

# Creating Our Future

## Results of the National Arts Participation Survey

### Music factsheet

Nhatty Man and crowd at the album launch for Solomon Sisay's *Sitota*, Footscray Community Arts Centre in November 2019. Credit: Raphael Recht Photography.

*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, exploring Australians' engagement with and attitudes towards the arts and creative activity.

Building on the 2009, 2013 and 2016 editions, *Creating Our Future* 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.

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.

The full report includes detailed insights into different art forms, including music.

Key findings about participating in **music** are included in this factsheet.

**48%**

of Australians  
attend live music  
events or festivals

**4.2**

live music events  
attended for every  
Australian in 2019

**15%**

of Australians  
create music

**92%**

of Australians  
listen to recorded  
music

## Introduction

Music is ubiquitous and powerful. It speaks to all tastes, stages of life and backgrounds and provides a soundtrack to our lives. Findings in *Creating Our Future* highlight the significant role of music in Australia.

Almost every Australian connects with music in some form – 92% of Australians listen to recorded music and around half of Australians attended live music events prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most popular art form experienced.

Festivals are a part of life for many Australians – around one in four Australians attended music festivals in 2019. Festivals bring people together and play a pivotal role in tourism in Australia with many music festivals drawing tourists to regional and remote areas. From *Groovin the Moo* held in six regional centres to the *Big Red Bash* in Birdsville, on the edge of the Simpson Desert in Outback Queensland, Australians have the opportunity to discover a range of music festival experiences.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on social, economic and cultural life in Australia and resulted in the closure of music venues and the cancellation of events and programs. However, the music industry has remained resilient, adaptable and innovative having consistently been at the forefront of evolving technology and audience behaviour.

With the rapid rise of online streaming services over the past decade, streaming revenue now accounts for the majority of recorded music industry revenue in Australia<sup>1</sup>. Prior to COVID-19 two thirds of Australians listened to music through online streaming services (free and paid) in 2019. Digital platforms continue to provide new ways to create and consume music, however live performance remains a key source of income for many musicians.<sup>2</sup>

Along with live attendance and listening to music, more than one in seven Australians also create music themselves by singing, playing musical instruments, or writing, mixing and composing music. Music brings Australian communities together, uplifting us and has proven health benefits. For example, community choirs have demonstrated positive impacts on our wellbeing and community cohesion.<sup>3</sup>

Read on for more on Australians engagement with music...

For the full report and online resources see:

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

1 Australian Recording Industry Association 2020, *2019 ARIA Yearly Statistics*.

2 Bartleet, B. L. et al 2020, *Making Music Work: Sustainable Portfolio Careers for Australian Musicians*, Australia Research Council Linkage Report, Brisbane: Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University. See also Chen S et al 2019, *Born Global: Australian music exports, ARC Linkage Project - The economic and cultural value of Australian music exports*, July 2019, available at <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/born-global>

3 For example, see Branigan E and Barker C 2018, *The Power of Song: an evaluation of the With One Voice Program*, Swinburne University of Technology; Moss H et al. 2018, *Exploring the perceived health benefits of singing in a choir: an international cross-sectional mixed-methods study*, *Perspectives in Public Health*, 138, 3; Clift, S et al. 2008, *Choral Singing, Well-being and Health*, Sidney De Haan Reports. Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health, Canterbury; and Clift S et al. 2010, *Group singing, wellbeing and health: a systematic mapping of research evidence*. UNESCO Observatory, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, the Melbourne Refereed E-Journal, 2.

# Attendance

## Half of Australians attend live music and attendance was increasing prior to COVID-19

In 2019, 9.9 million Australians attended live music events or festivals, or 48% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 43% in 2016.<sup>4</sup>

On average, those who attended live music attended 10.9 music events in 2019. Across the Australian population, this equates to 4.2 live music events attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.<sup>5</sup>

### What types of live music do Australians attend?

- More than a quarter of Australians attend **contemporary music** such as pop, rock, electronic, dance, hip hop, country, jazz or blues (28%).
- 8% of Australians attend **classical music**.
- 7% of Australians attend **traditional or folk music**.
- 6% of Australians attend **art music**.
- 4% of Australians attend **opera**.

