



Australian Government



Australia
Council
for the Arts

Creating Our Future

Results of the National Arts
Participation Survey

August 2020



Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey

August 2020

Creating Our Future reports on the fourth National Arts Participation Survey in a series by the Australia Council for the Arts.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was conducted by Lonergan, a Sydney-based research consultancy.

Focus groups were conducted by Patternmakers research agency.

Yindyamarra Consultancy managed the First Nations fieldwork.

Fieldwork in culturally and linguistically diverse communities was managed by Multicultural Marketing & Management.

Fieldwork for the targeted sample of respondents with intellectual disability was managed by the Council for Intellectual Disability.

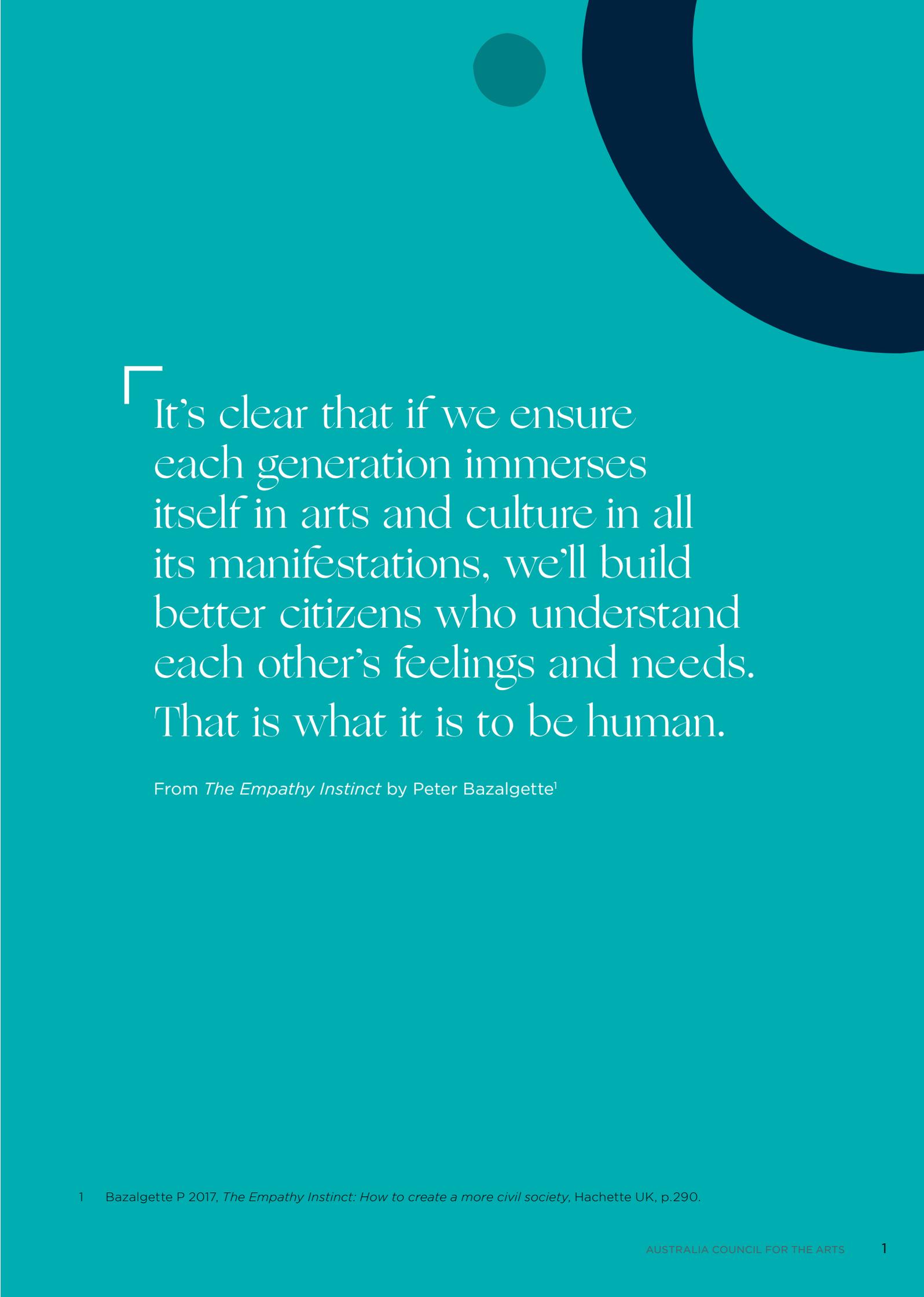
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this publication may contain names and images of deceased persons.

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Previous National Arts Participation Survey results were published in:

- Australia Council for the Arts 2017, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*.
- Australia Council for the Arts 2014, *Arts in Daily Life: Australian participation in the arts*.
- Australia Council for the Arts 2010, *More than Bums on Seats: Australian participation in the arts*.



It's clear that if we ensure each generation immerses itself in arts and culture in all its manifestations, we'll build better citizens who understand each other's feelings and needs. That is what it is to be human.

From *The Empathy Instinct* by Peter Bazalgette¹

¹ Bazalgette P 2017, *The Empathy Instinct: How to create a more civil society*, Hachette UK, p.290.

Foreword

Australians' engagement with arts and creativity creates stronger individual and collective futures and builds a more civil society for generations to come.

As our families, communities and nation come to terms with the uncertainty, isolation and social and economic disruption of the world in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the power of the arts and creativity to connect and uplift us, to reduce expenditure across health and social services and to stimulate tourism and local economies, has never been more important. Arts and creativity are among our most powerful assets. They are essential to the health, education, social cohesion and prosperity of our nation and its future.

The Australia Council's vision is a creatively connected nation in which creative enterprise is entrenched across society, industry and government as the fuel that ignites our social, cultural and economic success. We want all Australians to regularly experience the inspiration, satisfaction and wellbeing that stems from living a creative life.

Robust research and analysis underpin our efforts and advocacy to realise this vision. Our evidence base informs decision-making, strategic planning and policy; leverages new investment opportunities and supports our industry with insights into arts practice, audiences and markets.

The National Arts Participation Survey is a cornerstone of our evidence base. This research series began in 2009 as a landmark study that examined, for the first time, both Australians' attitudes and their arts engagement with a large, nationally representative sample. The Australia Council delivers the survey triennially to paint an evolving picture of the arts in Australians' lives, and to track emerging trends.

I am pleased to share with you *Creating Our Future*, results from our 2019 National Arts Participation Survey, the fourth report in this series, building on the 2009, 2013 and 2016 editions. It provides vital new evidence about the essential role that arts and creativity play in Australian communities, showing the arts are a public good infused and embedded in the fabric of our daily lives. It evidences Australians' strong and growing support for public funding, our growing recognition of the central importance of First Nations arts to Australia's culture, the importance of arts and creativity in child development and education, and the power of the arts to fuel our talent pipeline and jobs growth, while building our social cohesion and wellbeing.

The scope of this report is much broader than the reach of the Australia Council's funding. *Creating Our Future* captures Australians' engagement with a diverse range of creative activity – arts in the eye and experience of the Australian public. This encompasses arts across both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors; both amateur and professional arts experiences; and digital engagement at home through to opportunities for experiential, in-person connections. Importantly, it shows connection and wellbeing are the two main drivers of arts attendance.

The timing of this edition is particularly significant. The National Arts Participation Survey was conducted, all online for the first time, with almost 9,000 Australians in November and December 2019. In the months that followed, Australia faced a devastating summer of bushfires and, immediately after, the momentous disruption, isolation and anxiety wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Arts and creativity have played an invaluable role in supporting the wellbeing and connection of Australians during this unprecedented time, including relief concerts that united us while raising both spirits and funds.

From impromptu choirs on balconies and Zoom, to online dance parties, gallery tours, creative classes and performances; and from the books we read to the content we watch and the music we listen to, creativity is a force that enables us to transcend isolation. The arts have been, and will be, critical as we seek to bring life back into our cities, regions, culture and economy.

As the cultural and creative industries are re-ignited and re-imagined, the data in this report can provide a benchmark of Australians' arts engagement before the pandemic and vital insights to inform our efforts to rebuild. And as venues re-open, there is an opportunity to harness the increased online engagement during the pandemic in ensuring even more Australians can experience the transformative power of the arts. Rather than replacing the live experiences we have been missing during COVID-19, online engagement with arts and creativity provides greater equity and access, new points of entry, new ways of discovering artists and works and promotes greater awareness of Australian arts and culture.

Arts and creativity can also play a powerful role in social change. The global mobilisation of the Black Lives Matter movement is an important moment in history. It is prompting deep reflection and recognition of injustice, systemic inequality and racism, as well as the need for systemic change in both our society and our industry. Elevating diverse voices and the centrality of First Nations arts in Australia's culture, and understanding and promoting diverse arts engagement is crucial at this moment in time. The Australia Council is committed to promoting diversity and equity through arts and creativity and I am proud that the National Arts Participation Survey continues to expand its focus and reach among First Nations Australians and the diversity of cultures and heritages that reflect our nation. In doing so it provides deeper insights on the importance of arts to social cohesion – the glue that holds our society together.

I trust that this report will provide valuable insights illuminating the social, cultural and economic value of the arts in Australia. Creativity connects us. It will be vital to our recovery from this pandemic and our nation's future success.

Dr Wendy Were

Executive Director
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Key terms

First Nations

The terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', 'First Nations' and 'Indigenous' are used interchangeably in this report to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, arts and culture. The primary term used is First Nations in recognition of First Nations peoples' role as the original custodians of this country. We understand that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not comfortable with some of these words. The Australia Council means only respect when we use these words.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

The Australia Council recognises that Australian identities are not singular and that there is ongoing debate about how to measure and discuss cultural diversity (see page 33). In line with the previous National Arts Participation Survey, the term CALD has been used in this report when discussing cultural identity and diversity, based on self-identification by respondents.

While a contested term, the CALD acronym is still commonly used as a measurement of diversity across many policy areas and it is important to have data on the ethnic, cultural and linguistic makeup of our society and those who engage with the arts. The Australia Council uses this term with respect and recognises its limitations, and we aim to contribute to ways terminology can evolve for future research and policy development. Global attention on injustice and inequality has heightened the need to consider how terminology is used in ensuring it does not reinforce structural inequalities or inhibit the intent to fully understand and change them.

People with disability

People with disability are diverse and are not defined by their disability. There is a range of challenges for measuring and reporting disability as there is no single definition or way of capturing such complex and multidimensional experiences. Respondents with disability in the National Arts Participation Survey self-identified as a person with disability and/or a person who experiences limiting barriers unless access or support is provided. This definition is based on the social model of disability.²

The Australia Council recognises the term *people with disability* is widely used in Australia, including by disability advocates and peak bodies.³ We also recognise that the term is contested and evolving, with increasing use of self-identifying terms such as *disabled*, including in advocacy for change.⁴ We recognise that some choose to identify with a specific community such as *Deaf/deaf* or *Autistic* and may prefer not to refer to themselves as disabled or as having disability. This report uses the term *people with disability* with respect, and we will continue to recognise self-identification and engage in dialogue as the terminology evolves.

2 Barnes C 2020, 'Understanding the social model of disability: past present and future,' in Watson N and Vehmas S (eds) 2020, *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies*, Second edition, Routledge, NY.

3 People with Disability Australia, *Language Guide*.

4 Hadley B 2020, *Allyship in disability arts: Roles, relationships, and practices*.

Social cohesion

While social cohesion has long been the subject of academic enquiry and has been of increasing policy interest in Australia and internationally, there is no agreed definition. Most definitions incorporate notions such as a sense of belonging, common values, connection to the group, and willingness to participate and share outcomes.⁵ This is the definition adopted in this report in discussing the power of the arts to engage and connect Australians, to shape and communicate a national identity in which all Australians can feel they belong, and to enable empathy and understanding that can be an antidote to social divisions and threats.

Arts

In this report, the term 'arts' includes engagement with theatre, dance, visual arts and craft, music, literature, First Nations arts and multi-arts. It encompasses personal, community, amateur and professional engagement. It includes attending arts events and festivals, creative participation in the arts, engaging online, listening to music and reading books. *Creating Our Future* also explores Australians' attitudes towards and participation in broader types of creativity, including digital creations using online platforms.

Creative participation

Creative participation can take many forms – from artistic photography to playing an instrument; and from singing in a community choir or taking a community arts class, to more professional forms of arts creation. This report includes data on Australians' creative participation in visual arts and craft, music, creative writing, dance, theatre and community arts. This is likely to include participation in community arts and cultural development (CACD)⁶, however data on Australians' engagement in CACD is difficult to capture and is not a specific focus in this report.

Metropolitan, regional and remote areas

Metropolitan, regional and remote areas discussed in this report are based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure. The ASGS structure divides Australia into five classes of remoteness on the basis of relative access to services: 'major cities', 'inner regional', 'outer regional', 'remote' and 'very remote'.

Postcodes were used to allocate National Arts Participation Survey respondents to one of the five Remoteness Areas. In this report, metropolitan includes people living in 'major cities', regional includes 'inner regional' and 'outer regional' and remote areas include 'remote' and 'very remote'.

5 Markus A and Kirpitchenko L 2007, 'Conceptualising social cohesion', in J Jupp and J Nieuwenhuysen (eds), *Social Cohesion in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 21–32.

6 CACD is a specific type of socially engaged arts practice where as a group, community members and professional artists collaborate to create art that is reflective of that place and community.

Executive summary

The arts are vital expressions of human experience, through which we celebrate, commemorate and commune. Arts and creativity can unite us and delight us, make us happier and healthier. They uplift and entertain us, giving us moments of joy or escape from the challenges of our daily lives.

Arts and creativity also connect us with each other and with our past and present, and help us to imagine our future. They provide a mirror of the human experience in all its struggles and triumphs. **Experiencing the arts connects us with ideas, emotions and stories, and sparks pleasure, meaning, imagination and empathy.** The arts can inspire us, educate us, enrich us and transform us.

The National Arts Participation Survey asks how Australians are engaging with arts and creativity in our daily lives. How do Australians feel about arts and creativity? How is our arts engagement changing? Do we recognise the impacts of arts and creativity in our lives and communities? How do Australians feel about public funding for the arts?

These questions, and more, are explored through *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*. The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey is the fourth in a landmark research series, following editions in 2016, 2013 and 2009. The 2019 results are based on a nationally representative sample of 8,928 Australians.

This series provides a comprehensive picture of Australians' evolving relationship with the arts. 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; creative participation at all levels from the hobbyist to the arts professional; and the impact of digitisation on the ways we create, experience and engage with arts and creativity.

Tracking trends in arts engagement enables insight into growth opportunities and barriers to access. It arms the arts sector with information on participants, audiences and markets and **builds the evidence base about the value of the arts to Australians and to our nation's future.** It helps to ensure there is an informed conversation about the arts.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was conducted in November–December 2019, not long before the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our world, lives and the cultural and creative industries. The survey results provide **a benchmark of Australians' arts engagement before the impacts of the pandemic**, providing much needed information as doors reopen, audiences are rebuilt and the cultural and creative industries are re-ignited.

The survey also provides **vital insights on the connections of arts and creativity in health, tourism and education** – areas that will be critical as our nation recovers and looks to the future. It points to the power of the arts to build social cohesion, and to create a genuinely inclusive cultural landscape in which First Nations arts are central and all Australians feel part of our national story.

Evolving with the times, the National Arts Participation Survey went online in 2019 after being conducted through a mix of telephone and online surveys in 2016. Due to this change, the results that are most comparable for showing us trends over time are the results from the surveys conducted online in 2016, with results from the telephone surveys excluded. While the ‘2016 online only’ results presented in figures and trends throughout this report appear lower than the 2016 results published in the previous report, *Connecting Australians*, this is because of the change in methodology rather than decreases in the real world. In fact, the comparable trends indicate that across the board, Australians’ arts engagement and recognition of the value of the arts increased between 2016 and 2019.

As well as moving the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey online, targeted methods were used to ensure better representation of young Australians, regional and remote First Nations communities, communities for whom language might be a barrier to participation in the survey, and Australians with intellectual disability. We continue to capture and grow our understanding of how people from diverse backgrounds understand, participate in and value the arts.

For a deeper understanding of the survey findings, *Creating Our Future* also incorporates data from focus group discussions and additional research sources are drawn in throughout the report to provide context and paint a richer picture. Stories from the industry about Australians and the arts are shared to bring this picture to life.

Creating Our Future ‘spotlight’ sections bring together findings on key themes from across the survey results. These themes highlight the value of arts and creativity to Australians and to our nation’s future by:

- **delivering economic value and future success** through their role in child development, education, local economies, tourism and skills for the future
- **building social cohesion** through their power to shape our sense of national identity, celebrate our diversity and promote empathy and connection that can bridge social divides
- **supporting our health and wellbeing**, including meeting major challenges such as ageing, social isolation, loneliness and mental health.

Arts and creativity also connect us with each other and with our past and present, and help us to imagine our future

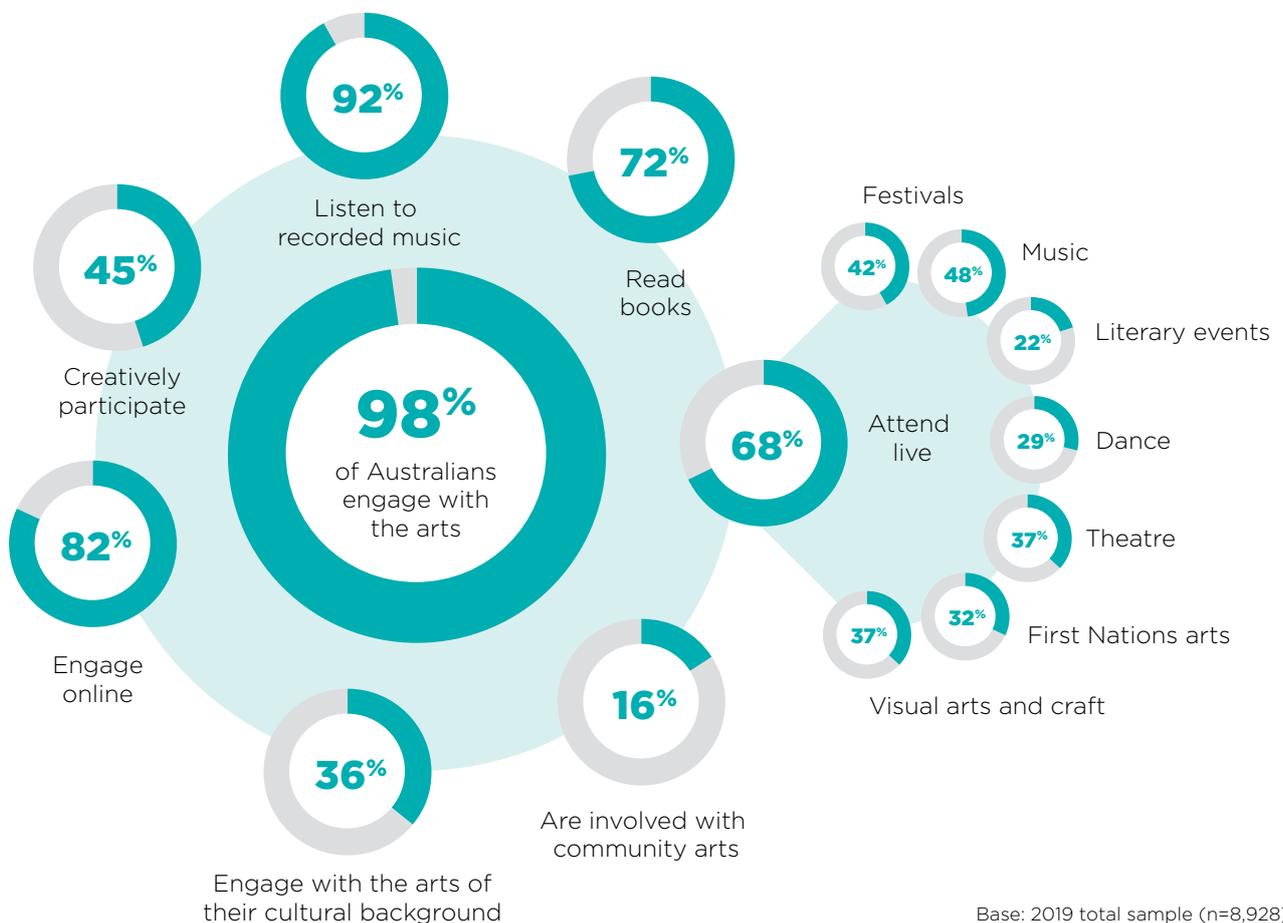
Ensuring **equal access to the benefits of arts and creativity for all Australians** is also a spotlight theme, and inequality will be the focus of further research by the Australia Council. Now, more than ever, arts and creativity have a significant role in helping Australians navigate rapid economic, social and cultural change and in building the health of our civil society.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey results show that Australians increasingly recognise the positive impacts of the arts. Nearly every Australian – 98% of us – engage with the arts in some way, whether it be through listening to music, reading, engaging online, creatively participating, attending arts in person or engaging with the arts of our cultural background or community (figure 1). The arts are not a luxury; they are embedded in the very fabric of our lives.

More Australians now agree First Nations arts are an important part of Australia’s culture and interest in First Nations arts is growing. Prior to COVID-19, Australians’ appetite for both online and live engagement with the arts was increasing too – rather than replacing the live experience, digital platforms provide complementary experiences and ways of engaging that can translate to growth in live audiences and greater access to the arts for all Australians.

Live attendance at arts events was thriving prior to COVID-19. The power of arts and creativity to connect us, and Australians’ strong and growing engagement with arts events, experiences and festivals, highlight the critical role for the arts in reinvigorating tourism, our economy and our wellbeing, and in creating our future for generations to come.

Figure 1: Australians’ arts engagement 2019





Executive Summary

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child first preview audience, 19 January 2019. Credit: Tim Carrafa.
Find out more about *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* on page 103.

Chapter

one

The value of arts and creativity to Australians



Colossus by Stephanie Lake Company, Arts Centre Melbourne, 2018. Credit: Mark Gambino.

Impacts of the arts and creativity

Significantly more Australians now recognise the range of positive impacts of arts and creativity in our lives and communities. In 2019, 84% of Australians acknowledged positive impacts, up from 75% in 2016.⁷ Since 2016, agreement has increased across all the 'impact' areas explored by the National Arts Participation Survey.

This includes increasing recognition of the impacts of arts and creativity on:

- **child development** (63%, up 13 percentage points)
- **our sense of wellbeing and happiness** (56%, up 11 percentage points)
- **dealing with stress, anxiety or depression** (56%, up 11 percentage points)
- **understanding other people and cultures** (60%, up eight percentage points)
- **bringing customers to local businesses** (41%, up nine percentage points).

Additionally, one in two Australians believe the arts **build creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce** (47%, new in 2019).

⁷ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

Australians' attitudes about the arts

Following a shift in some attitudes towards ambivalence in 2016 (respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with attitude statements), Australians' attitudes about the arts are now less ambivalent and increasingly positive.

Since 2016, the most significant attitude shifts among Australians have been greater agreement that **artists should have freedom of expression** (76%, up 15 percentage points), **the arts allow us to connect with others** (53%, up 15 percentage points), **the arts should receive public funding** (63%, up 12 percentage points) and **the arts should be an important part of education** (73%, up 12 percentage points).

Investment in the arts and creativity

As well as strong and growing support for public funding for the arts in Australia, Australians have clear priorities for investment. The top two priorities are **ensuring young people have access to art and creative experiences to support their learning and development** (74% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment), and **ensuring free or low-cost events are available** (68%).

More than half of Australians think funding should ensure **art and creative experiences are available to support our health and wellbeing** (55% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment). One in four prioritise investment in **art that pushes boundaries and drives innovation** (26%).

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. Australians are increasingly **giving to the arts** (26%, up from 18% in 2016), including **donating money** (10%, up from 6%), **volunteering** (9%, up from 6%) and supporting **crowdfunding** (8%, up from 5%).

Creating Our Future:

Spotlight on economic value and future success

Young Australians value the arts and are highly engaged. There is a reciprocal relationship between young people and the arts: a connection with the arts sets them up for success and in turn, they play a critical role in the future of the nation.

Results from the National Arts Participation Survey highlight the importance of arts and creativity to child development, education, local businesses and skills for the future. This is in line with the growing body of evidence about the value of arts and creativity in education and the essential role of creative skills in future workforces.

Previous research has shown the arts to be powerful drivers for regional, domestic and international tourism.⁸ Australians' strong and growing engagement with arts festivals and events prior to COVID-19 highlights the vital role for arts in reinvigorating tourism and our economy.

⁸ Australia Council 2020, *Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country*. Australia Council 2018, *International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures*. Tourism Research Australia 2014, *Events: Drivers of Regional Tourism*. Australian Government: Austrade, Canberra.

Chapter

two

Our cultural identity and diversity

Jessica Mauboy performs during the Fire Fight Australia bushfire relief concert at ANZ Stadium in Sydney, Sunday 16 February 2020.
Credit: AAP Image/Joel Carrett.

First Nations arts

First Nations arts are central to understanding who we are as Australians. More Australians now agree **First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (75%, up from 70% in 2016).⁹ However, only half of Australians believe **First Nations arts are well represented** (51%, up from 48% in 2016), showing there is still work to be done to build the representation and profile of First Nations arts in Australia.

Both attendance and interest in First Nations arts were strong and growing prior to COVID-19. One in three Australians were **attending First Nations arts** (32%, up from 26% in 2016) and four in ten were **interested in First Nations arts** (40%). Among those interested, nearly half reported a **growing interest** (45%).

Attendance was increasing across First Nations art forms prior to COVID-19 and one in five Australians attended **First Nations festivals** (19% in 2019). Concerns that programming could be safer and more conservative in future due to the financial impacts of COVID-19 highlight a need to ensure First Nations arts do not lose hard-won visibility, and that the availability of First Nations arts for Australian audiences is not reduced.

⁹ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

Cultural diversity and arts engagement

Whether in First Nations, Anglo-Celtic and/or diasporic communities,¹⁰ the arts are a key way that Australians connect with, and share, our cultural backgrounds, identities and heritages. All Australians are enriched and benefit from the tapestry of our people and cultural landscape. More than one in three Australians **connect with, and share, their cultural background through arts and creativity** (36%), including by **attending arts events** (31%).

More than half of CALD respondents attend arts events focused on their cultural background or community (55%) and more than eight in ten attend arts events overall (82%), including significant **cross-cultural arts engagement** and strong **engagement with First Nations arts**. This is a positive indicator for social cohesion and intercultural empathy.

Australians attend a range of live events to engage with their cultural background or community, including **live music** (17%) and **festivals or celebrations** (11%). They attend at a variety of places including **concert halls or theatres** (36%), **community centres** (28%) and **local parks** (28%) – local community infrastructure is vital to cultural participation, particularly among CALD communities. Australians who attend particularly benefit from **spending time with family or friends** (51%) and **getting to know people in the community** (39%).

Many Australians also **participate in creating art themselves to connect with their cultural background or community** (22%, including 46% of CALD respondents), particularly by **making music** (9% of Australians, including 20% of CALD respondents).

Creating Our Future: Spotlight on social cohesion

Australia's national identity springs from the stories we tell – to ourselves, to each other, to the wider world and to our future generations. Australians increasingly agree that **the arts shape and express Australian identity** and that **First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture**. Constructively addressing our past is vital for a coherent national identity in which we can all feel a sense of belonging, and artistic expressions can be a vital bridge to mutual understanding.

Arts and creativity have a unique capacity to connect us all, irrespective of our life circumstances and experiences. The shared stories of millions of diverse peoples who now call Australia home promote respect and empathy, and powerfully connect us to a global community. While we know there is still work to be done to ensure the arts fully reflect the diversity of Australia's people, more Australians now agree that **the arts in Australia reflect our cultural diversity**. There is also increasing recognition that the arts **allow us to connect with others, help us understand perspectives that are different to our own** and **impact our understanding of other people and cultures**.

In an environment of increasing polarisation and heightened global attention on injustice, racism and inequality, the arts provide opportunities to navigate multiple viewpoints, helping rebuild trust in our institutions and in each other. They enable a plurality of voices to be heard, including those who feel they are being left behind by rapid social change; helping us understand and live with our fellow citizens and guarding against social divisions and threats. At this point in time and as we look to the future, our artists have a significant role in helping Australians navigate rapid economic, social and cultural change and in building the health of our civil society.

¹⁰ Diasporic is used to describe a community of people who live outside their shared country of origin or ancestry but maintain active connections with it. A diaspora includes both emigrants and their descendants.

Chapter

three

Australians' arts attendance prior to COVID-19

Bendigo Groovin the Moo – crowd shot. Credit: Mackenzie Sweetnam.

Live attendance at arts events

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey results are a **benchmark of Australians' live attendance before the impacts of COVID-19** and can provide vital insights as the live performance industry and our venues and galleries reopen doors and rebuild their audiences. Prior to COVID-19, live attendance at arts events was thriving. More than two in three Australians **attended the arts in person** in 2019 (68%), up nearly ten percentage points since 2016.¹¹

Attendance increased across all types of arts events including **live music, theatre, visual arts and craft, dance, literature events, festivals** and **First Nations arts**.

Younger Australians and parents with young children have particularly strong attendance, highlighting the importance of the arts to both the wellbeing of our younger generations and the future of Australia's culture.

¹¹ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

Spotlight on live attendance by art form

Half of Australians attend **live music** and attendance was increasing prior to COVID-19 (48%, up from 43% in 2016). On average, those who attend went to 10.9 music events in 2019, or 4.2 live music events for every Australian.¹² More than one in four Australians attend **contemporary music** (28%) and 8% attend **classical music**. Australians attend live music at a range of places including **concert halls or theatres** (19%), **pubs, clubs or bars** (16%), **outdoor spaces** (16%), **stadiums or arenas** (15%) and **places of worship** (4%).

Live theatre was connecting an increasing number of Australians prior to COVID-19 (37%, up from 30% in 2016). On average, those who attend went to 8.8 theatre performances in 2019. One in five Australians attend **musical theatre or cabaret** (19%), 16% attend **traditional or contemporary theatre**, 7% attend **circus** and 6% attend **children's theatre**.

More than one in three Australians attend **visual arts and craft events** (37%, up from 33% in 2016). The equivalent of three visual arts and craft events were attended for every Australian in 2019. One in five Australians attend **painting, drawing, printmaking or street art** (19%), 13% attend **photography**, 12% attend **sculpture, installation or light projections** and 12% attend **craft**.

Three in ten Australians attend **dance** (29%, up from 24% in 2016). Those who attend dance are the most frequent attendees, attending on average 16.3 dance events in 2019. Australians attend various types of dance including **contemporary** (7%), **ballet** (6%), **street dance or hip hop** (6%), **social or competitive dance** (5%) and **classical/traditional/folk** (5%).

Australians are increasingly connecting through **book or literary events** (22%, up from 15% in 2016). On average, those who attend book or literary events went to 15.6 events in 2019. Australians connect with literature and with each other through **writer talks or book launches** (8%), **book clubs** (6%), **readings** (6%) and **writers festivals** (6%).

The festival audience

Festivals bring people and communities together and play a pivotal role in tourism in Australia. Festivals are a part of life for many Australians (42%) and were growing in popularity prior to COVID-19 (up by 9 percentage points since 2016). Parents with children aged under 16 years are the most likely to attend (54%). Festivals connect families as well as communities.

Australians attend a range of festivals including **music festivals** (23%), **multi-art form festivals** (18%), **visual arts festivals or fairs** (14%) and **performing arts festivals** (12%). One quarter of Australians attend **festivals related to particular cultural groups or communities** (24%), including **First Nations festivals** (19%).

¹² Aged 15 years and over. Frequency of attendance does not include attendance at festivals.

Motivations and barriers for live attendance

Entertainment, social connection and wellbeing are the main drivers of arts attendance. Australians are motivated to attend the arts **to have fun and to be entertained** (63%), **to socialise and connect with others** (41%), **to understand other perspectives and cultures** (33%) and **to improve their wellbeing** (25%). One in eight Australians attend the arts to develop skills for education, training or work (13%).

Four in ten Australians would like to attend more arts events (42%). Prior to COVID-19, cost and location were the main barriers to increased attendance: **cost of tickets or entry** prevented one in three Australians from attending as many events as they would like (34%) and one in four said there were **no arts events near where they live** (25%).

While location of events and difficulty getting to them are more significant barriers for those living in remote locations, and to some extent those in regional areas, this does not impact overall attendance at arts events and festivals as much as may be expected: 68% of respondents in remote areas were attending the arts prior to COVID-19, compared to 64% of those in regional areas and 70% of those in metropolitan areas. Those living in remote areas are the most likely to say they would like to attend more.

Creating Our Future:

Spotlight on equal access to arts and creativity for all Australians

All Australians should feel invited to connect and immerse themselves in exceptional arts experiences. The arts are not a luxury but rather a public good, with a role in addressing complex social issues and promoting inclusion across a range of areas of civic life. It is essential that these benefits are distributed where they are most needed.

While 98% of Australians engage with the arts in some way, the National Arts Participation Survey results highlight socio-economic inequalities in how Australians engage. Further, **ensuring free or low-cost events are available** is one of the top arts funding priorities among Australians.

When it comes to Australians' online engagement with arts and creativity, household income does not appear to play a significant role. Prior to COVID-19, both digital and live engagement with the arts were increasing and research on arts engagement during COVID-19 has found digital offerings are enabling some Australians to experience arts they could not normally see or afford. The majority of arts audiences want digital to remain an option as venues re-open, particularly vulnerable groups and those with access limitations.¹³ Rather than replacing the live experience, digital platforms provide complementary experiences and ways of engaging that can translate to growth in live audiences as well as greater access for all Australians.

Cultural inclusion is vital to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of Australian communities and for generations to come. Inequality will be a focus of further research for the Australia Council.

13 Patternmakers 2020, 'Fact Sheet: Online engagement,' *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor*.



World class Ethiopian saxophonist Solomon Sisay launched his debut album *Sitota* to a sold out crowd at Footscray Community Arts Centre in November 2019. Credit: Raphael Recht Photography. Find out more about Solomon Sisay on page 86.

Chapter

four

Australians' creative participation

MADE Ensemble, Ballet Barre class. Credit: Sandi Sissell.

Creative participation

Creative participation can take many forms – from artistic photography to playing an instrument; and from singing in a community choir or taking a community arts class, to more professional forms of arts creation. Australia is an increasingly creative nation.

The proportion of Australians who **creatively participate in the arts** (45%) has increased by 13 percentage points since 2016. This includes increased participation in **visual arts and craft, music, creative writing, dance and theatre**.¹⁴

Creative participation is particularly strong among young people, parents of children under 16 years, First Nations respondents, CALD respondents and respondents with disability.

In addition, one in three Australians were **creative using a digital platform** in 2019 (32%) – from creating TikTok videos or memes to creating music, digital visual art or poetry.

14 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

Spotlight on creative participation by art form

An increasing proportion of Australians **create visual arts and craft** (23%, up from 20% in 2016), including **painting, drawing, printmaking or street art** (11%), **photography** (10%), **craft** (10%), **digital or video art** (5%) and **sculpture, installations or light projections** (3%).

More than three million Australians **create music** (15%, up from 12%), including **playing a musical instrument** (10%), **singing** (6%) and **writing songs, mixing or composing music** (6%).

An increasing proportion of Australians are **creative writers** (14%, up from 9%), including **writing novels or short stories** (6%), **poetry** (5%), **creative non-fiction** such as biography or history (4%), **instructional non-fiction** (3%) and **plays or graphic novels** (2% each).

Almost one in ten Australians **participate in dance** (8%, up from 6%), including **contemporary dance** (3%), **street dance or hip hop** (3%), **social or competitive dance** (3%), **ballet** (2%) and **classical, traditional or folk dance** (2%).

Australians increasingly **creatively participate in theatre** (6%, up from 5%), including **musical theatre or cabaret** (3%), **traditional or contemporary theatre** (3%), **children's theatre** (2%) and **circus** (2%).

In addition, one in six Australians participate in **community arts** (16%). This includes community choirs and community theatre, which have demonstrated benefits for wellbeing and community cohesion. It may also include community arts and cultural development (CACD), which is a specific type of arts practice where as a group, community members and professional artists collaborate to create art that is reflective of that place and community.

Creating Our Future: **Spotlight on health and wellbeing**

Wellbeing is a policy consideration growing in currency internationally. The arts can provide savings and returns on investment across health services and social care, helping meet major challenges such as ageing, loneliness, chronic conditions and mental health.

Australians increasingly recognise the positive impact of arts and creativity on **our sense of wellbeing and happiness** and on **helping us deal with stress, anxiety or depression**. When it comes to public and private investment in the arts, more than half of Australians think funding should ensure that **arts and creative experiences are available to support people's health and wellbeing**.

Connection and wellbeing are two of the main drivers of arts attendance. They are also key benefits reported by Australians who attend arts events focused on their cultural background or community, particularly younger generations in CALD communities.

New research has shown that supporting wellbeing has been a key motivator for audiences participating in the arts online during COVID-19 and that online arts engagement has enabled Australians to feel connected, transcending isolation.¹⁵ As we look to the future, in all its uncertainty, the ability of creativity to uplift and connect us meets an increasingly pressing societal need.

