

# The arts are important in the lives of Australian children and young people



Report May 2014

## How do the arts impact children?

While the arts enrich the lives of all Australians, people recognise that the arts play an important role for children in particular. Two thirds of Australians think that the impact the arts have on the development of children is big or very big. The arts also play an important part in education (89 percent of people agree). This confirms a wide body of international research on the impact of arts in education. For example, a recent study by the University of Sydney and the Australia Council for the Arts has found that engagement in the arts benefits students not just in the classroom, but also in life.



The importance of arts for children has been recognised by the arts community and has led to an increase in arts events and activities aimed at children. For example, Melbourne Writers Festival included more than 70 events for primary and secondary school students in its 2014 program.

## What about when children grow up?

As children, about half of Australians were taken to the arts or cultural events by their parents at least once a year. A little over a third were never taken to an arts or cultural event by their parents.

Being taken to arts events as a child influences later arts engagement as an adult. People who were taken to arts events as children are more likely to create or attend arts. Those never taken to the arts are less likely to create or attend art.

For example, of those people who were never taken to the arts as children, only 37 percent create arts, while 61 percent of people who were taken to the arts every few months now create art. The picture is similar for attendance, with childhood attendance being related to higher attendance in 2013. Being taken to the arts as a child by your parents seems to embed the arts in people's lives in a way that follows us through to adulthood.

## Impact of attending at the arts in childhood on adult arts engagement

	Attended every few months as a child %	Never attended as a child %
Attended art in 2013	84	59
Created art in 2013	61	37

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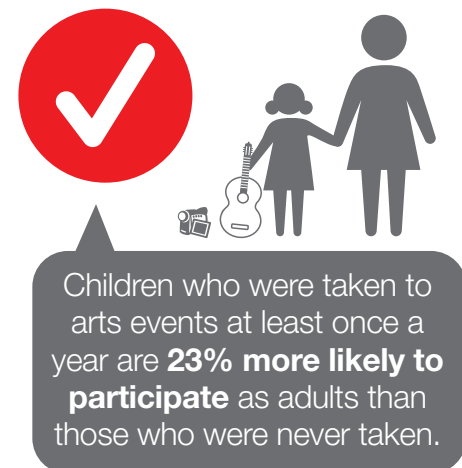
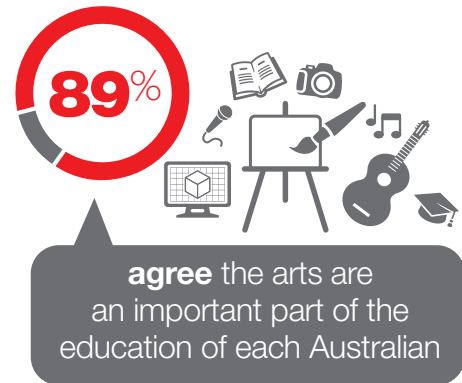
## How do young adults engage with the arts?

Young people (aged 16-24) are much more creatively engaged than other Australians. In 2013, almost two thirds of young people created arts during the past year, compared with 44 percent of people aged over 24. Previous research shows that this is largely driven by activities in school and tertiary education, suggesting that it is a life phase effect.

Young people use the internet to connect with the arts much more than others. For example:

- 80 percent of young people participated in the arts online by doing things like downloading or viewing art, compared with 51 percent of other Australians.
- 41 percent participated creatively online, compared with 19 percent.
- 66 percent used the internet to research, interact with or follow artists, arts events or arts organisations online, compared with 39 percent.

The arts also have a unique role for young Australians. Compared to people aged over 24, young people are much more likely to say that the arts have a big impact on self expression and creative thinking.



For more information on our research and to view other fact sheets and resources, visit [australiacouncil.gov.au](http://australiacouncil.gov.au)