### Where do people attend live music?

- **Concert halls or theatres** are the main venues where Australians attend live music (19%).
- This is followed by **pub, clubs or bars** (16%) and **outdoor public places** (16%).
- 15% of Australians attend live music at **stadiums or arenas**.
- 6% of Australians attend live music in **educational settings** (e.g. school, college, university).
- 4% of Australians attend live music **at a place of worship**.<sup>6</sup>

### Who attends live music events and festivals?

- Attendance at live music peaks **between the ages of 15–29 years** (66%).
- Three quarters of **First Nations respondents** attend live music (75%).
- Three in five **CALD respondents** attend live music (62%).
- Nearly half of **respondents without disability** attend live music (48%).
- Three in five **parents with children aged under 16 years** attend live music (58%).
- Half of **major city residents** attend live music (49%).
- **Those with the highest household income** (more than \$200,000) have strong attendance (62%). Attendance at live music decreases steadily with household income to 52% for those with a household income of \$70,000–\$99,000 and to 38% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

4 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

5 Frequency of attendance does not include attendance at festivals.

6 Data on the types of live music Australians attend and where they attend does not include festivals.

## Solomon Sisay

The November 2019 launch of world class Ethiopian saxophonist Solomon Sisay's debut album, *Sitota* was the culmination of a year-long project working and collaborating with fellow Ethiopian musician Nhatty Man.

*Sitota* launched at Footscray Community Arts Centre to a sold-out crowd as well as attracting media and industry representatives. The album, played regularly on radio, has led to performance opportunities at leading jazz festivals – increasing audiences, sharing his music and influencing and inspiring up and coming Ethiopian musicians.

Solomon Sisay. Credit: Raphael Recht Photography.



## Creative participation

### More than three million Australians create music

In 2019, 3.1 million Australians created music, or 15% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 12% in 2016.

#### How are Australians creating music?

- One in ten Australians **play a musical instrument** (10%).
- 6% of Australians **sing**.
- 6% of Australians **write songs, mix or compose music**.

#### Who's making music?

- One in five **men** create music (18%).
- Creative participation in music peaks **between the ages of 15–24 years** (28%).
- Three in ten **First Nations respondents** create music (30%).
- A quarter of **CALD respondents** create music (26%).
- More than one in five **respondents with disability** create music (22%).
- One in five **parents of children aged under 16 years create** music (20%).
- Creative participation in music is strong among **those in the highest household income bracket of more than \$200,000** (22%) and decreases steadily with income to 16% of those with household income of \$100,000–\$139,999 and to 13% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

## Listening to recorded music

### Recorded music is infused throughout the lives of almost every Australian

Recorded music provides a soundtrack to our lives: bringing us joy, connection, solace and helping us through challenging times and reminding us of important times. In 2019, 19 million Australians chose to listen to recorded music, or 92% of the population aged 15 years and over.

While this is a slight decrease from 95% in 2016,<sup>7</sup> questions about Australians' engagement with recorded music were updated in the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey.<sup>8</sup> Small decreases may reflect changes in the way these questions were asked rather than real change. However, the data clearly indicates that fewer Australians are listening to music they own or listening to music on radio or TV than they were in 2016, with online streaming (either paid or free) now on par with listening on radio or TV.

#### Who engages with recorded music in different ways?

- Two in three Australians choose to listen to music **on radio or television** (68%). **Australians aged 45 years and over** are most likely to listen in this way (75%). One in three Australians listen to music on the radio or television **daily** (34%) and three in five listen to music on the radio or television at least **once a week** (60%).
- Over half of Australians **stream music online for free** (e.g. YouTube) (55%). Australians **aged under 45** are the most likely to listen in this way (67%). Around one in five Australians stream music online for free **daily** (18%) and more than four in ten stream music online for free at least **once a week** (44%).
- More than one in three Australians **stream music through a paid subscription** (e.g. Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music) (36%). **Australians aged under 45** are nearly three times more likely to stream music through a paid subscription (52%, compared to 18% of those aged 45 years or more). Around one in five Australians stream music through a paid subscription **daily** (18%).
- More than one in three Australians listens to **music they own** (either downloaded or a physical copy e.g. CDs/vinyl) (37%).