15 Patternmakers 2020, 'Fact Sheet: Online engagement,' *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor*.

Chapter

five

Listening to recorded music,
reading and digital engagement

Children presenting Rumba Radio, *First On The Ladder*.
Credit: Simone Ruggiero, Polyglot Theatre, 2019.

Listening to recorded music

Recorded music is infused throughout the lives of almost every Australian, providing a soundtrack to our lives and helping us through the day. In 2019, 19 million Australians chose to **listen to recorded music** (92%).

Fewer Australians are listening to music they own or on radio or TV than they were in 2016. The proportion using **online streaming (either paid or free)** (67%) is now on par with the proportion **listening on radio or TV** (68%). Half of Australians aged under 45 years stream music through paid subscriptions (52%), providing vital income for the music industry.

On a daily basis, one in three Australians listen to music on the radio or TV (34%), and around one in five Australians use a paid service to stream music (18%).

Reading

Despite busy lives and digital distractions, reading remains a fundamental activity for Australians and provides a lifetime of enjoyment. The proportion of Australians who **read for pleasure** (72%) has increased by 17 percentage points since 2016.¹⁶ The most popular types of reading material are **novels or short stories** (47%), **instructional non-fiction** such as guidebooks or cookbooks (32%) and **creative non-fiction** such as biography or history (31%).

Print books remain the most popular format, read by seven in ten Australians (69%), including one in four Australians aged over 55 who read print books daily (23%). Two in five Australians read **e-books** (41%) and almost one in three listen to **audiobooks** (31%).

Digital engagement with the arts

Most Australians **engage with the arts online** (82%, up from 76% in 2016). In the digital age, the arts are more accessible than ever. Listening to streamed music remains the most popular way to engage (67%).

Two in three Australians **use digital platforms to engage with the arts** (64%), including **Facebook** (38%), **YouTube** (38%) and **Instagram** (25%).

One in three Australians **express themselves creatively on digital platforms** (32%), including through **image galleries** (9%), **memes** (8%) and **music or songs** (7%). But from video games to creative blogs, Australians have differing views of which digital creations can be considered art.

¹⁶ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

Chapter SIX

Spotlight on arts engagement among targeted groups in our community

Juk Yuang and Ngor Atem, participants in Akolkol Dastan Gesa. Image courtesy of Poppy van Oorde-Grainger. Credit: Matsu.

Connecting with Generation Z

Young people are vital to the future of Australia's culture and our nation's future success. Almost all young Australians aged 15–24 years recognise the **positive impacts of arts and creativity** in our lives and communities (91%).

Four in ten young Australians **give time or money** to the arts (40%), including one in two 18–19 year olds (49%). Support for public funding for the arts is strong among young Australians and their top priority for investment is **ensuring young people have access to art and creative experiences to support their learning and development**.

Young Australians aged 15–24 years are highly engaged – four in five **attend arts events** (83%), including **live music** (66%) and **festivals** (61%). More than a third attend the arts **to understand other perspectives and cultures** (35%) and more than a quarter **to improve their wellbeing** (27%). One in two young Australians **connect with their culture and community** through arts and creativity (53%) and two in three **creatively participate in the arts** (66%). The majority of young Australians agree **First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (76%) and 47% attend **First Nations arts or festivals**. The vast majority of young Australians **read for pleasure** (73%); **stream music**, either paid (60%) or for free (70%); and **use digital platforms to explore** (84%) or **express creativity** (62%).

Regional and remote First Nations communities

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of First Nations people in regional and remote communities, with 150 face-to-face interviews conducted by First Nations interviewers in Lismore (NSW), Woorabinda (Qld), Humpty Doo (NT) and Darwin (NT).

Almost all First Nations respondents interviewed believe the arts provide social, cultural and economic value, including by **bringing customers to local businesses** (85%) and **building creative skills necessary for the future workforce** (90%).

Targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents have stronger engagement with the arts than Australians overall, except theatre and literature events, and would like to attend the arts more than they do. They are less likely to agree ***First Nations arts are well represented*** than Australians overall (35% compared to 51%).

Targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are more likely to **engage with the arts online** than Australians overall, with three quarters **using digital platforms** to engage (74%). But despite strong digital engagement, targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are less likely to view digital creations as art.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians in the results. The survey was translated into six languages encompassing emerging and established communities: Arabic, Dinka, Mandarin, Spanish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

The targeted CALD respondents surveyed are more likely to **attend arts events** than Australians overall, particularly **book and literary events** (45%), **dance** (45%) and **First Nations arts** (82%). They are more likely to be motivated to attend the arts **to express themselves** (24%) and **to develop skills for education, training or work** (21%). In line with Australians overall and other CALD respondents, two in five targeted CALD respondents would like to attend the arts more than they currently do (42%).

Compared to other groups, targeted CALD respondents are *less* likely to agree that ***the arts reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia*** (59%, compared to 71% of Australians overall and 77% of other CALD respondents).

Compared to Australians overall, targeted CALD respondents are more likely **to creatively participate in the arts** (78%), especially **theatre** (22%), and are more **engaged with the arts online** (79%) and via **digital platforms** (82%). Targeted CALD respondents value engaging with arts of their cultural background to maintain their culture and share it with the wider Australian community.

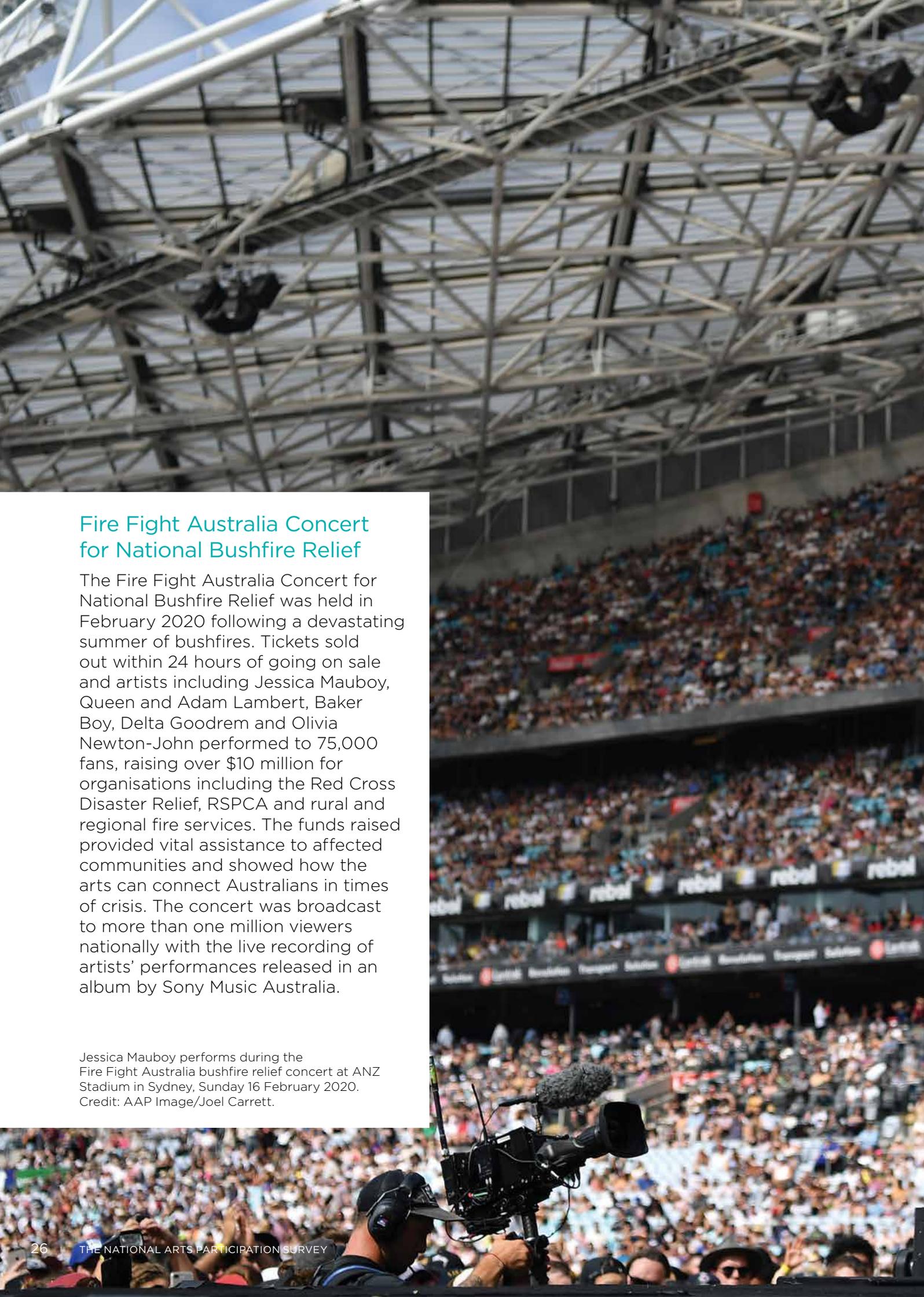
Australians with intellectual disability

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of Australians with intellectual disability, with 68 targeted easy read surveys undertaken.

Respondents with intellectual disability hold positive attitudes about the arts, with more than half agreeing ***art helps me understand things*** (59%), ***the government should fund arts*** (57%) and ***arts help me connect with people*** (56%).

Overall, almost all respondents with intellectual disability **attend the arts** (92%). They attend the arts to **have fun** (84%), **understand culture** (74%), **be social** (70%) and **learn skills** (52%). Compared to Australians overall, they are more than twice as likely to be **interested in First Nations arts** (87%) but are less than half as likely to attend (13%).

Nearly all targeted respondents with intellectual disability **read a book** in 2019 (95%). They are more likely to **listen to music on the radio or TV** or **music they own** but are less likely to stream music. Respondents with intellectual disability are more creative than Australians overall, with almost all **creatively participating in the arts** in some way.

A large stadium filled with a crowd of people, with a camera operator in the foreground. The stadium's metal structure is visible at the top. The crowd is dense, and there are banners for 'rebel' and 'Lentil' visible in the background. A camera operator is in the foreground, holding a professional video camera with a microphone.

Fire Fight Australia Concert for National Bushfire Relief

The Fire Fight Australia Concert for National Bushfire Relief was held in February 2020 following a devastating summer of bushfires. Tickets sold out within 24 hours of going on sale and artists including Jessica Mauboy, Queen and Adam Lambert, Baker Boy, Delta Goodrem and Olivia Newton-John performed to 75,000 fans, raising over \$10 million for organisations including the Red Cross Disaster Relief, RSPCA and rural and regional fire services. The funds raised provided vital assistance to affected communities and showed how the arts can connect Australians in times of crisis. The concert was broadcast to more than one million viewers nationally with the live recording of artists' performances released in an album by Sony Music Australia.

Jessica Mauboy performs during the Fire Fight Australia bushfire relief concert at ANZ Stadium in Sydney, Sunday 16 February 2020. Credit: AAP Image/Joel Carrett.



Research approach

Creating Our Future is the fourth study in the landmark National Arts Participation Survey series that explores Australians' engagement with and attitudes towards the arts. The research involved a two-stage process.

1 | Focus groups

The first stage of the research included seven focus groups with members of the public. The aim was to test previous findings from the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey, as well as to explore some possible new areas for inclusion in the 2019 edition. The focus groups were structured into five face-to-face groups and two online groups. This fieldwork was conducted in May 2019 by the arts and culture research agency, Patternmakers.

Figure 2: Focus group structure

Group	Location	Target
1	Sydney CBD	18-35 years
2	Sydney CBD	Over 36 years
3	Parramatta NSW	All ages 18+ years
4	Grafton NSW	18-35 years
5	Grafton NSW	Over 36 years
6	Online (Zoho Connect)	Parents aged 18+ years, of school-aged children
7	Online (Zoho Connect)	People with disability, aged 18+ years

2

National Arts Participation Survey

The second stage of the research was a quantitative survey of 8,928 Australians aged 15 years and over. The survey was administered online and via face-to-face interviews with selected groups from 24 September to 4 November 2019. The nationally representative sample of 8,928 respondents was sourced from three well-established online panel providers, and two partner agencies, and took on average 11 minutes to complete.

Targeted groups

Capturing the opinions and experiences of all Australians is a core objective of the National Arts Participation Survey, and as we move forward into the digital age online surveys are becoming increasingly representative of the general population compared to telephone surveys. However, this is less likely to be the case for some specific groups.

For the study to be more representative, and for specific audiences to be given an opportunity to participate, samples among people from selected cultural groups, and who were also less likely to be represented on online research panels, were boosted using alternative targeted data collection methods:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live in regional and remote communities.**
 - A series of 150 face-to-face interviews were completed across four locations: Lismore in New South Wales, Woorabinda in Queensland, and Humpty Doo and Darwin in the Northern Territory. This fieldwork was managed by experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviewers from Yindyamarra Consultancy.
 - This sample of respondents is included in the overall total of 8,928 respondents surveyed in 2019.
- **People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds who are also not fluent in English.**
 - A series of 182 online surveys was completed in six different languages encompassing both established and emerging communities in Australia: Arabic, Dinka, Mandarin, Spanish, Urdu and Vietnamese. The fieldwork was managed by Multicultural Marketing & Management.
 - After review of Census data and consultation with expert advisors, the six language groups were chosen to capture a sample of the population who may experience English language barriers and not be represented on online survey panels.
 - This sample of respondents is included in the overall total of 8,928 respondents surveyed in 2019.

- **People with intellectual disability who are also likely to be excluded/not represented on online panels due to access barriers.**
 - The focus was on boosting responses from people with moderate to severe intellectual disability, rather than people with physical disability. An easy read survey was developed to ensure the survey was inclusive and accessible.
 - A total of 68 surveys were completed using a mixed-method approach:
 - A series of 47 paper surveys was completed, with fieldwork managed by the Council for Intellectual Disability.
 - A series of 21 assisted-online surveys was completed via a Mystery Customer database.
 - This sample of respondents is not included in the overall total of 8,928 respondents surveyed in 2019 as the easy read questions are not directly comparable. These results are presented in Chapter 6.

In addition, **young Australians aged 15–24 years** were a targeted group in the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey due to their vital role in the future of Australia’s culture and our nation’s future success. See page 170 for more on this group within the sample and Chapter 6 for a spotlight on their results.

Sample representativeness

The 2019 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 as described below.

In this report, findings are presented for First Nations peoples, people with disability and people from CALD backgrounds. For each of these groups a proportion of surveys was completed via the online panel, with participation boosted using alternative data collection methods. While this approach resulted in increased representation of these groups, the findings should still be treated as indicative, and the data should be used as a guide, not an absolute.

Nalina Wait, Mui Cheuk-yin, Benjamin Hancock, Nobuyoshi Asai and Ema Yuasa in Sue Healey’s *ON VIEW: PANORAMA*, Yokohama 2020. Credit: Naoshi Hatori. Find out more about the *ON VIEW* series on page 99.



Figure 3: Respondent profile 2019 (unweighted)

	Total (n=)	First Nations (n=)	CALD (n=)	Disability (n=)
Total	8,928	619	1,992	1,531
Age				
15-17 years	386	41	111	57
18-19 years	280	58	103	51
20-24 years	708	88	242	111
25-34 years	1,667	188	544	285
35-44 years	1,609	122	408	218
45-54 years	1,180	61	218	200
55-64 years	1,482	42	195	309
65+ years	1,616	19	171	300
Gender¹⁷				
Female	4,705	258	974	761
Male	4,168	351	997	753
State/territory				
NSW (incl. ACT)	2,514	241	659	440
VIC	2,281	100	632	384
QLD	1,439	104	257	260
SA	512	15	77	113
WA	1,388	59	253	208
TAS	666	48	82	117
NT	128	52	32	9
Location				
Metropolitan	6,029	320	1,589	972
Regional	2,723	261	376	539
Remote	176	38	27	20

Connecting with Generation Z

It was important that the survey captured the views of Australians as young as 15 years, which meant completion needed to appeal to, and be engaging enough, for this younger age group. In 2019 the broad cohort of people aged 15-24 years was split into three segments (15-17, 18-19, 20-24 years) to provide a more nuanced understanding.

¹⁷ In 2019, the gender identifying question was updated to include the categories - *Female, Male, Non-binary/gender diverse, Please tell us* (please specify), *Prefer not to say*. Due to the very small sample size of the three categories *Non-binary/gender diverse, Please tell us, Prefer not to say* (combined 0.6% of sample), analysis and reporting of these specific results was not possible. However, the Australia Council is committed to advancing reporting and data on diverse gender identities.



Pavan Kumar Hari and Sukhjot Kaur Khalsa in *Fully Sikh*, a Barking Gecko Theatre and Black Swan Theatre Company co-production. Credit: Daniel Grant. Find out more about *Fully Sikh* on page 92.

First Nations people

Of the sample of 8,928 Australians, 7% self-identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander which is higher than the proportion of First Nations people across the population (3.3%).

However, there was an over-representation of First Nations people in the sample from metropolitan Australia (52%, compared to 37% of First Nations people across the population). After sample boosting, the First Nations regional sample was in line with the population (42%) but the remote First Nations sample remains underrepresented at 6% (compared to 18% of First Nations people who live in remote Australia).¹⁸

Although the boosted First Nations sample provides further insights into behaviours and attitudes in regional and remote communities, the overall figures about First Nations peoples' arts engagement should be treated as indicative only.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people

Australia has one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world. Almost half of all Australians were either born overseas (first generation Australian) or had at least one parent who was born overseas (second generation Australian) (49%). More than one in five Australians speak a language other than English at home, with over 300 languages currently spoken across Australia.¹⁹

Cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) can be defined and measured in different ways including characteristics such as country of birth, ancestry, language spoken at home and year of arrival in Australia. The National Arts Participation Survey uses self-identification: of the sample of 8,928 Australians, 24% self-identified as CALD by answering 'yes' to the survey question '*Do you identify as a person from a culturally and linguistically diverse background?*'. This measure has been used throughout the report when discussing CALD respondents. Additional cultural and linguistic characteristics were also captured in the survey, which will be explored in future research.

¹⁸ ABS 2018, *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, June 2016.

¹⁹ ABS 2017, 'Cultural Diversity in Australia,' *Stories from the Census*, 2016 (cat. no. 2071.0).

What do we know about measuring and discussing cultural and linguistic diversity?

Measuring cultural and linguistic diversity has long been a complex challenge in Australia and internationally. A range of concepts and terminologies has been developed and used over time to explore aspects of multicultural Australia.

There is no single definition for the term culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). It was introduced by Australian governments in the 1990s for statistical analysis and policy development.²⁰ The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) uses a range of characteristics captured in the Census including being born overseas, speaking a language other than English at home and proficiency in English.²¹ The term continues to be widely used in research, social commentary, diversity practice and public debate, with recent calls for it to be updated.²²

In line with the previous National Arts Participation Survey, this report uses the term CALD when discussing cultural identity and diversity, based on self-identification by respondents.

While it is a contested term, the CALD acronym is still commonly used as a measurement of diversity across many policy areas and it is important to have data on the ethnic, cultural and linguistic makeup of our society and those who engage with the arts.

However, we recognise ongoing debate about terminology and definitions of diversity and that the use of the umbrella term CALD has limitations. The term is often used to conflate many cultural identifications, language groups and backgrounds into a single category to differentiate from an unstated dominant cultural make-up of Australia. This use of the term has been challenged from a range of perspectives, including First Nations peoples seeking recognition of their own cultural and linguistic diversity, and groups seeking recognition of diversity beyond ethnicity, such as first language speakers of Auslan or another sign language, and religious communities.

Global attention on injustice and inequality has heightened the need to consider how terminology is used in ensuring it does not reinforce structural inequalities or inhibit the intent to fully understand and change them.

The Australia Council believes Australia's diversity is a great cultural asset and leads to greater artistic vibrancy and innovation. We also believe that participation in and enjoyment of the arts should be available to all Australians and not determined by social, physical, geographical or personal circumstances.

In the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey, additional items comparable to ABS data were also captured (country of birth, language spoken at home, ancestry). These will be used in further analysis as we seek to progress and contribute to ways the terminology can evolve for future research and policy development.

20 Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs 2001, *The Guide: Implementing the standards for statistics on cultural and language diversity*, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

21 ABS 1999, *Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity* (cat. no. 1289.0).

22 Ang I and Noble G 2018, *Ethnicity and cultural consumption in Australia*, *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, Vol. 32 No.3, p298; Mousaferiadis P 2020, *Why 'culturally and linguistically diverse' has had its day*, Diversity Atlas blog.

People with disability

There is a range of challenges for analysing and reporting disability as there is no single definition or way of capturing such complex and multidimensional experiences. People with disability are diverse and are not defined by their disability.

Of the sample of 8,928 Australians, 17% self-identified as having disability by answering 'yes' to the survey question *'Do you identify as a person with disability and/or do you experience barriers which limit the activities you participate in or attend unless access and/or support is provided?'* This is in line with the proportion of people with disability across the Australian population (18%) as defined by the ABS.²³

However, the age distribution of people with disability in the sample differs from the distribution in the Australian population. The sample contains a much larger proportion of respondents aged under 45 compared to the Australian population, while those aged 65 and over with disability are underrepresented in the sample.

As the National Arts Participation Survey is not a specific disability survey, the results should be treated as indicative rather than absolute.

See page 198 for how targeted outreach with people with intellectual disability enabled us to reach and engage this cohort of Australians in the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey.

23 ABS 2019, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of findings*, 2018 (cat. no. 4430.0).

Snoösphere (Lull Studios) at UNSW Galleries, The Big Anxiety 2017. Credit: Skyline Productions.
For insights on support for artists with disability, see our report, [Creating Pathways](#).



Change in survey methodology

Prior to the commencement of the previous National Arts Participation Survey conducted in 2016, a decision was made to begin migration of the study from Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to online. A mixed method approach was used in 2016 to futureproof the survey vehicle – enabling comparison back to previous waves while also setting up comparisons for future waves.

Conversations about survey methodology were based on recognition that full migration to online delivery for longitudinal surveys such as the National Arts Participation Survey was not a matter of if, but when.

In 2019, the decision was made to move to an online-only approach for a number of reasons including cost effectiveness, convenience for respondents, removal of interviewer bias and overall futureproofing of the survey.

Before exploring the 2019 research design in more detail, it is important to acknowledge that any change in survey methodology has an impact on results, and in particular on trend data. **Given the changes made to the National Arts Participation Survey, the previously published results in the *Connecting Australians* report are different to the 2016 data used for trend analysis in the *Creating Our Future* report.**

Mode effect

It is well known that a shift in survey methodology will impact results – a phenomena known as the ‘mode effect’. Mode effects are systematic differences in how people respond to questions because of the mode of data collection used. Differences are due to a range of factors, including interviewer bias (the effect of how the interviewer asks questions), social desirability bias (survey respondents’ tendency to give answers they think will be viewed more favourably) and the impact of visual cues, for example, ‘don’t know’ options are visible online even if they were not read out over the telephone.

The size of the mode effect differs for each question in a survey. To reduce this impact in 2016, the sample was split, with online (n=6,456) and CATI (n=1,084) components conducted concurrently. The online data was weighted to reflect the CATI data.

In 2019 the entire National Arts Participation Survey was conducted online. To ensure comparisons between 2019 and 2016 are made on a ‘like for like’ basis, data is presented for both 2016 overall and 2016 online only. **Commentary on any changes since 2016 is based on the 2016 online sample only.**

People with disability are diverse
and are not defined by their disability

What's new in 2019?

The Australia Council for the Arts' new set of strategic priorities for 2020–2024 respond to the rapidly changing landscape of Australian arts and creativity. Within this context, the 2019 survey needed to measure changing behaviour and new trends in arts engagement as well as providing continuity with previous waves.

While the 2019 study was largely based on the 2016 survey, a number of new elements were included:

- an online-only approach (discussed in detail above)
- a larger sample enabling more detailed analysis of younger Australians (aged 15–24 years), and a broader geographical reach for more detailed analysis of regional and remote perspectives
- a boosted sample of First Nations people and Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as a separate sample of Australians with intellectual disability
- expanding new areas of questioning introduced in 2016:
 - festival attendance – additional questions explored attendance at First Nations and cultural festivals
 - engaging with cultural background through arts – additional questions explored where and why people attend events that are focused on their cultural background, language group or community
 - digital engagement with the arts – additional questions explored the digital platforms used, digital creation and perceptions of digital creations as art.
- new questions exploring:
 - how people feel about their current level of attendance at arts events and the value such events provide
 - where people attend music events
 - engagement with types of books (print books, e-books and audiobooks)
 - priorities for how investment in arts and creativity should be allocated
 - perceptions of language and the extent to which the term 'the arts' is relatable.
- to capture new trends and language, all questions measuring engagement with specific art forms were reviewed and updated where necessary and an 'other (please specify)' option was included.

Side Pony Productions' interactive audioplay *The Turners*. Credit: David Collins.
Cover image of the [Australia Council Corporate Strategic Plan 2019–2023](#).







Circa *Leviathan*

Leviathan is a powerful world-first circus production by Circa that premiered at Perth Festival in February 2020. Festival director Iain Grandage described it as the crowd-pleaser in his highlights of shows not to miss. A work of staggering scope and scale, *Leviathan* is a collaboration with local circus performers, dancers and young people. The cast of performers, made up of 18 members of the world-renowned Circa ensemble and 18 local artists, propel themselves through the air, across the stage, and hang suspended from a grid in this action packed show. Circa's trademark acrobatics thrillingly expose the tension between the mass and the individual, offering hope in complex times by celebrating what can be achieved when we work together. *Leviathan* will go on to be shown at Brisbane Festival under a COVID Safe plan.

Circa, *Leviathan* 2020.
Credit: Johannes Reinhart.

one

The value of the arts and creativity to Australians

Impacts of the arts and creativity

- Significantly more Australians now recognise the range of positive impacts arts and creativity have in our lives and communities.
- This includes increasing recognition of the impacts of arts and creativity on child development, wellbeing, dealing with anxiety and depression, understanding other people and cultures, and bringing customers to local businesses.
- One in two Australians believe the arts build creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce.

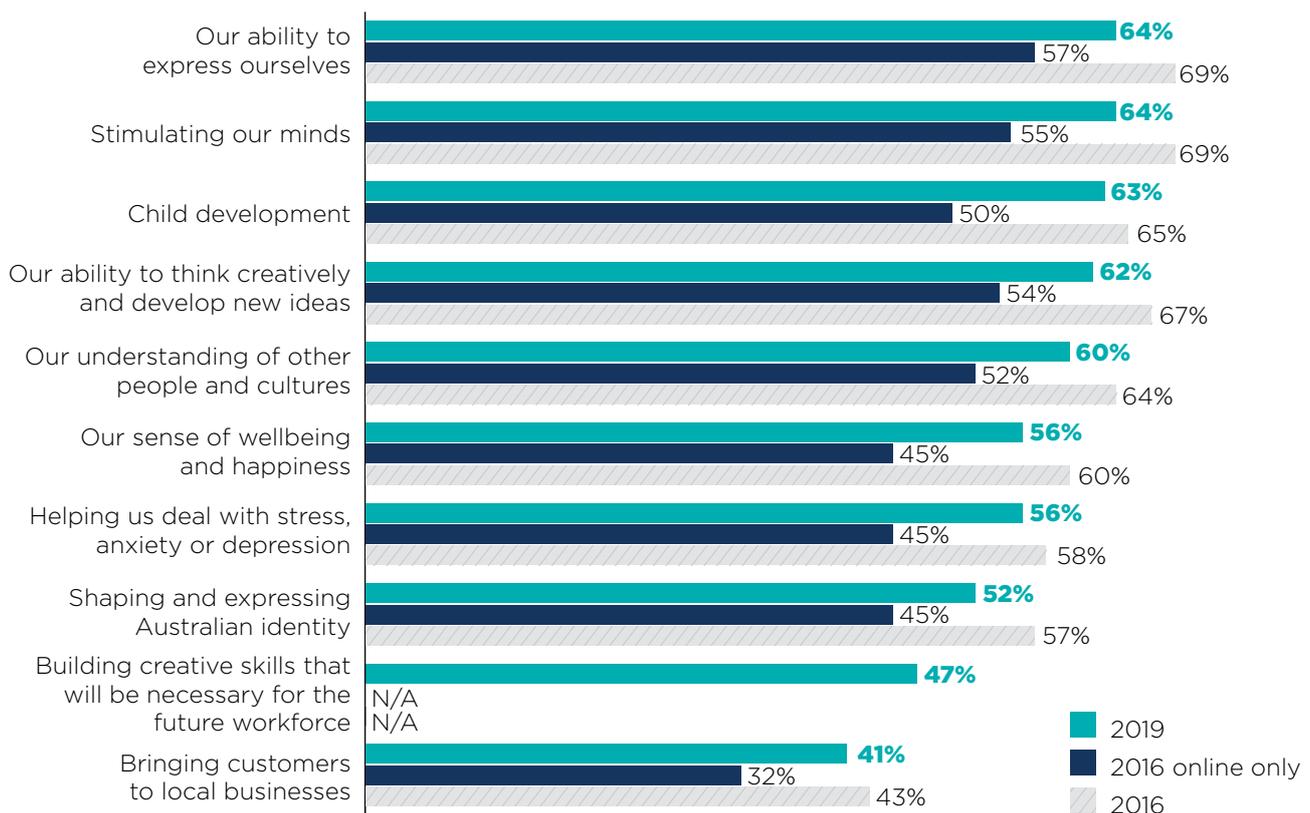
More Australians now recognise positive impacts of arts and creativity

In 2019, 17.3 million Australians acknowledged significant positive impacts of arts and creativity, or 84% of the population aged 15 years and over. This is a substantial increase from 75% in 2016.²⁴

Agreement has increased across all the 'impact' areas the National Arts Participation Survey explores. Additionally, half of Australians agree with a new question: *the arts have a big or very big impact on building creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce* (figure 4).

Due to the change to an online only National Arts Participations Survey in 2019, the 2016 'online only' results presented in figure 4 provide the most comparable results with the 2019 results. While these appear lower than the 2016 results published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*, this is because of the change in methodology rather than a decrease in agreement.

Figure 4: Proportion of Australians who felt arts and creativity had a 'big' or 'very big' impact on various areas 2016 and 2019



Base: General population 15+ (n=8,928).

²⁴ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

The largest increases have been in the proportion of Australians agreeing arts and creativity impact:

- **child development** (63%, up 13 percentage points from 50% in 2016)
- **our sense of wellbeing and happiness** (56%, up 11 percentage points from 45% in 2016)
- **helping us deal with stress, anxiety or depression** (56%, up 11 percentage points from 45% in 2016)
- **bringing customers to local businesses** (41%, up nine percentage points from 32% in 2016)
- **stimulating our minds** (64%, up nine percentage points from 55% in 2016).

At least six in ten Australians agree arts and creativity impact:

- **our ability to express ourselves** (64%, up from 57% in 2016)
- **our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas** (62%, up from 54% in 2016)
- **our understanding of other people and cultures** (60%, up from 52% in 2016).

One in two Australians agree arts and creativity impact:

- **shaping and expressing Australian identity** (52%, up from 45% in 2016)
- **building creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce** (47%, this is a new item in 2019).

“Someone might experience growth, learning something new, meeting new people, exposure to something they’ve never seen or heard or felt before. They might experience happiness, joy, satisfaction... so many possibilities.”

Focus group participant



Who recognises the positive impacts of arts and creativity?

- **Women** are more likely than men to recognise the positive impacts of arts and creativity.
- **Young Australians** aged 15–24 years are more likely than other age groups to recognise the positive impacts of arts and creativity.
- **Parents with children aged under 16 years** are more likely to recognise the positive impacts of arts and creativity across all areas than Australians without children under 16 years. In particular, believing that the arts build **creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce** (55% compared to 45%) and impact **child development** (69% compared to 61%).
- **Respondents from very remote areas** of Australia are more likely than those living in metropolitan or regional areas to recognise the positive impacts of arts and creativity across all areas.
- **First Nations respondents** are more likely than non-First Nations respondents to recognise the positive impacts of arts and creativity across all areas, particularly on **building creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce** (70% compared to 45%).
- **CALD respondents** are much more likely than non-CALD respondents to recognise the positive impacts of arts and creativity across all areas.
- **Respondents living with disability** are more likely than respondents not living with disability to recognise the positive impacts of arts and creativity across all areas, in particular, in **shaping and expressing Australian identity** (59% compared to 51%).

Colossus by Stephanie Lake Company, Arts Centre Melbourne, 2018. Credit: Mark Gambino. Find out more about *Colossus* on page 181.







Tuggeranong Arts Centre *On Thin Ice*

On Thin Ice is an arts-documentary work sharing stories of ice addiction, recovery and hope, encouraging empathy in the broader community and promoting recovery as a collective effort. The exhibition at Tuggeranong Arts Centre in November 2019 went beyond headlines and stereotypes, beyond snap judgments and prejudices, beyond 'meth crisis' and 'ice epidemic', empowering individuals to tell their own stories – stories of pain, trauma, loss and isolation, but also, stories of hope and of healing. *On Thin Ice* featured audio and written works by journalist and author Ginger Gorman, photography by Hilary Wardhaugh and Martin Ollman, sculptural works by Tom Buckland, and works on paper by printmaker Jess Higgins.

On Thin Ice, artworks by Tom Buckland (foreground) and Hilary Wardhaugh (photographs), 2019. Image courtesy of Tuggeranong Arts Centre. Credit: Martin Ollman.

Australians' attitudes about the arts

- Australians' attitudes about the arts are less ambivalent and increasingly positive.
- Since 2016, the most significant attitude shifts among Australians have been greater agreement that artists should have freedom of expression, that the arts help us connect to others, that the arts should receive public funding and that the arts should be an important part of education.

“There should be more [funding] for these kinds of things as they are a great way of learning about all the different cultures and being able to experience them.”

Focus group participant

Bunbury Groovin the Moo. Credit: Community photographer Jess Gleeson.
Find out more about Groovin the Moo on page 175.



Australians' attitudes about the arts are increasingly positive

At the time of the previous National Arts Participation Survey in 2016, while the vast majority of Australians maintained positive attitudes about the arts, there was a shift in some attitudes towards ambivalence. This shift reflected a move away from agreement to more Australians neither agreeing nor disagreeing with some positive attitude statements about the arts.

In 2019, this trend has reversed. Across all nine positively worded statements, agreement has increased and ambivalence (neither agree nor disagree) has decreased.

Since 2016, the most significant attitude shifts among Australians have been greater agreement that:

- **artists should have freedom of expression**²⁵ (76%, up 15 percentage points from 61% in 2016²⁶)
- **the arts allow me to connect with others** (53%, up 15 percentage points from 38% in 2016)
- **the arts should receive public funding** (63%, up 12 percentage points from 51% in 2016)
- **the arts should be an important part of education**²⁷ (73%, up 12 percentage points from 61% in 2016).

Around seven in ten Australians agree that:

- **artists make an important contribution to Australian society** (73%, up from 64% in 2016)
- **the arts in Australia reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia** (71%, up from 65% in 2016)
- **the arts help you to understand perspectives that are different to your own**²⁸ (71%, up from 60% in 2016).

Arts and creativity are highly valued among Australians. We increasingly support public funding for the arts and recognise their vital contribution to our individual lives, our communities and our nation's future success.

