

Creating Our Future

Results of the National Arts Participation Survey

ACT highlights



Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey is the fourth report in a landmark series by the Australia Council for the Arts, building on the 2009, 2013 and 2016 editions.

The National Arts Participation Survey is a cornerstone of our evidence base. It provides vital new evidence about the essential role that arts and creativity play in Australian communities, showing the arts are a public good infused and embedded in the fabric of our daily lives.

Creating Our Future evidences Australians' strong and growing support for public funding, our growing recognition of the central importance of First Nations arts to Australia's culture, the importance of arts and creativity in child development and education. It also evidences the power of the arts to fuel our talent pipeline and jobs growth, while supporting social cohesion and wellbeing.

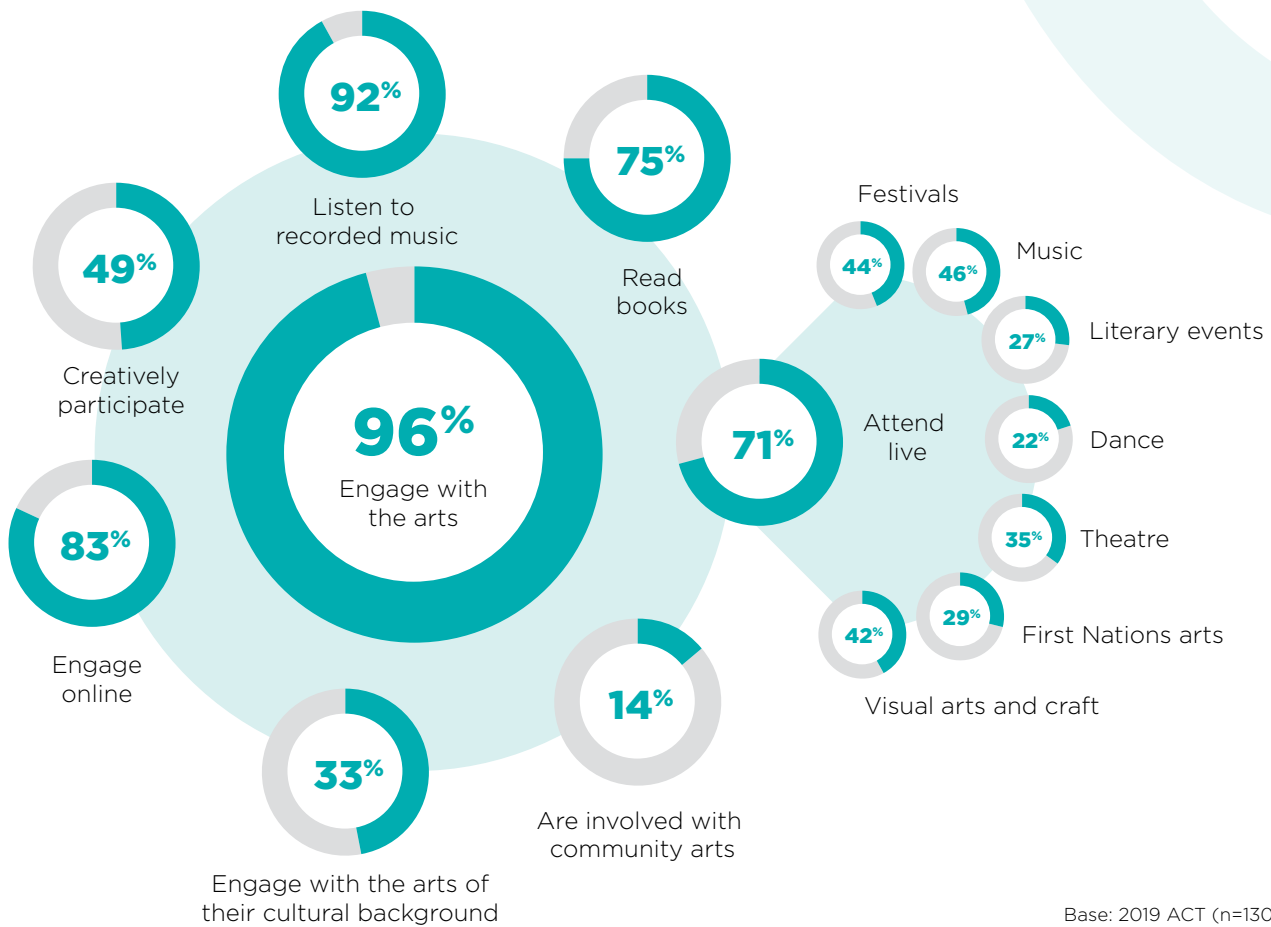
The survey was conducted not long before the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our world, lives and the cultural and creative industries. The survey results provide a benchmark of Australians' arts engagement before the impacts of the pandemic, providing much needed information as doors reopen, audiences are rebuilt and the cultural and creative industries are re-ignited.

