

Creating Our Future

Results of the National Arts Participation Survey



Northern Territory 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.

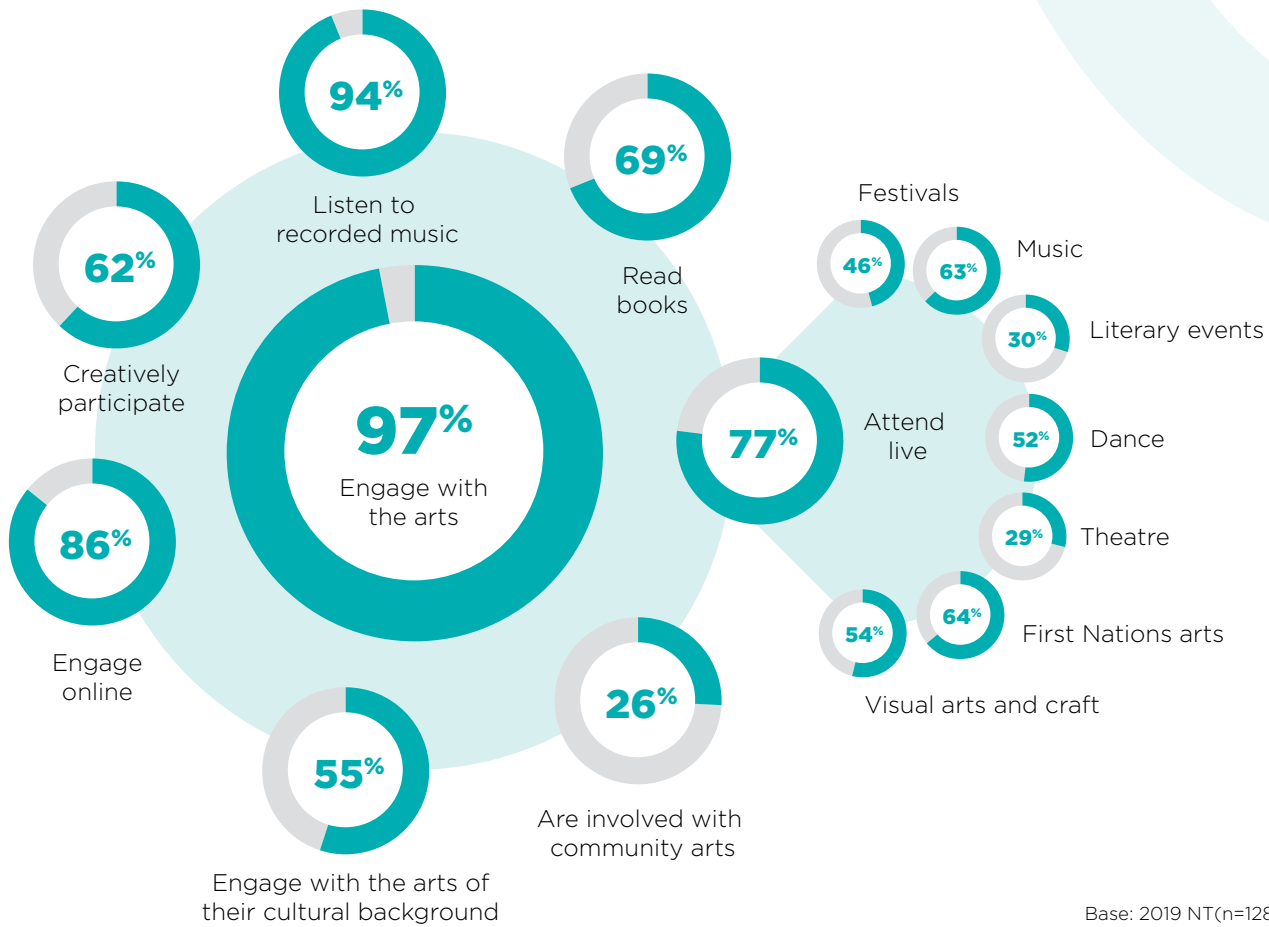
The survey was conducted not long before the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our world, lives and the cultural and creative industries. The survey results provide a benchmark of Australians' arts engagement before the impacts of the pandemic, providing much needed information as doors reopen, audiences are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

Figure 1: NT 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.

- In line with national trends, even more NT residents now believe the arts have a ‘big’ or ‘very big’ impact on:
 - their **ability to express themselves** (78%, up from 64% in 2016)
 - their **understanding of other people and cultures** (76%, up from 54% in 2016)
 - **child development** (75%, up from 65% in 2016)
 - **stimulating their minds** (75%, up from 56% in 2016)
 - their **ability to think creatively and develop new ideas** (74%, up from 55% in 2016)
 - **helping them deal with stress, anxiety or depression** (70%, up from 43% in 2016).
 - their **sense of wellbeing and happiness** (66%, up from 52% in 2016)
 - **shaping and expressing Australian identity** (65%, up from 50% in 2016)
 - **building creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce** (58%, new in 2019)
 - **bringing customers to local businesses** (55%, up from 33% in 2016).