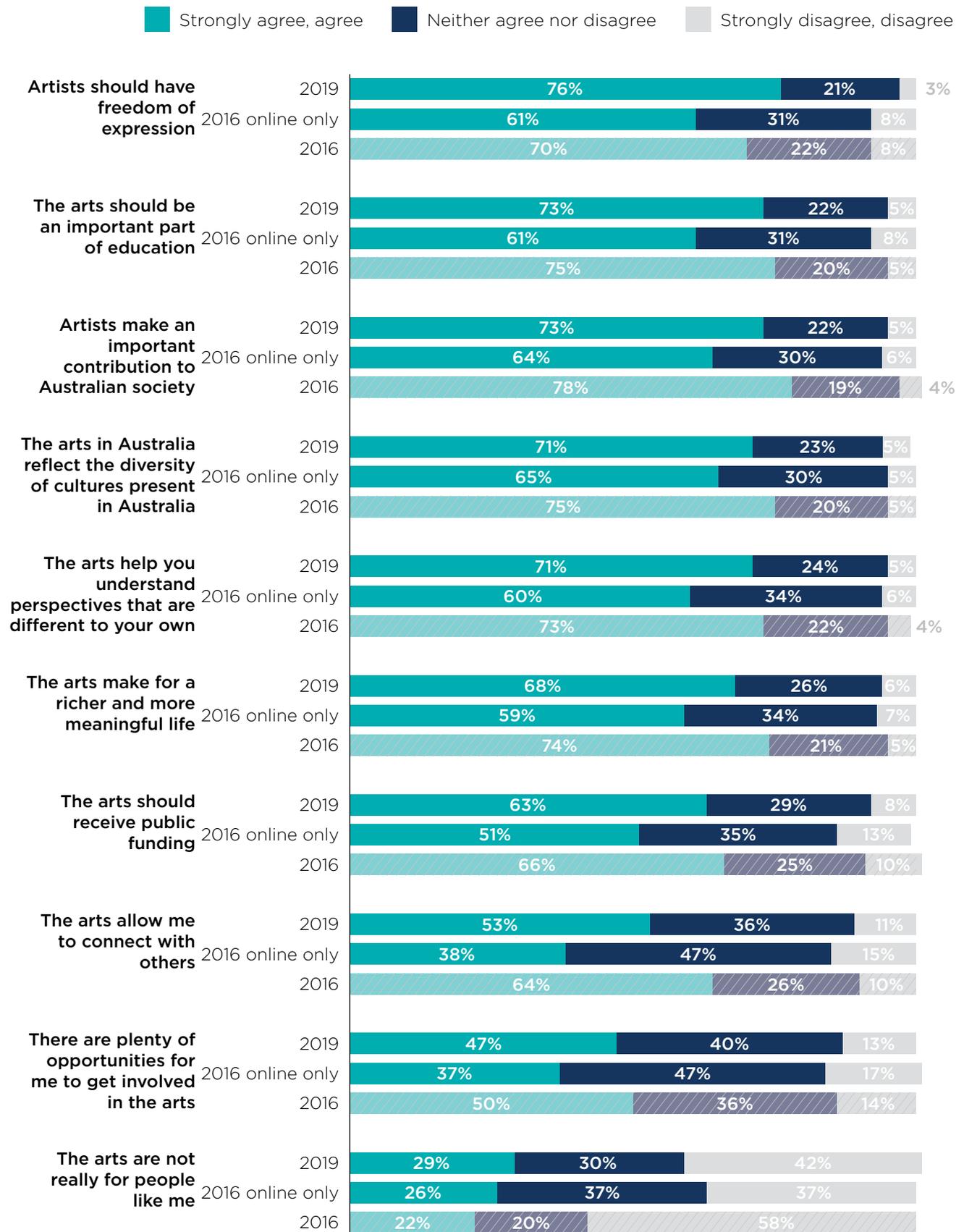
25 Reworded from 2016: *Artists should have total freedom of expression.*

26 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians.*

27 Reworded from 2016: *The arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian.*

28 Reworded from 2016: *The arts are an important way to get different perspectives on a topic or issue.*

Figure 5: Australians' attitudes to the arts 2016 and 2019



Base: General Population 15+ (n=4,502)

What do we know about 'the empathy instinct'?

Peter Bazalgette's book *The Empathy Instinct* draws on discoveries and new thinking about empathy emerging from the science community.

Empathy is strongest in groups where people identify with each other: family, friends, clubs, gangs, religions or races. When empathy can be deployed beyond these groups, argues Bazalgette, *'it's our most civilising force.'*

Another challenge of empathy is extending it to large groups of people. This is where individual stories are the most effective – we respond to these better than to the plight of many.

The arts, by their very essence, share our individual human stories and promote empathy, understanding and human connection. Human stories enable us to practise empathy and the theory of mind it requires, and research has shown that both storytellers and listeners have the same regions of their brains active. The arts rely on, exercise, and feed our ability to understand and share in another person's feelings, experiences and perspectives.

Source: Bazalgette P 2017, *The Empathy Instinct: How to create a more civil society*.

While more Australians agree ***that there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts*** (47%, up 10 percentage points from 37% in 2016), there has also been a slight increase in the proportion of Australians who are feeling disconnected from the arts, with almost three in ten agreeing that ***the arts are not really for people like me*** (29%, up from 26% in 2016), which is a continuing trend. Interestingly, some of those who hold the most positive attitudes to the arts and public funding, such as First Nations respondents and those living with disability, are also feeling the most disconnected.

Who holds positive attitudes about the arts?

- **Women** are more likely than men to believe that the arts should be an important part of education (77% compared to 70%), that **artists make an important contribution to Australian society** (76% compared to 70%) and that **artists should have freedom of expression** (78% compared to 74%). They are less likely to believe **the arts are not really for people like me** (22% compared to 35%).
- **Respondents aged under 45 years** are more likely to feel that **the arts allow me to connect with others** (61%, compared to 44% of those aged 45 plus) and are also more likely to feel that **there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts** (54% compared to 39%).
- **Parents of children aged 16 years and under** tend to be slightly more positive about the arts than respondents without children in this age group. In particular, parents of children aged 16 years and under are more likely to feel that **the arts allow me to connect with others** (64% compared to 50%) and that **there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved with the arts** (54% compared to 44%).
- **First Nations respondents** surveyed are generally much more positive about the arts than non-First Nations respondents. They are much more likely to feel that **the arts allow me to connect with others** (78% compared to 51%), **there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts** (70% compared to 45%), **the arts should receive public funding** (77% compared to 62%), **artists make an important contribution to society** (85% compared to 72%) and **art helps you to understand perspectives other than your own** (83% compared to 70%). However, they are also more likely to feel that **the arts are not really for people like me** (43% compared to 27%).
- **CALD respondents** are more positive about the arts, with higher proportions agreeing with each attitude listed, relative to non-CALD respondents. In particular, they are more likely to feel that **artists make an important contribution to society** (79% compared to 71%), **the arts helps you to understand perspectives different to your own** (77% compared to 69%), **the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life** (75% compared to 66%) and **the arts reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia** (75% compared to 70%).
- **Respondents with disability** are more likely than those without disability to agree **the arts allow me to connect with others** (58% compared to 52%), **the arts should receive public funding** (68% compared to 62%) and **artists make an important contribution to society** (77% compared to 72%). However, they are also more likely to feel that **the arts are not really for people like me** (35% compared to 27%).

The impact of language is a complex topic requiring further exploration in ensuring that narrow perceptions of the arts can be broadened and everyone can feel a point of connection to creative life in Australia

The impact of language

Focus groups conducted at the time of the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey found that perceptions the arts are expensive and hard to access are driven in part by narrow definitions Australians have about what 'the arts' are. While the National Arts Participation Survey questionnaire steps respondents through an inclusive list of arts activities, the focus groups showed that some people maintain an ingrained, narrow definition of 'the arts'. Those who are less engaged with the arts are more likely to have entrenched perceptions of them as 'opera and ballet', rather than for example, free and accessible festivals.

The language of the arts was also discussed in the pre-survey focus groups for the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey. Participants observed several images that depicted a range of arts activities and were then asked what the images have in common and what words they would use to summarise them. Some of the findings from this exercise suggested that 'culture' is regarded as a broader concept than 'the arts', and that some respondents may not engage with what they perceive to be 'the arts', instead finding terms like experience, entertainment, creativity and culture more accessible.

To further explore the potential impact of language on engagement with and attitudes to the arts, the attitudinal statements were 'split run'. That is, half the respondents saw the statements referencing 'the arts', e.g. *The arts allow me to connect with others*. While the other half of respondents saw statements with alternate wording that referenced 'cultural and creative experiences', e.g. *Cultural and creative experiences allow me to connect with others*.

Interestingly, there was little to no difference in agreement or disagreement across the two sets of statements. The only statement impacted was attributed to education: ***creative activities should be an important part of education*** (77%, compared to 73% when referring to 'the arts'). The impact of language is a complex topic requiring further exploration in ensuring that narrow perceptions of the arts can be broadened and everyone can feel a point of connection to creative life in Australia.

What is the view from 'middle Australia'?

A report by think tank A New Approach explored the views of middle-aged, middle income swing voters from suburban and regional Australia. It found the four most common reasons why arts and culture matter to 'middle Australians' are:

- opportunities to be together and build community
- children need exposure to arts and culture to develop
- arts and culture stimulate creativity and broaden your mind
- Australian arts and culture are essential for giving us a sense of identity and helping us represent Australia to the world.

Using the terms 'arts and culture' together broadened the emotional response and imagery, rather than using the words 'arts' or 'culture' separately. The report also found that use of the word 'arts' suggested the 'high arts' which for middle Australians is associated with wealth, exclusivity and not for people like them.

Source: Fielding K, Trembath JL 2020, *A view from middle Australia: Perceptions of arts, culture and creativity*. Produced by A New Approach think tank with lead delivery partner the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra.

Red Room Poetry at Tumbalong Park *Poetic Moments*

Red Room Poetry's mission is to make poetry accessible to all. They create poetic projects and learning programs in collaboration with poets, schools, communities and partners for positive social impact. In 2019, Red Room Poetry's public programs reached audiences of 4.6 million, with poetry placed on boardwalks, buses, trains, in botanic gardens and zoos and across radio broadcast to garner new audiences and increase poetic visibility across Australia. *Poetic Moments* presented poems on the 2018 NAIDOC theme of 'Because of Her We Can' by five of Australia's finest First Nations poets: Ali Cobby Eckermann, Joel Davison, Jenine Leane, Lorna Munro and Kirli Saunders. The poems were presented alongside work by visual artist David Cragg in Tumbalong Park, Sydney.



Tumbalong Gatherers celebrating First Nations poems on light boxes with artwork by Koori David Cragg in Darling Square and Darling Quarter for NAIDOC 2018. Courtesy of LendLease.



Investment in arts and creativity

- There is strong and growing support for public funding for the arts in Australia.
- The top two priorities for investment among Australians are arts and creativity in the lives of young people and ensuring Australians can access free or low-cost events.
- More than half of Australians think funding should ensure art and creative experiences are available to support our health and wellbeing and one in four prioritise investment that drives innovation.
- Australians are increasingly giving their time or money to the arts.

“A wide diversity of art is important for the government to support. The arts need to be accessible to as many people as possible.”

Focus group participant

Australians have clear preferences on priority areas for investment in arts and creativity

There is strong and growing support for public funding for the arts in Australia. Two in three Australians agree **the arts should receive public funding** (63%), up 12 percentage points from 2016.²⁹

A new question exploring community preferences for arts investment was included in 2019. The question was presented in the following context: *‘Creative activities, cultural experiences and the arts would not exist without some form of public or private support.’*

Respondents were then presented with six ways in which funding could be allocated to the arts and asked to select their top three and rank them in order of importance (see figure 6).

²⁹ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

Figure 6: Allocation of funding in order of importance to Australians 2019

Q. From the following list, please select the top 3 in order of importance to you and your community. Base: General population 15+ (n=8,928)

Australians have three clear priority areas for investment in the arts:

1. Three quarters of Australians prioritise the important role arts and creativity play in the lives of **children and young people and their learning and development** (74% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment).
2. Over two thirds of Australians acknowledge that cost may be a barrier for some people and believe **access to free or low-cost events** is a worthwhile investment (68% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment).
3. More than half of Australians think funding should ensure that arts and creative experiences are available to support people's **health and wellbeing** (55% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment).

There is strong support for public funding of the arts. At an individual level, such investment helps provide opportunities for everyone to enjoy the arts regardless of economic status or income. Nationally, such investment can impact educational and health outcomes and our nation's social, cultural and economic success.

Who prioritises arts and creative experiences for children and young people?

- **Older Australians aged 65 plus** (82%), **parents of children aged under 16 years** (78%) and **women** (77%) are more likely to place importance on allocating funds to **ensuring children and young people have access to arts and creative experiences**.
- **Australians who live away from urban hubs**. Value attributed to this increases with distance from urban hubs: from 73% in metropolitan areas, to 76% in regional areas, up to 85% among Australians living in remote areas.

“*Creative outlets are a great way for children to consolidate things they have learnt and to express ideas they have ... It can also be a great way to explore feelings they may have or may find difficult to share.*”

Focus group participant

Who prioritises access to free or low-cost events?

- **Ensuring free or low-cost events are available** is a priority for **Australians aged 45 plus**. Three in four Australians aged 45 plus rank free and low-cost events in their top three priorities for public or private investment (76%), compared to three in five aged under 45 years (61%).
- The importance of free and low-cost events decreases as income rises. Three in four **Australians with a household income of under \$40,000** rank this item in their top three priorities for public or private investment (74%), compared to 58% with a household income of more than \$200,000. The reverse pattern is true for donating time and/or money to the arts, which increases as incomes rise.

Who prioritises arts and creative experiences to support health and wellbeing?

- **Women** are more likely than men to rank **ensuring art and creative experiences are available to support people's health and wellbeing** in their top three priorities for public or private investment (57% compared to 53%). Men are more likely than women to prioritise **investing in the making of art so it can be widely shared and experienced** (44% compared to 36%).

“*People who go into this sort of stuff regularly may not be as depressed. You're putting effort into enjoying your life rather than wasting away...*”

Focus group participant

What do we know from the *Giving Attitude* report?

Giving Attitude, a 2018 report by Creative Partnerships Australia shows that while arts and cultural organisations earn income through day-to-day operations such as box office sales, support from the public and private sectors is essential to their viability.

The report also found that over nine in ten private supporters of the arts are individuals, rather than businesses or foundations. While half of this support is monetary, the research found a third of all support is given in volunteer and pro bono time.

Source: Jones B 2018, *Giving Attitude: Private sector support survey 2018*, Creative Partnerships Australia.

One in four Australians prioritise investment in art that drives innovation

The technologies of the fourth industrial revolution are transforming and disrupting industries, economies, and how we interact with our world and each other.³⁰ Artists are among those who work at the forefront of technological and social change – pushing boundaries, defying conventions, imagining new possibilities. Investment in arts and creativity can cultivate new ideas, technologies, and cutting edge innovation; as well as fuelling our talent pipeline and job growth.

One in four Australians ranked **supporting art that pushes boundaries and drives innovation** in their top three priorities for public or private investment in the arts (26%).

Who prioritises investment in art that pushes boundaries and drives innovation?

- More than one in three **Australians aged up to 34 years** places this in their top three (36%). This decreases sharply with age to 29% of those aged 35–49 and 14% of those aged 50 plus.
- **Men** are more likely than women to place this in their top three (30% compared to 21%).
- **Parents with children aged under 16 years** are more likely to place this in their top three (30%, compared to 24% of those without children in this age group).
- **First Nations respondents** are more likely to place this in their top three than non-First Nations respondents (39% compared to 24%).
- **CALD respondents** are more likely to place this in their top three than non-CALD respondents (34% compared to 23%).
- **Respondents with disability** are more likely to place this in their top three than those without disability (28% compared to 25%).

Australians are increasingly giving their time and money 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. In 2019, 5.3 million Australians gave time or money to the arts, or 26% of the population aged 15 years and over. This is a substantial increase from 18% in 2016.³¹

One in ten Australians:

- **did unpaid work** such as helping artists or community groups with arts activities (10%, up from 6% in 2016)
- **donated money** to the arts (10%, up from 6% in 2016)
- **did volunteer work** for the arts (9%, up from 6% in 2016).

There were also increases in the proportion who contributed to a crowdfunding effort for an arts activity (8%, up from 5% in 2016); or joined an arts organisation's membership program (6%, up from 4% in 2016).

³⁰ The fourth industrial revolution is characterised by technological advances that blur the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres; whereas the first used water and steam power to transform production, the second used electricity and the third used electronics and IT. Shwab K 2016, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution: What it means, how to respond*, World Economic Forum.

³¹ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

What do we know about collective giving?

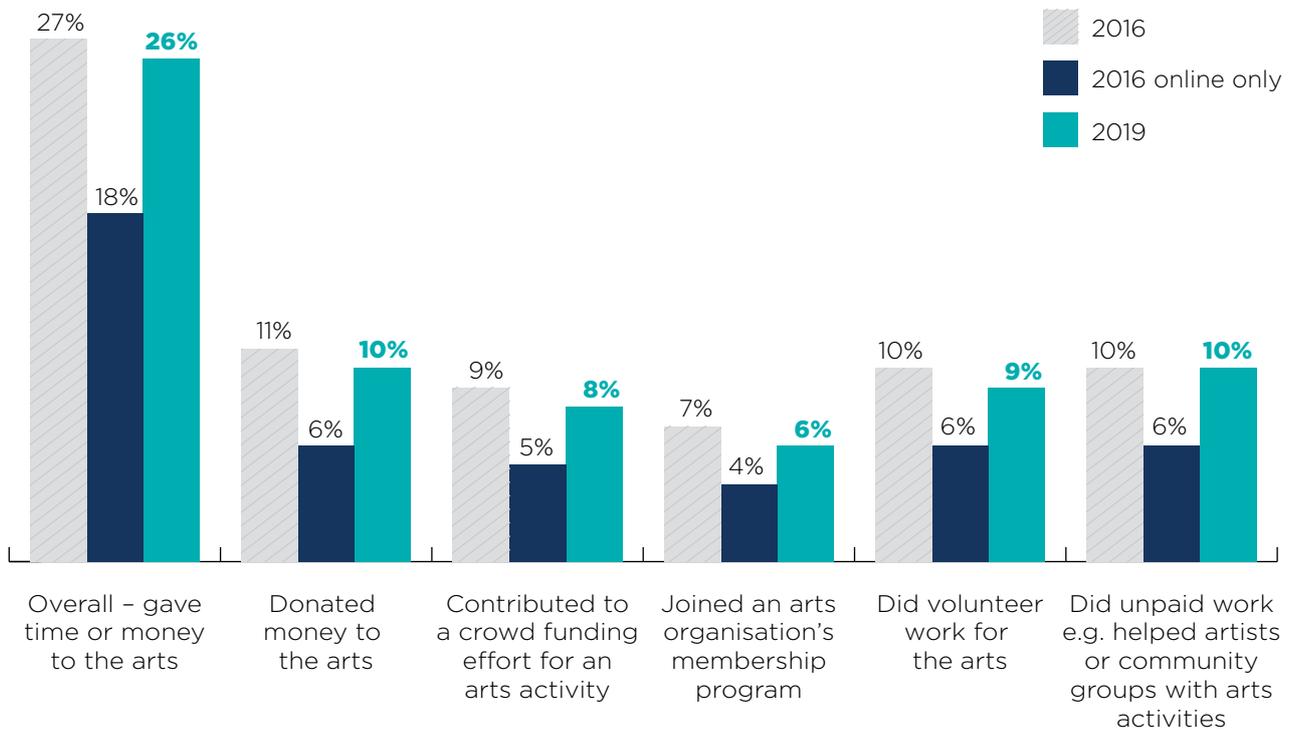
Creative Partnerships Australia has released a report on collective giving. While people coming together and pooling their funds to donate is not a new concept, in the last decade ‘giving groups’ have emerged in Australia.

Giving groups are a relatively new way for Australians to engage in collective fund raising, responding to community demand for accessible philanthropy and the ability to see the impact of their contributions.

The primary motivation for Australians engaging in collective giving groups is to be more effective in their giving. Individual donors contribute amounts of their choosing and the group decide together where the pooled funds go.

Source: Boyd J and Partridge L 2017, *Collective giving and its role in Australian philanthropy*, Creative Partnerships Australia.

Figure 7: Proportion of Australians who gave time or money to the arts 2016 and 2019



Who is more likely to give time and money to the arts?

- **Men** are more likely to give to the arts than women (30% compared to 21%) and are twice as likely to contribute to crowdfunding for arts activities (10% compared to 5%).
- Giving to the arts decreases with age, from two in five **Australians aged up to 34 years** (39%), to a quarter of those aged 35–54 years (25%), down to just over one in 10 of those aged 55 plus (13%).
- **Students** are more likely to do unpaid work (16%, compared to 10% of Australians overall).
- **Respondents with disability** are more likely to give to the arts (38%) than respondents without disability (23%).
- **Parents of children aged up to 16** are more likely to give to the arts than those who do not have children under 16 (35% compared to 22%).
- **Those with higher household income** are more likely to give to the arts. While less than one in five Australians on a household income of under \$40,000 donate time or resources to the arts (19%), this increases to a third of those with a household income of more than \$200,000 (34%). In particular, those with a higher household income are three and a half times more likely to contribute to a crowdfunding effort for an arts activity (14%, compared to 4% of those earning under \$40,000), and three times more likely to join an arts organisation’s membership program (12%, compared to 4% of those earning under \$40,000).
- **First Nations respondents** are nearly *three times* more likely to give to the arts than non-First Nations respondents. Three in five First Nations respondents donate time or money (62%) compared to just over one in five non-First Nations respondents (22%). In particular, First Nations respondents are almost *four times* more likely to contribute to a crowdfunding effort for an arts activity (23%, compared to 6% of non-First Nations respondents) or to join an arts organisation’s membership program (19%, compared to 5% of non-First Nations respondents).
- **CALD respondents** are also nearly *three times* more likely to give to the arts than non-CALD respondents. Half of CALD respondents donate time or money (50%) compared to just under one in five non-CALD respondents (18%). In particular, CALD respondents are three times more likely to do volunteer or unpaid work for the arts (32%, compared to 11% of non-CALD respondents).

What do we know about First Nations and CALD communities volunteering and giving more broadly?

A report on giving and volunteering in culturally and linguistically diverse and First Nations communities in Australia by CIRCA found that both communities are deeply involved in volunteering and sharing for cultural maintenance and community wellbeing:

‘CALD participants described volunteering as an inseparable element of their culture that needed to be passed onto the next generation and shared with other Australian communities.’

Similarly, for First Nations participants *‘sharing, giving and helping others are integral to Indigenous culture and play a key role in maintaining culture and traditions.’*

Source: Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA) 2016, *Giving and volunteering in culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous communities*, pp vi-vii, June 2016.





State Theatre Company of SA Theatre for Change workshops

Theatre for Change is a national first program that supports returned armed service veterans and emergency service personnel to cope with their experiences and struggles through theatre workshops with lived experience peers. Held in late 2019 at the Repat Health site in Adelaide, the program encouraged creative expression within a safe and supported environment with the aim of increasing social connectedness, fostering an interest in theatre and improving and transforming lives. Theatre for Change is an initiative of the State Theatre Company South Australia, The Road Home, a veterans and emergency services charity of The Hospital Research Foundation and the Office for Ageing Well (SA). It is led by two of the state's most experienced performers, Jo Stone and Paulo Castro.

Theatre for Change directors Paulo Castro and Jo Stone. Credit: Brenton Edwards Photography / Newspix.

Creating Our Future: economic value and future success

Australia's arts and creativity are among our nation's most powerful assets and will play a critical role in Australia's future success. Results from the National Arts Participation Survey highlight the importance of arts and creativity to child development, education, local businesses and skills for the future. Previous research has shown the arts to be powerful drivers for regional, domestic and international tourism. Australians' strong and growing engagement with arts festivals and events prior to COVID-19 highlights the critical role for arts in reinvigorating tourism and our economy.

Arts and creativity in child development, education and young people's lives

Young Australians value the arts and are highly engaged – four in five of those aged 15–24 attend, two in three creatively participate and four in ten give time or money to the arts. There is a reciprocal relationship between young people and the arts: a connection with the arts sets them up for success and in turn, they play a critical role in the future of the nation.

There is a substantial body of evidence about the value of arts and creativity in education, including the power of arts activities to help students develop personal, social and cognitive skills that transfer to and improve performance in a wide range of academic and social situations.³²

32 This includes: Australia Council (forthcoming), *Creative Leadership in Learning: Cultivating creativity in schools*; Dunn J, Bundy P, Jones A, Stinson M, Hassall L, Penton J, Lazaroo N, and Le L 2019, *Creating Critical Connections through the Arts: The Y Connect Report. Examining the impact of arts-based pedagogies and artist/teacher partnerships on learning and teaching in one Australian secondary school*, Griffith Institute for Educational Research; A New Approach 2019, *Transformative: Impacts of Cultural and Creativity*, Insight Series, Report No. 2; Ewing R 2010, *The Arts and Australian Education: Realising Potential*; Martin BH and Calvert A 2018, 'Socially Empowered Learning in the Classroom: Effects of Arts Integration and Social Enterprise in Schools', *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 11, No. 2; Jefferson M and Anderson M 2017, *Transforming schools: Creativity, critical reflection, communication, collaboration*.

The National Arts Participation Survey results show that Australians increasingly recognise the value of arts and creativity in the lives and education of children and young people. While Australians increasingly recognise positive impacts of arts and creativity in a range of areas, the most substantial increase since 2016 is the proportion of Australians who agree ***the arts and creativity impact child development*** (63%) – up 13 percentage points from 2016.³³ Additionally, the proportion of Australians who agree ***the arts should be an important part of education*** (73%) is up by 12 percentage points.

When it comes to public and private investment in the arts, the priority with the highest level of support among Australians is access to ***arts and creativity in the lives of children and young people to support their learning and development*** – 74% ranked this in their top three investment priorities.

Creative skills for the future workforce

Australians also increasingly agree that ***the arts stimulate our minds*** (64%, up nine percentage points from 55% in 2016) and ***impact our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas*** (62%, up from 54% in 2016). One in two Australians agree that the arts have a big or very big impact on ***building creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce*** (47%, new in 2019). Further, one in eight Australians are motivated to attend the arts ***to develop skills for education, training or work*** (13%), including more than one in five young Australians aged 15–24 (22%).

This is in line with the growing body of evidence that identifies creative skills as essential to workforces of the future. In recent years, multiple predictions about workforces of the future – both Australian and international studies – have identified increasing need for creative thinking and skills.³⁴ Creativity enables adaptability, experimentation and innovation. Creative skills have been integral to the fast-growing industries in Australia over the past decade³⁵ and prior to COVID-19, the creative economy was growing at a rate nearly twice that of the Australian workforce.³⁶

As well as fuelling our talent pipeline and job growth, investment in arts and creativity can cultivate new ideas, technologies and cutting edge innovation. One in four Australians rank investment in ***art that pushes boundaries and drives innovation*** in their top three priorities for public or private investment in the arts (26%).

33 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

34 For example: World Economic Forum 2016, *The future of jobs: Employment, skills and workforce strategy for the fourth industrial revolution*, World Economic Forum, Switzerland; Bakshi H, Downing J, Osborne M and Scheider P 2017, *The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030*, Pearson and Nesta, UK; Pratchett L, Hu R, Walsh M and Tuli S 2017, *The Knowledge City Index: A tale of 25 cities in Australia*, University of Canberra, Faculty of Business, Government and Law; Foundation for Young Australians 2017, *The new work smarts: Thriving in the new work order*, Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne.

35 Australian Bureau of Communications and Arts Research (BCAR) 2019, *Creative skills for the Future Economy*.

36 Cunningham and McCutcheon 2018, *The Creative Economy in Australia: Cultural production, creative services and income*.

The value of arts to local businesses and their vital role in reinvigorating the economy

Arts events boost tourism and hospitality. Australians increasingly recognise the impacts of the arts on **bringing customers to local businesses** (41%, up nine percentage points from 32% in 2016).

Live attendance at arts events and festivals was booming prior to COVID-19, up nearly ten percentage points since 2016 (to 68%). This included 8.7 million Australians who **attended an arts festival** in 2019 (42%, also up by ten percentage points). Attending arts festivals and events is a way of life for many Australians.

Arts festivals and events are powerful drivers for regional, domestic and international tourism.³⁷ For example, the 2019 Adelaide Festival generated an estimated \$76.8 million in associated spending for the state with 19,046 visitors coming from interstate or overseas for 141,258 bed nights.³⁸ Both domestic and international arts tourism were growing prior to COVID-19 and arts tourists are high value tourists who tend to stay longer and spend more. From large scale festivals and events, to visits to artist workshops and studios, the arts draw domestic tourists to both metropolitan and regional locations and to unique offerings in different parts of Australia.³⁹

Arts and creativity will be critical as we seek to bring life back into our cities, regions, culture and economy. Creativity connects us and will be vital to our recovery from this pandemic and our nation's future success.

37 Australia Council 2020, Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country. Australia Council 2018, *International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures*. Tourism Research Australia 2014, *Events: Drivers of Regional Tourism*. Australian Government: Austrade, Canberra.

38 'Festival stages a big spend,' *Adelaide Advertiser*, 16 May 2019, p.14.

39 Australia Council 2020, Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country. Australia Council 2018, *International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures*.

Such events are absolutely essential for kids as it provides them a platform to experience different ideas and concepts in a playful manner.

Focus group participant

Arts and creativity provide value to our individual lives and our economy and help to build more cohesive communities. It's important to support the role of the arts and creativity in Australian public life and policy making.

Focus group participant

Tarnanthi

Tarnanthi presents the contemporary art of the world's oldest living culture in a national event held annually by the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA). Encompassing an exhibition, an art fair, artist talks, performances and events, Tarnanthi is a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from across the country to share important stories with all Australians. Engagement is strong and growing – the art fair generated \$1.2 million in sales of ethically sourced works in 2019 alone, and more than \$3.4 million from 2015 to 2019, delivering significant benefits for artists and their communities. Tarnanthi has also developed education resources for students and teachers, leading to workshops at the AGSA that are engaging teachers and influencing a generation of young learners. Tarnanthi is presented by the AGSA in partnership with Principal Partner BHP and support from the Government of South Australia.



Tarnanthi 2019 launch, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Credit: John Montesi.



THE ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Our cultural identity and diversity

First Nations arts

- First Nations arts are central to understanding who we are as Australians. More Australians now agree that First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture.
- However, only half of Australians believe First Nations arts are well represented, showing there is still work to be done to increase the representation and visibility of First Nations arts in Australia.
- Prior to COVID-19, attendance and interest in First Nations arts were strong and growing. Attendance was increasing across art forms.
- First Nations festivals are a vital part of Australia's cultural landscape. One in five Australians attend First Nations festivals.

More Australians now agree that First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture

First Nations arts are central to understanding who we are as Australians. They have a pivotal role to play in forging an inclusive cultural identity and a more connected national community (see the spotlight on social cohesion on page 86).

In 2019, 15.5 million Australians, or 75% of the population aged 15 years and over, agreed that **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts are an important part of Australia's culture**⁴⁰ – an increase from 70% in 2016.⁴¹ This includes 35% of the population who strongly agree.

40 Reworded from 2016: *Indigenous arts are an important part of Australia's culture.*

41 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians.*

Who is more likely to agree (or strongly agree) with this statement?

- **Women** are more likely to agree than men (79% compared to 72%).
- **First Nations respondents** are more likely to agree than non-First Nations respondents (86% compared to 75%). Of the remaining 14%, 9% neither agree nor disagree and 4% disagree.
- **CALD respondents** are more likely to agree than non-CALD respondents (83% compared to 73%).

Who is more likely to *strongly* agree with this statement?

- **Young people aged 15-24** are more likely to strongly agree (40% compared to 35% of the population overall).
- **People living in remote locations** are more likely to strongly agree (49% compared to 35% of the population overall).
- **First Nations respondents** are more likely to strongly agree than non-First Nations respondents (59% compared to 33%).
- **CALD respondents** are more likely to strongly agree than non-CALD respondents (41% compared to 33%).



Sarah Bolt in *Djurra* – a NORPA Production, 2017. Credit: Kate Holmes.

For more insights on the makers' view of pathways for First Nations theatre and dance, see [Creating Art Part 1](#).

Only half of Australians believe First Nations arts are well represented

Despite First Nations arts being widely valued, just half of Australians believe that ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts are well represented in Australia***⁴² (51%). This is a slight increase from 48% in 2016.⁴³ There is still work to be done to build the representation and profile of First Nations arts in Australia and to connect First Nations artists to audiences.

Who is more likely to agree First Nations arts are well represented?

- **Men** are more likely to agree than women (54% compared to 49%).
- **First Nations respondents** are more likely to agree than non-First Nations respondents (63% compared to 50%) and are almost three times more likely to *strongly agree* (31% compared to 11%).
- **CALD** respondents are more likely to agree than non-CALD respondents (60% compared to 48%) and are nearly twice as likely to *strongly agree* (20% compared to 11%).

42 Reworded from 2016: *Indigenous arts are well represented in Australia*.

43 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

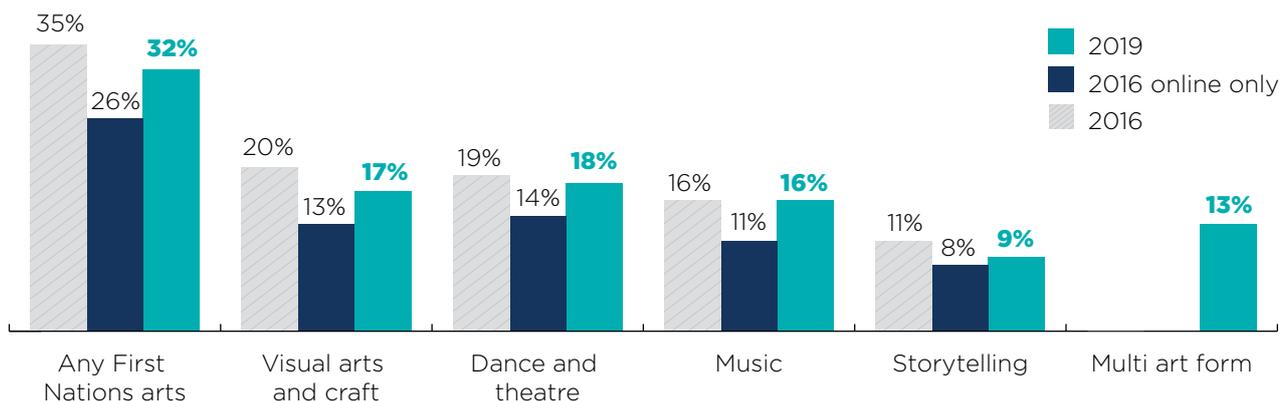
First Nations arts attendance was increasing prior to COVID-19

In 2019, 6.5 million Australians attended First Nations arts or festivals, or 32% of the population aged 15 years and over – an increase from 26% in 2016.⁴⁴ The data indicates that attendance was increasing across art form.⁴⁵

These attendance figures provide a benchmark of Australians' live attendance at First Nations arts before the pandemic (see page 98 for more on attendance results in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic).

- Nearly one in five Australians attended **First Nations dance or theatre** (18%, up from 14% in 2016).
- One in six Australians attended **First Nations visual arts and craft** (17%, up from 13% in 2016).
- One in six Australians attended **First Nations music** (16%, up from 11% in 2016).
- One in eight Australians attended **multi-art form First Nations arts** (13%, new in 2019).
- One in ten Australians attended **First Nations storytelling** (9%, compared to 8% in 2016).

Figure 8: Australians' attendance at First Nations arts 2016 and 2019⁴⁶



Base: General population 15+ (n=8,928)

44 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

45 Due to changes in the way questions were asked to capture more detail on attendance at First Nations festivals in 2019, trends for First Nations arts attendance by art form are indicative only.

46 Due to the change to an online only National Arts Participations Survey in 2019, the 2016 'online only' results presented in figure 8 provide the most comparable results with the 2019 results. While these appear lower than the 2016 results published in *Connecting Australians*, this is because of the change in methodology rather than a decrease in attendance.





Tennant Creek Brio at NIRIN 2020 Biennale of Sydney

The 2020 Biennale of Sydney (titled NIRIN) was artist- and First Nations-led for the first time. It is showcasing more than 700 artworks by 101 artists and collectives from around the world, including the work of the Tennant Creek Brio, an artist collective based in the remote town of Tennant Creek, in Warumungu country, Northern Territory. The collective began in 2016 as an Aboriginal men's art therapy program through Anyinginyi Aboriginal Health Organisation to help men with issues of alcohol and substance misuse. The group's work is a dynamic interplay of influences including Aboriginal desert traditions, abstract expressionism, action painting, found or junk art, street art and art activism. NIRIN opened to unprecedented acclaim in March. Due to the pandemic, it closed to the public after only 10 days, reopening as COVID-Safe in June.

Tennant Creek Brio, *We are the Living History*, 2020. Installation view for the 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020), Cockatoo Island. Image courtesy of the artists and Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre. Credit: Jessica Maurer.

Who attends First Nations arts?

First Nations audiences are young and diverse.

- **Australians aged 15–34 years** are more likely to attend First Nations arts (47%) than those aged 35–54 years (31%) or over 55 (17%).
- Almost half of **Australians in remote areas** attend some form of First Nations arts (49%).
- **Men** are more likely to attend First Nations arts than women (35% compared to 28%). This is consistent with the 2016 online only data (men 28%, women 24%).
- Attendance is 14% higher among **parents of children aged under 16 years** than those without children in this age group (42% compared to 28%).
- Attendance is very high among **First Nations respondents** (86%), especially at First Nations dance (42%) and music (41%). First Nations respondents are also five times more likely than non-First Nations respondents to attend multi-art form First Nations arts (27% compared to 5%), and six times more likely to attend First Nations theatre (24% compared to 4%).
- **CALD respondents** are more likely to attend First Nations arts than non-CALD respondents (55% compared to 25%).
- **Respondents with disability** are more likely to attend First Nations arts than respondents without disability (40% compared to 29%).
- **Australians in the highest household income bracket** (more than \$200,000) are more likely to attend First Nations arts (38%) than those earning less than \$40,000 (27%).
- Two fifths of **Australians with a university degree or post-graduate qualification** attend First Nations arts (40%) compared to 27% of those with a lower level of education.

Research by independent think tank A New Approach also found that Australians with higher levels of income and education, and those from professional and management occupations are more likely to show strong levels of engagement with Indigenous culture.⁴⁷

Thomas E.S. Kelly, *Junjeiri Ballun – Gurul Gaureima*; Queenstown Tasmania.
Directed by Thomas E.S. Kelly, Produced by Tasdance Credit: Kim Eijdenberg.
For more information on Domestic Arts tourism, see *Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country*.

⁴⁷ Fielding K and Trembath JL 2020, *A view from middle Australia: Perceptions of arts, culture and creativity*. Produced by A New Approach think tank with lead delivery partner the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra.

What do we know about First Nations arts and tourism?

Australia Council tourism research shows there was a growing appetite for First Nations arts among both domestic and international tourists prior to COVID-19, particularly among those travelling into regional Australia.