For the full report and online resources see:

<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/creating-our-future>

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

Figure 1: ACT residents' arts engagement in 2019



Impacts of the arts

More Australians now recognise the many positive impacts the arts have on our daily lives and in our communities.

- More ACT residents now believe the arts have a ‘big’ or ‘very big’ impact on:
 - **stimulating their minds** (67%, up from 61% in 2016)
 - their **ability to express themselves** (65%, up from 59% in 2016)
 - **child development** (64%, up from 58% in 2016)
 - their **ability to think creatively and develop new ideas** (62%, up from 59% in 2016)
 - their **understanding of other people and cultures** (62%, up from 60% in 2016)
 - **our sense of wellbeing and happiness** (59%, up from 52% in 2016)
 - **helping them deal with stress, anxiety or depression** (57%, up from 46% in 2016)
 - **shaping and expressing Australian identity** (55%, up from 43% in 2016)
 - **bringing customers to local businesses** (47%, up from 36% in 2016)
 - **building creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce** (46%, new in 2019).

Attitudes about the arts

Following a shift in some attitudes towards ambivalence in 2016 (respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with attitude statements), ACT residents' attitudes about the arts are now less ambivalent and increasingly positive.

More ACT residents now agree that:

- **the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life** (82%, up from 71% in 2016)
- **the arts should be an important part of education** (77%, up from 70% in 2016)
- **artists make an important contribution to Australian society** (77%, up from 67% in 2016)
- **artists should have freedom of expression** (75%, up from 62% in 2016)
- **the arts in Australia reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia** (75%, up from 69% in 2016)
- **the arts should receive public funding** (69%, up from 61% in 2016)
- **the arts help to understand perspectives that are different to their own** (69%, up from 64% in 2016)
- **the arts allow them to connect with others** (49%, up from 38% in 2016)
- **there are plenty of opportunities for them to get involved in the arts** (49%, up from 45% in 2016)

More ACT residents are also feeling connected to the arts. There has been a decrease in the proportion of ACT residents who are feeling disconnected from the arts, with less than a quarter now agreeing that **the arts are not really for people like me** (23%, down from 28% in 2016). This is opposite to the national trend, where an increasing proportion agree that the arts are not for people like them.

Investment in arts and creativity

As well as strong and growing support for public funding for the arts in Australia, Australians have clear priorities for investment. The top three priorities for those from the ACT are:

- **ensuring children and young people have access to art and creative experiences to support learning and development** (75% ranked this in their top three priorities);
- **ensuring free or low-cost events are available** (64% ranked this in their top three priorities) and
- **ensuring art and creative experiences are available to support people's health and wellbeing** (56% ranked this in their top three priorities).

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. Just under a quarter of ACT residents are **giving to the arts** (23%), however this is down slightly from 2016 (26%). The leading ways ACT residents gave time or money to the arts include **unpaid work such as helping artists or community groups with arts activities** (11%, up from 8%) and **donating money to the arts** (10%, on par with 2016).

Cultural identity and diversity

First Nations arts

More Australians now agree First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture and interest in First Nations arts is growing. Prior to COVID-19, Australians' appetite for both online and live engagement with the arts was increasing too.

Following national trends, more ACT residents now agree **First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (80%, up from 77% in 2016). However, less than half of those from the ACT now believe **First Nations arts are well represented** (48%, down 10 percentage points from 58% in 2016), showing there is still work to be done to build the representation and profile of First Nations arts in Australia.

Interest and attendance in First Nations arts remains strong amongst ACT residents, despite dropping slightly since 2016.

