

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.

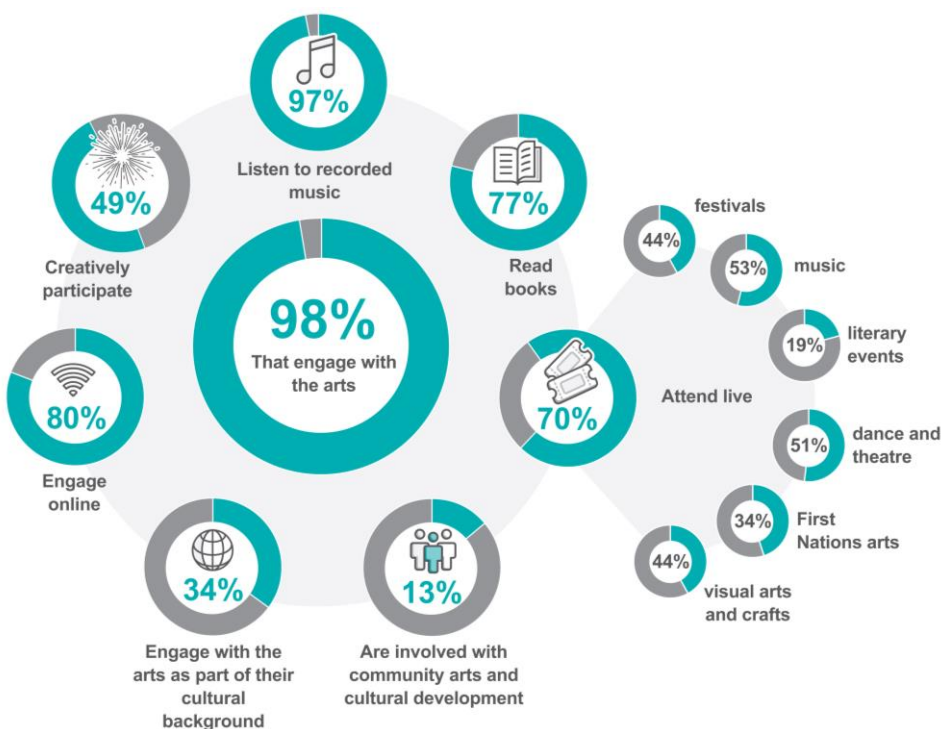
Connecting Australians: Results of the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey is the third in a landmark series by the Australia Council for the Arts. This research is designed to broaden the conversation about the arts, and to inform policy, programs and investment in the arts and well beyond. The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

This fact sheet provides an overview of results for Western Australia.

FIGURE 1: West 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.

- In line with national trends, more West Australians now believe the arts impact:
 - their ability to express themselves (69%, up from 58% in 2013)
 - their sense of wellbeing and happiness (59%, up from 51% in 2013)
 - shaping and expressing Australian identity (56%, up from 47% in 2013).
- Around two in three West Australians believe the arts impact their understanding of other people and cultures (63%) and child development (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.

- Around seven in ten West Australians agree that:
 - the arts in Australia reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia (74%, up from 66% in 2013)
 - the arts are an important way to get different perspectives on a topic or issue (74%)
 - the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life (72%)
 - the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian (71%)
 - artists should have total freedom of expression (70%)
 - it is exciting to see new styles and types of arts (70%).
- Around eight in ten West Australians agree that First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture (79%) and artists make an important contribution to Australian society (77%).

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 West Australians 'neither agree or disagree' with attitude statements, such as:
 - the arts should receive public funding (27% 'neither agree or disagree', up from 13% in 2013)
 - the arts are not really for people like me (20% 'neither agree or disagree', up from 8% in 2013)
 - the arts require understanding to appreciate them fully (29% 'neither agree or disagree', up from 12% in 2013).
- More West Australians now believe the arts are too expensive (44%, up from 35% in 2013); and the arts tend to attract people who are somewhat elitist or pretentious (40%, up from 29% 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.

- Three in ten West Australians give time or money to the arts (30%), up from 22% in 2013.
 - In 2016, 16% volunteered for the arts or helped artists or community groups with arts activities; 12% donated money; and 8% donated to a crowdfunding campaign, up from 3% in 2013.

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 third of West Australians engage with their own cultural background through the arts (34%).
 - In 2016, 20% engaged through music; 13% through visual arts and craft; 13% through theatre; 10% through dance; and 9% through creative writing.

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 West Australians attend First Nations arts (34%, up from 22% in 2013 and 17% in 2009).
 - In 2016, 20% attended First Nations visual arts and craft; 16% attended First Nations music; 15% attended First Nations dance; 11% attended First Nations storytelling; and 9% 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, 13% of West 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.

- Seven in ten West Australians attend the arts (70%), on par with previous years.
 - In 2016, half attended live music (53%); 44% attended visual arts; 39% attended theatre; 31% attended dance; and 19% attended literature events.
- Data available for the first time show that more than four in ten West Australians attend arts festivals (44%).
 - In 2016, a quarter of West Australians attended music festivals (25%); one fifth attended theatre or dance festivals (21%); 15% attended multi-art form festivals; 15% attended visual arts festivals; 5% attended First Nations festivals; and 4% attended literature festivals.

Creative participation in the arts

Despite our busy lives, Australia remains a creative nation.

- Half of West Australians creatively participate in the arts (49%), on par with 2013.

- In 2016, one third created visual arts and craft; 19% did creative writing; 16% creatively participated in music; 9% creatively participated in theatre; and 9% creatively participated in dance.

Listening and reading

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

- Almost all West Australians intentionally listen to recorded music (97%).
 - In 2016, 89% listened via the radio/television; 86% listened to music they owned; and 74% listened through paid or free online streaming services – a substantial increase from 2013 (41%) and 2009 (27%).
- Three in four West Australians read creative writing (77%).
 - In 2016, 58% read novels; 39% read creative non-fiction; 34% read short stories; 20% read graphic novels or comics; 14% read poetry; and 12% read plays.

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.

- Eight in ten West Australians engage with the arts online (80%).
 - In 2016, 74% listened to music online (up from 41% in 2013 and 27% in 2009); 30% researched or reviewed the arts or artists; 28% viewed arts online; 26% followed or interacted with an artist or arts organisation; 17% shared arts with others or engaged in an online arts community; and 14% created, learned to create or sold art online.
- Over one quarter West Australians use Facebook to connect with and learn about the arts or artists (29%) or YouTube (26%); 14% use the website of an artist or arts organisation; and 13% use Instagram.

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 Western Australia data, the margin of error at 50% is +/- 3%. This means that if 50% of survey respondents did a particular activity, then it is 95% likely that the population estimate will be between 47% and 53%. The margin of error for 2013 is +/- 4%, and for 2009 is +/- 6%.

This factsheet only highlights differences that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

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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