- Nearly 830,000 international tourists engaged with First Nations arts while in Australia in 2017, an increase of 41% since 2013.
- International tourists are more likely to engage with First Nations arts than attend sporting events.
- Australians went on over 320,000 daytrips that included First Nations art, craft and cultural displays in 2018, an increase of 26% since 2016.
- Over half a million overnight trips by Australians included First Nations art, craft and cultural displays in 2018, an increase of 40% over the previous five years.
- First Nations arts tourists are high value tourists; they tend to stay longer and spend more than domestic tourists overall.

Sources: Australia Council 2018, *International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures*, based on Tourism Research Australia's International Visitor Survey.

Australia Council 2020, *Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country*, based on Tourism Research Australia's Domestic Visitor Survey.



Prior to COVID-19, one in five Australians attended First Nations festivals

In 2019, 3.9 million Australians attended a First Nations festival, or 19% of the population aged 15 years and over. First Nations festivals play a critical role in Australia's cultural landscape.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey included additional questions that explored types of First Nations festival attendance for the first time.

What types of First Nations festivals do Australians attend?

- 8% of Australians attend **First Nations music festivals**.
- 8% of Australians attend **First Nations visual arts and craft festivals**.
- 8% of Australians attend **multi-art form First Nations festivals**.
- 7% of Australians attend **First Nations theatre or dance festivals**.

Who attends First Nations festivals?

Patterns of attendance at First Nations festivals are similar to attendance at other arts festivals.

- **Men** are more likely to attend First Nations festivals than women (23% compared to 15%).
- Almost a third of **Australians aged 15–34 years** attend First Nations festivals (32%). Attendance decreases sharply with age: to just under a quarter of those aged 35–44 years (23%) and less than one in 10 of those aged 45 plus (8%).
- **Parents of children aged under 16 years** are twice as likely as those without young children to attend First Nations festivals (30% compared to 15%).
- **Respondents living in metropolitan areas** are more likely to attend First Nations festivals (21%) than those living in regional or remote areas (13% and 19% respectively).
- **First Nations respondents** are four times more likely than non-First Nations respondents to attend First Nations festivals (60% compared to 15%), with music festivals the most popular (30%).
- **CALD respondents** are over three times more likely to attend First Nations festivals than non-CALD respondents (41% compared to 12%).
- **Respondents with disability** are more likely to attend First Nations festivals than those without disability (29% compared to 17%).

First Nations festivals play a critical role
in Australia's cultural landscape

Interest in First Nations arts is growing

While 32% of Australians attended First Nations arts or festivals in 2019, 40% of the population aged 15 years and over were interested in First Nations arts (8.2 million Australians). Interest has increased from 35% in 2016.⁴⁸

Among those who are interested, nearly half (45%) reported a *growing interest*. Respondents identifying as CALD are nearly twice as likely as non-CALD respondents to report that their interest in First Nations arts is growing (32% compared to 17%).

While both audiences for First Nations arts and interest in them were growing prior to COVID-19, the gap between interest and attendance continues to highlight an opportunity to further develop audiences for First Nations arts. However, there are concerns that programming could be safer and more conservative in future due to the financial impacts of COVID-19 and that this could have a particularly negative impact on First Nations arts. It is vital that First Nations artists do not lose their hard-won visibility as a result of the pandemic and that the availability of First Nations arts for Australian audiences is not reduced.

Who is interested in First Nations arts?

The profile is young and diverse, similar to that of First Nations arts attendees.

- Interest in First Nations arts is high among **younger Australians aged 15–34 years** (46%) and declines with age to 40% of those aged 35–54 years, and 33% of those aged 55 plus. Younger Australians aged 15–34 are also twice as likely to be *strongly interested* than those aged 55 or older (15% compared to 6%).
- Interest in First Nations arts is high among **those who live in remote areas** (58%) and decreases with urbanisation to 39% among those in metropolitan areas. Respondents living in remote areas are also four times as likely to be *strongly interested* than their urban counterparts (40% compared to 10%).
- Interest in First Nations arts is high among **parents with children aged up to 16 years** (46%, compared to 38% of those without children aged under 16 years). These parents are also nearly twice as likely to be *strongly interested* (17%, compared to 9%).
- Interest in First Nations arts is high among **First Nations respondents** (82%, compared to 36% of non-First Nations respondents). First Nations respondents are also nearly seven times more likely to report that they are *strongly interested* (54%, compared to 8%).
- Interest in First Nations arts is high among **CALD respondents** (54%, compared to 35% of non-CALD respondents). CALD respondents are also nearly three times more likely to report that they are *strongly interested* (20%, compared to 8% of non-CALD respondents).
- Interest in First Nations arts is high among **respondents with disability** (49%, compared to 38% of those without disability). Respondents with disability are also almost twice as likely to report that they are *strongly interested* (17%, compared to 10% of those without disability).

⁴⁸ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.





Yira Yaakin and Bell Shakespeare *Hecate*

Hecate, Australia's first large-scale Shakespeare production entirely in Noongar language, premiered at the Perth Festival in February 2020 to a standing ovation. Hecate, queen of the witches, is usually omitted from productions of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Here she is at the heart of everything watching as Macbeth strives toward power at any cost, all the while knowing that Country always trumps human ambition and greed. Having spent years studying and reclaiming their endangered Noongar language, a star ensemble used this adaptation as a springboard to showcase its poetic and expressive qualities. Before and after the performance, audiences were invited to Hecate Kambarnap, a gathering space to celebrate Noongar people and their maintenance and care of the language. Adapted and directed by Kylie Bracknell, *Hecate* was produced by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company in association with Bell Shakespeare.

Hecate actors performing at Subiaco Arts Centre, Perth Festival 2020 (Centre: Della Rae Morrison. From left: Ian Wilkes, Bobbi Henry, Rubeun Yorkshire, Trevor Ryan, Kyle J Morrison, Cezera Critti-Schnaars, Maitland Schnaars, Mark Nannup). Credit: Dana Weeks.

Cultural diversity and arts engagement

- **More than one in three Australians connect with, and share, their cultural background through arts and creativity.**
- **While more than half the CALD community attends arts events to engage with their cultural background or community, the CALD community also demonstrates significant cross-cultural arts engagement – a positive indicator for social cohesion.**
- **Australians value attending these events, especially to spend time with family and friends and to get to know others.**
- **Many Australians connect with their culture or community by creating art.**

Australians connect with, and share, their cultural background through arts and creativity

Australia has one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world. As well as being home to the world's oldest continuously living cultures, one in three Australians were born overseas and more than 300 languages are spoken in Australian homes.⁴⁹ (See page 190 for discussion of definitions and terminology about cultural and linguistic diversity).

Whether in First Nations, Anglo-Celtic and/or diasporic communities,⁵⁰ the arts are a key way that Australians connect with, and share, our cultural backgrounds, identities and heritages. All Australians are enriched and benefit from the tapestry of our people and cultural landscape.

In 2019, 7.4 million Australians engaged with their cultural background, language group or community by attending arts events or creatively participating in arts; or 36% of the population aged 15 years and over, including 62% of CALD respondents. This compares to 25% of Australians in 2016,⁵¹ although the trend is indicative only due to changes in how the question was asked.⁵²

Australia is rich in artistic, cultural and creative resources. The source of this wealth is the tapestry of our people.

49 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, *Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia*, Stories from the Census 2016 (cat. no. 2071.0).

50 Diasporic is used to describe a community of people who live outside their shared country of origin or ancestry but maintain active connections with it. A diaspora includes both emigrants and their descendants.

51 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

52 In 2019, attendance and creative participation were presented in two separate questions. In 2016, a single question was asked. Given this change in approach, trend comparisons are indicative only.

Attending live events connects communities and cross-cultural engagement is strong

In 2019, 6.5 million Australians 15 years and over attended arts events focused on their cultural background or community, or 31% of the population.

More than half of CALD respondents attended arts events focused on their cultural background or community (55%) and more than eight in ten CALD respondents attended arts events overall (82%) – CALD people engage with diverse offerings including high engagement with First Nations arts. This cross-cultural behaviour is ‘a positive indicator for social cohesion and intercultural empathy.’⁵³

What do we know about the arts and intercultural social inclusion?

A 2020 study of three schools in Victoria found that the arts and music are key to promoting inclusion among students from culturally diverse backgrounds, helping them to better connect with classmates and exceed in the Australian school system.

It showed that students from non-English speaking and refugee backgrounds particularly benefit, with the arts and music providing a means of developing important personal and social skills, including intercultural competence: socially inclusive behaviours and intercultural competence are seamlessly embedded in music activities that are student-centred, active, practical, experiential and authentic.

What do we know about Australia’s cultural diversity and social cohesion?

The Scanlon Foundation has been undertaking the Mapping Social Cohesion survey in Australia since 2007. The surveys seek to provide evidence to address the critical question of Australia’s ability to sustain the migration and social cohesion success of the post-war decades. The 2019 report shows:

- 85% of Australians agree that ***multiculturalism has been good for Australia***.
- An increasing proportion of Australians agree that ***accepting immigrants from many different countries makes Australia stronger*** (68%, up from 63% in 2017).
- The majority of Australians agree that Australians should learn from the cultures of new arrivals, but equally that new arrivals should embrace Australian values.

There have also been concerning trends, with the proportion of Australians with a strongly held sense of belonging declining since 2017, experiences of discrimination, and negative attitudes about particular cultural groups.

Social cohesion remains a pressing public policy concern. See page 88 for a spotlight on social cohesion and the National Arts Participation Survey findings.

Sources: Crawford, R 2020, ‘Beyond the dots on the page: Harnessing transculturation and music education to address intercultural competence and social inclusion,’ *International Journal of Music Education*.

Markus A 2019, *Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation surveys 2019*.

53 Migliorino P 2017, ‘The arts and cultural diversity – commentary by Pino Migliorino,’ in Australia Council 2017, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*, p.50.

What types of arts events?

Australians attend a range of live events to engage with their cultural background or community:

- **live music** (17%, including 28% of CALD respondents)
- **festivals or celebrations** (11%, including 24% of CALD respondents)
- **dance** (10%, including 22% of CALD respondents)
- **visual arts and craft** (9%, including 18% of CALD respondents)
- **theatre** (9%, including 16% of CALD respondents)
- **book or literary events** (7%, including 14% of CALD respondents).

Who attends the arts to engage with their cultural background or community?

- **Men** are more likely to attend the arts to engage with their cultural background or community than women (35% compared to 28%).
- Almost half of **Australians aged 15-24 years** attend the arts to engage with their cultural background or community (45%). Attendance decreases with age to a third of those aged 25-54 years (36%), and less than one in five of those aged 55 plus (18%).
- **Parents of children under 16 years of age** are more likely to attend the arts to engage with their cultural background or community, than those without children aged under 16 years (42% compared to 28%).
- **Australians living in metropolitan areas** are more likely to attend the arts to engage with their cultural background or community (33%) than those living in regional locations (25%) or remote locations (32%).
- **CALD respondents** are twice as likely as non-CALD respondents to attend the arts to engage with the arts of their cultural background or community (55% compared to 24%).
- Attendance of cultural and community events across all art forms is much more popular among **younger generations from CALD communities** with engagement decreasing with age from two thirds of **those aged 15-34 years** (67%), to half of those aged 35-54 years (49%) and down to a third of those aged 55 plus (32%).
- **Those who speak Dinka** (one of the target communities in the expanded 2019 National Arts Participation Survey) have particularly strong attendance at arts events to engage with their cultural background or community (84%), particularly visual arts, theatre and book or literary events.
- **Those who speak Mandarin** are the most likely of the target groups to engage with their cultural background or community through attendance at music or dance events. (See page 190 for a spotlight on arts engagement among target CALD groups).

Counting and Cracking, a Belvoir St Theatre and Co-Curious co-production 2019.
Credit Brett Boardman. Read more about *Counting and Cracking* in [Australia Council's 2018-19 Annual Report](#).

Where do Australians attend?

Australians attend arts events to engage with their cultural background or community at a range of places. Local community infrastructure such as concert halls, community centres and local parks is vital to cultural participation, particularly among CALD communities. Of the 6.5 million Australians who attend the arts to engage with their cultural background or community:

- more than one in three attend at **concert halls or theatres** (36%, including 36% of CALD respondents)
- more than one in four attend at **community centres** (28%, including 32% of CALD respondents)
- more than one in four attend at **local parks** (28%, including 30% of CALD respondents)
- more than one in four attend at **stadiums or arenas** (26%, including 27% of CALD respondents)
- one in four attend at **museums or galleries** (24%, including 27% of CALD respondents)
- almost one in five attend in **educational settings** (19% including 24% of CALD respondents)
- almost one in five attend at **markets** (19%, including 20% of CALD respondents)
- almost one in five attend at **libraries** (18%, including 21% of CALD respondents)
- one in six attend at **neighbourhood or street events** (16%, including 20% of CALD respondents)
- one in seven attend at **places of worship** (14%, including 19% of CALD respondents).

Participation in cultural arts facilitates social inclusion and citizenship; promoting awareness, empathy, connection and understanding through shared experiences and celebrations.



Australians value these events, especially to spend time with family and friends and get to know others

Australians who attend arts events focused on their cultural background or community see great value in doing so, with almost all citing at least one benefit (96%), including:

- **spending time with family and/or friends** (51%, including 47% of CALD respondents)
- **getting to know people in the community** (39%, including 41% of CALD respondents)
- **feeling connected to heritage** (36%, including 47% of CALD respondents)
- **improved health and wellbeing** (33%, including 33% of CALD respondents)
- **the wider community having more understanding of their culture** (27%, including 35% of CALD respondents)
- **preserving the practices of their heritage** (25%, including 34% of CALD respondents)
- **enabling their children to learn about and connect with their cultural background** (24%, including 31% of CALD respondents and 46% of those with children aged under 16 years)
- **community support for people living away from their home country** (19%, including 30% of CALD respondents).

Younger generations in the CALD community strongly value opportunities to engage with their cultural background or community by attending arts events. They particularly benefit from **spending time with family and/or with friends** (44% of CALD respondents aged 15–34 years who attend), **getting to know people in the community** (39% of CALD respondents aged 15–34 years who attend) and **improved health and wellbeing** (34% of CALD respondents aged 15–34 years who attend).

First Nations respondents also value opportunities to engage with their culture through the arts. They particularly benefit from **feeling connected to heritage** (48% of First Nations respondents who attend), **spending time with family and/or with friends** (45% of First Nations respondents who attend) and **getting to know people in the community** (42% of First Nations respondents who attend).

Younger generations in the CALD community strongly value opportunities to engage with their cultural background or community by attending arts events

More than one in five Australians create art to engage with their culture or community

In 2019, almost 4.5 million Australians created, produced or collaborated in the making of art to engage with their cultural background or community, or 22% of the population aged 15 years and over. This includes nearly half of CALD respondents (46%).

What types of art do they create?

To engage with their cultural background or community, Australians creatively participate in the arts in a range of ways:

- **making music** (9% of Australians, including 20% of CALD respondents)
- **creating visual arts and craft** (7% of Australians, including 17% of CALD respondents)
- **dancing** (6% of Australians, including 15% of CALD respondents)
- **producing creative writing** (6% of Australians, including 14% of CALD respondents)
- **creatively participating in theatre** (5% of Australians, including 13% of CALD respondents).

Who creates art to engage with their cultural background or community?

- **Men** are more likely than women to create art to engage with their cultural background or community (25% compared to 18%).
- Nearly two in five **Australians aged 15–34 years** create art to engage with their cultural background or community (37%). Creation decreases steadily with age to one in five of those aged 35–49 years (22%), down to less than one in ten aged 50 plus (8%).
- **Australians who do not live in regional locations** are more likely to create art to engage with their cultural background or community compared to those who live in regional locations (23% compared to 17%).
- **Parents of children under 16 years of age** are much more likely to create art to engage with their cultural background or community than those without children aged 16 or under (31% compared to 18%).
- **CALD respondents** are much more likely to create art to engage with their cultural background or community than non-CALD respondents (46% compared to 14%).
- **The younger generations in the CALD community** are the most likely to creatively participate in each art form. Six in ten CALD respondents aged 15–34 years creatively participate in the arts to engage with their cultural background or community (61%), compared to 38% of those aged 35–54, and 19% of those aged 55 years and over.

CALD respondents are strong participators in a range of arts, with creative participation particularly strong **among those who speak Spanish, Mandarin and Dinka** (87%, 86% and 84% respectively). These communities were surveyed through a targeted approach in the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey. See page 170 for more on arts engagement among targeted culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

A photograph of a crowd at an album launch event. The scene is dimly lit with blue and purple stage lights. In the foreground, a hand in a dark suit jacket points upwards. The background shows a dense crowd of people, some with their hands raised, suggesting a lively atmosphere.

Solomon Sisay album launch

The November 2019 launch of world class Ethiopian saxophonist Solomon Sisay's debut album, *Sitota* was the culmination of a year long project working and collaborating with fellow Ethiopian musician Nhatty Man. *Sitota* launched at Footscray Community Arts Centre to a sold-out crowd as well as attracting media and industry representatives. The album, played regularly on radio, has led to performance opportunities at leading jazz festivals - increasing audiences, sharing his music and influencing and inspiring up and coming Ethiopian musicians.

Nhatty Man and crowd at the album launch for Solomon Sisay's *Sitota*. The event had a sold-out crowd at Footscray Community Arts Centre in November 2019.

Credit: Raphael Recht Photography.



Creating Our Future: social cohesion

Our arts and creativity reflect who we are as a nation and are crucial in understanding and shaping our sense of national identity. Arts and creativity have a unique capacity to connect us all, irrespective of our life circumstances and experiences. The shared stories of millions of diverse peoples who now call Australia home promote mutual understanding, respect and empathy, and powerfully connect us to a global community – all Australians are enriched by the tapestry of our people. Now, more than ever, our artists have a significant role in helping Australians navigate rapid economic, social and cultural change and in building the health of our civil society.

Our arts shape and communicate our cultural identity

The many and varied stories and perspectives brought to life through literature, music, performance and visual arts construct a sense of who we are as individuals, as a society, and as a nation. Australia's national identity springs from the stories we tell – to ourselves, to each other, to the wider world and to our future generations.

There is enormous potential to harness our arts and creativity to forge and promote a more inclusive cultural identity for Australia in these rapidly changing and divided times: a contemporary national identity that brings together the many strands that make up the Australian community.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey results show that an increasing proportion of Australians now agree that ***the arts shape and express Australian identity*** (52%, up seven percentage points from 45% in 2016).⁵⁴

This includes middle-aged, middle income swing voters from suburban and regional Australia, who were the focus of a research report from independent think tank A New Approach. One of the four most common reasons this group gave for why arts matter is that ***Australian arts and culture give us a sense of identity and help us represent Australia to the world***. The most common reason given was that ***arts and cultural activities bring us together and help build community***.⁵⁵

54 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

55 Fielding K, Trembath JL 2020, *A view from middle Australia: Perceptions of arts, culture and creativity*. Produced by A New Approach think tank with lead delivery partner the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra.

First Nations arts are central to understanding who we are as Australians

Australia is home to the world's longest continuing living culture with a rich artistic context. This is a unique strength, unsurpassed globally, of which all Australians can be proud.

Understanding and respecting First Nations cultures is essential to Australia's social wellbeing and benefits both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Constructively addressing our past is vital for a coherent national identity and artistic expressions can be a vital bridge to mutual understanding.

“*I would say those moments where [First Nations] arts are showcased, where they have a platform to actually exist and be recognised is important and taking that away is erasure. It's really, really important we lift those communities.*”

Focus group participant

“*That's the only way that our community is going to get better. To get knowledge and inclusivity and looking out for each other.*”

Focus group participant

More Australians than ever are engaging with First Nations arts for their beauty, strength and power, and to understand who we are as a nation. The results of the National Arts Participation Survey show that an increasing proportion of Australians agree **First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (75%, up from 70% in 2016) and attendance at First Nations arts was increasing across art forms prior to COVID-19.

Our diverse artistic expression can reshape our contemporary national identity

Australia has one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world. We also have more than three million people living below the poverty line and there are diverse experiences among Australians living in regional, remote and peri-urban communities.

A diverse sweep of artists is interpreting this multiplicity of 'Australias' for us, providing unique opportunities that go beyond day-to-day encounters – for insights into the cultures and communities of others and deep connections with one's own cultural and community roots. Seeing, feeling and hearing one's own experience expressed and reflected in creative expression is inherently powerful. Equally, there is power in seeing, hearing and feeling this experience reflected and valued in our cultural landscape.

While we know there is still work to be done to ensure the arts fully reflect the diversity of Australia's people, an increasing proportion of Australians agree **the arts in Australia reflect our cultural diversity** (71%, up from 65% in 2016). In addition, more than one in three Australians connect with, and share, their cultural background through arts and creativity (36%) including more than half of CALD Australians (62%) and significant cross-cultural arts engagement. This is a positive indicator for social cohesion and intercultural empathy in Australia.⁵⁶ Australians value these opportunities to connect with family and friends and to get to know others, as creativity connects people and communities.

⁵⁶ Migliorino P 2017, 'The arts and cultural diversity – commentary by Pino Migliorino,' in Australia Council 2017, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*, p.50.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of CALD Australians, with the survey translated into six languages encompassing languages of both established and emerging communities in Australia: Arabic, Dinka, Mandarin, Spanish, Urdu and Vietnamese. The results show that these targeted communities are highly engaged with arts and creativity – they are more likely to engage with arts and creativity than Australians overall, whether it is attending arts events, participating in arts activities or engaging online. This includes engaging with arts of their own background, which provides valued opportunities to celebrate and share their culture with the wider Australian community.

Our creative expressions can be an antidote to declining public trust and social divisions

Globally, and in Australia, there is growing evidence of pessimism about the future and cynicism about institutions of all kinds, private and public.⁵⁷ This coincides with rising concerns about inequality, job security and the cost of living – particularly in the wake of COVID-19 – and increasing divisions in society. The arts have a particularly powerful role to play at this moment in time: in generating empathy that can bridge social divides, and in creating a future where diversity is celebrated.

In an environment of increasing polarisation and heightened global attention on injustice, racism and inequality, the arts can provide vital space and opportunity to navigate multiple viewpoints and perspectives, and to engage with complexity and challenging ideas from a safe space. In this way our arts and artists provide invaluable conduits to helping rebuild trust in our institutions and in each other. They enable a plurality of voices to be heard, including those who feel they are being left behind by rapid social change.

The results of the National Arts Participation Survey show an increasing proportion of Australians feel that the arts enable us to **connect with others** (53%, up 15 percentage points from 38% in 2016), **understand perspectives that are different to our own**⁵⁸ (71%, up from 60% in 2016), and that the arts **impact our understanding of other people and cultures** (60%, up from 52% in 2016). Connection with others is one of the main drivers of arts attendance and one in three Australians are motivated to attend the arts **to understand other perspectives and cultures** (33%).

“**Art is a way to share... It's an experience with others' cultures that allows you to experience without talking. You bond.**”

Focus group participant

Through their ability to inspire our collective imagination, engage and connect us and challenge our assumptions, the arts help us understand and live with our fellow citizens, guarding against social divisions and threats and building the health of our civil society.

57 Cameron S and McAllister I 2016, *Trends in Australian Political Opinion: Results from the Australian election study 1987-2016*, Australian National University, Canberra. Ipsos 2020, *Global Trends: Understanding complexity*.

58 Reworded from 2016: *The arts are an important way to get different perspectives on a topic or issue*.

Art is a way to share...
It's an experience
with others' cultures
that allows you to
experience without
talking. You bond.

Focus group participant

Barking Gecko and Black Swan *Fully Sikh*

Fully Sikh, written and performed by Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa (one of Australia's most talented and celebrated spoken word artists) premiered in Perth in 2019, clocking up an audience of nearly 5,000 across 25 shows. Sukhjit made headlines around the globe in 2016 when she performed a rousing poem confronting racism on Australia's Got Talent and went on to tour her poetry across Australia and overseas. A Barking Gecko and Black Swan co-production directed by Matt Edgerton, *Fully Sikh* is Australia's first professional theatrical work about growing up Sikh in Australia. Sukhjit tells her deeply personal story with humour and lyrical style in a show that has been described as 'both a simple coming of age story and a significant cultural and artistic achievement that feeds our hunger for sharing stories'.[†]



Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa and Pavan Kumar Hari in *Fully Sikh*, a Barking Gecko Theatre and Black Swan Theatre Company co-production. Credit: Daniel Grant.

[†] Mercer L, *Fully Sikh* review: a charismatic, generous performance about growing up Sikh in Australia, *The Conversation*, 21 October 2019.



three

Australians' arts attendance prior to COVID-19

Live attendance at arts events

- Prior to COVID-19, live attendance at arts events was thriving. Australians' live attendance had increased nearly ten percentage points since 2016.
- Attendance increased across all types of arts events including live music, theatre, visual arts and craft, dance, literature events, festivals and First Nations arts.
- Younger Australians and parents with young children have particularly strong attendance. This highlights the importance of the arts to both the wellbeing of our younger generations and the future of Australia's culture.

Prior to COVID-19, live arts attendance was thriving

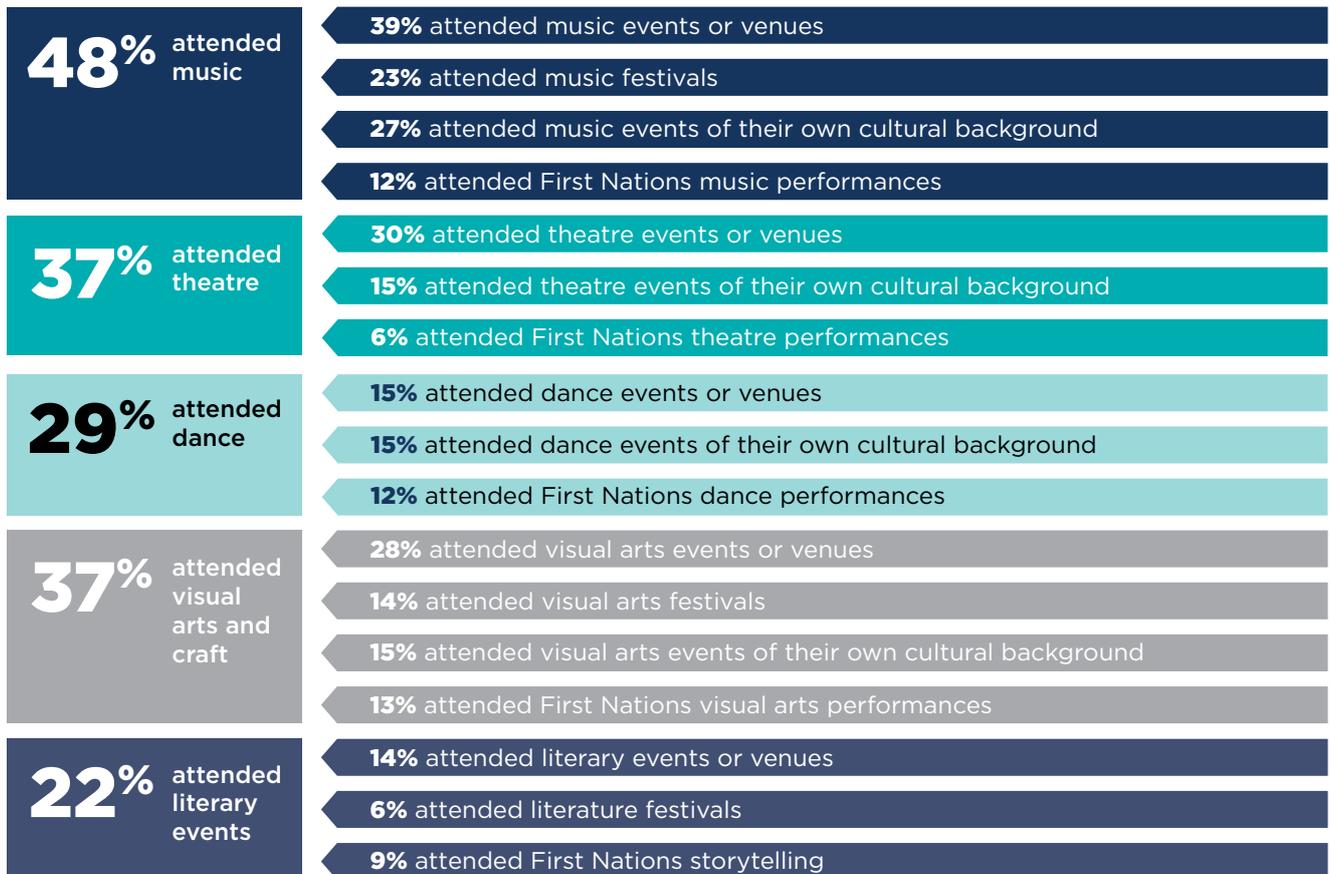
In 2019, 14.1 million Australians attended arts events or festivals, or 68% of the population aged 15 years and over. Overall attendance has increased nearly 10 percentage points from 59% in 2016.⁵⁹

These attendance figures provide a benchmark of Australians' live attendance at the arts before the pandemic (see page 98 for more on attendance results in relation to COVID-19).

⁵⁹ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

-  **Music** is the most popular art form experienced – 9.9 million Australians attended live music (48%, up from 43% in 2016).
-  This is followed by **festivals**, attended by 8.7 million Australians (42%, up from 33% in 2016).
-  Almost two in five, or 7.6 million Australians attended **theatre** (37%, up from 30% in 2016).
-  Similarly, almost two in five Australians attended **visual arts and craft events** (37%, up from 33% in 2016).
-  One in three or 6.5 million Australians attended **First Nations arts or festivals** (32%, up from 26% in 2016).
-  Three in 10, or 6 million Australians attended **dance** (29%, up from 24% in 2016).
-  Over one in five, or 4.5 million Australians attended any **literary events, including First Nations storytelling** (22%, up from 15% in 2016).

Figure 9: Australians' arts attendance by art form 2019



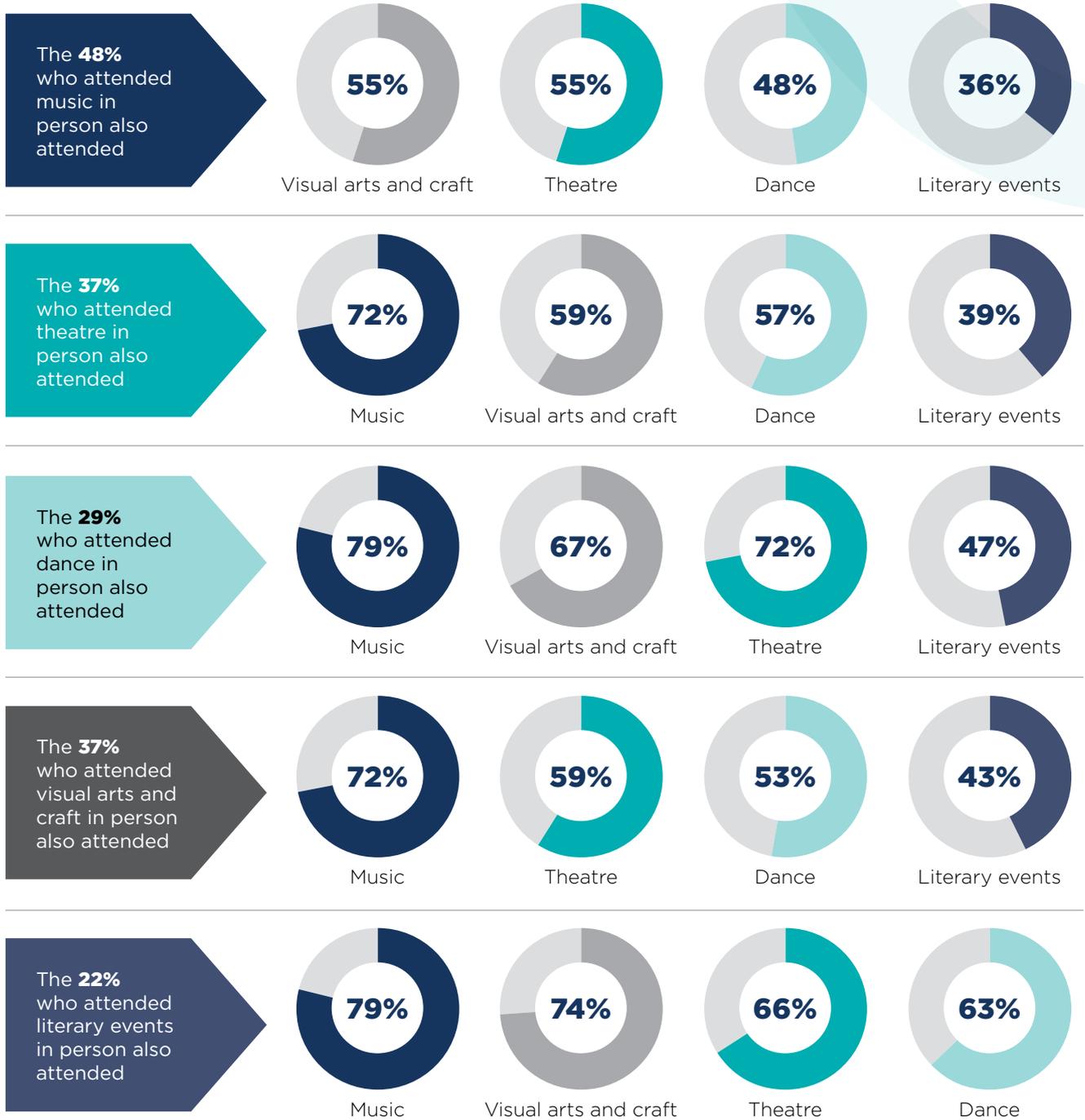
Who is the live audience?

- The majority of **Australians aged 15–34** (81%) attend arts events or festivals. There is a steady decrease with age to seven in ten of those aged 35–49 years (69%) and 57% of those aged 50 plus.
- Over three quarters of **parents of children aged under 16** attend arts events or festivals (76%) compared to two thirds of those without children of this age (66%).
- Arts attendance is very high among **First Nations respondents** at 91% (compared to 66% of non-First Nations respondents).
- The vast majority of **CALD respondents** attend arts events or festivals compared to two in three non-CALD respondents (82% and 64% respectively).
- **Respondents without disability** are more likely to attend than those with disability (69% compared to 64%). This contrasts with the results in the previous study, which found respondents with disability attended arts events at a higher rate. This difference could be a result of the changed methodology for this group, including moving to an online only survey and targeted interviews to reach a broader sample of people with disability.
- Four in five **Australians in the highest household income bracket** (more than \$200,000) attend arts events and festivals (79%). Attendance decreases with decreased income to three in five of those on a household income of under \$40,000 (57%). Respondents in the lowest household income bracket are also least likely to agree that *the arts allow me to connect with others and there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts*.
- Three quarters of **employed Australians** attend arts events and festivals (76%), compared to 53% of respondents receiving a carer/parenting payment, 51% of respondents who are unemployed for medical reasons, and 40% of respondents on disability benefit.
- More **current students** attend arts events and festivals than Australians overall (81% compared to 68%).
- Over three quarters of **those with a university degree or post-graduate qualification** attend arts events and festivals (78%), compared to 63% of respondents with a lower level of education.
- **Australians living in metropolitan areas** are more likely to attend arts events and festivals than those living in regional and remote areas (70% compared to 64%).

Australian arts audiences enjoy a variety of experiences and are likely to attend more than one art form. Music events are the most popular among those who attend other art forms. Among those who attend literary events, at least three in five also attend events in other art forms (figure 10).

Australian arts audiences enjoy a variety of experiences and are likely to attend more than one art form

Figure 10: Overlaps in Australians' art form attendance 2019



Attendance results in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic

From March 2020, necessary distancing measures to protect Australians from the COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions on public gatherings and travel, have caused unprecedented disruption to social and economic life in Australia. This disruption has had devastating impacts for Australia's cultural landscape and resulted in the closure of venues and cancellation or postponement of events and programs. These impacts will be long-lasting and continue to be felt across the live performance industry for years to come.

Results from the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey can be used as a benchmark of Australians' live attendance before the impacts of COVID-19 and can provide much needed information as the live performance industry and our venues and galleries reopen doors and rebuild their audiences.

What do we know from the Audience Outlook Monitor study?

In order to understand changes in behaviours and sentiments of arts-goers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Audience Outlook Monitor tracking study collected baseline data in a cross-sector collaborative survey process involving 159 arts and culture organisations, including museums, galleries, performing arts organisations and festivals. These organisations simultaneously sent a survey to a random sample of their audiences, who had attended a cultural event since January 2018.

The first two phases of the study were conducted in May and July 2020. Key findings from the second phase of the study showed that in July:

- One in four audience members had attended an arts or cultural event in the previous fortnight (24%) with museums and galleries the most common venues (12%).
- More than a quarter of audiences are ready to attend events as soon as permitted (28%, up from 22% in May).
- Audiences are increasingly comfortable to attend live performance venues of all sizes, assuming they were open, following safety procedures and observing social distancing guidelines.

The final phase of the Audience Outlook Monitor study will be conducted in September 2020.

Source: Patternmakers 2020, *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor: Australia Snapshot Report July 2020*.



