

Fact Sheet

Arts participation: Are there markets for Indigenous arts?

**Nine out of ten Australians
agreed Indigenous arts are
important to our culture.**

New research from the Australia Council for the Arts has identified major opportunities to build audiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts across Australia. Nine out of ten Australians agreed Indigenous arts are important to our culture and while 17 per cent of the population have attended Indigenous arts in the past year, 47 per cent have a growing interest.

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

Participation in Indigenous arts

Of the 74 per cent of people who had attended a visual arts and crafts, theatre, dance or music exhibition or performance in the past 12 months, nearly a quarter (23 per cent) had attended arts created or performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artists.

Receptive participation in Indigenous arts

Indigenous art forms	% attended out of total sample
Visual arts & crafts	9
Theatre	4
Dance	8
Live music	8

Visual arts and crafts were the most popular Indigenous art form with nine per cent of the total sample engaging with them. This was followed by dance and live music (each attended by eight per cent of the total sample) and lastly theatre (four per cent of the total sample).

New South Wales and Queensland had higher levels of attendance at Indigenous dance events than Victoria and South Australia. Whilst the Northern Territory appeared to have much higher attendance levels for Indigenous visual arts and crafts compared to the other states these results were only indicative due to the low sample size.

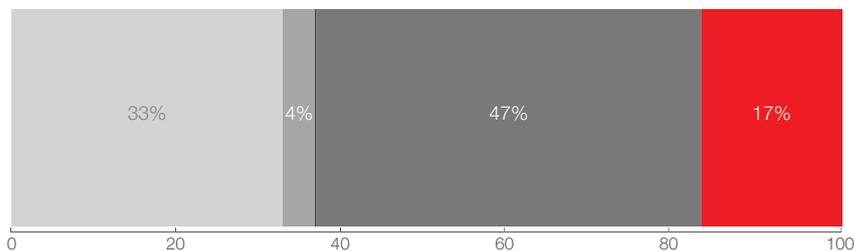
In terms of regional differences in Indigenous arts attendance, dance and live music audiences were more concentrated in rural areas when compared to inner or outer metropolitan areas.

Is there a market for Indigenous arts?

Attitudes towards Indigenous arts

Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of Australians either already have a strong interest in Indigenous arts or have a growing interest. There was a relationship between attitudes to Indigenous arts and attendance, with those who had attended an Indigenous arts activity having significantly more positive attitudes.

Attitudes towards Indigenous arts



- Indigenous arts are of low interest to me and will continue to be low
- My interest in Indigenous arts is declining
- My interest in Indigenous arts is growing
- I have a strong interest in Indigenous arts and will continue to

This is not to suggest that attendance caused positive attitudes, or vice versa, but simply that those who were going to see Indigenous art were more likely to favour it. Of those who had attended arts created or performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artists, 34 per cent reported having a strong interest in Indigenous arts and would continue to, while 50 per cent said their interest was growing.

Is there a market for Indigenous arts?

Attitudes and receptive participation in Indigenous arts

Attitude	Had receptively participated in Indigenous art %	Had not receptively participated in Indigenous art %
I have a strong interest in Indigenous arts and will continue to	34	14
My interest in Indigenous arts is growing	50	46
My interest in Indigenous arts is declining	3	4
Indigenous arts are of low interest to me and will continue to be low	13	37

However, there was still a small group of people (16 per cent) for whom Indigenous arts was of low interest, yet they still attended at times. Perhaps even more surprising was that 60 per cent of people who had not attended Indigenous art in the past 12 months had some sort of interest in it (14 per cent strong and 46 per cent growing). This suggests a real opportunity for the arts sector to address the demand for more Indigenous art experiences.

Arts participation:

Is there a market for Indigenous arts?

Who are attending Indigenous arts?

Those attending Indigenous arts were more likely than those not attending Indigenous arts to have the following characteristics:

- be from Queensland (25 per cent compared to 19 per cent)
- use the internet to research, view or create any kind of music, writing or artistic performance (52 per cent compared to 38 per cent)
- really like the arts (55 per cent compared to 32 per cent)
- have encouraged others to attend arts events (75 per cent friends, 52 per cent partner/spouse, 56 per cent extended family, 31 per cent parent/child/carer, 21 per cent someone else as part of a program)
- be in part-time paid employment (23 per cent compared to 19 per cent)
- be a professional (42 per cent compared to 36 per cent) or a community/personal service worker (15 per cent compared to 10 per cent)
- have a postgraduate degree or diploma (11 per cent compared to 5 per cent).

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

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