Attitudes about the arts

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

More NT residents now agree that:

- **the arts should be an important part of education** (91%, up from 64% in 2016)
- **the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life** (82%, up from 60% in 2016)
- **the arts help to understand perspectives that are different to their own** (82%, up from 53% in 2016)
- **artists make an important contribution to Australian society** (82%, up from 71% in 2016)
- **the arts should receive public funding** (79%, up from 48% in 2016)
- **artists should have freedom of expression** (77%, up from 69% in 2016)
- **the arts in Australia reflect the diversity of cultures present in Australia** (74%, up from 58% in 2016)
- **the arts allow them to connect with others** (64%, up from 45% in 2016)
- **there are plenty of opportunities for them to get involved in the arts** (60%, up from 55% in 2016).

However, there has also been an increase in the proportion of NT residents who are feeling disconnected from the arts, with a quarter agreeing *that **the arts are not really for people like me*** (25%, up from 19% in 2016), which is a continuing national trend.

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 NT residents are:

- **ensuring children and young people have access to art and creative experiences to support their learning and development** (79% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment);
- **ensuring free or low-cost events are available** (56% ranked this in their top three priorities) and
- **ensuring art and creative experiences are available to support our health and wellbeing** (53% 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. NT residents are **giving to the arts** at a slightly decreased rate (26%, down from 33% in 2016), including **doing unpaid work**, for example, helping artists or community groups with arts activities (14%, down from 19% in 2016) and contributing to a **crowd funding** effort (5%, down from 19% in 2016). On the other hand, **volunteer work** for the arts *has* increased among NT residents (16%, up from 13% in 2016), as has **donating money** (9%, up from 6%).

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 First Nations arts was increasing too.

In line with national trends, even more NT residents now agree **First Nations arts are an important part of Australia's culture** (83%, up from 57% in 2016). However, only half of NT residents believe **First Nations arts are well represented** (51%, down from 68% in 2016), showing there is still work to be done to build the representation and profile of First Nations arts in Australia.

Both attendance and interest in First Nations arts were strong and growing prior to COVID-19. Two-thirds of NT residents were **attending First Nations arts** (64%, up from 56% in 2016) and were **interested in First Nations arts** (62%). Among those NT residents interested in First Nations arts, almost three quarters reported a **growing interest** (72%).

In addition, NT residents are also **twice as likely to attend** First Nations arts and are **more likely to be interested** in First Nations arts compared to Australians overall (62% and 40% respectively).

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.

Over half of all NT residents **connect with, and share, their cultural background through arts and creativity** (55%), including by **attending arts events** (44%).

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) NT residents are much more likely to attend arts events focused on their cultural background or community (74%) than CALD Australians overall (55%). They are also more likely to attend arts events overall (91%, compared to 82% of CALD Australians overall), 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.

Over three quarters of NT residents now **attend the arts** (77% in 2019, on par with 2016).

More than six in ten attend **music** (63%), over half attend **visual arts and craft** (54%) and **dance** (52%), 29% attend **theatre** and 30% attend literary events.

46% attend **festivals**, including multi-art form festivals (25%), music festivals (17%), performing arts festivals (16%) and visual art festivals or fairs (9%).

Creative participation

Australia is an increasingly creative nation. Over half of all NT residents now **create, produce or collaborate in the making of art** (62%, up from 45% in 2016).

- Two in five NT residents create **visual arts and craft** (39%).
- Almost a third are creative using a **digital platform** (32%).
- 26% creatively participate in **community arts**.
- 14% of NT residents create **music**.
- 14% creatively participate in **dance**.
- 13% **produce creative writing**.
- 2% 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. Over nine in ten NT residents listen to recorded music (94%).

- 70% of NT residents listen to **music on radio or tv**.
- Half **stream music online for free** (e.g. YouTube) (49%).
- 31% **listen to music they own** (either downloaded or a physical copy e.g. CDs/vinyl).
- Two in five NT residents **stream music through a paid subscription** (e.g. Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music) (39%).

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 NT residents who **read for pleasure** (69%) has increased (up from 66% 2016). The most popular types of reading material are **novels or short stories** (48%), **instructional non-fiction** such as guidebooks or cookbooks (26%) and **creative non-fiction** such as biography or history (25%).

Print books remain the most popular format, read by two-thirds of NT residents (65%). Over a third of NT residents read **e-books** (36%) and a quarter listen to **audiobooks** (25%).

Australia is an increasingly creative nation

Digital engagement

Most NT residents now **engage with the arts online** (86%, up from 84% in 2016). In the digital age, the arts are more accessible than ever. **Listening to streamed music** remains the most popular way to engage (67%).

Seven in ten NT residents **use digital platforms to engage with the arts** (69%), including **Facebook** (43%), **YouTube** (37%) and **Instagram** (23%).

Almost a third of NT residents **express themselves creatively on digital platforms** (32%), including through **image galleries** (16%), **music or songs** (8%) and **creative writing** (7%) and **memes** (7%). However, like all Australians, from video games to creative blogs NT residents 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 128 NT 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.**

The 2019 data collection for the Northern Territory was also boosted by including face to face interviews in First Nations communities. Due to this mixed methods sampling, some 2019 data may skew more positively. Please use comparisons to 2016 data with caution.