Sue Healey *ON VIEW*

One of Australia's leading dance makers, Sue Healey brings her works to audiences in diverse spaces including galleries, theatres and public spaces. She partnered with artists from Hong Kong, Japan and Australia to present her *ON VIEW* series, shown across all three locations between 2013 and 2020. *ON VIEW: PANORAMA*, the culmination of the series, was presented in January 2020. A cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural production combining live dance performances, film installations and exhibitions, *ON VIEW: PANORAMA* explores the dynamics of seeing and being seen, and how the body is influenced by the culture it is surrounded by.



Nobuyoshi Asai in Sue Healey's *ON VIEW: PANORAMA*. Credit: Naoshi Hatori.

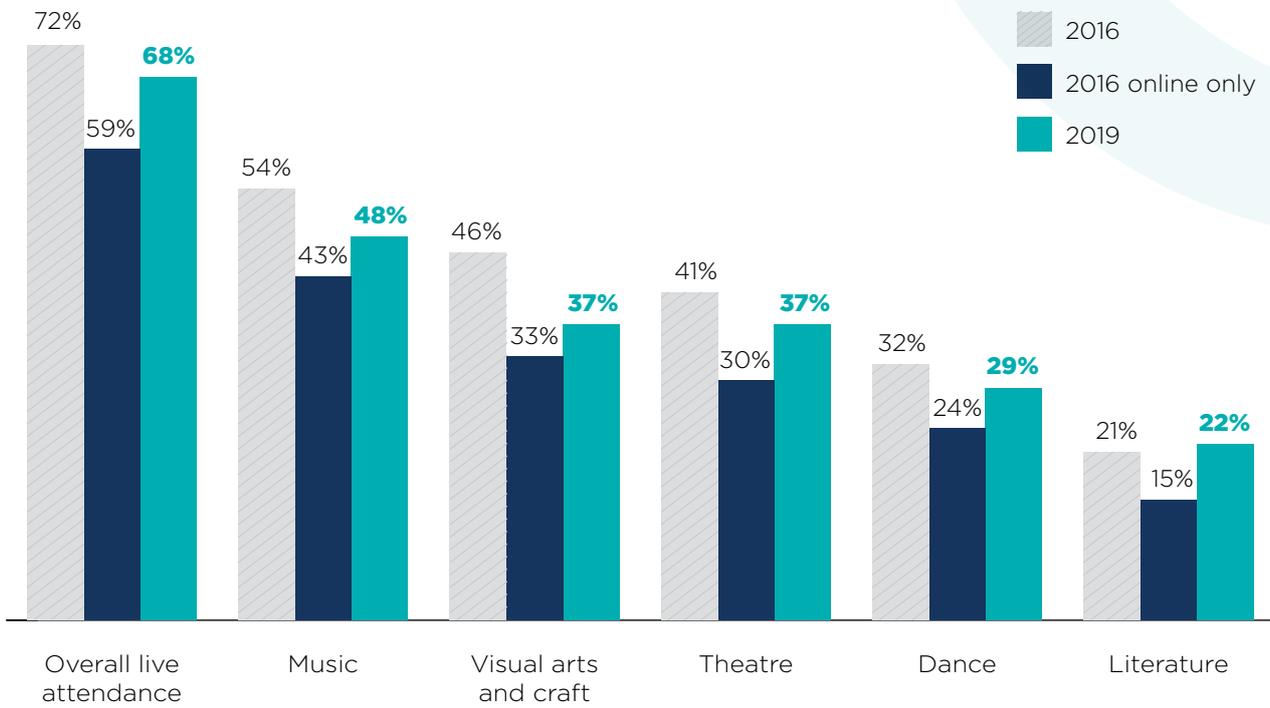
Spotlight on live attendance by art form

- Half of Australians attend live music and attendance was increasing prior to COVID-19.
- Live theatre was connecting an increasing number of Australians prior to COVID-19, including one in five Australians who attend musical theatre or cabaret.
- The equivalent of three visual arts and craft events were attended for every Australian in 2019.
- Those who attend dance are the most frequent attendees.
- Australians are increasingly connected through literature events such as book clubs.

BIG RED BASH Day One 16 July 2019. Credit: Matt Williams.
Find out more about the Big Red Bash on page 115.



Figure 11: Australians' arts attendance by art form 2016 and 2019





Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

Featuring a predominately Australian cast, the Australian company of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* has brought the magic of the Harry Potter universe to life for sold-out Australian audiences. Following sweeping acclaim on Broadway and the West end, the show opened at the Princess Theatre in Melbourne in 2019, breaking records when tickets first became available. The eighth story in the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* is the first official Harry Potter story to be presented on stage, immersing theatre-goers in this spectacular world where epic duels, extraordinary spells and beloved characters come to life.



The Australian company of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. Credit: Matt Murphy.

What do we know from the LPA Ticket Attendance and Revenue Survey 2018?

Live Performance Australia's (LPA) Ticket Attendance and Revenue Survey covers ticketed attendances reported by ticketing companies, self-ticketing venues, event promoters and the Australian major performing arts (MPA) companies.

Approximately 26.3m tickets were issued in 2018, an increase of 14.1% from 2017 and the highest recorded levels of attendance since LPA began publishing data in 2004. In terms of individual categories:

- Contemporary music saw the highest attendance at over 10 million, an increase of 19% since 2017.
- While music festivals saw a slight increase in attendance in 2018, multi-art form festivals such as the Adelaide Fringe, Dark Mofo and VIVID Sydney saw significant growth, up 38.1% from 1.9m attendances in 2017 to 2.6m in 2018.
- Theatre experienced a small decline in attendance, down 2% from 2017 to 1.43 million in 2018. However, circus and physical theatre attendance saw a significant decline by 61% from 1.17m in 2017 to 0.5m in 2018 – although this category can be variable depending on the presence or absence of major tours by international companies in any given year.

What do we know from the ABS Cultural Attendance survey?

Overall, eight in ten Australians attended a cultural venue or event (82%) in 2017-18.

- Over half attended performing arts events (54%) including live music (38%), theatre (17%) and dance (10%).
- Over a quarter of Australians attended an art gallery (28%).

The ABS Cultural Attendance survey is collected as part of the Multipurpose Household Survey and includes broader cultural categories than the National Arts Participation Survey including attendance at museums, cinemas and libraries. Due to the differences in survey methodology and scope, these results should not be compared directly but rather used as further evidence to build a more comprehensive picture of Australians' live attendance.

Sources: Ernst & Young (EY) 2019, *Live Performance Industry in Australia: 2018 Ticket Attendance and Revenue Report*. Live Performance Australia.

ABS, *Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, Australia, 2017-18*. (cat. No. 4114.0).

Half of Australians attend live music and attendance was increasing prior to COVID-19

In 2019, 9.9 million Australians attended live music events or festivals, or 48% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 43% in 2016.⁶⁰

On average, those who attended live music attended 10.9 music events in 2019. Across the Australian population, this equates to 4.2 live music events attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.⁶¹

What types of live music do Australians attend?

- More than a quarter of Australians attend **contemporary music** such as pop, rock, electronic, dance, hip hop, country, jazz or blues (28%).
- 8% of Australians attend **classical music**.
- 7% of Australians attend **traditional or folk music**.
- 6% of Australians attend **art music**.
- 4% of Australians attend **opera**.

Where do people attend live music?

- **Concert halls or theatres** are the main venues where Australians attend live music (19%).
- This is followed by **pub, clubs or bars** (16%) and **outdoor public places** (16%).
- 15% of Australians attend live music at **stadiums or arenas**.
- 6% of Australians attend live music in **educational settings** (e.g. school, college, university).
- 4% of Australians attend live music at **a place of worship**.⁶²

Who attends live music events and festivals?

- Attendance at live music peaks **between the ages of 15–29 years** (66%).
- Three quarters of **First Nations respondents** attend live music (75%).
- Three in five **CALD respondents** attend live music (62%).
- Nearly half of **respondents without disability** attend live music (48%).
- Three in five **parents with children aged under 16 years** attend live music (58%).
- Half of **major city residents** attend live music (49%).
- **Those with the highest household income** (more than \$200,000) have strong attendance (62%). Attendance at live music decreases steadily with household income to 52% for those with a household income of \$70,000–\$99,000 and to 38% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

60 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

61 Frequency of attendance does not include attendance at festivals.

62 Data on the types of live music Australians attend and where they attend does not include festivals.

Live theatre was connecting an increasing number of Australians prior to COVID-19

In 2019, 7.6 million Australians attended live theatre performances or festivals, or 37% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 30% in 2016.⁶³

On average, those who attended live theatre attended 8.8 theatre performances in 2019. Across the Australian population, this equates to 2.6 live theatre performances attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.⁶⁴

What types of theatre do Australians attend?

- One in five Australians attend **musical theatre or cabaret** (19%).
- One in six Australians attend **traditional or contemporary theatre** (16%).
- 7% of Australians attend **circus**.
- 6% attend **children's theatre**.

Data on musical theatre or cabaret, circus and children's theatre was collected for the first time in the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey.⁶⁵

Who attends live theatre performances and festivals?

- Attendance at live theatre peaks **between the ages of 25–39 years** (45%).
- Half of **CALD respondents** attend live theatre (51%).
- More than two in five **parents with children aged under 16 years** attend live theatre (44%).
- Two in five **major city residents** attend live theatre (40%).
- **Those with the highest household income** (more than \$200,000) have strong attendance (51%). Attendance at live theatre decreases steadily with household income to 46% for those with a household income of \$70,000–\$139,999 and to 25% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

63 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

64 Frequency of attendance does not include attendance at festivals.

65 In 2019, the questionnaire had more theatre options which respondents were able to select. Traditional or contemporary theatre remained the same since 2016 but children's theatre, musical theatre or cabaret, circus or 'other form of theatre' were added in 2019, while experimental theatre was taken out.



Circa, *Leviathan* 2020.
Credit: Johannes Reinhart.
Find out more about Circa on page 39.

Sensorium Theatre *Whoosh!*

Sensorium Theatre's *Whoosh!* is an immersive work that puts children with access needs at the forefront of creativity. Children participate in an immersive performance where they can see, touch, hear, smell and taste the action as the story unfolds around them. Produced by Performing Lines Western Australia, the work is designed specifically for children with complex and multiple needs, including those on the autism spectrum, aged 5-12 years. It is a unique participatory experience with innovative use of technology including pre-show engagement through a digital app.

Cast and young audience in Sensorium Theatre's *Whoosh!* Perth 2019. Credit: Christophe Canato.



The equivalent of three visual arts and craft events were attended for every Australian in 2019

In 2019, 7.6 million Australians attended visual arts and craft events or festivals, or 37% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 33% in 2016.⁶⁶

Those who attended visual arts and craft attended 11.1 visual arts and craft events in 2019 on average. Across the Australian population, this equates to three visual arts and craft events attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.⁶⁷

What types of visual arts and craft do Australians attend?

- One in five Australians attend **painting, drawing, printmaking or street art** (19%).
- One in eight Australians attend **photography events** (13%).
- 12% of Australians attend **sculpture, installation or light projections**.
- 12% of Australians attend **craft like ceramics, glass art, jewellery, textiles or woodcraft**.
- 8% of Australians attend **digital art**.

Who attends visual arts and craft events and festivals?

- Attendance at visual arts and craft peaks **between the ages of 25–34 years** (48%).
- Three in five **First Nations respondents** attend visual arts and craft (62%).
- More than half of **CALD respondents** attend visual arts and craft (53%).
- Nearly half of **parents with children aged under 16 years** attend visual arts and craft (45%).
- **Those with the highest household income** (more than \$200,000) have strong attendance (46%). Attendance at visual arts and craft decreases steadily with household income to 41% for those with a household income of \$70,000–\$99,999 and to 28% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

66 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

67 Frequency of attendance does not include attendance at festivals.

Dance attenders are the most frequent attenders

In 2019, 6 million Australians attended dance performances or festivals, or 29% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 24% in 2016.⁶⁸

Those who attended dance attended 16.3 dance events in 2019 on average – the most frequent attendance of any art form. Across the Australian population, this equates to 2.4 live dance performances attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.⁶⁹

What types of dance do Australians attend?

- 7% of Australians attend **contemporary dance**.
- 6% of Australians attend **ballet**.
- 6% of Australians attend **street dance or hip hop**.
- 5% of Australians attend **social or competitive dance** (such as ballroom, swing or tango).
- 5% of Australians attend **classical/traditional/folk**.

Who attends dance performances and festivals?

- Dance attendance peaks **between the ages of 25–34 years** (42%).
- Two in three **First Nations respondents** attend dance (66%).
- Half of **CALD respondents** attend dance (48%).
- Two in five **parents with children aged under 16 years** attend dance (41%).
- Three in ten **major city residents** attend dance (30%).
- **Those with the highest household income** (more than \$200,000) have strong attendance (37%). Attendance at dance performances decreases steadily with household income to 34% for those with a household income of \$70,000–\$99,999 and to 23% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

68 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

69 Frequency of attendance does not include attendance at festivals.

Literature events, including book clubs, connect an increasing number of Australians

In 2019, 4.5 million Australians attended book or literary events or festivals, or 22% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 15% in 2016.⁷⁰

On average, those who attended book or literary events attended 15.6 events in 2019. Across the Australian population, this equates to 2.2 book or literary events attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.⁷¹

What types of book and literary events do Australians attend?

- 8% of Australians attend **writer talks or book launches**.
- 6% of Australians attend **book clubs**.
- 6% of Australians attend **readings including poetry and storytelling**.
- 6% of Australians attend **writers festivals**.

Who attends book or literary events or festivals?

- Book or literary events attendance peaks **between the ages of 25–34 years** (35%).
- More than half of **First Nations respondents** attend book or literary events (53%).
- Two in five **CALD respondents** attend book or literary events (40%).
- Three in ten **respondents with disability** attend book or literary events (28%).
- One in three **parents with children aged under 16 years** attend book or literary events (31%).
- One in four **major city residents** attend book or literary events (23%).
- **Those with the highest household income** (more than \$200,000) have strong attendance (34%). Attendance at book or literary events decreases steadily with household income to 26% for those with a household income of \$100,000–\$139,999 and to 16% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

Melissa Lucashenko's *Too Much Lip* won the 2019 Miles Franklin Literary Award and the 2019 Queensland Premier's Award for a work of State Significance and will be published in the US and the UK in 2020. Read more about this title in [Australia Council's Annual Report 2018–19](#).

70 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

71 Frequency of attendance does not include attendance at festivals other than writers festivals.

**TOO
MUCH
LIP**

MELISSA LUCASHENKO

Award-winning author of **MULLUMBIMBY**

The festival audience

- **Festivals bring people and communities together and play a pivotal role in tourism in Australia.**
- **Festivals are a part of life for many Australians and were growing in popularity prior to COVID-19 – by 9 percentage points since 2016.**
- **Around one in four Australians attend music festivals and one in five attend multi-art form festivals.**
- **One quarter of Australians attend festivals related to particular cultural groups or communities.**

Festivals bring people and communities together

Arts festivals are a critical component of the Australian arts ecology – from festivals in the laneways of major cities to festivals drawing locals and tourists to regional centres; and from major international multi-arts festivals to First Nations festivals in remote Australia. Festivals in their diverse forms bring people and communities together in immersive arts experiences. Festivals in regional Australia are powerful drivers for regional tourism, including intrastate overnight trips.⁷²

What do we know about the role of arts festivals and events in tourism?

Australia Council research shows that the arts were increasingly on the itinerary of both domestic and international visitors prior to COVID-19, particularly in regional areas.

Domestic tourists are more likely to attend the arts than sports events, amusement parks or wineries.

Arts festivals and events were an increasingly popular arts activity among tourists:

- 3.5 million Australians attended a festival, fair or cultural event on a daytrip in 2018, up 11% from 2014 and 80% from 2009.
- 3.3 million Australians attended a festival, fair or cultural event on an overnight trip in 2018, up 11% from 2014 and 78% from 2009.
- Attendance at festivals, fairs and cultural events was found to be the fastest growing arts activity among international tourists, increasing by 61% from 643,000 attendees in 2013 to over one million in 2017.

Sources: Australia Council 2020, *Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country*.
Australia Council 2018, *International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures*.

72 Australia Council 2020, *Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country*.
Tourism Research Australia 2014, *Events: Drivers of Regional Tourism*. Australian Government: Austrade, Canberra.



Big Red Bash Music Festival

Outback festivals draw Australians and tourists to regional and remote areas. The Big Red Bash Festival in Birdsville, on the edge of the Simpson Desert in Outback Queensland, is the world's most remote music festival. In 2019, it attracted more than 9,000 festival-goers from every Australian state and territory, as well as overseas – marking its largest audience since the festival began in 2013. Major acts included Midnight Oil, The Living End and Kasey Chambers.

Festivals are a part of life for many Australians and were growing in popularity prior to COVID-19

In 2019, 8.7 million Australians attended an arts festival, or 42% of the population aged 15 years and over – up by nine percentage points from 33% in 2016.⁷³

“It takes your stress away... makes your life better than monotonous routine.”

Focus group participant

What types of festivals do Australians attend?

- Consistent with 2016, **music festivals** are the most popular, attended by almost one in four Australians (23%).
- Almost one in five Australians attend **multi-art form festivals** such as VIVID Sydney or Brisbane Festival (18%).
- One in seven Australians attend **visual arts festivals or fairs** (14%).
- One in eight Australians attend **performing arts festivals** such as theatre or dance (12%).

⁷³ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

MONA FOMA

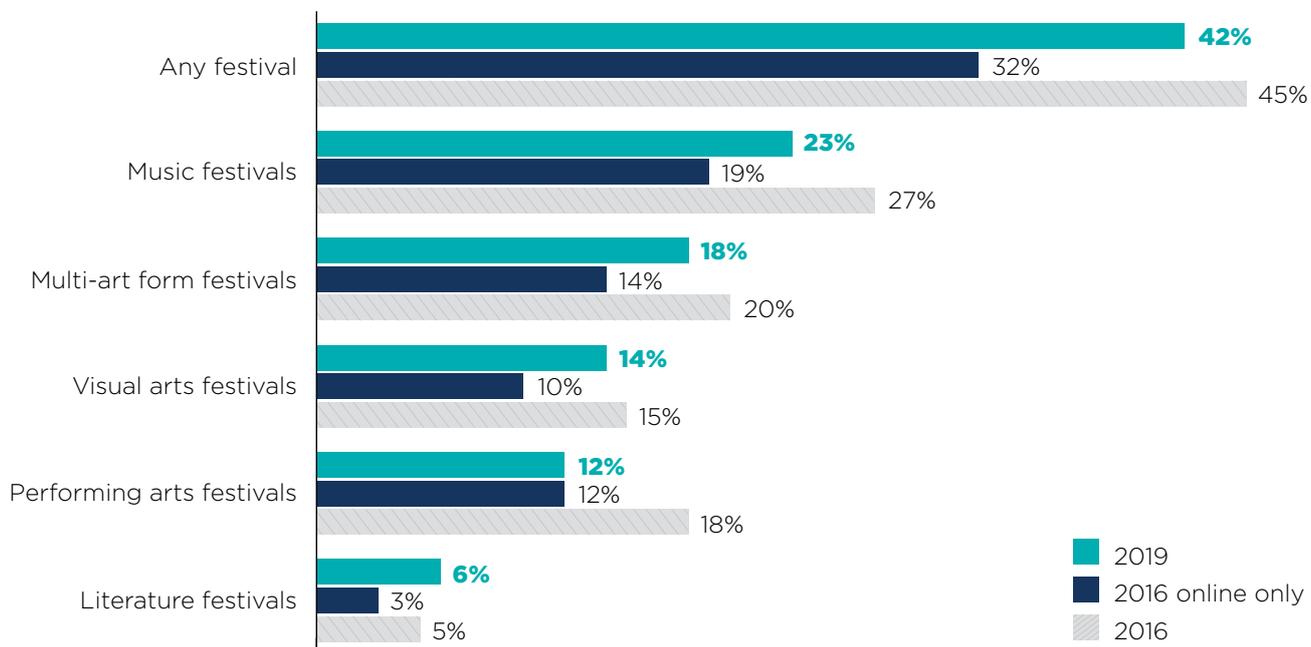
MONA FOMA - Museum of Old and New Art: Festival Of Music and Art - is a contemporary music and arts summer festival in Tasmania. Now held in Launceston, the 2020 festival drew crowds of more than 50,000 people boosting tourism to the region. The festival partners with local artists, organisations, community groups and businesses to showcase a broad range of art forms, including sound, noise, dance, theatre, visual arts, performance and new media. The result is one of the most diverse audiences at an Australian arts festival: from queer club kids and cyberpunks to rockers, parents with children and older people.



Flying Lotus 3D at MONA FOMA 2020.
Image courtesy of The Museum of Old and New Art.



Figure 12: Australians' festivals attendance 2016 and 2019



Base: General population 15+ (n=8,928)

Who attends festivals?

- Festivals connect families as well as communities. **Parents with children aged under 16 years** are the most likely to attend festivals (54%).
- **Men** are more likely to attend festivals than women (45% compared to 39%), particularly music festivals (26% compared to 20%).
- Festival attendance peaks **between the ages of 15–34 years** (60%), then decreases sharply with increasing age to 47% for those aged 35–44 years and 28% for those aged 45 years plus.
- **First Nations respondents** are more likely to attend festivals than non-First Nations respondents (70% compared to 39%).
- **CALD respondents** are more likely to attend festivals than non-CALD respondents (64% compared to 36%).
- **People living in metropolitan areas** are more likely to attend festivals (45%) than those living in regional or remote areas (34% and 27% respectively).
- **Those with a household income of \$100,000 or more** have strong attendance (53%). Attendance at festivals decreases steadily with household income to 44% for those with a household income of \$40,000–\$99,999 and to 30% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

One quarter of Australians attend festivals related to a particular cultural group or community

In 2019, 5 million Australians attended a festival related to a particular cultural group or community, or 24% of the population aged 15 years and over. This was a new question in the National Arts Participation Survey in 2019.

What type of festivals related to cultural groups or communities do Australians attend?

Attendance is largely consistent by type of festival, with around one in ten respondents attending:

- **multi-art form festivals** (11%)
- **music festivals** (10%)
- **visual arts festivals or fairs** (9%)
- **performing arts festivals** (8%).

Who attends festivals related to particular cultural groups or communities?

- **Men** are more likely than women to attend (29% compared to 20%).
- Attendance peaks **between the ages of 15–34 years** (38%), then decreases sharply to 27% for those aged 35–49 years and 11% for those aged 50 years plus.
- More than a third of **parents with children aged under 16 years attend** (36%).
- **Respondents living in metropolitan areas** are more likely to attend (27%) than those in regional or remote areas (18% and 22% respectively).

Tarnanthi Festival 2016, in the Art Gallery of South Australia. Image features Yhonnie Scarce, *Thunder Raining Poison*, 2015. 2000 Blown glass yams, stainless steel and reinforced wire. Find out more about Tarnanthi on page 66.



Motivations and barriers for live attendance

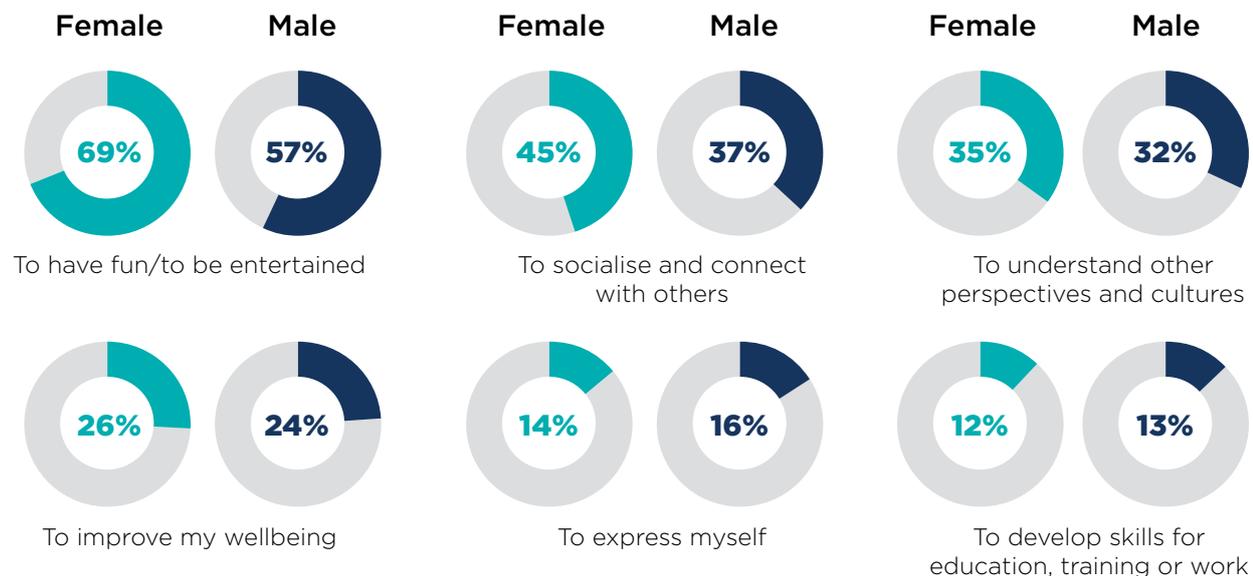
- Entertainment, social connection and wellbeing are the main drivers of arts attendance.
- One in eight Australians attend the arts to develop skills for education, training or work.
- Four in ten Australians would like to attend more arts events.
- Cost and location are the main barriers to increased arts attendance.

Entertainment, social connection and wellbeing are the main drivers of arts attendance

There are many reasons why Australians attend arts events or festivals.

- Almost two thirds of Australians attend the arts **to have fun and to be entertained** (63%).
- Four in ten Australians attend the arts **to socialise and connect with others** (41%).
- One in three Australians attend the arts **to understand other perspectives and cultures** (33%).
- One in four Australians attend the arts **to improve their wellbeing** (25%).
- 15% of Australians attend the arts **to express themselves**.
- 13% of Australians attend the arts **to develop skills for education, training or work**.

Figure 13: Reasons why Australians attend arts events and festivals 2019



Base: General population 15+ (n=8,928)

What motivates different groups to attend the arts?

- **Women** are much more likely to attend arts events **to have fun and be entertained** (69%, compared to 57% of men) and **to socialise and connect with others** (45%, compared to 37% of men).
- Attendance at arts events as a form of **self-expression** decreases with age, from almost a quarter of **those aged 15–34 years** (24%), to 15% of those aged 35–49 years and just 6% of those aged 50 plus.
- **Parents of children aged under 16** are more likely to go to arts events for all the reasons provided, especially **to develop skills for education, training or work** (19%, compared to 10% of those without children aged under 16 years) and **to express themselves** (20%, compared to 13%).
- **Respondents in remote areas** are more likely than those living in metropolitan or regional locations to attend the arts **to improve their wellbeing** (35%, compared to 25% in metropolitan areas and 24% in regional areas).
- **First Nations respondents** are more likely to go to attend arts events for all given reasons, apart from to have fun or be entertained (53%, compared to 64% of non-First Nations respondents). In particular, they are more than twice as likely to go to arts events **to express themselves** (29%, compared to 13%), and **to develop skills for education, training or work** (26%, compared to 11%).
- **CALD respondents** are more likely to go to arts events for all given reasons, apart from to have fun or be entertained (59%, compared to 64% of non-CALD respondents). In particular, they are more likely to attend **to understand other perspectives and cultures** (45%, compared to 30%), and are twice as likely to go **to express themselves** (23%, compared to 12%), and **to develop skills for education, training or work** (21%, compared to 10%).
- **Respondents with disability** are also less likely to attend arts events to have fun and be entertained (55%, compared to 65% of those without disability). They are more likely to attend to improve their wellbeing (30%, compared to 24%) and **to express themselves** (19%, compared to 14%).

Four in ten Australians would like to attend more arts events

In 2019, 8.6 million Australians said they would like to attend more arts events or festivals, or 42% of the population aged 15 years and over. A similar proportion (41%) are happy with their current level of attendance, with the remaining 17% not interested in attending.

Who would like to attend more?

- Nearly half of **women** would like to attend more arts events (48%) compared to just over a third of men (35%).
- Almost three in five **respondents in remote locations** would like to attend more arts events (57%) compared to 44% of those living in regional Australia and 41% in city areas.

Cost and location are the main barriers to arts attendance

The benefits a creative life can bring should be accessible to all Australians, regardless of who they are, where they live or how much they earn. There are a variety of reasons that Australians were not attending the arts, or not attending them as much as they would like to, in 2019. The two main barriers were the **cost of tickets/entry** and the **availability of events near where they live**. (See page 98 for discussion of Australians' willingness to attend the arts in light of COVID-19).

Ensuring free or low-cost events are available is a priority among Australians – more than two in three ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment in arts and creativity. **Ensuring availability of arts and creative experiences for children and young people** was the only priority ranked higher (in the top three for 74% of Australians) (see page 53).

“If they gave us more, maybe there would be a chance for people to like it more. We have three hours of nightlife on a Friday night and that's it.”

Focus group participant

What were the barriers to Australians attending the arts as much as they would like to in 2019?

- The **cost of tickets/entry** to arts events prevented one in three Australians from attending as many events as they would like to (34%).
- One in four Australians said there were **no arts events near where they live** (25%).
- One in five Australians found **difficulty getting to arts events a barrier** (19%).
- 17% of Australians found a **lack of awareness and information** a barrier.
- 16% of Australians said **it was hard to find the time**.
- 14% of Australians were prevented from attending because **friends and/or family were not interested in going with them**.
- 9% of Australians were unable to attend as much as they would like due to **health concerns (either physical or mental)**.
- 6% of Australians had **safety concerns**.

Who experiences which barriers?

- **Women** face a variety of barriers to attending the arts as much as they would like. They were more likely than men to cite eight of the ten reasons provided, with **cost of tickets or entry** being a major barrier for four in ten (39%, compared to 28% of men). Conversely, men are more likely to not attend due to a lack of personal interest (19%, compared to 13% of women).
- **Those aged under 55** are twice as likely to **find it hard to find the time** to attend as many arts events as they would like to, compared to those aged 55 plus (19% compared to 9%).
- For **those aged 55 and over**, the main barriers are **cost of tickets or entry** (38%, compared to 31% of those under 55), **events being too far away** (29%, compared to 23%), **health concerns** (13%, compared to 7%) and **difficulty getting to events** (22%, compared to 17%).
- For over one in five **parents of children aged under 16 years**, **finding the time** is a key barrier (22%, compared to 14% of those without children of this age).
- Those in **remote areas**, and to some extent those in **regional areas**, are impacted by their location, with the main barrier to attendance being that **events and festivals are too far from where they live** (remote: 52%, regional: 37%, metropolitan: 21%). Those in remote areas are also twice as likely to experience **difficulty getting to events** (41%, compared to 18% in other locations). However these barriers do not substantially affect overall arts attendance:

68% of respondents in remote areas were attending the arts prior to COVID-19, compared to 64% of those in regional areas and 70% of those in metropolitan areas.

- **First Nations respondents** are **less impacted by almost all the barriers to attendance**. In particular, while just over a third of non-First Nations respondents mention cost of tickets or entry (35%), this drops to one in five First Nations respondents (21%). This may be because there are more opportunities for First Nations people to experience First Nations arts that are non-ticketed, including free festivals as well as cultural events.
- **Non-First Nations respondents** were twice as **likely to find lack of interest among family or friends** to be a barrier compared to First Nations respondents (15% compared to 7%).
- **CALD respondents** are **less likely to be impacted by most of the barriers presented**, particularly cost (27%, compared to 36% of non-CALD respondents), events being too far away (21%, compared to 27%) and a lack of personal interest (12%, compared to 17%). Again, this may be because respondents from CALD communities participate in different ways to non-CALD people, as part of engagement with their own culture. CALD respondents are however more likely to mention **safety concerns** (8%, compared to 5% of respondents with non-CALD backgrounds).
- **Respondents with disability** are almost twice as likely to find **safety concerns** a barrier compared to respondents without disability (9% compared to 5%). For respondents with disability, **health concerns** (29%) and **difficulty getting to events** (25%) are also barriers impacting attendance (compared to 4% and 17% respectively for respondents without disability).
- **Australians with a household income of under \$40,000** are more likely to experience a number of barriers to attending arts events compared to Australians overall including **cost of tickets or entry** (39% compared to 34%), **health concerns** (17% compared to 9%), **difficulty getting there** (25% compared to 9%) and **events being too far away** (30% compared to 25%).

What do we know about audiences returning to arts events in light of COVID-19?

The Audience Outlook Monitor tracking study explores changes in behaviours and sentiments of arts-goers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The second phase of the study conducted in July 2020 found that the majority of audiences plan to return to arts and culture events (78%) with 72% planning to attend as much as they did previously and 6% more often.

However, in July, although audiences were increasingly comfortable to attend performance venues, comfort levels were dependent on the size of the venue. Smaller venues are the most likely to attract audiences with four in five people saying they would be at least somewhat comfortable attending a 50-seat venue (81%) and two thirds comfortable attending a 100-seat venue (68%). Just over one in ten audience members would be 'very comfortable' attending a venue seating 1,000 people (13%).

Audiences are more comfortable visiting exhibitions with most audiences 'somewhat comfortable' walking around a museum or gallery (93%) or visiting a community arts space (87%).

The final phase of the Audience Outlook Monitor study will be conducted in September 2020.

Source: Patternmakers 2020, *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor: Australia Snapshot Report July 2020*.



The Farm *Throttle*

Throttle, by Brisbane collective the Farm, brings together fans of dance-theatre, B-grade thrillers and drive-in movies. Staged at Mudgeeraba Showground '*Throttle* has elements of stunt, the thrill of surprise, the eeriness of a stage lit by car headlights and incredible sound design that comes through your car stereo so you never quite know where the action's coming from or what's coming next.'[†] Part of Bleach* Festival 2019, this work has been described as a game changer for Australian theatre.

Throttle by the Farm.
Credit: Artwork Agency 2018.

[†] Bleach* Artistic Director and CEO Louise Bezzina



Creating Our Future: equal access to arts and creativity for all Australians

All Australians, regardless of social, physical, geographic or personal circumstances, should feel invited to connect and immerse themselves in exceptional arts experiences. The National Arts Participation Survey highlights work still to be done in Australia to ensure that all Australians can participate fully and equitably in Australia's cultural and creative life through the arts. Cultural inclusion is vital to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of Australian communities and for generations to come. Inequality will be a focus of further research for the Australia Council.

The arts are not a luxury, they are a public good

Everyone benefits from investment in the arts. Arts and creativity have a role in addressing complex social issues and promoting inclusion across a range of areas of civic life, from education and child development to neighbourhood revitalisation, health, wellbeing, and economic development. It is essential that these benefits are distributed where they are most needed.

Nearly every Australian – 98% of us – engages with the arts in some way, whether it be through listening to music, reading, engaging online, attending arts events or engaging with the arts of our cultural background. The arts are not a luxury; they are embedded in the very fabric of our lives. However, the National Arts Participation Survey results also highlight that socio-economic inequalities remain in Australians' engagement with the arts.

Arts engagement decreases with lower household income and education

Despite Australia enjoying consistent economic growth over the last three decades prior to COVID-19, poverty rates have remained high. More than three million Australians live below the poverty line and there is a stark division in our community between those getting ahead and those being left behind.⁷⁴ There are also disparities in our arts engagement.

Four in five Australians in the highest household income bracket (more than \$200,000) attend the arts (79%). Attendance decreases with lower income to three in five of those on a household income of under \$40,000 (57%). Both attendance and creative participation in the arts decreases with household income across each art form, with the only exception being attendance at arts festivals, reflecting the free festival offerings in Australia. Respondents in the lowest household income bracket are also the least likely to agree that *the arts allow me to connect with others* and *there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts*.

As well as household income, arts attendance is related to employment status and education. Three quarters of employed Australians attend the arts (76%), compared to 53% of those receiving a carer or parenting payment, 51% of those who are unemployed for medical reasons, and 40% of those on disability benefit. Most current students attend the arts (81%) and over three quarters of those with a university degree or post-graduate qualification (78%), compared to less than two thirds of those with a lower level of education (63%).

Overall, more Australians agreed in 2019 that *there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts* (47%, up ten percentage points from 37% in 2016). However, there has also been a slight increase in the proportion of Australians who are feeling disconnected with the arts, with almost three in ten agreeing that *the arts are not really for people like me* (29%, up from 26% in 2016), which is a continuing trend. Interestingly, some of those who hold the most positive attitudes towards the arts and public funding, such as First Nations respondents and those living with disability, are also feeling the most disconnected – a finding which warrants further investigation.

While respondents with disability are *more* likely to creatively participate in the arts compared to respondents without disability (57%, compared to 42%), they were *less* likely to attend arts events and festivals in 2019 (64%, compared to 69%). An exception to this is respondents with intellectual disability, who were a targeted group in the expanded 2019 National Arts Participation Survey: targeted respondents with disability have both higher arts participation and attendance rates than the Australian population overall. The arts have the potential to generate a sense of belonging for people with an intellectual disability, enabling them to build self-confidence and strengthen social networks (see page 200).

74 ACOSS and UNSW 2020, *Poverty in Australia 2020. Part One: Overview*. ACOSS/UNSW Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No. 3, Sydney: ACOSS.

