 12%).
- In addition to increased ambivalence, more Victorian residents agree that the arts are too expensive (43%, up from 38% in 2013); the arts tend to attract people who are somewhat elitist or pretentious (43%, up from 28%); and the arts are not really for people 'like me' (22%, up from 13%).
- While these shifts contrast with other findings in the National Arts Participation Survey, they are likely to reflect the heightened anxiety, disengagement and divisions within society at this point in time; and that many Australians maintain a narrow ingrained view of what the arts include. This is discussed in more detail in [Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey](#).

Giving to the arts

The high value that Australians place on the arts is reflected in the time and money they give to support artists, arts organisations and arts projects.

- Around one in three Victorians give time or money to the arts (30%).
 - In 2016, 17% of Victorians volunteered for the arts or helped artists or community groups with arts activities; 12% donated money; and 10% donated to a crowdfunding campaign.

Victorians are more likely to give to the arts (30%) than other Australians (26%).

The arts and cultural diversity

For the first time in 2016, the National Arts Participation Survey collected data on engagement with the arts as part of Australians' cultural backgrounds.

- Almost four in ten Victorians engage with their cultural background through the arts (37%).
 - In 2016, music was the most common way Victorians engaged (21%); followed by visual arts and craft (15%); theatre and/or dance (13%); and creative writing (9%).

More Australians are attending First Nations arts across art forms, reflecting the high quality work of First Nations artists and initiatives to build audiences for First Nations arts.

- One in three Victorians attend First Nations arts (34% in 2016, up from 23% in 2013 and 14% in 2009).
 - In 2016, 18% of Victorians attended First Nations visual arts and craft, on par with 2013; 17% attended First Nations music, up from 10% in 2013; and 15% attended First Nations dance, up from 8% in 2013.

Data available for the first time shows that the community arts and cultural development (CACD) sector is a leader in the use of the arts to support social cohesion, enabling diverse voices to be heard and connected through creating art.

- In 2016, 14% of Victorians were involved in CACD activities that actively engaged community members in decision making art creation in collaboration with professional artists.

Arts attendance

Attending arts experiences in person enables Australians to come together as audiences and connect with artists in unmediated ways.

- Three in four Victorians attend the arts (74% in 2016, on par with previous years and national attendance).
 - In 2016, more than half of Victorians attended live music (57%); 49% attended visual arts, up from 44% in 2013; 45% attended theatre; 33% attended dance; and 23% attended literature events.
- Data available for the first time show that almost half of Victorians attend arts festivals (46%).
 - In 2016, 29% of Victorians attended music festivals; 19% attended dance or theatre festivals; 17% attended a visual arts festival; 16% attended a multi-art form festival; 7% attended a writers festival; and 5% attended a First Nations festival.

Victorians are more likely to attend live music (57%), visual arts (49%) and theatre (45%) than other Australians (53%, 45% and 40% respectively).

Creative participation in the arts

Despite our busy lives, Australia remains a creative nation.

- Almost half of Victorians creatively participated in the arts in 2016 (47%), on par with 2013.
 - In 2016, three in ten Victorians created visual arts and craft (30%), on par with 2013; 21% did creative writing; 18% creatively participated in music; and one in ten creatively participated in dance (11%) and theatre (9%).

Listening and reading

Listening to music and reading are vital, accessible and popular ways that Australians engage with the arts.

- Almost all Victorians intentionally listen to recorded music (97%).
 - In 2016, 89% listened to music they owned; and three quarters listened through paid or free online streaming services (77%) – a significant increase from 2013 (46%) and 2009 (33%).
- Eight in ten Victorians read creative writing (79%).
 - In 2016, 60% read novels; 39% read creative non-fiction; 38% read short stories; 17% read graphic novels or comics; 16% read poetry; and 8% read plays.

Online engagement

Across Australia, online engagement with the arts is booming. Online activity is creating new opportunities to collaborate and share, and connecting artists and audiences.

- Eight in ten Victorians engaged with the arts online in 2016 (82%), up from 2013 and 2009 and in line with national trends.
 - In 2016, 77% listened to music online; 34% researched or reviewed the arts or artists; 29% viewed visual arts, music, dance, theatre or literature online; and 13% created, learned to create or sold art online.
- Facebook is the most popular digital media that Victorians use to connect with and learn about the arts or artists (29%), followed by YouTube (25%) and an artist's or art organisation's website (18%).

Notes on data interpretation

The third National Arts Participation Survey was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 7,537 Australians aged 15 years and over in November 2016, following editions in 2009 and 2013. It encompasses engagement with the broad gamut of arts offerings across Australia, including from both commercial and not-for-profit organisations; engagement with free accessible public art; and creative participation at all levels from the hobbyist to the arts professional.

This factsheet only highlights differences that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

All sample-based surveys are subject to sampling error. For the 2016 Victorian data, the margin of error at 50% is +/- 2%. This means that if 50% of survey respondents did a particular activity, then it is 95% likely that the population estimate will be between 48% and 52%. The margin of error for 2013 is +/- 3%, and for 2009 is +/- 4%.

The National Arts Participation Survey was sampled and weighted to be nationally representative based on age, gender and location (by states and territories and metropolitan/regional Australia). While it is representative of Australians as a whole, it is not necessarily representative of any particular sub-group or location.

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