

### RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL ARTS PARTICIPATION SURVEY – JUNE 2017

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

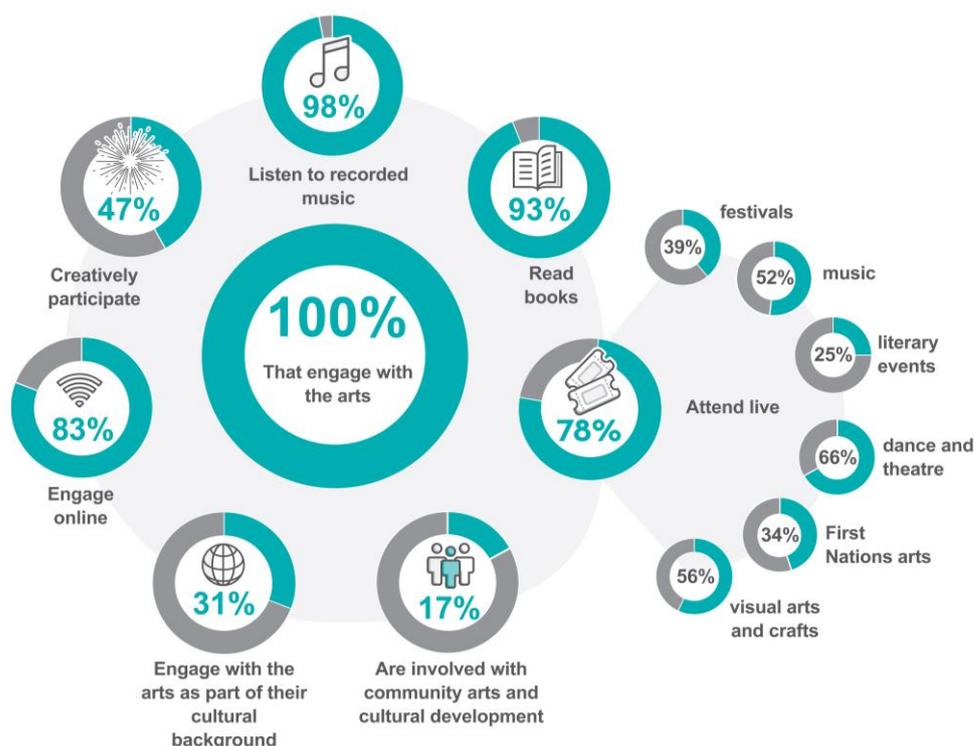
*Connecting Australians: Results of the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey* is the third in a landmark series by the Australia Council for the Arts. This research is designed to broaden the conversation about the arts, and to inform policy, programs and investment in the arts and well beyond. The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

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

For the full report and online resources see: [www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research)

This fact sheet provides an overview of results for the ACT.

**FIGURE 1: ACT residents’ arts engagement 2016**



## Impacts of the arts

More Australians now recognise the many positive impacts the arts have on our daily lives and in our communities, including on our wellbeing and happiness, and ability to think creatively and develop new ideas.

- In 2016, the majority of ACT residents felt the arts have a 'big' or 'very big' impact on:
  - their understanding of other people and cultures; and child development (both 74%)
  - stimulating their minds (72%)
  - their ability to express themselves (71%)
  - their ability to think creatively and develop new ideas (70%)
  - their sense of wellbeing and happiness (66%).

## Attitudes about the arts

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

- Almost nine in ten ACT residents agree that:
  - First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture (87%)
  - the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life (85%).
- Around eight in ten ACT residents agree that:
  - the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian (84%)
  - artists make an important contribution to Australian society (81%)
  - the arts in Australia reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia (77%)
  - the arts are an important way to get different perspectives on a topic or issue (75%).
- Around seven in ten ACT residents agree that:
  - the arts should receive public funding (71%)
  - artists should have total freedom of expression (68%)
  - the arts allow them to connect to others (65%).

*Compared to other Australians, ACT residents are more likely to agree that:*

- *the arts impact child development (74%, compared to 64% of other Australians)*
- *the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life (85%, compared to 74%)*
- *the arts should be an important part of the education for every Australian (84%, compared to 75%)*
- *there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in the arts (65%, compared to 50%).*

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

While these shifts contrast with other findings in the National Arts Participation Survey, they are likely to reflect the heightened anxiety, disengagement and divisions within society at this point in time; and that many Australians maintain a narrow ingrained view of what the arts include.

This is discussed in more detail in [Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey](#).

## Giving to the arts

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

- One in three ACT residents give time or money to the arts (34%).
  - In 2016, 17% of ACT residents volunteered for the arts or helped artists or community groups with arts activities; 15% donated money; 13% joined an arts organisations membership program; and 13% donated to a crowdfunding campaign.

## The arts and cultural diversity

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

- One in three ACT residents engage with their cultural background through the arts (31%).
  - In 2016, visual arts and craft was the most common way ACT residents engaged (22%); followed by music or theatre (both 19%); creative writing (10%); and dance (8%).

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

- One in three ACT residents attend First Nations arts (34%).
  - In 2016, 24% of ACT residents attended First Nations visual arts and craft; 18% attended dance; 17% attended music; 15% attended First Nations storytelling; and 12% attended First Nations theatre.

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

- In 2016, 17% of ACT residents were involved in CACD activities that actively engaged community members in decision making and creation of art in collaboration with professional artists.

## Arts attendance

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

- Four in five ACT residents attend the arts (78%).
  - In 2016, almost two thirds of ACT residents attended theatre (63%); more than half attended visual arts (56%) or live music (52%); more than a third attended dance (37%); and one quarter attended literature events (25%).

*ACT residents are more likely to attend theatre (63%) than other Australians (41%).*

- Data available for the first time show that two in five ACT residents attend arts festivals (39%).
  - In 2016, more than a quarter of ACT residents attended multi-art form festivals (27%) or music festivals (26%); 18% attended theatre or dance festivals; 16% attended visual arts festivals; 10% attended literature festivals; and 9% attended First Nations festivals.

## Creative participation in the arts

Despite our busy lives, Australia remains a creative nation.

- Almost half of ACT residents creatively participate in the arts (47%).

- In 2016, three in ten created visual arts and craft (29%); and around two in ten participated in creative writing (21%), music (16%) or theatre (15%).

## Listening and reading

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

- Almost all ACT residents intentionally listen to recorded music (98%).
  - In 2016, 92% listened to music they owned; 88% listened via the radio/television; and 77% listened through paid or free online streaming services.
- More than nine in ten ACT residents read creative writing (93%).
  - In 2016, 76% of ACT residents read novels; 60% read creative non-fiction; 39% read short stories; 12% read graphic novels or comics; and 12% read poetry.

## Online engagement

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

- More than four in five ACT residents engage with the arts online (83%).
  - In 2016, 77% listened to music online; 44% researched or reviewed the arts or artists; 30% viewed visual arts, music, dance, theatre or creative writing online; and 9% created, learned to create or sold art online.
- More than one in three ACT residents use Facebook to connect with and learn about the arts or artists (36%); 29% use YouTube (29%); and 28% use the website of an artist or arts organisation.

## Notes on data interpretation

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

It is not possible to compare findings for the ACT over time because of the small sample size. This means that even what appear to be large changes over time may not be significantly different – this may be because they are not true differences in the population, or because the sample size is not large enough to detect a true difference.

All sample-based surveys are subject to survey error. For the 2016 ACT data, the margin of error for the total sample size at 50% is +/- 9%. This means that if 50% of survey respondents did a particular activity, then it is 95% likely that the population estimate will be between 41% and 59%.

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

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