Cost and location are the main barriers to arts attendance

Prior to COVID-19, four in ten Australians said they would like to attend more arts events than they were currently (42%). The **cost of tickets or entry** was preventing one in three Australians from attending more (34%), one in four said there were **no arts events near where they live** (25%) and one in five found **difficulty getting to arts events** a barrier (19%).

Australians with a household income of under \$40,000 are more likely to experience a number of barriers to attending arts events compared to Australians overall, including **cost of tickets or entry** (39%, compared to 34%), physical or mental health concerns (17%, compared to 9%), **difficulty getting to arts events** (25%, compared to 9%) and **no arts events near where they live** (30%, compared to 25%).

While location of events and difficulty getting to them are more significant barriers for those living in remote locations, and to some extent those in regional areas, this does not impact overall attendance at arts events and festivals as much as may be expected: 68% of respondents in remote areas were attending the arts prior to COVID-19, compared to 64% of those in regional areas and 70% of those in metropolitan areas. Those living in remote areas are the most likely to say they would like to attend more.

While digital technology has made the arts more accessible, access to free or low-cost arts experiences remains a priority

With new ways of making, sharing and experiencing arts and creativity emerging all the time, technological and social change has meant creative expression is more plentiful and accessible than ever before. When it comes to Australians' online engagement with arts and creativity, household income does not appear to play a significant role in levels of engagement.

Many Australian artists and arts organisations have pivoted to digital content during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research on engagement with the arts during COVID-19 has found that digital offerings are enabling some Australians to experience arts they would not normally have the opportunity to see or afford. Digital arts offerings are particularly valued by those who face barriers to arts engagement, including due to disability, caring responsibilities and/or living remotely. While internet accessibility and connectivity has been a barrier to engagement for some, the majority of arts audiences want digital to remain an option as venues re-open, particularly vulnerable groups and those with access limitations.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Patternmakers 2020, 'Fact Sheet: Online engagement,' *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor*.

The National Arts Participation Survey results show that prior to COVID-19, both digital and live engagement with the arts were increasing. Rather than replacing the live experience, digital platforms provide complementary experiences and ways of engaging that can translate to growth in live audiences as well as greater access for all Australians. They can diversify access by providing new points of entry, new ways of discovering artists and works and by promoting greater awareness of Australian arts, culture and creativity. When venues re-open there is an opportunity to harness the increased online engagement occurring during the pandemic in ensuring more Australians can experience the transformative power of the arts.

In 2019, live attendance at the arts was a part of life for 68% of Australians. The same proportion of Australians ranked **ensuring free or low-cost events are available** in their top three priorities for public or private investment in arts and creativity (68%). Agreement was particularly high among those aged 45 plus or with a low household income. Ensuring **availability of arts and creative experiences for children and young people** was the only priority Australians ranked higher.

Arts experiences can provide a great leveller through their ability to touch and connect people equally and simultaneously. Ensuring all individuals and communities can participate fully and equitably in Australia's cultural and creative life through the arts – both online and in person – will improve the long-term health and vitality of our nation.

Access to the arts —
that should be a right
for everyone, not just a
privilege. If you have four
kids, you shouldn't be
taking them to the park
because the museum is
too expensive.

Focus group participant

VIDEOS

Lauren Carroll Harris *Prototype*

Prototype takes video art outside of traditional spaces like galleries and film festivals and puts it where most of us view content: on our phones. Launched in July 2019 by Lauren Carroll Harris, the curated platform delivered a new video work directly to the email inboxes of over 2,600 subscribers every Tuesday in time for the morning commute. Subscribers are mostly aged 18-30, 55% male and while mainly based in Sydney or Melbourne, include strong numbers in NSW regional centres. *Prototype* has also attracted international audiences in the US and Europe. For the second iteration of *Prototype* Carroll Harris aims to support regionally-based artists and Australian artists working overseas. Meanwhile, in response to COVID-19, *Prototype Care Package* is a rapid-response weekly series for lockdown delivering new, remixed, re-edited and under-seen works.

Still taken from the *Prototype* website.
Hannah Bronte, *The Sweet Suits* 2019.

CARE PACKAGES



24.09.19

THE SWEET SUITS



SWEET

JITS

WAVEFORM

four

Australians' creative participation

Creative participation

- Australia is an increasingly creative nation. More than two in five Australians create, produce or collaborate in the making of art.
- The proportion of Australians who creatively participate in the arts has increased by 13 percentage points since 2016, including increased participation in visual arts and craft, music, dance, theatre and creative writing.
- In 2019, one in three Australians were creative using a digital platform – from creating TikTok videos or memes to creating music, digital visual art or poetry.

Australia is an increasingly creative nation

Creativity is for everyone. It has the power to heal individuals and strengthen communities through the expression of shared stories, histories and identities. Our engagement with arts and creativity is a fundamental attribute of who we are.

Creative arts participation can take many forms – from artistic photography to playing an instrument; and from singing in a community choir or taking a community arts class, to more professional forms of arts creation.

In 2019, 9.3 million Australians created, produced or collaborated in the making of art, or 45% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 32% in 2016.⁷⁶

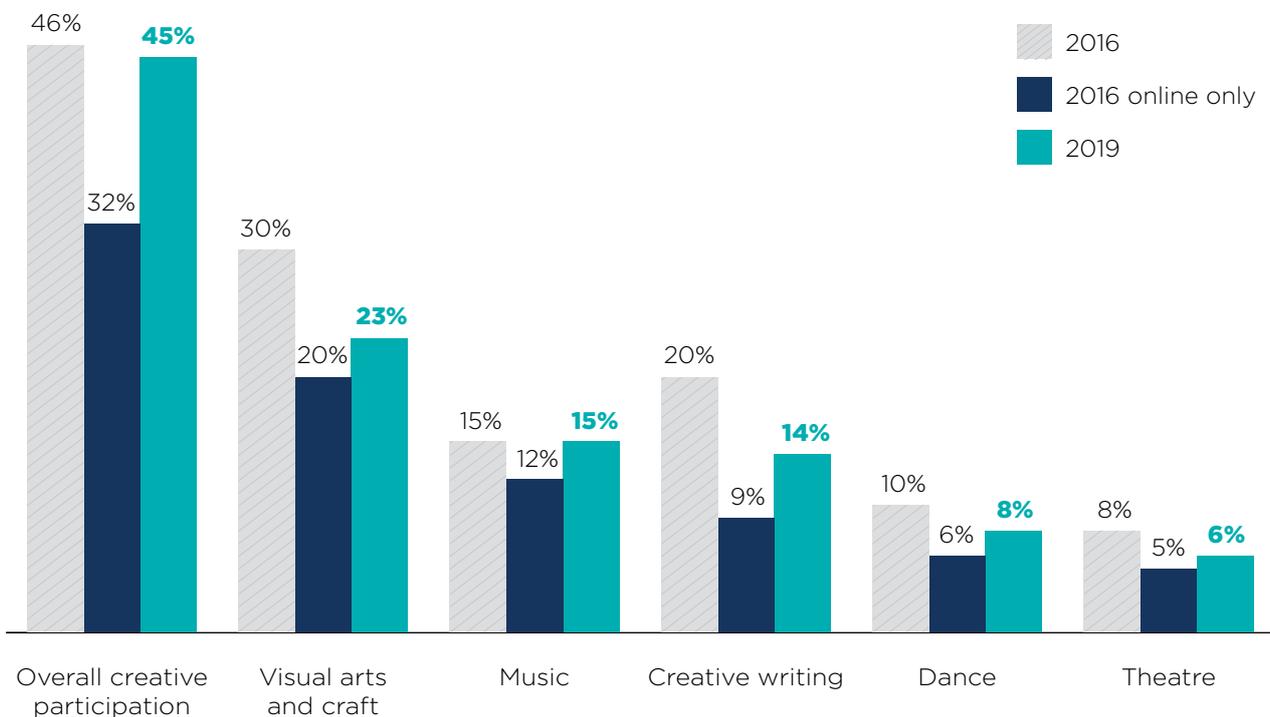
This includes individual and collective activities, creating things for oneself or to share with others, and community collaboration. It includes all expressions of creativity – participation in organised lessons or classes, hobbyists creating things for fun, and professional artists creating things to sell.

In addition, 6.5 million Australians were creative using a digital platform in 2019, from creating TikTok videos, memes or emotes to creating music, digital visual art, blogs or poetry (see page 167).

⁷⁶ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

- 
One in three Australians create using a digital platform
 (32%, new for 2019) (see page 160).
- 
 One in four Australians create **visual arts and craft**
 (23%, up from 20% in 2016).
- 
 More than one in seven Australians **create music**
 (15%, up from 12% in 2016).
- 
 One in seven Australians **produce creative writing**
 (14%, up from 9% in 2016).
- 
 One in six Australians **participate in community arts** (16%),
 including community choirs and theatre.⁷⁷
- 
 8% of Australians **creatively participate in dance**
 (up from 6% in 2016).
- 
 6% of Australians **creatively participate in theatre**
 (up from 5% 2016).

Figure 14: Australians' creative arts participation 2016 and 2019



Base: General population 15+ (n=8,928)

⁷⁷ Reworded in 2019: *Of all the activities you have been involved in over the last 12 months, have any been a community arts activity (e.g. community choir, community theatre)?*

What do we know from the ABS Cultural Participation survey?

In 2017-18, almost a third of Australians participated in cultural activities (31%), including playing music, singing, dancing, writing, sculpting, painting or photography.

- **Women** had a higher cultural participation rate than men (37% compared with 25%).
- **Younger Australians aged 15-24 years** had the highest participation rate (39%).
- 14% of Australians **created visual art** such as painting, drawing, photography.
- 13% of Australians **participated in craft** activities such as knitting, pottery, wood craft.
- 6% of Australians **wrote fiction or non-fiction**.
- 5% of Australians **sang or played a musical instrument**.

In addition, 96% of children aged 5 to 14 years participated in at least one cultural activity outside of school hours.

The ABS Cultural Participation survey is collected as part of the Multipurpose Household Survey and includes broader cultural categories than the National Arts Participation Survey including web design, computer games, fashion and interior design. Due to the differences in survey methodology and scope these results should not be compared directly but rather used as further evidence to build a more comprehensive picture of Australians' creative activities.

Source: ABS, *Participation in Selected Cultural Activities*, Australia, 2017-18. (cat. No. 4921.0).



Who are the creative participants?

- Two thirds of **15–24 year olds** creatively participate (66%). Creative participation decreases steadily with age to over half of those aged 25–34 years (57%), less than half of those aged 35–54 years (41%), and a third of those aged 55 plus (31%).
- Creative participation is higher among **parents of children aged under 16**, compared to those without children of this age (51% compared to 43%).
- Creative participation in the arts is very high among **First Nations respondents** at 78% (compared to 42% of non-First Nations respondents).
- Two thirds of **CALD respondents** creatively participate in the arts compared to just over four in ten non-CALD respondents (66% compared to 38%).
- While **respondents with disability** are less likely to attend the arts, they are more likely to creatively participate in the arts compared to respondents without disability (57% compared to 42%).
- Creative participation is higher among **those in the highest income bracket of more than \$200,000** (47%) compared to those on a household income of under \$40,000 (42%).
- There are also large differences in creative participation by work status with half of **employed respondents** creating art (49%), compared to 34% of homemakers and 34% of respondents on disability benefit.
- Two thirds of **respondents currently studying** creatively participate in the arts (64%), which is much higher than the proportion of Australians overall (45%).
- Those with higher levels of education are also more likely to creatively participate in the arts, with more than half of **respondents with a university degree or post-graduate qualification** creatively participating (53%) compared to 41% of respondents with a lower level of education.
- Almost half of **Australians living in remote areas** creatively participate in the arts (48%) – a similar rate to **those living in metropolitan areas** (45%) or **regional areas** (45%).

From hobbyists making things for fun, to professionals creating art to sell, and from creating craft, to music, to creative writing; creativity in all its forms is increasing. Creativity is for everyone, and it has the power to heal individuals and strengthen communities through the expression of shared stories, histories and identities.

Circa, *Leviathan* 2020. Credit: Johannes Reinhart.
Find out more about Circa on page 39.

First on the Ladder

First On The Ladder was a three-year art-meets-sport collaboration between Polyglot Theatre and Beyond Empathy, in collaboration with Rumbalara Football and Netball Club in Shepparton, Victoria and the Moree Boomerangs in New South Wales. The project involved young people from these two Indigenous sports clubs celebrating their culture and achievements through a range of creative experiences including zine-making, street art, radio broadcasting and play workshops. In 2019, around 580 children and young people were involved, bringing the respect, pride and harmony that was thriving within the sports clubs into the broader community through the arts.



Children presenting Rumba Radio, *First On The Ladder*. Credit: Simone Ruggiero, Polyglot Theatre, 2019.



Spotlight on creative participation by art form

- An increasing number of Australians create visual arts and craft, including more than one in ten who participate in painting, drawing, printmaking or street art.
- More than three million Australians create music and one in ten Australians play a musical instrument.
- An increasing number of Australians participate in creative writing and theatre.
- Almost one in ten Australians participate in dance, including connecting with others through social dance.
- One in six Australians participate in community arts including community choirs or theatre.



An increasing number of Australians create visual arts and craft

In 2019, 4.7 million Australians created visual arts and craft, or 23% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 20% in 2016.

What types of visual arts and craft are Australians creating?

- More than one in ten Australians creatively participate in **painting, drawing, printmaking or street art** (11%).
- One in ten Australians creatively participate in **photography** (10%).
- One in ten Australians create **craft like ceramics, glass art, jewellery, textiles or woodcraft** (10%).
- One in twenty Australians create **digital or video art** (5%).
- 3% of Australians create **sculpture, installations or light projections**.

“*Even if it was macramé I'd go. It's learning something, it's challenging. It's good to see how you can turn a piece of string into something.*”

Focus group participant

Who's creating visual arts and craft?

- Nearly one in three **women** create visual arts and craft (28%).
- Creative participation in visual arts and craft peaks **between the ages of 15-24 years** (33%).
- A third of **First Nations respondents** create visual arts and craft (35%).
- One in three **CALD respondents** create visual arts and craft (31%).
- Almost one in three **respondents with disability** create visual arts and craft (30%).
- A quarter of **parents of children under 16 years** create visual arts and craft (26%).
- A quarter of **respondents living in regional areas** create visual arts and craft (26%).

More than three million Australians create music

In 2019, 3.1 million Australians created music, or 15% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 12% in 2016.

How are Australians creating music?

- One in ten Australians **play a musical instrument** (10%).
- 6% of Australians **sing**.
- 6% of Australians **write songs, mix or compose music**.

Who's making music?

- One in five **men** create music (18%).
- Creative participation in music peaks **between the ages of 15–24 years** (28%).
- One in three **First Nations respondents** create music (30%).
- A quarter of **CALD respondents** create music (26%).
- More than one in five **respondents with disability** create music (22%).
- One in five **parents of children aged under 16 years** create music (20%).
- Creative participation in music is strong among **those in the highest household income bracket of more than \$200,000** (22%) and decreases steadily with income to 16% of those with household income of \$100,000–\$139,999 and to 13% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

An increasing number of Australians are creative writers

In 2019, 2.8 million Australians produced creative writing, or 14% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 9% in 2016.

What types of creative writing are Australians producing?

- 6% of Australians write **novels or short stories**.
- 5% of Australians write **poetry**.
- 4% of Australians write **creative non-fiction such as biography or history**.
- 3% of Australians write **instructional non-fiction**.
- 2% of Australians write **plays**.
- 2% of Australians write **comics of graphic novels**.

Who's producing creative writing?

- Creative writing peaks **between the ages of 15–24 years** (24%).
- A quarter of **First Nations respondents** produce creative writing (24%).
- Nearly a quarter of **CALD respondents** produce creative writing (23%).
- One in five **respondents with disability** produce creative writing (20%).
- One in six **parents of children aged under 16 years** produce creative writing (16%).
- Creative writing is strong among **those in the highest household income bracket of more than \$200,000** (17%) and decreases steadily with income to 15% of those with household income of \$100,000–\$139,999 and to 12% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

Almost one in ten Australians participate in dance

In 2019, 1.6 million Australians created or participated in dance, or 8% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 6% in 2016.

What types of dance do Australians participate in?

- 3% of Australians participate in **contemporary dance**.
- 3% of Australians participate in **street dance or hip hop**.
- 3% of Australians participate in **social or competitive dance**.
- 2% of Australians participate in **ballet**.
- 2% of Australians participate in **classical, traditional or folk dance**.

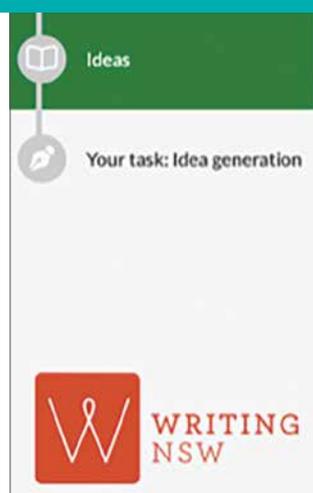
Who's creatively participating in dance?

- Creative participation in dance peaks **between the ages of 15–34 years** (14%).
- Nearly a quarter of **First Nations respondents** participate in dance (23%).
- One in six **CALD respondents** participate in dance (17%).
- More than one in ten **respondents with disability** participate in dance (13%).
- More than one in ten **parents of children aged under 16 years** participate in dance (12%).
- Creative participation in dance is strong among **those in the highest household income bracket of more than \$200,000** (13%) and decreases steadily with income to 10% of those with household income of \$100,000–\$139,999 and to 5% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

Benjamin Law, Writing NSW

Writing NSW runs a rich and varied program of events for writers, including courses, festivals, industry networking events, publishing consultations and more. In the wake of COVID-19, Writing NSW rapidly expanded its digital content with a range of online professional development programs, to offer more than 50 seminars, interactive workshops, feedback programs and on-demand courses online with established authors. In June 2020, best-selling writer and broadcaster, Benjamin Law (pictured), taught a class on Writing Narrative Journalism which immediately sold out. His course provided emerging and developing writers with a suite of story ideas to work on, as well as new skills to transform those ideas into stories.

Benjamin Law teaching Narrative Journalism online for Writing NSW. Credit: Writing NSW.



An increasing number of Australians participate in theatre

In 2019, 1.2 million Australians creatively participated in theatre, or six percent of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 5% in 2016.

What types of theatre do Australians create?

- 3% of Australians creatively participate in **musical theatre or cabaret**.
- 3% of Australians creatively participate in **traditional or contemporary theatre**.
- 2% of Australians creatively participate in **children's theatre**.
- 2% of Australians creatively participate in **circus**.

Who's creatively participating in theatre?

- **Men** are slightly more likely than women to creatively participate in theatre (7% compared to 5%).
- Creative participation in theatre peaks **between the ages of 15–34 years** (11%).
- One in five **First Nations respondents** creatively participate in theatre (18%).
- More than one in ten **CALD respondents** creatively participate in theatre (13%).
- More than one in ten **respondents with disability** creatively participate in theatre (12%).
- One in ten **parents of children aged under 16 years** creatively participate in theatre (10%).
- Creative participation in theatre is strong among **those in the highest household income bracket of more than \$200,000** (12%) and decreases steadily with income to 8% of those with household income of \$100,000–\$139,999 and to 3% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on Australians' creative activities?

To better understand creative and cultural engagement in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Australia Council commissioned Lonergan Research to explore this topic as part of their online Omnibus Survey. The survey, conducted between 17 and 20 April 2020, found:

- Since the lockdown began, more than four in ten Australians had creatively participated in the arts (43%) – visual arts and craft had been created most (25%) followed by music (16%) and creative writing (14%).
- More than a quarter of Australians said their creativity had increased since the lockdown – 27% felt more creative than before the lockdown began.

The *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor* found that almost half of audience members (46%) were being creative at home more frequently than before the pandemic and most were planning to continue with these creative activities after the pandemic (89%).

Sources: Australia Council 2020, *Arts engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic*.
Patternmakers 2020, *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor: Australia Snapshot Report May 2020*.

One in six Australians participate in community arts

In 2019, 3.3 million Australians participated in a community arts activity, or 16% of the population aged 15 years and over.⁷⁸ This includes community theatre and community choirs, which have demonstrated benefits on wellbeing and community cohesion.⁷⁹ It may also include community arts and cultural development (CACD), which is a specific type of socially engaged arts practice where as a group, community members and professional artists collaborate to create art that is reflective of that place and community.

Who's participating in community arts?

- **Men** are more likely to participate in community arts than women (18% compared to 14%).
- Almost a quarter of **Australians aged 15 to 34 years** (24%) participate in community arts. Participation decreases sharply with age to just under one in five of those aged 35–44 years (18%) and one in ten of those aged 45 years or more (10%).
- **Parents of children aged under 16 years** are more likely to participate in community arts, than those without children of this age (22% compared to 14%).
- **First Nations respondents** are 3.5 times more likely to participate in community arts than non-First Nations respondents (46% compared to 13%).
- **CALD respondents** are three times more likely to participate in community arts than non-CALD respondents (34% compared to 11%).
- **Respondents with disability** are more than twice as likely than respondents without disability to participate in community arts (29% compared to 14%).

Community arts bring people together, collaborating to make positive change through a stronger sense of place, identity and community. Connected communities are safer and stronger, more vibrant and alive.

78 The question exploring community arts engagement was re-worded in 2019 with survey participants asked: *Of all the activities you have been involved in over the last 12 months, have any been a community arts activity (e.g. community choir, community theatre)?*

79 For example, see Branigan E and Barker C 2018, *The Power of Song: an evaluation of the With One Voice Program*, Swinburne University of Technology; Moss H et al. 2018, Exploring the perceived health benefits of singing in a choir: an international cross-sectional mixed-methods study. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 138, 3; Clift, S et al. 2008, Choral Singing, Well-being and Health, Sidney De Haan Reports. Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health, Canterbury; and Clift S et al. 2010, Group singing, wellbeing and health: a systematic mapping of research evidence. UNESCO Observatory, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, *the Melbourne Refereed E-Journal*, 2.





PUBsing

Community choirs have demonstrated benefits on wellbeing and community cohesion. PUBsing is a community choir experience run each month in Adelaide prior to COVID-19. Having observed over many years the positive changes that happen to people when they sing, co-founders Lisa Lanzi and Angela Sharp were driven to create a safe space for people to come together and sing, regardless of expertise. The motto of PUBsing is “If you can talk, you can sing.” Lisa and Angela have a long history of supporting wellbeing with music. Through their BodySONG partnership, they have run community choirs with women in prisons, women affected by homelessness, those with mental health issues, older people, and those affected by dementia or with a disability.

PUBsing with co-founder Angela Sharp at The Jade, Adelaide. Credit: Tony Barker.

Creating Our Future: health and wellbeing

Wellbeing is a policy consideration growing in currency internationally, and Australians increasingly recognise the positive impact of arts and creativity on our wellbeing. The arts can save expenditure and provide returns on investment across health services and social care, helping meet major challenges such as ageing, loneliness, chronic conditions and mental health.

Arts and creativity can meet pressing challenges to our nation's health and wellbeing

The arts make our individual lives better and build stronger and more cohesive communities. The arts have been shown to improve quality of life in myriad ways, including: increasing mental wellbeing;⁸⁰ addressing loneliness, mental health and ageing;⁸¹ decreasing anxiety and depression; increasing wellbeing and social inclusion;⁸² positive wellbeing impacts for young people;⁸³ and treating PTSD and helping communities recover from trauma.⁸⁴

The creative arts and health sectors have significant and growing connections, covering primary care, acute and chronic hospital care, rehabilitation, respite care and general wellbeing. Techniques are used across art forms, including visual arts, music, dance and drama.⁸⁵

The arts can save future expenditure across health services and social care. In the UK doctors are literally prescribing arts experiences, providing up to £11 return on investment for every £1 invested, as well as employment and income for artists.⁸⁶

80 Davies et al. 2015, 'The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population.' *BMC Public Health* (16)15.

81 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts 2017, *Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*.

82 First reported in: Slawson N 2017, 'It's time to recognise the contribution arts can make to health and wellbeing,' *The Guardian*, 11 October 2017.

83 Patternmakers 2017, *ATYP Impact Evaluation*.

84 Baker et al. 2017, 'A systematic review of the efficacy of creative arts therapies in the treatment of adults with PTSD,' *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 10(6), 643–651, 2018.

85 For example, see Putland C 2012, *Arts and Health - A guide to the evidence, Background document prepared for the Institute for Creative Health Australia*; Fenner P, Rumbold B, Rumbold J, Robinson P, Harpur S 2012, *Is there compelling evidence for using the arts in healthcare? Health policy evidence brief*, Deeble Institute, Australian Healthcare and Hospitals' Association; and the National Arts and Health Framework 2014, Commonwealth Government, available at www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au

86 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts 2017, *Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*.

Australians increasingly recognise the impact of arts and creativity on our wellbeing

Results of the National Arts Participation Survey show that the proportion of Australians who agree that arts and creativity have a 'big' or 'very big' impact on **our sense of wellbeing and happiness** has increased 11 percentage points since 2016 (up to 56%),⁸⁷ as has the proportion of Australians who agree **the arts help us deal with stress, anxiety or depression** (up to 56%).

“I suffer from mental illness, when I’m making I’m outside of my own thoughts, I have something to look forward to. I’m being creative, I’m relaxed, so therapeutic.”

Focus group participant

Connection and wellbeing are two of the main drivers of arts attendance. More than four in ten Australians attend **to socialise and connect with others** (41%); and one in four attend **to improve their wellbeing** (25%). Compared to Australians overall, respondents with disability and respondents in remote areas are more likely to attend the arts specifically to improve their wellbeing.

Connection and wellbeing are also key benefits reported by Australians who attend arts events focused on their cultural background or community. More than half benefit from **spending time with family and/or friends** (51%, including 47% of CALD respondents) and four in ten benefit from **getting to know people in the community** (39%, including 41% of CALD respondents). One in three Australians who attend arts events to engage with their cultural background or community report **improved health and wellbeing** as a benefit (33%), particularly younger generations in CALD communities.

When it comes to public and private investment in the arts, more than half of Australians think funding should ensure that **arts and creative experiences are available to support people's health and wellbeing** (55% ranked this in their top three investment priorities).

⁸⁷ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous *National Arts Participation Survey* report, *Connecting Australians*.

As well as enhancing social connections, arts activities such as music and dance have a demonstrable impact on quality of life as people age by enhancing memory, movement and mood, and by alleviating diseases and conditions of ageing such as Alzheimer's and dementia.⁸⁸ Many Australian museums and galleries run arts and craft programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of ageing Australians.⁸⁹ With an ageing population, arts can play an increasingly valuable role in supporting our national wellbeing.

In the months that followed the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey, Australia faced a devastating summer of bushfires and the momentous disruption, isolation and anxiety wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Arts and creativity have played an invaluable role in supporting the wellbeing of Australians during this unprecedented time, including relief concerts that united Australians while raising both spirits and funds.

While necessary distancing measures kept us away from theatres, galleries and venues, many Australians increased their online arts engagement.⁹⁰ Supporting wellbeing has been a key motivator for audiences participating in the arts online during COVID-19. Audiences who have engaged in online activities also report achieving a sense of connection during the pandemic – online arts have enabled Australians to transcend isolation.⁹¹

Further, three of the five most popular activities Australians did to stay connected and support their wellbeing during the April 2020 lockdown relied on the cultural and creative industries and the skills of artists: 'watching films/television programs or listening to the radio/podcasts' (72%), 'listening to music' (55%) and 'reading for pleasure or relaxation' (54%).⁹²

We have also witnessed impromptu choirs on balconies and seen the growth of online dance parties, gallery tours, creative classes and performances. And as we look to the future, in all its uncertainty, the ability of creativity to uplift and connect us seems now more important than ever.

Focus groups particularly highlighted the value of the arts in lives of older Australians, to connect them to their communities and support their wellbeing.

88 Rhea et al. 2016, The impact of community-based arts and health interventions on cognition in people with dementia: a systematic literature review, *Ageing & Mental Health*, 20:4, 337-351. Ting Choo et al. 2009, 'The effect of intuitive movement reembodyment on the Quality of Life of older adults with dementia: A pilot study,' *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*. Staricoff L 2006, *Arts in health: a review of the medical literature*, Arts Council England.

89 For example, the Museum of Contemporary Art's *Artful: Art and Dementia program*, which has been found to enhance wellbeing for sufferers of dementia. See: MCA 2020, *Artful: Art and Dementia Report*.

90 Australia Council 2020, *Arts Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, based on Lonergan Research's Omnibus Survey, April 2020. Patternmakers 2020, *Audience Outlook Monitor: Australia Snapshot Report*, May 2020.

91 Patternmakers 2020, 'Fact Sheet: Online engagement,' *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor*.

92 Australia Council 2020, *Arts Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, based on Lonergan Research's Omnibus Survey, April 2020. The other two most popular activities were 'keeping in touch with family and friends via phone or videoconferencing' and 'exercise/backyard activities'.

People that are older... they become isolated from the rest of the community... There's not a lot to do, you fade away and in the end you have to create your own little environment...

Focus group participant

Older Australians miss out a lot and mental health is becoming a big thing. If we had events for my age group, it's really great to be inclusive, to learn about other cultures.

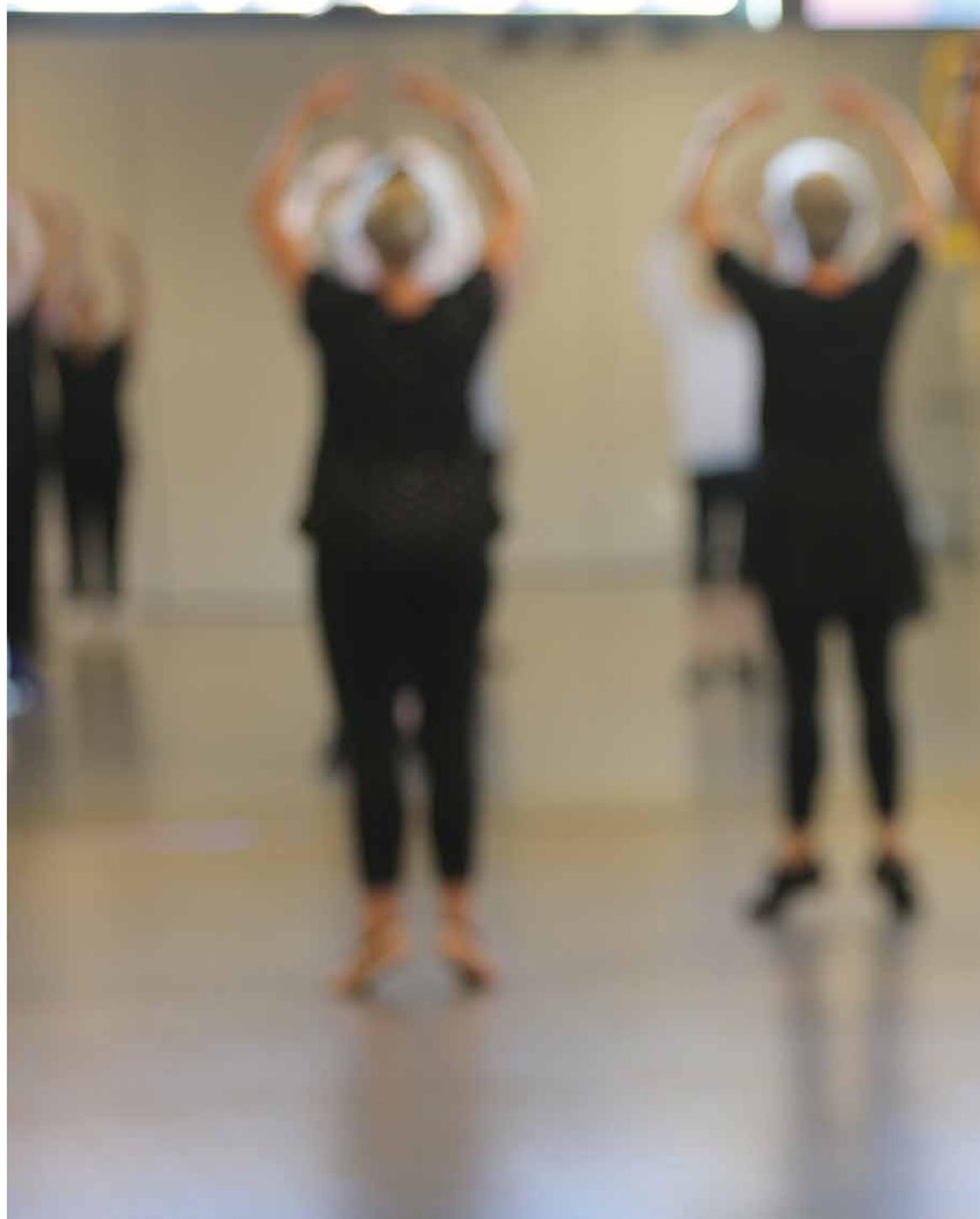
Focus group participant

[Arts activities] connect people from different backgrounds and walks of life, like older people and younger people.

Focus group participant

Mature Artists Dance Experience (MADE)

The arts can be invaluable in the lives of older Australians for both connecting to community and promoting health and wellbeing. Hobart's Mature Artists Dance Experience (MADE) is one of Australia's leading dance companies for older artists, featuring dancers aged over 50 in their performances. MADE also runs dance classes for adults of all ages led by locally, nationally and internationally recognised dance teachers, with no prior dance experience necessary to participate. MADE creates performances to tell stories of our life experiences and challenge audience perceptions of the mature dancer.



MADE Ensemble,
Ballet Barre class.
Credit: Sandi Sissell.



five

Listening to recorded music, reading and digital engagement with arts and creativity

Listening to recorded music

- Recorded music is infused throughout the lives of almost every Australian, providing a soundtrack to our lives and helping us through the day.
- One in three Australians choose to listen to recorded music on the radio or TV on a daily basis, and one in five Australians used a paid service to stream music each day.
- Half of Australians aged under 45 years stream music through paid subscriptions, providing vital income for the music industry.

“Listening to music is pop culture, it can inspire creativity.”

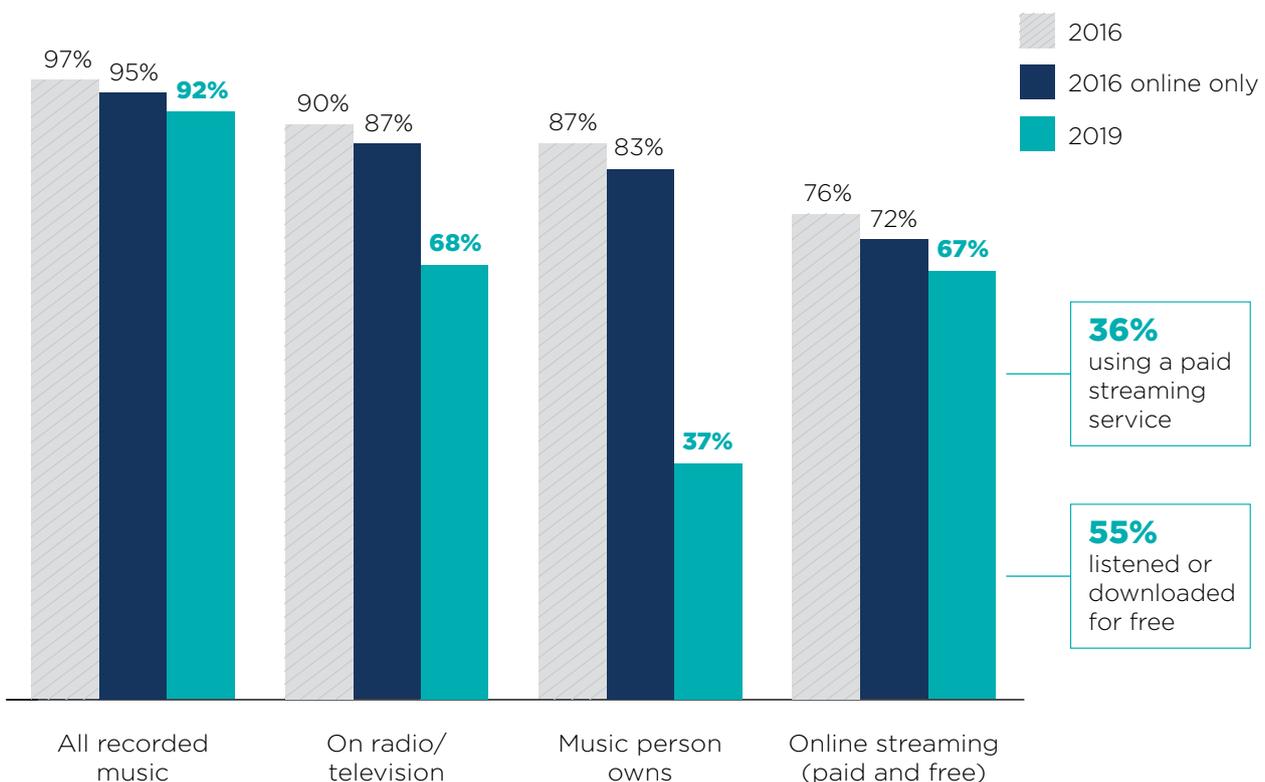
Focus group participant

Recorded music is infused throughout the lives of almost every Australian

Recorded music is ubiquitous and powerful. It provides a soundtrack to our lives: bringing us joy, helping us through challenging times and reminding us of important times. In 2019, 19 million Australians chose to listen to recorded music, or 92% of the population aged 15 years and over.