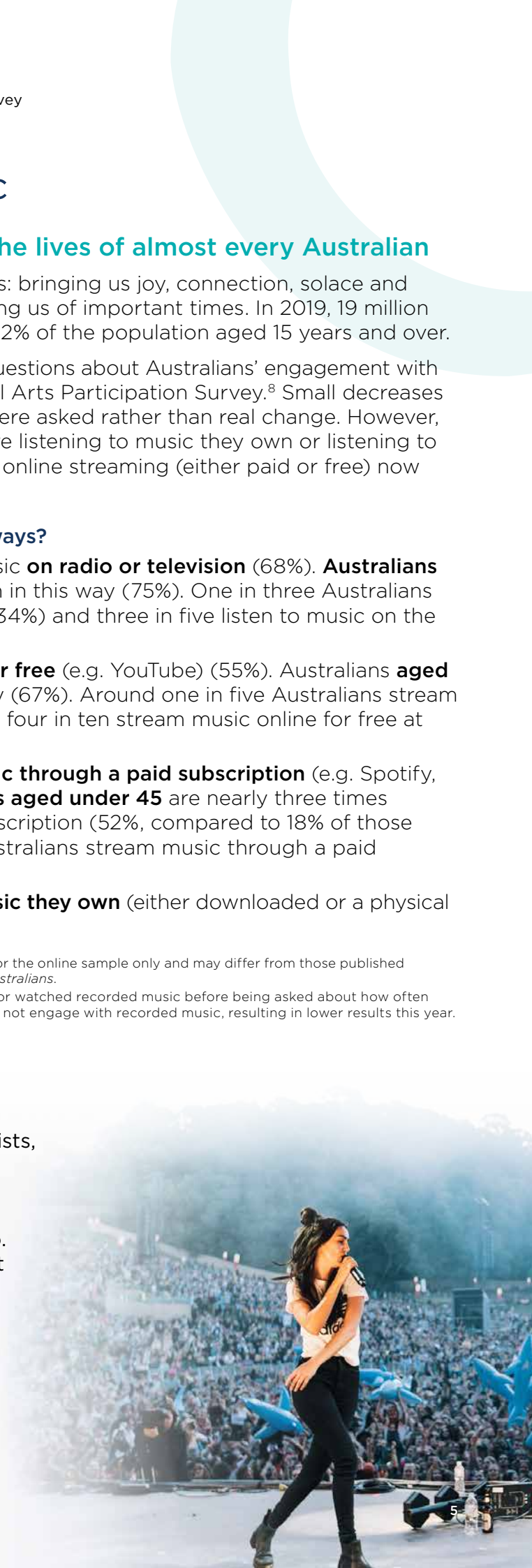
7 For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

8 In 2019 respondents were asked about whether they had listened and/or watched recorded music before being asked about how often they did. This may have removed some response bias for those who do not engage with recorded music, resulting in lower results this year.

## Amy Shark

Amy Shark is one of Australia's favourite music artists, with over two million monthly listeners on Spotify. After years of self-producing her own music, Amy's first singles *Adore* and *I Said Hi* shot to the top of the charts and dominated commercial radio. Her debut album *Love Monster* won four awards at the 2018 ARIAs from nine nominations, including Album of the Year. In June 2019, Amy released a new single *Everybody Rise* landing the highest radio airplay debut of any Australian in 2020 to date (based on Radio Monitor).

Amy Shark on stage. Credit: PR Image.





Bendigo Groovin the Moo – crowd shot. Credit: Mackenzie Sweetnam.

## 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).

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.**