Nearly three in ten ACT residents were **attending First Nations arts** (29%, down slightly from 31% in 2016) and over a third were **interested in First Nations arts** (37%, on par with 2016). Among those interested, over half reported a **growing interest** (56%).

Cultural diversity

The arts are a key way that Australians connect with, and share, our cultural backgrounds, identities and heritages. All Australians are enriched and benefit from the tapestry of our people and cultural landscape.

A third of those from the ACT **connect with, and share, their cultural background through arts and creativity** (33%), including by **attending arts events** (29%).

Eight in ten culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) ACT residents attend arts events overall (80%), including significant **cross-cultural arts engagement** and strong **engagement with First Nations arts**.

Live attendance

Prior to COVID-19, live attendance at arts events was thriving. Attending arts experiences in person enables Australians to come together as audiences and connect with artists in unmediated ways.

Seven in ten ACT residents **attend the arts** (71%, up from 62% in 2016).

Almost half attend **music** (46%), four in ten attend **visual arts and craft** (42%), more than one in three attend **theatre** (35%), 27% attend **literary events** and 22% attend **dance**.

44% attend **festivals**, including music festivals (25%), multi-art form festivals (23%), visual art festivals or fairs (13%) and performing arts festivals (6%).

Creative participation

Australia is an increasingly creative nation. Nearly half of ACT residents now **create, produce or collaborate in the making of art** (49%, up from 35% in 2016).

- Nearly a third create using a **digital platform** (31%).
- Three in ten ACT residents create **visual arts and craft** (29%).
- 18% create **music**.
- 14% produce **creative writing**.
- 14% creatively participate in **community arts**.
- 8% creatively participate in **dance**.
- 3% creatively participate in **theatre**.

Listening to music recorded music, reading and digital engagement

Listening to recorded music

Recorded music is infused throughout the lives of almost every Australian, providing a soundtrack to our lives and helping us through the day. More than nine in ten ACT residents listen to **recorded music** (92%).

- 63% listen to **music on radio or tv**.
- Nearly six in ten **stream music online for free** (e.g. YouTube) (59%).
- Half of ACT residents **listen to music they own** (either downloaded or a physical copy e.g. CDs/vinyl) (50%).
- 39% **stream music through a paid subscription** (e.g. Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music).

Reading

Despite busy lives and digital distractions, reading remains a fundamental activity for Australians and provides a lifetime of enjoyment.

In line with national trends, the proportion of ACT residents who **read for pleasure** (75%) has increased (up 13 percentage points from 62% in 2016). The most popular types of reading material are **novels or short stories** (55%), **creative non-fiction** such as biography or history (35%) and **instructional non-fiction** such as guidebooks or cookbooks (33%).

Print books remain the most popular format, read by more than seven in ten ACT residents (71%). Over four in ten read **e-books** (42%) and around a third listen to **audiobooks** (32%).

Australia is an increasingly
creative nation

Digital engagement

Most ACT residents **engage with the arts online** (83%, up from 79% in 2016). In the digital age, the arts are more accessible than ever. **Listening to streamed music** remains the most popular way to engage (71%).

Over half of ACT residents **use digital platforms to engage with the arts** (59%), including **YouTube** (37%), **Facebook** (34%), and **Instagram** (24%).

More than three in ten ACT residents **express themselves creatively on digital platforms** (31%), including through image galleries like **Instagram** (10%), **creative writing** such as blogs or fan-fiction (9%) and **memes** (8%). But from video games to creative blogs, those from the ACT, like Australians overall, have differing views of which digital creations can be considered art.

Research approach

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was conducted from September to November 2019 with the survey sample of 8,928 Australians aged 15 years and over weighted to be nationally representative based on age, gender and location (by states and territories and metropolitan/regional Australia). The survey sample included 130 ACT residents.

Evolving with the times, the survey went online in 2019 after being conducted through a mix of telephone and online surveys in 2016. Due to this change, the results that are most comparable for showing trends over time are the results from the surveys conducted online in 2016. **Given the changes made to the National Arts Participation Survey, the previously published results in the *Connecting Australians* report are different to the 2016 data used for trend analysis in the *Creating Our Future* report.**