While this is a slight decrease from 95% in 2016,⁹³ questions about Australians' engagement with recorded music were updated in the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey,⁹⁴ so trend data is indicative only – small decreases may reflect changes in the way these questions were asked rather than real change. However, the data clearly indicates that fewer Australians are listening to music they own or listening to music on radio or TV than they were in 2016, with online streaming (either paid or free) now on par with listening on radio or TV (figure 15).

Figure 15: Australians' recorded music engagement 2016 and 2019



Q18. Have you listened to and/or watched any of the following formats of recorded music in the past 12 months?
Base: General population 15+ (n=8,928)

93 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

94 In 2019, respondents were asked about whether they had listened to and/or watched recorded music before being asked about how often they did. This may have removed some response bias for those who do not engage with recorded music, resulting in lower results this year.

What do we know from ARIA 2019 wholesale figures?

The Australian recorded music industry had a fifth straight year of growth in 2019, increasing 5.5% from 2018 to over \$555 million in revenue. The results reflect the strength of the music industry before the COVID-19 pandemic presented a series of major challenges.

Highlights from the 2019 results include:

- Streaming revenue now makes over 80% of the Australian music market, a result that reflects 18% growth in 2019. This streaming category includes revenue from subscription services (including Apple Music, Spotify, and YouTube Music) and other non-subscription on-demand streaming services.
- Revenue from digital downloads across albums and tracks declined by 34%. Physical sales also suffered an overall decline of 21%.

What do we know from the Share of Audio study?

The Share of Audio study commissioned by Commercial Radio Australia provides an annual picture of the Australian audio landscape. The 2019 study was conducted over a four week period using a nationally representative sample of nearly two thousand respondents aged 10+ across all metro and major regional markets. Respondents included both listeners and non-listeners and were required to complete a customised 7-day audio diary detailing their listening activities. Key findings include:

- Live Australian radio remains the most popular choice of audio, accounting for a dominant 61.3% share of all audio listening.
- Streaming (free and paid) has a 15% share of the audio market.
- Australians spend 3 hours and 28 minutes listening to audio every day, 7 minutes more than last year.
- For the first time, Australians are spending more time listening to podcasts than their own music collections.

What do we know from Deloitte's 2019 Media Consumer Survey?

Deloitte's annual Media Consumer Survey explores how Australians consume media and entertainment, particularly digital media and entertainment. Findings about podcasts show:

- The most popular genres of podcasts are news and current affairs, comedy, and true crime.
- Australians mostly listen to podcasts at home (66%) or in their car (28%).
- Podcasts are especially popular with younger Australians, 14–29 year olds (59%) and 30–35 year olds (57%), and high-income earners (67%).
- Those who listen to podcasts tend to do so actively: 47% of podcast listeners consume at least one episode each week, with 20% listening to three or more podcasts each week.
- Just 16% of podcast listeners have ever purchased an episode.

Sources: ARIA 2020, *Industry Wholesale Figures 2019*.

GfK 2019, *Australian share of Audio 2019*.

Deloitte 2019, *Media Consumer Survey 2019 Australian media and digital entertainment preferences*.



Amy Shark on stage. Credit: PR Image.

Amy Shark is one of Australia's favourite music artists, with over two million monthly listeners on Spotify. After years of self-producing her own music, Amy's first singles *Adore* and *I Said Hi* shot to the top of the charts and dominated commercial radio. Her debut album *Love Monster* won four awards at the 2018 ARIAs from nine nominations, including Album of the Year. In June 2019, Amy released a new single *Everybody Rise* landing the highest radio airplay debut of any Australian in 2020 to date. (Based on Radio Monitor).

Who engages with recorded music in different ways?

- Two in three Australians choose to listen to music **on radio or television** (68%). **Australians aged 45 years and over** are most likely to listen in this way (75%). One in three Australians listen to music on the radio or television daily (34%) and three in five listen to music on the radio or television at least **once a week** (60%).
- Over half of Australians **stream music online for free** (e.g. YouTube) (55%). Australians **aged under 45** are the most likely to listen in this way (67%). Around one in five Australians stream music online for free **daily** (18%) and more than four in ten stream music online for free at least **once a week** (44%).
- More than one in three Australians **stream music through a paid subscription** (e.g. Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music) (36%). **Australians aged under 45** are nearly three times more likely to stream music through a paid subscription (52%, compared to 18% of those aged 45 years or more). Around one in five Australians stream music through a paid subscription **daily** (18%).
- More than one in three Australians listens to **music they own** (either downloaded or a physical copy e.g. CDs/vinyl) (37%).

Reading

- **Despite busy lives and digital distractions, reading remains a fundamental activity for Australians and provides a lifetime of enjoyment.**
- **The proportion of Australians who read for pleasure has increased by 17 percentage points since 2016.**
- **Print books remain the most popular format.**

An increasing number of Australians read for pleasure

Despite the busyness of daily life and the array of digital distractions, Australians are increasingly reading for pleasure. In 2019, 14.8 million Australians read at least one printed book, e-book or listened to an audiobook for pleasure, or 72% of the population aged 15 years and over. This is an increase of 17 percentage points from 55% in 2016.⁹⁵

What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on Australians listening to music and reading?

The Australia Institute conducted a survey in May 2020 exploring creative arts engagement during lockdown. Results showed that:

- 45% of Australians are listening to more music, compared to 8% who are listening to less music.
- People are listening to radio and podcasts more often (30% and 22% respectively).

To better understand creative and cultural engagement in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Australia Council commissioned Lonergan Research to explore this topic as part of their online Omnibus Survey. In terms of reading, the survey found:

- More than a third of Australians have been reading more (36%)
- 42% are reading about the same as they normally would and 6% believe their reading habits have decreased.
- Nearly all Australians are doing an activity to stay connected and support their wellbeing (97%), with over half spending their time reading for pleasure or relaxation (54%).

Sources: The Australia Institute 2020, *Lockdown and the arts*, April, May 2020.

Australia Council 2020, *Arts Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, based on Lonergan Research's Omnibus Survey, April 2020.

95 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.



Liane Moriarty

Liane Moriarty's novels are exceptionally popular with Australian readers, selling two million copies in Australia and New Zealand, and over 14 million worldwide. Her sixth novel, *Big Little Lies*, debuted at number one on the New York Times bestseller list and also topped bestseller lists in Australia. *Big Little Lies* was adapted into a hit Emmy and Golden Globe award-winning mini-series for HBO, produced by and starring Nicole Kidman and Reese Witherspoon. Moriarty's latest novel, *Nine Perfect Strangers*, became an instant best-seller in Australia and the highest selling fiction title in 2018. This was the third year in a row that Moriarty was the highest selling fiction author in Australia.

What types of content are Australians reading?

- Almost half of Australians read **novels or short stories** (47%).
- A third of Australians read **instructional non-fiction such as guidebooks or cookbooks** (32%).
- Almost one in three Australians read **creative non-fiction such as a biography or history** (31%).
- More than one in seven Australians read **graphic novels or comics** (15%).
- One in ten Australians read **poetry** (10%).
- 7% of Australians read **plays**.

Who are the readers?

- **Women** are more likely to read for pleasure than men (75% compared to 68%), particularly a novel or short story (55% compared to 39%).
- Reading for pleasure fluctuates with age, with reading strongest among **older Australians aged 65 years plus** (77%) and **younger Australians aged 25–34 years** (75%) compared to 67% of those aged 35–64 years. There are also generational differences by the type of content being read. While Australians aged 25–34 years are more likely to read poetry, plays, and graphic novels or comics; Australians aged 65 years plus are more likely to read creative non-fiction.
- Reading for pleasure is stronger among **First Nations respondents** (78%, compared to 71% of non-First Nations respondents), **CALD respondents** (81%, compared to 69% of non-CALD respondents) and **respondents with disability** (76%, compared to 71% of those without disability). All three groups are also more likely to read poetry, plays and graphic novels or comics.
- Reading for pleasure is strong among **those in the highest household income bracket of over \$200,000** (82%) and reading decreases with income to two thirds of those with a household income of under \$40,000 (66%).
- Reading for pleasure is strong among **those who completed post-graduate study** (85%) and decreases with level of education to 61% of those who did not complete high school.

Who uses which formats?

- **Print books** are still by far the most popular format, read by 14.2 million Australians, or 69% of the population aged 15 years and over. Almost two in five Australians read a print book **at least once a week** and 15% read print books **daily**.
- One in four **Australians aged over 55** read print books daily (23%) and **women** are more likely to read **print books daily than men** (18% compared to 12%).
- Two in five Australians had read an **e-book** in the previous 12 months (41%) and one in five read e-books **at least once a week** (19%). **Men** are more likely to read e-books at least once a week than women (20% compared to 17%).
- Regular e-book usage is more widely adopted by **First Nations respondents** (37% read e-books at least once a week, compared to 17% of non-First Nations respondents), **CALD respondents** (34%, compared to 14% of non-CALD respondents) and **respondents with disability** (26%, compared to 17% of respondents with no disability).
- E-book readers also have a much younger profile than for reading in general. More than half of **Australians aged 15–34 years** read e-books (55%), compared to less than half of those aged 35–44 years (45%), and three in ten of those aged over 45 (29%).

- Almost one in three Australians listen to **audiobooks** (31%) and one in seven listen to audiobooks **at least once a week** (14%).
- As with e-books, those who listen to audiobooks at least once a week are more likely to be **men** (16%, compared to 12% of women) and have a younger age profile: almost one in four **Australians aged 15–34 years** regularly listen to audiobooks (23%), compared to 18% of those aged 35–44 years (18%) and 6% of those aged 45 plus.
- As with e-books, regular audiobook usage is also more widely adopted among **First Nations respondents** (37%, compared to 12% of non-First Nations respondents), **CALD respondents** (30%, compared to 9% of non-CALD respondents) and **respondents with disability** (22%, compared to 12% of respondents without disability).

“Is [reading a Kindle] creative? If it’s a novel, a love story, then it’s creative. You want to immerse yourself in it.”

Focus group participant

What do we know about the Australian book market?

After five straight years of growth, Nielsen BookScan reported that in 2019 book sales in Australia had decreased slightly in terms of both volume and value from the previous year (down 0.9% and 3.0% respectively).

In total, almost 61 million print books were sold in 2019, valued at \$1.14 billion. The overall market decrease was due to a drop in fiction (down 3.4%) and non-fiction (down 6.2%), despite a three percent growth in children’s books sales.

These figures are collected from Nielsen BookScan’s Australian Book Market trade panel. E-book and audiobook sales are not included in these figures.

What do we know about e-books and audiobooks?

There is no single source tracking e-book and audiobook sales in Australia. It is estimated that e-book sales make up around 15–20% of the market, although this can vary greatly between genres.

Audiobooks continue to grow in popularity and research from Audible Australia in 2019 found that 6.6 million Australians, or a third of the population, listen to their audiobooks. Audiobooks are particularly popular with millennial Australians, with more than half listening to audiobooks (55%).

The Audible Australia study also found that customers downloaded an average of 17 audiobooks and listened to over 50 million hours of audio content. And audiobook listenership is expected to increase further with nine in ten Australians expecting to listen to more audiobooks than they currently do within the next three years.

Sources: Books + Publishing 2019, *Australian market overview*, 28 February 2019.
The Australian 2019, *Future of audiobooks sounds great*, 18 November 2019.

Digital engagement with the arts

- Most Australians engage with the arts online - in the digital age, the arts are more accessible than ever.
- Two in three Australians use platforms like Facebook and Instagram to engage with arts and creativity.
- From video games to creative blogs, Australians have differing views of which digital creations can be considered art.
- A third of Australians are creative using digital platforms.

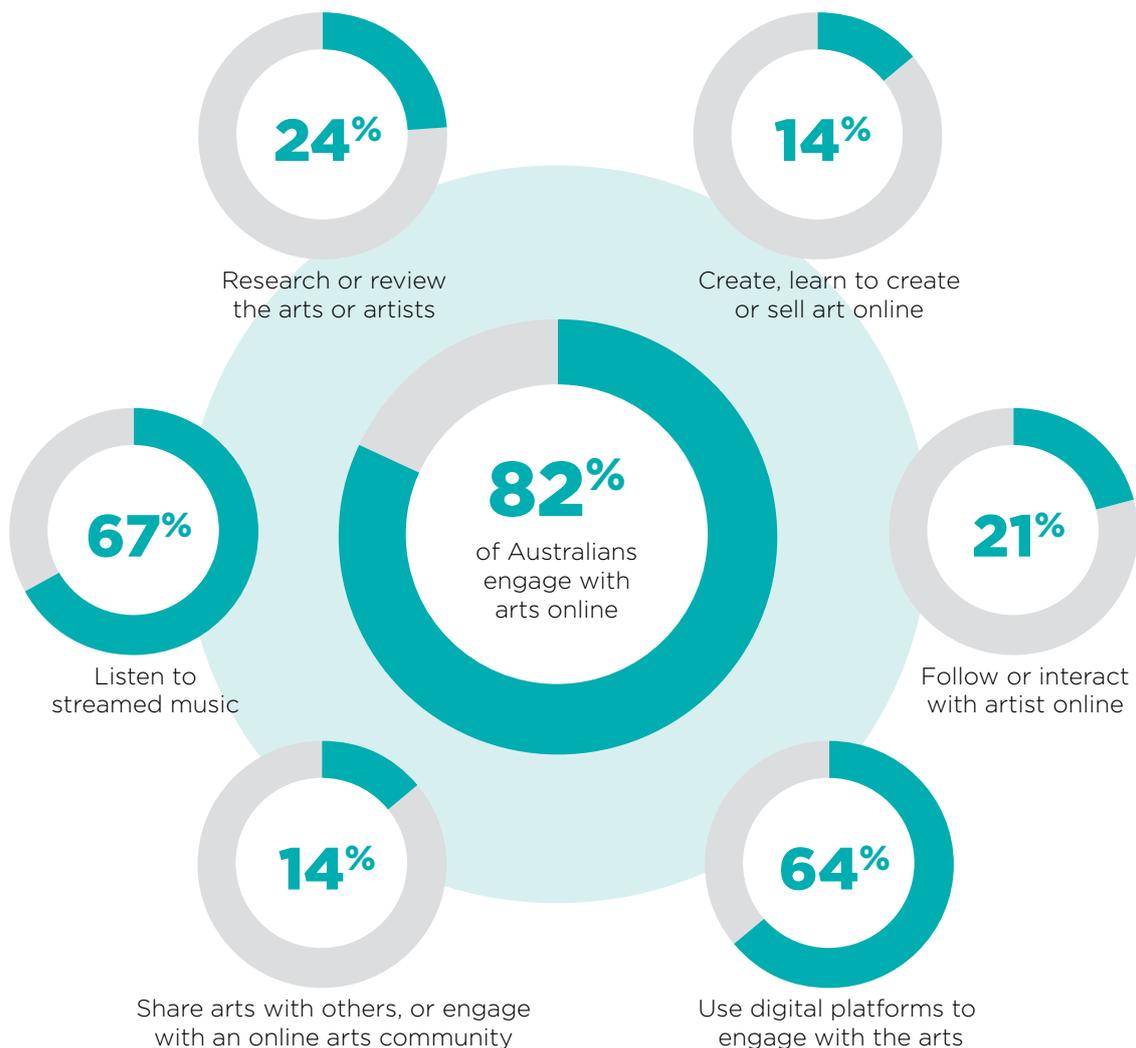
Ema Yuasa, Benjamin Hancock, Nobuyoshi Asai, Mui Cheuk-yin and Nalina Wait in Sue Healey's *ON VIEW: PANORAMA*, Yokohama 2020. Credit: Naoshi Hatori.
Find out more about *ON VIEW* on page 99.



Most Australians engage with the arts online

Digital art can be accessed anywhere, anytime – connecting artists and audiences across social, cultural, geographical and even political divides. In 2019, four in five Australians engaged with the arts online (82%), from researching or reviewing arts or artists to listening to streamed music, or using digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or Pinterest. While online engagement increased from 76% in 2016,⁹⁶ listening to streamed music remains the most popular way to engage.

Figure 16: Australians’ online engagement with the arts 2019



n=8,928 (2019 total sample)

96 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

How are Australians using the internet to explore and express creativity?

- One in four Australians **researches or reviews the arts or artists** online (24%, up from 21% in 2016).
- More than one in five Australians **follows or interacts with artists or arts organisations** online (e.g. through social media or newsletters) (21%, up from 17% in 2016).
- One in seven Australians use the internet to **share arts with others** or **engage with an online arts community** (14%, up from 11% in 2016).
- One in seven Australians **create, learn to create, or sell art** online, such as music, visual art, digital or video art, or creative writing (14%, up from 10% in 2016).

Who is engaging with the arts online in these ways?

- Two in three **Australians aged 15-24 years** use the internet to explore and express creativity (65%). Engagement declines sharply with age to less than half of those aged 35-44 years (46%), and a quarter of those aged 55 plus (26%).
- **Parents of children aged under 16 years** are more likely than those without children in this age group to engage with the arts online (51% compared to 40%).
- **Australians living in metropolitan areas** are the most likely to engage with the arts online (44%, compared to 39% in regional and 40% in remote locations).
- **First Nations respondents** are much more likely to engage with the arts online with three quarters doing so (75%) compared to 40% of non-First Nations respondents. First Nations respondents are more than twice as likely to share arts with others, or engage with an online arts community (31%, compared to 12% of non-First Nations respondents) and to create, learn to create, or sell art (27%, compared to 12% of non-First Nations respondents). This could be in part due to the younger age profile of First Nations respondents (and the First Nations population more broadly).
- **CALD respondents** are more likely to engage with the arts online, with two in three doing so (65%) compared to one in three non-CALD respondents (36%). In line with First Nations respondents, they are twice as likely as non-CALD respondents to share art online or engage with an online arts community (25%, compared to 10% of non-CALD respondents) and to create, learn to create or sell art online (25%, compared to 10%).
- **Respondents with disability** are more likely to engage with the arts online than respondents without disability (52% compared to 41%), including creating, learning to create or selling art online (22%, compared to 12% of respondents with no disability) and sharing art online or engaging with an online arts community (21%, compared to 12% respectively).

What do we know about online arts engagement during COVID-19?

As result of necessary restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, many artists and arts organisations pivoted to digital content to attract audiences, including streaming live performances, creating virtual galleries and delivering online classes and tutorials.

Research conducted in April 2020 by Lonergan Research and the Australia Council found that one in five Australians had increased their online arts engagement and a third who had not engaged would like to or have an interest in doing so.

The Audience Outlook Monitor tracking study, which explores changes in behaviours and sentiments of arts-goers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, found that three quarters of arts audiences are participating in online arts and culture activities during the pandemic. In July 2020, more than half of audiences (54%) said they were engaging online more frequently than before the pandemic and many say they plan to continue doing so after the pandemic (72%).

Sources: Australia Council 2020, *Arts engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Patternmakers 2020, *COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor: Australia Snapshot Report July 2020*.



Sydney Dance Company's Virtual Studio, featuring Company dancer Jacopo Grabar, 2020. Credit: Pedro Greig.
For more about Sydney Dance Company's Virtual Studio, please see page 164.

Sydney Dance Company Virtual Studio

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sydney Dance Company pivoted to offer online dance classes in their Virtual Studio. The largest public dance class program in Australia with over 80,000 dance class attendees each year in their Ultimo studios, the Virtual Studio focuses on accessibility and building a new national customer base. The virtual classes are available to everyone at all levels and have enabled participants to keep their bodies moving, their spirits up and their minds at ease through the isolation and anxiety of COVID-19.

Dance styles include ballet, jazz, contemporary and hip hop, as well as pilates and body conditioning. The classes, which are led by Company dancers from diverse backgrounds, are popular with people looking to learn something new and have fun and as well as those who dance regularly.





Sydney Dance Company's Virtual Studio,
featuring Head of Training Linda Gamblin, 2020.
Credit: Pnina Hagege.

A range of digital platforms are used to engage with the arts

Two in three Australians, or 13.2 million Australians aged 15 years or over, used a digital platform to engage with the arts in 2019 (64%).

What digital platforms were Australians using to engage with the arts in 2019?

- Four in ten Australians used **Facebook** (38%).
- Four in ten Australians used **YouTube** (38%).
- One in four Australians used **Instagram** (25%).
- One in seven Australians used **Pinterest** (14%).
- One in ten Australians used **Twitter** (9%).
- 7% of Australians used **podcasts**.
- 6% of Australians used **Etsy**.
- 4% of Australians used **livestreaming platforms** (this is likely to have increased in light of COVID-19).
- 4% of Australians used **photography apps**.
- 4% of Australians used **music-making apps**.

“Australians are embracing new and emerging expressions of creativity, culture and art. Technology is reshaping the arts landscape with the internet widely used to create and engage with the arts online”

Who is using which digital platforms to engage with the arts?

- While overall use of digital platforms is consistent by gender, the choice of platform varies, with **women** more likely to use **Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Etsy** and **men** more likely to use **YouTube, Twitter and Reddit**.
- Engagement with the arts through digital platforms is much higher among younger Australians, with the majority of **those aged 15–34 years** doing so (81%). Usage drops sharply to 68% of those aged 35–49 and to 47% of those aged 50 plus. In particular, those aged 15–34 years have much higher usage of **Instagram** (43%, compared to 15% of those aged 35 plus) and **YouTube** (50%, compared to 31% of those aged 35 plus).
- **Parents of children aged under 16 years** are more likely to engage with the arts through digital platforms, with three quarters doing so (74%), compared to three in five of those who do not have children aged under 16 (60%). They are more likely to use any of the platforms listed, particularly **Facebook** (47%, compared to 36%).
- Nearly nine in ten **First Nations respondents** engage with the arts through online platforms (88%) compared to around six in ten non-First Nations respondents (62%). In particular, First Nations respondents have higher usage of **Facebook** (49%, compared to 37%), **Instagram** (33%, compared to 24%), and **music-making apps such as Garage band and LMMS** (12%, compared to 3%).
- Similarly, four in five **CALD respondents** used at least one digital platform to engage with the arts online (81%, compared to 59% of non-CALD respondents). CALD respondents have higher usage of **YouTube** (49%, compared to 34%) and **Instagram** (36%, compared to 21%).
- Seven in ten **respondents with disability** (71%) engaged with the arts via digital platforms, compared to six in ten respondents with no disability (62%).

“It’s a way for people to save the memory... you can see people’s stories from all over the world. It’s just everywhere.”

Focus group participant

Australians have differing views of which digital creations can be considered art

One in three Australians express themselves creatively on digital platforms (32%), including through image galleries (9%), memes (8%) and music or songs (7%). But do Australians consider this creativity to be art?

Respondents to the survey were presented with a wide-ranging list of digital creations including GIFs, memes, TikTok videos, digital or video games, songs, image galleries, e-books, creative blogs and podcasts; and asked which, if any, they considered to be art.

While overall, the majority of Australians consider at least one of the presented digital creations to be art (82%), there were wide-ranging views of which creations fit the bill.

Which digital creations do Australians consider art?

- More than half of Australians consider digitally created **music or songs** to be art (53%).
- More than half of Australians consider **digital visual artworks such as drawings and greeting cards** to be art (53%).
- Almost half of Australians **consider online creative writing such as blogs and fan-fiction** to be art (46%).
- Almost half of Australians consider **comics and animations** to be art (46%).
- Almost four in ten Australians consider **wallpapers and overlays** to be art (38%).
- One in three Australians consider **image galleries such as Instagram** to be art (32%).
- One in five Australians consider **digital or video games** to be art (21%).
- One in five Australians consider **e-books** to be art (19%).
- One in six Australians consider **GIFs** to be art (16%).
- One in seven Australians consider **memes** to be art (15%).
- One in seven Australians consider **podcasts** to be art (14%).
- One in ten Australians consider **TikTok videos** to be art (10%).
- 8% of Australians consider **emotes** to be art.

Who considers which digital creations to be art?

- **Women** are more likely to consider **digital visual artworks such as drawings and greetings cards, and creative writing such as poetry, blogs and fan-fiction** to be art.
- **Men** are more likely to see the art in **video games** and **memes**.
- **Australians aged under 35** are more likely to consider image galleries, video games, e-books, GIFs, memes, podcasts, TikTok videos and emotes as art compared to older Australians.
- **Parents with children under 16** are also more likely to consider digital creations such as memes, podcasts and video games art compared to those without children this age.
- **CALD respondents and respondents with disability** are more likely to consider digital creations art compared to other Australians, whereas First Nations respondents are less likely to.

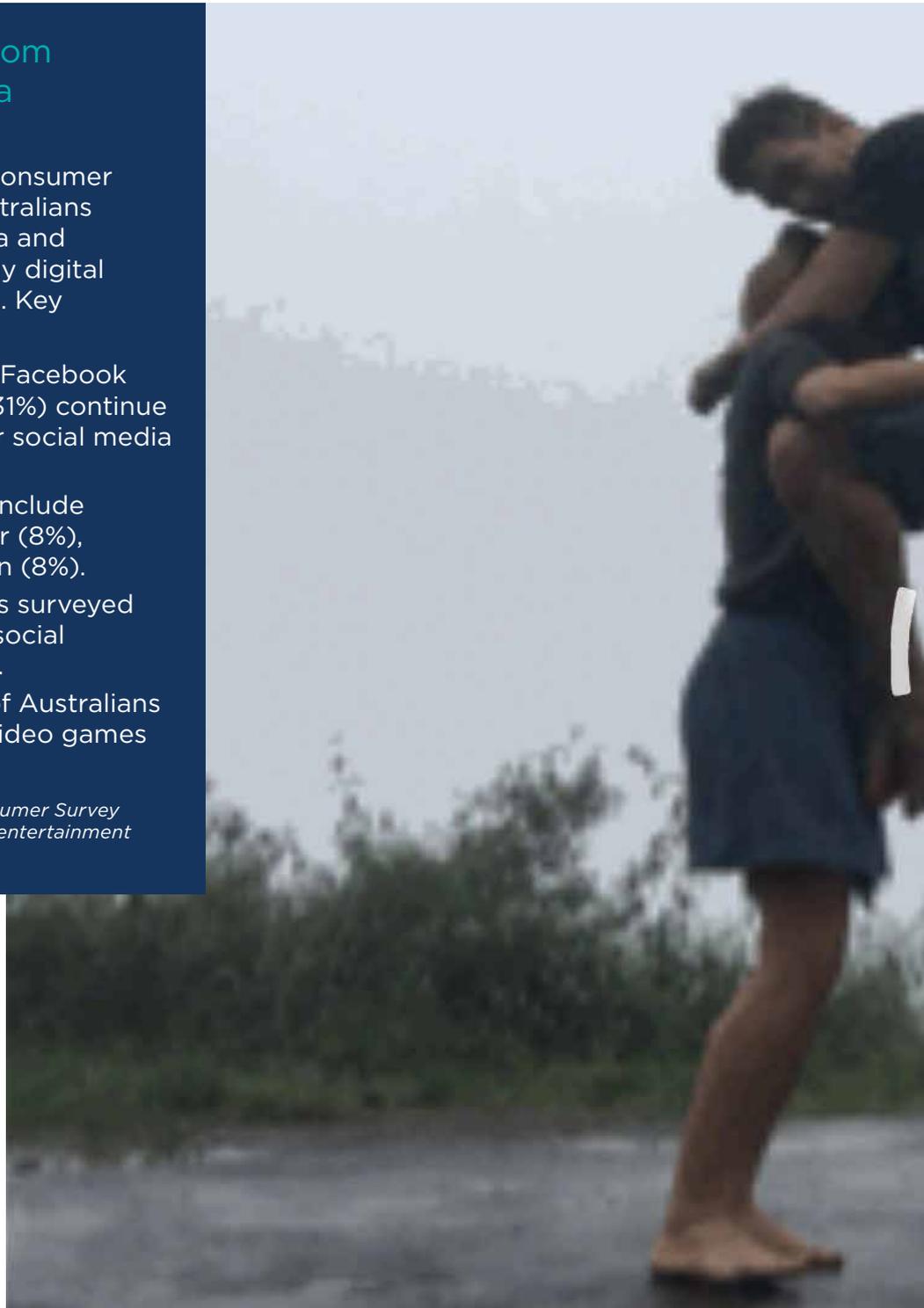
What do we know from Deloitte's 2019 Media Consumer survey?

Deloitte's annual Media Consumer Survey explores how Australians (n=2000) consume media and entertainment, particularly digital media and entertainment. Key findings include:

- Across all age groups, Facebook (81%) and Instagram (31%) continue to be the most popular social media platforms used.
- Other platforms used include Snapchat (12%), Twitter (8%), Pinterest (8%), LinkedIn (8%).
- Over half of Australians surveyed update or check their social network(s) daily (56%).
- Almost a third (30%) of Australians surveyed are playing video games at least weekly.

Source: Deloitte 2019, *Media Consumer Survey 2019 Australian media and digital entertainment preferences*.

The GIF of Dance
(<http://MattCornell.com>)
Performers: Courtney Scheu
and Matt Cornell.





GIF

The GIF of Dance

With The GIF of Dance, Matt Cornell and his team bring sophisticated choreography to people who may never set foot in a theatre. For each day of the week-long season, a new dance is made and sent via text message directly to fans' mobile phones as a GIF. The GIF of Dance integrates choreography into everyday life, offering joy to audiences while dethroning the barriers of time, cost and class access. As Cornell describes, 'It doesn't have to be part of your general community or socio-economic situation. There's still a place for deeply considered dancing and choreography to come into your life regardless of where you live.'

Six

Focus on arts engagement among targeted groups in our community

Connecting with Generation Z

- Young Australians aged 15–24 years value the arts and are highly engaged – four in five attend and two in three creatively participate. Four in ten young Australians give time or money to the arts.
- Support for public funding for the arts is strong among young Australians, with arts and creativity to support learning the top priority for investment.
- Young Australians agree First Nations arts are an important part of Australia’s culture and 47% attend First Nations arts or festivals.
- While young Australians predominantly attend the arts to have fun, socialise and be entertained, more than a third attend to understand other perspectives and cultures and more than a quarter to improve their wellbeing.
- The vast majority of young Australians stream music, read for pleasure and use digital platforms to explore and express creativity.

The arts and creativity are highly valued by young Australians

Young people are vital to the future of Australia's culture and our nation's future success. The vast majority of young Australians aged 15–24 years recognise the significant positive impacts of the arts and creativity on our individual lives and communities (91%).

The areas where there is the strongest agreement among young people about the 'big' or 'very big' social impacts of the arts and creativity are:

- **our ability to express ourselves** (70%)
- **our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas** (70%)
- **child development** (69%).

Looking to the attitudes of young people, the three statements in the National Arts Participation Survey with the highest levels of agreement are:

- **artists should have freedom of expression** (79%)
- **the arts help us understand different perspectives** (76%)
- **artists make an important contribution to Australian society** (73%).

The attitude statement with the lowest level of agreement among young Australians was: **there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts** (59%) suggesting that there are barriers for some young respondents and that they would like more opportunities to engage.

Young Australians' priority is ensuring young people have access to art and creative experiences to support their learning and development

Two thirds of young Australians aged 15–24 years agree that **the arts should receive public funding** (66%, compared to 63% of Australians overall). Young Australians have three clear priority areas for investment in the arts:

1. Seven in ten feel that their generation and those younger than them should have **access to art and creative experiences to support learning and development** (70% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment).
2. Six in ten believe **access to free or low-cost events is a worthwhile investment** (59% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment).
3. More than half of young Australians think funding should ensure that arts and creative experiences are available to support people's **health and wellbeing** (56% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment).

These priorities are in line with the priorities of Australians overall.

Four in ten young Australians give time or money to the arts, including one in two 18-19 year olds

The significant value that young Australians place on the arts is reflected in the number who give their time or money to support them: over 1.3 million young Australians give back to the arts in this way, or 40% of the population aged 15-24 years.

- The most common way young Australians support the arts is **unpaid work such as helping artists or community groups with arts activities** (17%).
- Among young people, **18-19 year olds** are the biggest supporters with half having donated time or money to the arts in the last 12 months (49%) compared to 30% of 15-17 year olds and 41% of those aged 20-24 years.

Young Australians agree First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture and 47% attend First Nations arts or festivals

Young Australians aged 15-24 years hold positive attitudes to First Nations arts, in line with Australians overall:

- Three quarters of young Australians agree that **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (76%, compared to 75% of Australians overall).
- Just over half of young Australians agree that **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts are well represented in Australia** (53%, compared to 51% of Australians overall).

However, young Australians' engagement with First Nations arts is much stronger:

- 1.6 million young Australians attended **First Nations arts or festivals** in 2019, or 47% (compared to 32% of Australians overall).
- Around one in four young Australians attend **First Nations music** (24%), including around one in four 18-19 year olds (29%).
- 44% of young Australians are **interested in First Nations arts** (compared to 40% of Australians overall), and half of young Australians who are interested have a **growing interest** (50%, compared to 45% of Australians overall). This equates to one in four young Australians overall having a growing interest in First Nations arts (26%).
- Attendance at **First Nations festivals** increases with age, from one in five of those aged 15-17 years (21%), to one in three of those aged 20-24 years (34%).

Young Australians are connecting with their culture and community through arts and creativity

In 2019, almost 1.8 million young Australians engaged with their cultural background, language group or community through arts attendance or participation, or 53% of the population aged 15–24 years. This is higher than the rate for Australians overall (36%).

- 45% of young Australians **attended events or festivals focused on their cultural background or community**, including almost half of those aged 18–24 years (48%). Overall, **music** is the most popular event, attended by one in four young Australians (24%), followed by **festivals or celebrations** (15%) and dance (14%).
- Of young Australians who attend arts events to engage with their cultural background or community, the main **venues** they attend are **concert halls or theatres** (31%), **stadiums or arenas** (29%) and **local parks** (27%).
- Almost all young Australians who attend these kinds of cultural events believe they **provide value** to them (97%), with the main benefits being **spending time with family or friends** (50%) and **getting to know people in the community** (38%).
- Three in five young Australians **creatively participate in the arts** to engage with their cultural background, language group or community (61%), particularly through **music** (25%), or **visual arts and craft** (19%).
- Almost a quarter of young Australians aged 15–24 years engage with **community arts** (24%) (not necessarily related to their cultural background). This includes community choirs or community theatre and may include **community arts and cultural development (CACD) activities** which are a specific type of arts practice where as a group, community members and professional artists collaborate to create art that is reflective of that place or community.

Four in five young Australians attend the arts

Four in five young Australians aged 15–24 years attended the arts in 2019, or 83% – up from 77% in 2016.⁹⁷ Young people are more likely to attend the arts than Australians overall (68%).

- The most popular art form is **live music**, attended by two in three young Australians aged 15–24 years (66%).
- Three in five young Australians attend **festivals** (61%), including two in three young men (64%, compared to 58% of young women) and two in three of those aged 18–24 years (65%, compared to 51% of those aged 15–17 years).
- Half of young Australians attend **First Nations arts** (47%).
- Nearly half of young Australians attend **visual arts and craft** (45%).
- More than four in ten young Australians attend **theatre** (44%).
- Four in ten young Australians attend **dance** (39%).
- Three in ten young Australians attend **book or literature events** (31%).

⁹⁷ For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

More than a third of young Australians attend the arts to understand other perspectives and cultures and more than a quarter to improve their wellbeing

There are many reasons why young Australians aged 15–24 years attend arts events or festivals.

- Seven in ten young Australians attend the arts **to have fun or to be entertained** (70%).
- More than half of young Australians attend the arts **to socialise and connect with others** (53%).
- More than a third of young Australians attend the arts **to understand other perspectives and cultures** (35%).
- More than one in four young Australians attend the arts **to express themselves** (28%).
- More than one in four young Australians attend the arts **to improve their wellbeing** (27%).
- More than one in five young Australians attend the arts **to develop skills for education, training or work** (22%).

“These activities are great for expanding the brain and allowing people to understand and explore new perspectives.”

Focus group participant

“Given that our mainstream education system is focused heavily on left-brain thinking from an early age, we are living in a society that is unable to enjoy the simple pleasures of life. We need external entertainment events to experience joy and exercise the right brain through the arts.”

Focus group participant

In line with the population at large, four in ten young Australians aged 15–24 would like to attend more arts events (42%). Almost half are happy with how often they attend (46%).

There is a reciprocal relationship between young people and the arts: a connection with the arts sets them up for success and in turn, they play a critical role in the future of Australia's culture.

For young Australians who do not attend or want to attend more arts events than they currently do, the main barriers are:

- **cost of tickets and/or entry** (54%)
- **events being too far away or not near where they live** (41%)
- **difficulty finding the time** (36%)
- **difficulty getting there** (33%)
- **a lack of awareness or information about events** (32%)
- **their friends and/or family are not interested** (30%).

Groovin the Moo

Festivals are a part of life for three in five young Australians. Groovin the Moo is an annual all-ages music festival held in six regional centres across Australia – in 2019 this included Wayville (SA), Bendigo (VIC), Maitland (NSW), Bunbury (WA), Canberra (ACT) and Townsville (QLD). Established by Cattleyard Promotions in 2005, the festival attracts upwards of 100,000 people nationally and features both local talent, such as Baker Boy, Ocean Alley and Regurgitator, as well as huge international acts like Billie Eilish. Festivals bring people and communities together in immersive experiences.

