

### 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.

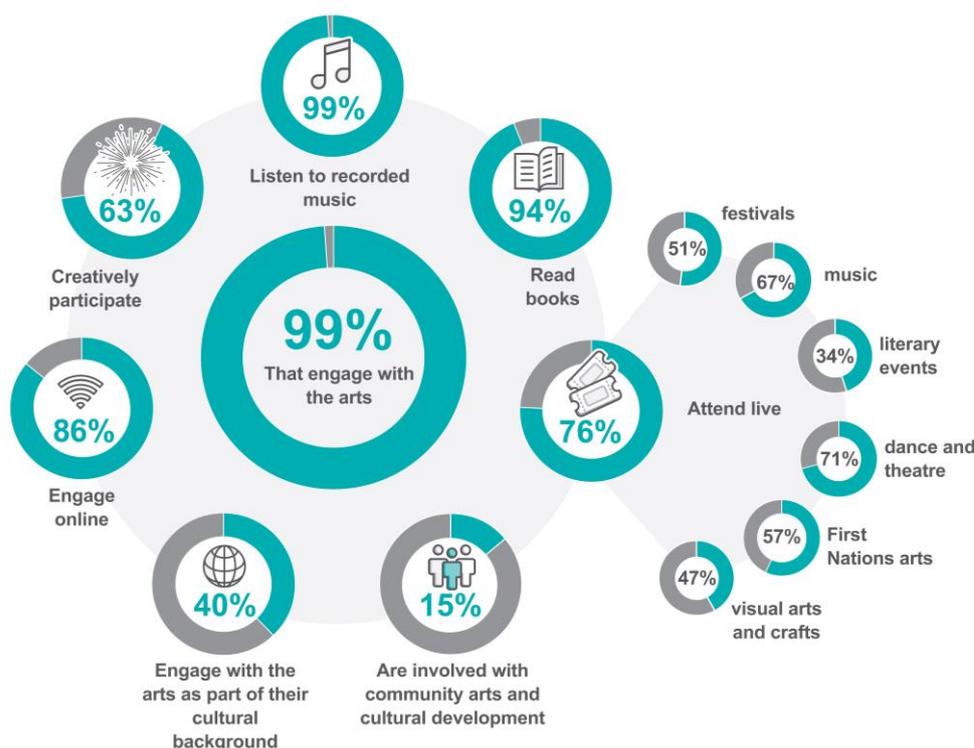
*Connecting Australians: Results of the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey* is the third in a landmark series by the Australia Council for the Arts. This research is designed to broaden the conversation about the arts, and to inform policy, programs and investment in the arts and well beyond. The 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 Northern Territory (NT).

**FIGURE 1: NT 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 NT survey respondents felt the arts have a ‘big’ or ‘very big’ impact on:
  - child development (74%)
  - their understanding of other people and cultures (69%)
  - their ability to think creatively and develop new ideas (62%)
  - their ability to express themselves (60%)
  - stimulating their minds (59%).

## Attitudes about the arts

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

- Around eight in ten NT survey respondents agree that:
  - artists make an important contribution to Australian society (82%)
  - the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian (81%)
  - it is exciting to see new styles and types of arts (80%)
  - they feel proud when Australians do well overseas (78%)
  - First Nations arts are an important part of Australia’s culture (76%) and are well represented in Australia (75%).
- Around seven in ten NT survey respondents agree that:
  - artists should have total freedom of expression (74%)
  - the arts allow them to connect to others (69%)
  - the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life (68%)
  - the arts in Australia reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia (66%).
- Around six in ten NT survey respondents agree that:
  - the arts should receive public funding (59%)
  - they require understanding to appreciate them fully (59%)
  - there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in the arts (58%)
  - the arts are an important way to get different perspectives on a topic or issue (55%).

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.

- Almost half of NT survey respondents give time or money to the arts (46%).
  - In 2016, 41% of NT survey respondents donated to a crowdfunding campaign; 26% volunteered for the arts or helped artists or community groups with arts activities; 9% joined an arts organisations membership program; and 8% donated money to the arts.

## **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.

- Four in ten NT respondents engage with their cultural background through the arts (40%).
  - In 2016, 28% of NT respondents engaged through music; 24% through dance; 14% through visual arts and craft; 7% through creative writing; and 4% through theatre.

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.

- More than half of NT survey respondents attend First Nations arts (57%).
  - In 2016, 46% of NT respondents attended First Nations dance; 37% attended First Nations music; 32% attended First Nations storytelling; 26% attended First Nations visual arts and craft; and 7% 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, 15% of NT survey respondents 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.

- Three quarters of NT survey respondents attend the arts (76%).
  - In 2016, two thirds of NT respondents attended live music (67%); 61% attended dance; 47% attended visual arts and craft; 45% attended theatre; 34% attended literature events.
- Data available for the first time show that half of NT respondents attend arts festivals (51%).
  - In 2016, 29% of NT respondents attended music festivals; 24% attended theatre or dance festivals; 16% attended visual arts and craft festivals; 13% attended First Nations festivals; 8% attended multi-art form festivals; and 2% attended literature festivals.

## **Creative participation in the arts**

Despite our busy lives, Australia remains a creative nation.

- Six in ten NT survey respondents creatively participate in the arts (63%).
  - In 2016, 58% created visual arts and craft; one in three creatively participated in dance (35%); three in ten did creative writing (30%) or creatively participated in music (29%); and 17% creatively participated in theatre.

## Listening to music

Listening to recorded music is the most popular way that Australians engage with the arts. Music is both ubiquitous and powerful – it can move people, help them through the day and provide a soundtrack to their lives.

- Almost all NT survey respondents intentionally listen to recorded music (99%).
  - In 2016, 89% listened via the radio/television; 88% listened to music they owned; and 73% listened through paid or free online streaming services.

## 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.

- Almost nine in ten NT survey respondents engage with the arts online (86%). In 2016:
  - 73% listened to music online; 46% viewed visual arts, music, dance, theatre or creative writing online; 44% researched or reviewed the arts or artists; 30% shared arts with others or engaged in an online arts community; 27% created, learned to create or sold art online; and 21% followed or interacted with an artist or arts organisation.
- Around one quarter of NT respondents use YouTube to connect with and learn about the arts or artists (24%), Facebook (23%) or the website of an artist or arts organisation (23%); and one fifth use Instagram (20%).

## 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 NT over time or to the rest of Australia because of the small sample size in NT. 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 sampling error. For the 2016 NT data, the margin of error at 50% is +/- 14%. This means that if 50% of survey respondents did a particular activity, then it is 95% likely that the population estimate will be between 36% and 64%.

This large margin of error requires a high degree of caution when interpreting the results for the NT.

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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