

### 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.

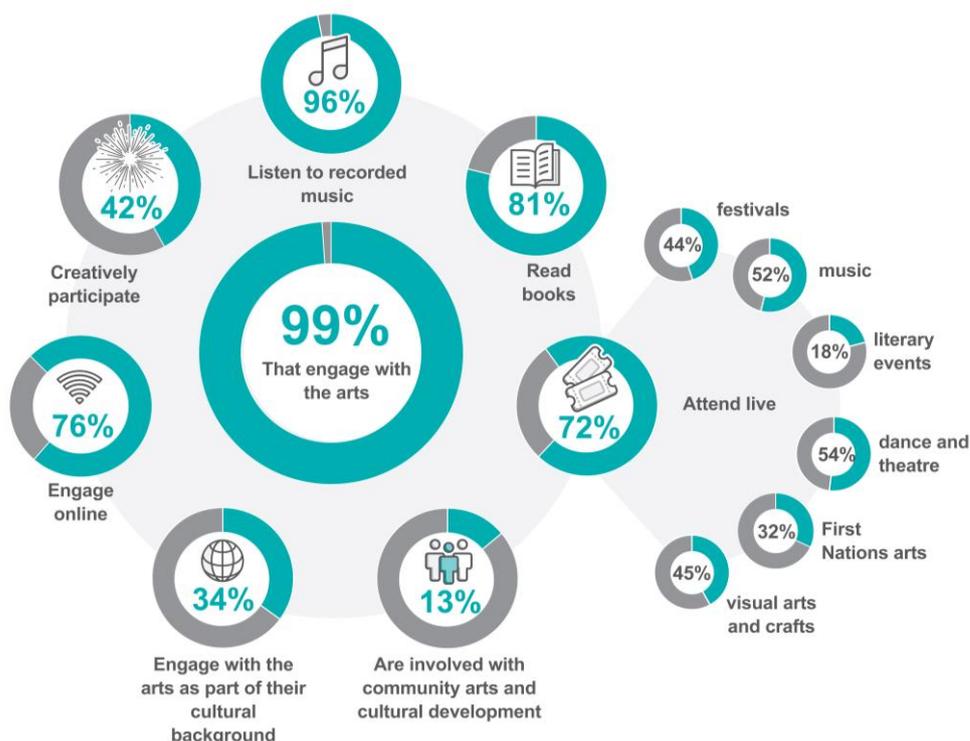
*Connecting Australians: Results of the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey* is the third in a landmark series by the Australia Council for the Arts. This research is designed to broaden the conversation about the arts, and to inform policy, programs and investment in the arts and well beyond. The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

**FIGURE 1: South Australians’ 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 line with national trends, more South Australians now believe the arts have a ‘big’ or ‘very big’ impact on:
  - their ability to express themselves (73%, up from 57% in 2013)
  - their ability to think creatively and develop new ideas (68%, up from 59%)
  - their sense of wellbeing and happiness (64%, up from 49%)
  - dealing with stress, anxiety or depression (62%, up from 52%)
  - shaping and expressing Australian identity (58%, up from 39%).
- Two in three South Australians agree that the arts impact child development (65%) and their understanding of other people and cultures (69%).

## 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 South Australians agree that:
  - First Nations arts are an important part of Australia’s culture (80%)
  - artists make an important contribution to Australian society (76%)
  - the arts reflect Australia’s cultural diversity (76%)
  - they feel proud when Australians do well overseas (76%).
- Around seven in ten South Australians agree that:
  - the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian (73%)
  - the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life (73%).

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

- In keeping with this trend, more South Australians ‘neither agree or disagree’ with attitude statements, such as:
  - there are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts (36% ‘neither agree or disagree’, up from 11% in 2013)
  - it is exciting to see new types and styles of arts (27% ‘neither agree or disagree’, up from 16% in 2013)
  - the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian (22% ‘neither agree or disagree’, up from 8% in 2013).

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 quarter of South Australians give time or money to the arts (25%).
  - In 2016, 15% of South Australians volunteered for the arts or helped artists or community groups with arts activities; 10% donated money; 7% joined an arts organisations membership program; and 5% 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 South Australians engage with their cultural background through the arts (34%).
  - In 2016, music was the most common way South Australians engaged (20%); followed by visual arts and craft (14%); dance (12%); theatre (11%); and creative writing (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 South Australians attend First Nations arts (32% in 2016, up from 17% in 2013 and 9% in 2009). The most common ways that South Australians engage with First Nations arts are through visual arts and craft (21%), and music (13%).

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, 13% of South Australians 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.

- Almost three quarters of South Australians attend the arts (71% in 2016, on par with previous years).
  - In 2016, more than half of South Australians attended live music (52%); 45% attended visual arts; 42% attended theatre; 31% attended dance; and 18% attended literature events.
- Data available for the first time show that more than four in ten South Australians attend arts festivals (44%).
  - In 2016, one a quarter attended music festivals (25%); 21% attended theatre or dance festivals; 19% attended visual arts festivals; 18% attended multi-art form festivals; 6% attended First Nations festivals; and 5% attended literature festivals.

## **Creative participation in the arts**

Despite our busy lives, Australia remains a creative nation.

- Four in ten South Australians creatively participated in the arts in 2016 (42%), on par with 2013.

- In 2016, more than one quarter of South Australians created visual arts and craft (27%); one fifth did creative writing (20%); 14% creatively participated in music; and one in ten creatively participated in dance (9%) and theatre (8%).

## Listening and reading

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

- Almost all South Australians intentionally listen to recorded music (96%).
  - In 2016, 91% listened via the radio/television; 87% listened to music they owned; and 73% listened through paid or free online streaming services – up from 38% in 2013 and 30% in 2009.
- Eight in ten South Australians read creative writing (81%).
  - In 2016, 72% of South Australians read novels; 49% read creative non-fiction; 41% read short stories; 24% read poetry; 12% read graphic novels or comics; and 10% read plays.
- While overall reading levels are similar to the rest of Australia, South Australians read more novels (72%, compared to 60%) and poetry (24%, compared to 14%).

*South Australians are more likely to read novels (72%) and poetry (24%), compared to other Australians (60% and 14% respectively).*

## 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.

- Three in four South Australians engage with the arts online (76%).
  - In 2016, 73% listened to music online (up from 38% in 2013 and 30% in 2009); 29% researched or reviewed the arts or artists; 25% viewed visual arts, music, dance, theatre or creative writing online; and 17% created, learned to create or sold art online.
- Facebook and YouTube are the most popular digital media that South Australians used to connect with and learn about the arts or artists (both 28%); followed by the website of an artist or arts organisation (15%); and Instagram (12%).

## 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.

All sample-based surveys are subject to sampling error. For the 2016 South Australian data, the margin of error at 50% is +/- 4%. This means that if 50% of survey respondents did a particular activity, then it is 95% likely that the population estimate will be between 46% and 54%. The margin of error for 2013 is +/- 7%, and for 2009 is +/- 7%.

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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