Bendigo Groovin the Moo – crowd shot.
Credit: Mackenzie Sweetnam.



Two in three young Australians creatively participate in the arts

In 2019, 2.2 million young Australians created, produced or collaborated in the making of art, or 66% of the population aged 15–24 years. This is a much higher participation rate than for the Australian population overall (45%). It includes all expressions of creativity – participation in organised lessons or classes, hobbyists creating things for fun, and professional artists creating things to sell.

- One in three young Australians **create visual arts and craft** (33%).
- More than one in four young Australians **create music** (28%).
- One in four young Australians produce **creative writing** (24%).
- One in seven young Australians **participate in dance** (14%).
- One in ten young Australians **participate in theatre** (11%).

The vast majority of young Australians stream music, read for pleasure and use the internet to explore and express creativity

Music is a vital part of the daily lives of young Australians aged 15–24 years – 95% listen to recorded music.

- Seven in ten young Australians listen to **music they stream for free** such as from YouTube (70%).
- Three in five young Australians **stream music through a paid subscription** such as Spotify, Apple Music or Amazon (60%).
- Three in five young Australians listen to music **on radio or TV** (57%).
- Less than a third of young Australians listen to **music they have paid for by downloading or purchasing a physical copy** such as CDs or vinyl (30%).

In 2019, excluding reading for work or study, 2.5 million young Australians **read at least one printed book, e-book or listened to an audiobook for pleasure**, or 73% of the population aged 15–24 years.

- Almost half of young Australians read **novels and short stories** (46%).
- One in four young Australians read **graphic novels or comics** (25%).
- One in four young Australians read **instructional non-fiction**, such as cookbooks or travel books (25%).
- One in four young Australians read **creative non-fiction** (24%).

Nearly two thirds of young Australians **use the internet to explore and express creativity** (65%). Those aged 18–19 years are most likely to do so (71%), compared to just under two thirds of those aged 20–24 years (64%) and three in five of those aged 15–17 years (61%).

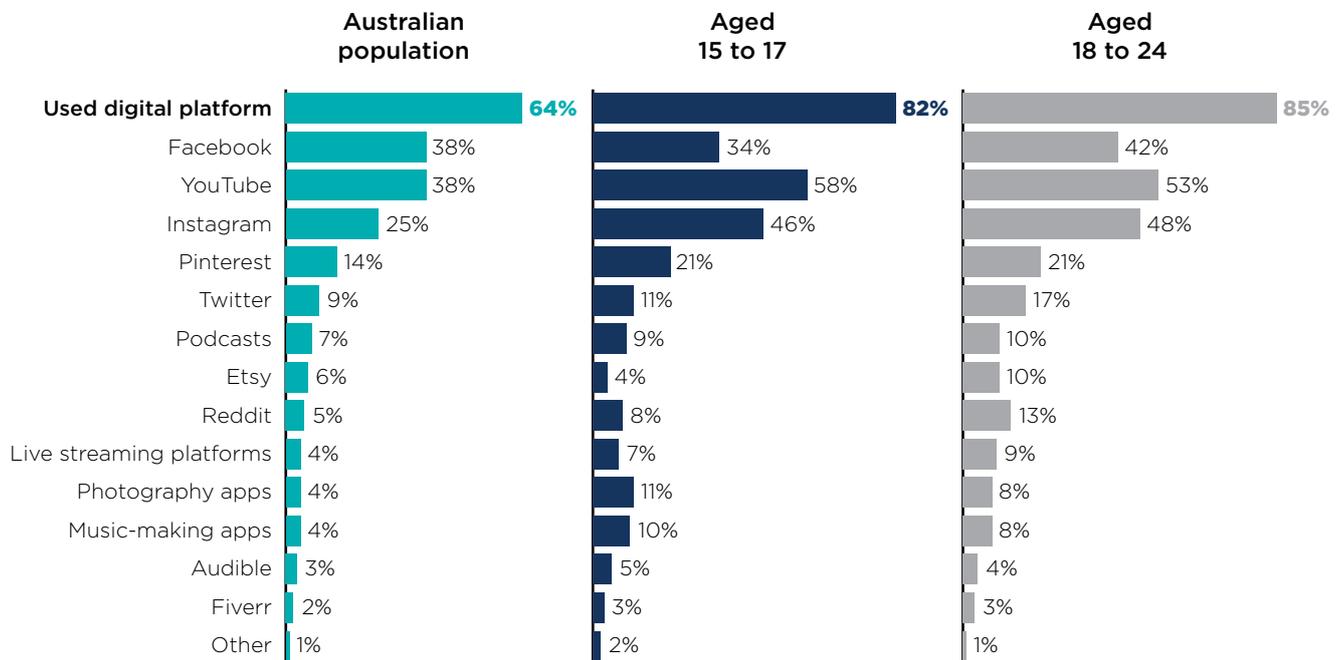
In 2019, 2.8 million young Australians **used a digital platform to engage with the arts**, or 84% of the population aged 15–24 years. Overall, the main platforms young Australians used are:

- **YouTube** (54%)
- **Instagram** (48%)
- **Facebook** (40%)
- **Pinterest** (21%).

Young Australians are more likely to use digital platforms to engage with the arts than the Australian population overall. Those aged 15–17 years are less likely to use Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and Etsy, than those aged 18–24 years (figure 17).

Generation Z (those aged 15–24 years) grew up surrounded by technology in a world with smartphones and the internet at their fingertips. The arts have great influence on new technologies that are emerging and enable young Australians to think outside of the box and explore concepts that are relatively new in the digital world.

Figure 17: Media used to engage with the arts online 2019



Base: General population 15+ (n=8,928)/Aged 15–17 (n=386)/Aged 18–24 (n=988)

Respondents to the survey were presented with a wide-ranging list of digital creations including GIFs, memes, TikTok videos, digital or video games, songs, image galleries, e-books, creative blogs and podcasts; and asked which, if any, they considered to be art.

While there were wide-ranging views on which digital creations can be considered art, the majority of young respondents consider at least one of these digital creations to be art (89%). In particular:

- **music or songs** (55%)
- **digital visual artworks** (49%)
- **animations or comics** (47%)
- **creative writing such as poetry, blogs or fan-fiction** (46%)
- **wallpapers or overlays** (40%).

There are differences in opinion across the generation with those aged 15–17 years more likely to think digital visual artworks are art, 18–19 year olds more likely to consider memes and TikTok videos to be art and 20–24 year olds more likely to consider e-books and podcasts to be art.

In 2019, 2.1 million young Australians used a digital platform to create a digital creation such as these, or 62% of the population aged 15–24 years. In particular, young people created:

- **memes** (20%)
- **image galleries** (18%)
- **music or songs** (16%).

There are differences by age with the younger cohort aged 15–17 years more likely to create digital visual artworks such as drawings or greeting cards and less likely to create image galleries; and the middle group aged 18–19 years most likely to create memes and TikTok videos.

Architects of Air, Daedalum Luminarium at MONA FOMA 2020.
Image courtesy of The Museum of Old and New Art.
Find out more about *MONA FOMA* on page 116.







Stephanie Lake *Colossus*

Young Australians are highly engaged in the arts, with almost all recognising the positive impacts of the arts and creativity in our lives. *Colossus* is a recent project developed by one of Australia's most exciting choreographers, Stephanie Lake. First performed at the Melbourne Fringe Festival in September 2018 and then presented at the Melbourne International Arts Festival 2019 and Perth and Sydney Festivals in the summer of 2020, *Colossus* attracted audiences of over 120,000. Its video trailer has been viewed over 4.2 million times on Facebook. The work engages the local dance community, involving 50 young emerging dancers from each city or place it is performed. In 2021 *Colossus* will be performed in France, Germany and Spain. As the dancers move in and out of the group, the performance explores the dichotomy of the good and bad of humanity.

Colossus by Stephanie Lake Company, Arts Centre Melbourne, 2018. Credit: Mark Gambino.

Regional and remote First Nations communities

- The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of First Nations people in regional and remote communities in the results.
- Almost all First Nations respondents interviewed believe the arts provide social, cultural and economic value, including by bringing customers to local businesses and building creative skills needed for future employment.
- Targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents have strong engagement with the arts, except theatre and literature events, and would like to attend the arts more than they do. They are less likely to agree First Nations arts are well represented than Australians overall.
- Cultural events are highly valued, connecting participants to their heritage, and strengthening family and community relationships.
- Three quarters of targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents use digital platforms to engage with the arts.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure better representation of regional and remote First Nations communities

We know that First Nations arts engagement supports empowerment, community connectedness and wellbeing among First Nations Australians, particularly in remote Australia.⁹⁸ We wanted to ensure that the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey included regional and remote First Nations respondents in the sample.

In the anticipation that First Nations people who *also* live in regional or remote communities were likely to be skewed or underrepresented through the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey online method, **a series of 150 face-to-face interviews was completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviewers⁹⁹ across four locations:**

- **Lismore** in New South Wales (inner regional)
- **Woorabinda** in Queensland (remote)
- **Humpty Doo** in the Northern Territory (outer regional)
- **Darwin** in the Northern Territory (outer regional).¹⁰⁰

This section of the report explores how the attitudes and behaviours of the targeted regional and remote First Nations sample (n=150) compare to the First Nations respondents surveyed in the national online survey (n=469) and the total nationally representative sample of respondents. The targeted First Nations respondents are included in the overall national sample (n=8,928).

98 Australia Council 2017, *Living Culture: Arts participation and wellbeing*.

99 Yindyamarra managed the First Nations fieldwork.

100 Classifications of regional and remote areas are based on the ASGS Remoteness Areas 2016.

Almost all regional and remote First Nations respondents interviewed believe the arts provide social, cultural and economic value

While the First Nations respondents surveyed are generally much more positive about the arts than non-First Nations respondents, the targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents interviewed are more positive again. Targeted First Nations respondents are in almost unanimous agreement with three key attitudinal statements about public funding and the social value of the arts:

- ***the arts should receive public funding*** (93%, which is 20 percentage points higher than First Nations respondents surveyed online and 30 percentage points higher than Australians overall)
- ***the arts should be an important part of education*** (97%, which is 19 percentage points higher than First Nations respondents surveyed online and 24 percentage points higher than Australians overall)
- ***the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life*** (91%, which is 19 percentage points higher than First Nations respondents surveyed online and 23 percentage points higher than Australians overall).

Compared to the First Nations respondents surveyed, the targeted First Nations respondents are five times *less* likely to agree that ***the arts are not really for people like me*** (10%, compared to 52% of First Nations respondents surveyed online).

The majority of targeted First Nations respondents also agree with the majority of the impact statements explored in the National Arts Participation Survey, with agreement much higher compared to both First Nations respondents surveyed online and Australians overall.

In particular, their responses reflect stronger recognition of the economic impacts of the arts compared to Australians overall. The vast majority of targeted First Nations respondents agreed the arts have a ‘very big’ or ‘big’ impact on:

- ***bringing customers to local businesses*** (85%, compared to 41% of Australians overall)
- ***building creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce*** (90%, compared to 47% of Australians overall).

Regional and remote First Nations respondents also have strong recognition of the cultural value of the arts. Compared to First Nations respondents surveyed online, they had much stronger agreement that the arts impact:

- ***shaping and expressing Australian identity*** (90%, which is 23 percentage points higher than First Nations respondents surveyed online)
- ***our understanding of other people and cultures*** (95%, which is 28 percentage points higher than First Nations respondents surveyed online).

What do we know about economic value from the National Survey of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists?

For many First Nations peoples in remote Australian communities, arts and cultural production has the potential to be one of the most important means for providing a viable and culturally relevant livelihood.¹⁰¹ Macquarie University's National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists¹⁰² shows that creative artistic activities and other cultural activities are the main income sources for around a third of artists working in: North West NT and the Tiwi Islands (29%), the Central Desert (NT) and APY Lands (SA) (35%), Arnhem Land (NT) (33%) and the Kimberley (31%).¹⁰³

Within creative practices, the most prominent art form in these remote regions is visual arts, with over nine in ten visual artists who practised their art in the last 12 months receiving some financial return from it.

The study also highlights the vital role that art centres play in the functioning of the Indigenous arts economy in remote regions. The majority of respondents agreed that having an art centre creates (could create) jobs and incomes: North West NT and the Tiwi Islands (97%), the Central Desert (NT) and APY Lands (SA) (86%), Arnhem Land (NT) (98%) and the Kimberley (97%).

Source: See Throsby D and Petetskaya K 2019, *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development*.

Targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents have strong engagement with the arts, except theatre and literature events

Compared to Australians overall, targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are more likely to:

- **attend free or paid arts events** such as exhibitions, performances and shows (91%, compared to 68% of Australians overall)
- **attend dance** (62%, compared to 29%)
- **attend the arts to socialise and connect with others** (76%, compared to 41%)
- **attend the arts to understand others' perspectives and cultures** (44%, compared to 33%)
- **attend the arts to improve their wellbeing** (45%, compared to 25%).
- **creatively participate in the arts** (64%, compared to 45%)
- **create visual arts and craft** (41%, compared to 23%).

The arts play an essential role in the lives of many First Nations peoples in both regional and remote Australia – sustaining culture, communities and economies.

101 Throsby D and Petetskaya K 2019, *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA): National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists*. Macquarie University.

102 The National Survey is being undertaken in the Department of Economics at Macquarie University progressively across six regions in remote Australia, including the Kimberley (WA), East and West Arnhem Land (NT), North-West NT and Tiwi Islands, Central Desert (NT) and APY Lands (SA), Pilbara and Western Desert (WA), and Far North Queensland.

103 Throsby D and Petetskaya K 2016-2019, *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development: National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists*. Macquarie University.

Compared to both Australians overall and First Nations respondents surveyed online, targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are *less* likely to attend theatre (28% compared to 37% of Australians overall and 61% of First Nations respondents surveyed online).

Overall, there is **little difference in frequency of arts attendance** between targeted First Nations respondents and Australians overall, **apart from theatre attendance**, with targeted First Nations respondents attending much fewer performances on average (an average of 0.4 performances per person in the previous year, compared to 2.6 performances attended for every Australian).

Compared to First Nations respondents surveyed online, targeted First Nations respondents generally **attend much less often**. But they are *more* likely to attend the arts:

- **to socialise and connect with others** (76%, compared to 44% of First Nations respondents surveyed online)
- **to have fun or be entertained** (71%, compared to 47%)
- **to improve their wellbeing** (45%, compared to 33%).

Over three quarters of the targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents **would like to attend more arts events and festivals** than they currently do (79%, compared to 42% of Australians overall and 35% of First Nations respondents surveyed online). The location of events and transportation are the main barriers to attendance:

- More than two in five targeted First Nations respondents have **difficulty getting to events** (45%, compared to 19% of Australians overall). They are four times more likely to cite this reason than First Nations respondents surveyed online.
- More than two in five targeted First Nations respondents feel **events are too far away** (45%, compared to 25% of Australians overall). They are three times more likely to cite this reason than First Nations respondents surveyed online.

Targeted First Nations respondents have strong engagement in First Nations arts but are less likely to agree they are well represented

Compared to Australians overall, targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are more likely to:

- **attend First Nations arts** (87%, compared to 32% of Australians overall)
- **attend First Nations festivals** (35%, compared to 19%)
- **be interested in First Nations arts** (96%, compared to 40%)
- **strongly agree First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (85%, compared to 35%).

However, only a third of targeted First Nations respondents agree First Nations arts are well represented in Australia (35%) compared to half of Australians overall (51%).

Targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents have similar overall attendance at First Nations arts compared to First Nations respondents surveyed online, but they are more likely to:

- **attend First Nations dance** (56%, compared to 37% of First Nations respondents surveyed online)
- **strongly agree First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (85%, compared to 50%).

Targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are *less* likely than First Nations respondents surveyed online to:

- **attend First Nations theatre** (8%, compared to 29% of First Nations respondents surveyed online)
- **attend First Nations festivals** (35%, compared to 68%).

What do we know from the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey?

Living Culture presents arts and culture data from the ABS's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. It shows that in 2014-15, First Nations people in remote Australia had lower engagement with arts venues and events compared to those in regional Australia or major cities, including:

- **visiting a library, museum or art gallery** (23% of First Nations people in remote Australia, compared to 38% in regional Australia and 43% in major cities)
- **attending theatre or a concert** (9% of First Nations people in remote Australia, compared to 20% in regional Australia and 28% in major cities).

However, First Nations people in remote Australia had higher engagement with First Nations arts, including:

- **attending First Nations festivals** (32% of First Nations people in remote Australia, compared to 20% in regional Australia and 23% in major cities)
- **creatively participating in First Nations arts by making arts or craft; performing music, dance or theatre; or writing or telling stories** (33% of First Nations people in remote Australia, compared to 25% in regional Australia and 27% in major cities).

The research indicates that practising culture, including through First Nations arts participation, is the key to improving wellbeing for First Nations people in remote Australia.

The methodology and scope of these results should not be compared directly to the National Arts Participation Survey, but rather used as further evidence to build a more comprehensive picture of First Nations peoples' arts engagement.

Source: Australia Council 2017, *Living Culture: First Nations arts participation and wellbeing*.

Cultural events are valued, connecting First Nations people to their heritage and community

Targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are more likely to **attend arts events focused on their cultural background, language group or community** (59%) compared to Australians overall (31%). Those who attend are also more likely to:

- attend these events **at a local park** (64%, compared to 28% of Australians overall)
- attend these events **at a community centre/hall** (39%, compared to 28%)
- value these events **to feel connected to their heritage** (86%, compared to 36%), **to spend time with family and/or friends** (67%, compared to 51%) and **to get to know people in their community** (60%, compared to 39%).

Three quarters of targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents use digital platforms to engage with the arts

Targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are more likely to engage with the arts online than Australians overall, but First Nations respondents surveyed online have the strongest digital engagement.

- Just over half of the targeted First Nations respondents **use the internet to engage with the arts** (55%, compared to 43% of Australians overall and 81% of First Nations respondents surveyed online). More than one in three **follow or interact with artists or arts organisations** online (e.g. via social media and newsletters) (38%, compared to 21% of Australians overall).
- Three in four of the targeted First Nations respondents **engage with the arts via digital platforms** (74%, compared to 64% of Australians overall and 92% of First Nations respondents surveyed online). Six in ten engage via **Facebook** (61%, compared to 38% of Australians overall).

Despite strong digital engagement, targeted regional and remote First Nations respondents are **less likely to view digital creations as art** compared to both groups (53%, compared to 82% of Australians overall and 94% of First Nations respondents surveyed online), including:

- **music or songs** (34%, compared to 53% of Australians overall)
- **digital visual artworks** such as drawings and greeting cards (34%, compared to 53% of Australians overall)
- **creative writing** such as poetry, blogs and fan-fiction (25%, compared to 46% of Australians overall).

They are also **less likely than both groups to have created one of these digital creations in the previous year** (22%, compared to 32% of Australians overall and 77% of First Nations respondents surveyed online).

How are First Nations people using social media to share language and culture?

Social media has significant cultural implications for First Nations Australians by providing opportunities for practising culture and producing new forms of cultural expression. A 2018 study by Macquarie University found that many First Nations people in Australia engage with a range of cultural practices online. For example, 'closed groups' on Facebook are a common way of sharing particular knowledge (such as language and stories) which, in turn, facilitate cultural knowledge translation.

Sources: Kral I. 2011, 'Youth media as cultural practice: Remote Indigenous youth speaking out loud,' *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 1, pp.4-16.

Carlson B. and Frazer R. 2018, *Social Media Mob: Being Indigenous Online*, Macquarie University, Sydney.



Exhibition of Woorabinda artists' works

In July 2019, Woorabinda's young and emerging artists shared their history, culture and journey to healing through an exhibition that was officially launched in Rockhampton's Kern Arcade. Part of a project coordinated through the Central Queensland Regional Arts Services Network (CQRASN) and CQUniversity, the exhibition of 30 works by more than 50 artists included historical photographs of Woorabinda, original paintings, sculptures and video. The exhibition not only gave emerging Woorabinda artists the chance to display their talents, it also provided them with a way to share their history and culture and, in some cases, heal their past.



Artist Nickeema Williams on opening night. *Home will always be home*, Synthetic polymer paint on canvas. Credit: Central Queensland University Woorabinda Art.

Cultural and linguistically diverse communities

- The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians in the results. The survey was translated into six languages encompassing emerging and established communities.
- The targeted CALD respondents surveyed are more likely to attend arts events than Australians overall, including book and literary events. They are more likely to attend to express themselves and develop skills. However, they are less likely to agree the arts reflect Australia's diversity.
- Targeted CALD respondents are also more likely to creatively participate in the arts, especially theatre, and are more creatively engaged on digital platforms.
- Targeted CALD respondents value engaging with arts of their cultural background to maintain their culture and share it with the wider Australian community.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of culturally and linguistically diverse people

Australia has one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world. We wanted to ensure that the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey included a strong sample of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) respondents.

In anticipation that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are *also* not fluent in English were likely to be skewed or underrepresented through the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey online panel method, **a series of 182 targeted online surveys was undertaken in six languages which encompass both established and emerging communities in Australia:**¹⁰⁴

- Arabic
- Dinka
- Mandarin
- Spanish
- Urdu
- Vietnamese.

This section of the report explores how the attitudes and behaviours of the targeted CALD sample (n=182) compare to the other CALD respondents in the national online survey sample (n=1,810) and the total nationally representative sample of respondents. The targeted CALD respondents are included in the national sample (n=8,928).

¹⁰⁴ The fieldwork was managed by Multicultural Marketing & Management.

CALD Australians in the targeted communities are more likely to engage with the arts than Australians overall – both attending and creating

Targeted CALD respondents are more likely to:

- **attend free or paid arts events** such as exhibitions, performances and shows (88%, compared to 68% of Australians overall)
- **attend book or literary events** (45%, compared to 22% of Australians overall)
- **attend dance performances** (45%, compared to 29% of Australians overall)
- **attend live events more frequently**, particularly **visual arts and craft events** (on average 6.5 times a year per person, compared to an average of 3 times a year for each Australian) and **book or literary events** (6.7 times a year per person, compared to an average of 2.2 times a year for each Australian)
- **attend the arts to express themselves** (24%, compared to 15% of Australians overall)
- **attend the arts to develop skills for education, training or work** (21%, compared to 13% of Australians overall).

Those **who speak Dinka** are the most likely targeted CALD group to attend arts events (90%), especially **theatre** (81%).

Compared with other CALD respondents in the national sample, the targeted CALD respondents are *less* likely to:

- **attend the arts to have fun or be entertained** (26%, compared to 62% of other CALD respondents)
- **attend the arts to improve their wellbeing** (16%, compared to 13% of other CALD respondents).

Compared to other groups, targeted CALD respondents are less likely to agree that **the arts reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia** (59%, compared to 71% of Australians overall and 77% of other CALD respondents). Seeing and feeling one's own experience reflected and valued in the cultural landscape is inherently powerful. Research has shown an under-representation of people with English as a second language among practising professional artists compared to the workforce.¹⁰⁵

In line with Australians overall and other CALD respondents, two in five targeted CALD respondents would like to attend the arts more than they currently do (42%). However, targeted CALD respondents report far **fewer barriers to attendance**:

- fewer report **cost of tickets/entry** as a barrier (13%, compared to 29% of other CALD respondents and 34% of Australians overall)
- fewer report **events being too far away/not where they live** (9%, compared to 22% of other CALD respondents and 25% of Australians overall)
- fewer report **friends/family not being interested** (5%, compared to 13% of other CALD respondents and 14% of Australians overall).

The main barrier experienced is **difficulty finding the time** (16%, which is on par with Australians overall). One in ten targeted CALD respondents reported **not having event information provided in their language** (11%, compared to just 2% of other CALD respondents). Those who speak **Arabic or Vietnamese** are most likely to find this a challenge (23% and 18% respectively).

Targeted CALD respondents are also more creative than other CALD respondents and Australians overall – three in four **creatively participate in the arts** (78%), compared to 65% of other CALD respondents and 45% of Australians overall.

- Creative participation is highest among **those who speak Spanish, Mandarin and Dinka** (87%, 86% and 84% respectively).
- One in five targeted CALD respondents participate in **creating theatre** (22%), including more than one in two of those who speak **Dinka** (55%), compared to 6% of Australians overall and just over one in ten other CALD respondents (12%).

¹⁰⁵ Australia Council 2017, *Making Art Work: A summary and response by the Australia Council for the Arts*.

Targeted CALD respondents value engaging with arts of their background to maintain their culture and share their it with other Australians

Consistent with other CALD respondents, targeted CALD respondents are more likely to attend arts events to engage with their cultural background, language group or community, and twice as likely compared to Australians overall (73%, compared to 61% of other CALD respondents and 36% of Australians overall), especially **those who speak Dinka** (87%).

There is higher attendance across all types of events, particularly **theatre** (23%, compared to 15% of other CALD respondents and 9% of Australians overall), with some difference by language group:

- **Those who speak Mandarin** are the most likely to engage with their cultural background or community through attendance at **music** or **dance** events.
- **Those who speak Dinka** are the most likely to engage with their cultural background or community through attendance at **visual arts, theatre** and **book or literary events**.

Compared to Australians overall, targeted CALD respondents are slightly more likely to attend these events in all locations, including at **local parks, community centres or halls, stadiums or arenas, museums or galleries, educational settings, libraries, places of worship** and in **neighbourhood or street settings**.

Like other CALD respondents and Australians overall, almost all targeted CALD respondents who attend arts events to engage with their cultural background or community believe these events provide value (97%). Targeted CALD respondents particularly benefit from:

- **the wider community having more understanding of their culture** (37%, compared to 27% of Australians overall)
- **preserving the practices of their heritage** (33%, compared to 25% of Australians overall).

Potentially reflecting the strength of their current connections to their culture, family and community, compared to other CALD respondents, targeted CALD respondents are *less* likely to value these events for:

- **feeling connected to their heritage** (31%, compared to 49% of other CALD respondents)
- **getting to know people in their community** (24%, compared to 43% of other CALD respondents)
- **spending time with family and/or friends** (27%, compared to 49% of other CALD respondents)
- **enabling their children to learn about and connect with their cultural background** (23%, compared to 32% of other CALD respondents).

Targeted CALD respondents are highly engaged with First Nations arts

Like other CALD respondents, the majority of targeted CALD respondents attend **First Nations arts** (82%, compared to 32% of Australians overall), especially those who speak **Dinka** (90%).

- Targeted CALD respondents are three times more likely **to attend First Nations festivals** (62%, compared to 19% of Australians overall).
- Targeted CALD respondents are four times more likely **to attend First Nations visual arts festivals or fairs** (34%, compared to 8%), and **First Nations multi-art form festivals** (30%, compared to 8%).

Despite their higher levels of attendance, targeted CALD respondents' overall **interest in First Nations arts** reflects the national average (35% interested, compared to 40% of Australians overall).

However, targeted CALD respondents have stronger levels of agreement that **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (82%, compared to 75% of Australians overall) and that **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts are well represented in Australia** (75%, compared to 51%).

Targeted CALD respondents are more creatively engaged online and via digital platforms

Targeted CALD respondents are more likely to:

- **use the internet to engage with the arts** (79%, compared to 64% of other CALD respondents and 43% of Australians overall)
- **share arts with others, or engage with an online arts community** (33%, compared to 24% of other CALD respondents and 14% of Australians overall).

Those who speak **Mandarin** are the most likely to **use the internet to create or sell art** (37%) and **share arts with others** (42%).

The arts are alive and embraced in Australia's culturally diverse communities – be it through attendance, creation, participation, or the embracing of new and emerging expressions of creativity.

Targeted CALD respondents also tend to be highly **engaged with digital platforms**:

- Consistent with other CALD respondents, four in five use at least one digital **platform to engage with the arts** (82%, compared to 64% of Australians overall). This increases to almost all respondents who speak **Dinka** (94%) and **Spanish** (93%).
- Four in five targeted CALD respondents have **expressed themselves creatively on a digital platform** in the previous year, through things like image galleries, memes, music, songs, poetry or TikTok videos (80%, compared to 53% of other CALD respondents and 32% of Australians overall). This increases to almost all respondents who speak **Dinka** (94%) and **Spanish** (93%).

Digital technology and social media have created an increasingly interconnected world with greater access to local and international networks that enable CALD people to explore, connect with and express their cultural identity.¹⁰⁶

SAME DRUM cast and crew on location filming as part of Akolkol Dastan Gesa. Image courtesy of Poppy van Oorde-Grainger. Credit: Ella Hemsley. For more about Akolkol Dastan Gesa, please see page 196.



¹⁰⁶ Lam C 2013, Online identities: national and cultural expression online, an Australian perspective. *Studies in Media and Communication* 1(1) p116-130.

Akolkol Dastan Gesa

Akolkol Dastan Gesa means 'story' in three of the many languages spoken by the young people who created this work: Dinka, Dari and Arabic. The project was a unique opportunity for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to be leaders in telling their own stories. Between May 2017 and April 2018, 40 participants worked with a team of professional artists to create a music video called SAME DRUM. The project built the young people's relationships, sense of belonging, confidence and self-esteem. Launched during Harmony Week, the work was broadcast on radio, TV and online, screened at international film festivals and the young artists performed at a 20,000-person festival. The project was produced by Poppy van Oorde-Grainger and supported by project partners Aranmore Catholic College, DADAA, CAN and Beyond Empathy.

Juk Yuang and Ngor Atem, participants in Akolkol Dastan Gesa. Image courtesy of Poppy van Oorde-Grainger. Credit: Matsu.





Australians with intellectual disability

- The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of Australians with intellectual disability in the results.
- Respondents with intellectual disability hold positive attitudes about the public value of the arts and almost all attend. They attend the arts to have fun, understand culture, be social and learn skills.
- They are more than twice as likely to be interested in First Nations arts than Australians overall but are less than half as likely to attend.
- Nearly all targeted respondents with intellectual disability read a book in 2019, with one in three reading a true story.
- Respondents with intellectual disability are more creative than the general population, with almost all creatively participating in the arts in some way.

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was expanded to ensure greater representation of Australians with intellectual disability

Every Australian should be able to experience the transformative power of art and participate in the cultural life of the nation. We wanted to ensure that the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey included a strong sample of respondents with disability.

In anticipation that people with intellectual disability were likely to be skewed or underrepresented through the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey online panel method, a series of **68 targeted surveys with people with intellectual disability was undertaken using a mixed approach:**

- **47 paper surveys were completed**¹⁰⁷
- **21 assisted-online surveys were completed.**¹⁰⁸

The focus was on boosting participation among people with moderate to severe intellectual disability, who would be excluded due to access and comprehension barriers, rather than people with physical disability. An easy read survey was developed to ensure the survey was inclusive and accessible.

This section of the report explores how the attitudes and behaviours of the targeted people with intellectual disability sample (n=68) compare to respondents with disability in the national online survey sample (n=1,531) and the total nationally representative sample of respondents (n=8,928). The targeted disability sample was not included in the national sample as the easy read survey questions are not directly comparable.

¹⁰⁷ Fieldwork was managed by the Council for Intellectual Disability.

¹⁰⁸ Using Lonergan's Mystery Customer database.

Respondents with intellectual disability hold positive attitudes about the public value of the arts

More than half of the targeted respondents with intellectual disability agree that:

- **art helps me understand things** (59%)
- **the government should fund arts** (57%)
- **arts help me connect with people** (56%)
- **arts are important in schools** (54%)
- **artists contribute to our society** (53%).

Compared with respondents with disability in the national sample, targeted respondents with intellectual disability have lower levels of agreement, including being less likely to agree that **there are lots of art things I can get involved with** (36%, compared to 49% of respondents with disability in the national sample).

A simplified version of the question exploring **priorities for investment** was asked to targeted respondents with intellectual disability. The questions presented three options and asked which one the government should spend money on.

The majority of respondents chose **free events in the community** (80%), with 8% choosing **children learning art** or **having art in public places**.

Even though there were two different questions asked of the general population and the targeted respondents with intellectual disability, the theme of ensuring events are free or low-cost is important across the board.



Back to Back Theatre, *Lady Eats Apple*.
Credit: Jeff Busby.
For insights on support for artists with disability, see [Creating Pathways](#).

Respondents with intellectual disability have strong arts engagement including live attendance, reading and listening to music

Targeted respondents with intellectual disability are more likely to:

- **attend free or paid arts events** such as exhibitions, performances festivals and shows (92%, compared to 68% of Australians overall and 64% of respondents with disability in the national sample)
- **attend visual arts and craft** (41%, compared to 28% of Australians overall and 24% of respondents with disability in the national sample).

Their attendance at festivals is on par with Australians overall (41%, compared to 42%) but is slightly lower than festival attendance for respondents with disability in the national sample (44%).

Despite having lower levels of attendance at First Nations arts (13%, compared to 32% of Australians overall and 40% of respondents with disability in the national sample), targeted respondents with intellectual disability are much more likely to be **interested in First Nations arts** (87% interested, compared to 40% of Australians overall and 49% of respondents with disability in the national sample).¹⁰⁹

Nearly three in five targeted respondents with intellectual disability **would like to go to more arts events and festivals** (57%) – a larger proportion than among Australians overall (42%) and respondents with disability in the national sample (40%). The remaining 43% are happy with their current level of attendance.

Most targeted respondents with intellectual disability attend events and festivals:

- **to have fun** (84%)
- **to understand culture** (74%)
- **to be social** (70%).

While the question was asked quite differently, it is worth noting that targeted intellectual disability respondents are four times more likely to attend to **learn skills** (52%, compared to 13% of Australians overall).

In terms of **barriers to attendance**, similarly to Australians overall and respondents with disability in the national sample, **cost** is the main barrier (54%). A quarter say **it is hard to get to events and festivals** or **they don't hear about them** (both 26%). One in ten are concerned about **safety issues** (11%), almost double the proportion of Australians overall (6%).

Targeted respondents with intellectual disability are more likely to:

- **listen to music on the radio or TV** (89%, compared to 68% of Australians overall and 64% of respondents with disability in the national sample)
- **listen to music they own** (84%, compared to 37% of Australians overall and 42% of respondents with disability in the national sample).

The arts have the potential to generate a sense of belonging for people with an intellectual disability, enabling them to build self-confidence and strengthen social networks.

¹⁰⁹ The total sample had a 'neither interested nor disinterested' option, but even excluding these people, the targeted cohort of respondents with intellectual disability are still more likely to be interested compared to respondents with disability in the national sample (87% compared to 75%).

However, they are less likely to listen to music through a paid or free internet/streaming service such as iTunes or YouTube (41%, compared to 67% of Australians overall and 64% of respondents with disability in the national sample).

Nearly all targeted respondents with intellectual disability **read a book** in 2019 (95%) compared to seven in ten Australians overall (69%) and three in four respondents with disability in the national sample (76%).

- One in three respondents with intellectual disability read **a true story** (33%).
- Three in ten respondents with intellectual disability read **comics** (31%).
- One in five respondents with intellectual disability read **a novel or short story** (21%).
- One in five respondents with intellectual disability read **a guidebook** (21%).
- One in six respondents with intellectual disability read **poems** (16%).
- 8% of respondents with intellectual disability read **a play**.

Respondents with intellectual disability are more creative than Australians overall

Targeted respondents with intellectual disability are highly **creative**, with nearly nine in ten **creatively participating** in one or more of the following in the previous 12 months: visual arts and craft, theatre, dance, creative writing or music (87%, compared to 57% of respondents with disability in the national sample and 45% of Australians overall). In particular, a third of targeted respondents with intellectual disability **created craft** (36%), compared to 30% of respondents with disability in the national sample and 23% of Australians overall).

Targeted respondents with intellectual disability are also more likely to **participate in community arts activities** like community choirs or theatre, with a quarter doing so in 2019 (23%, compared to 16% of Australians overall).

Overall, targeted respondents with intellectual disability are less likely to **use the internet to engage with the arts** (34%, compared to 43% of Australians overall and 52% of respondents with disability in the national sample). The main ways respondents with intellectual disability use the internet to engage with the arts are **sharing art with other people** (18%) and **doing research on art or an artist** (16%).

Digby Webster at work on portrait of Neil Tomkins 2020.
Credit: David Webster



Digby Webster

Using strong and evocative colours, Digby Webster's art brings joy to everyone who sees it. Art making is part of Digby's everyday life. An accomplished visual artist working across a range of mediums, Digby has exhibited in solo shows and group shows across Australia including Tin Sheds Gallery, Riverside Theatre Parramatta and the Sydney Opera House. He has painted murals across the inner west of Sydney, collaborated with companies and is recipient of a number of accolades. Arterie, an international award-winning art program based at RPA Hospital invited Digby to be Artist in Residence in 2018. Also in 2018, Digby brought the Special Olympics Australia logo to life, creating the first inclusive games logo and capturing the essence of the South Australian landscape for the 2018 National Games in Adelaide.



Everybody needs to
see art. Everybody.
You've gotta have that
one experience...
You go, 'jeez, I like that,
what else is there?'

National Arts Participation Survey focus group participant



Australian Government

Australia
Council
for the Arts 

The logo for the Australia Council for the Arts, which is a stylized white figure with a circular head and a long neck, resembling a kangaroo or a person in a dynamic pose.

australiacouncil.gov.au