

Media release

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Audiences are coming back, with purpose: Australians turn to arts and culture to improve their wellbeing

The 2022 National Arts Participation Survey provides the first comprehensive study of Australians' engagement with arts and creativity since the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results reinforce just how important arts, culture and creativity are for helping us through difficult times.

Nearly all Australians (97%) engaged in arts and culture in some form in 2022, 84% acknowledged that arts and creativity have positive impacts for individuals, communities, and the economy, and 68% attended live events and festivals - all of which are consistent with 2019.

As with the previous 2019 survey, more than half of all Australians acknowledge the benefits of arts and creativity to personal wellbeing (56% in both years). However, the 2022 results show that there has been a strong rise in people acting on that belief.

"The findings show that there has been a substantial increase in those who are attending arts and cultural events to improve their wellbeing. A third of all Australians reported this motivation in 2022, up from a quarter in 2019," said Creative Australia's CEO, Adrian Collette AM.

It is likely that the impacts of the pandemic contributed to this shift - almost half of Australians said that creative activities and experiences helped with their mental health or wellbeing during the pandemic (48%).

The 2022 survey, titled *Creating Value: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*, shows consistency across several measures pre and post pandemic, meaning that Australians have maintained connections to arts and creativity and continue to value them in their lives and communities.

However, Australians are now attending less frequently. Among those who attended live events and festivals weekly attendance dropped across all art forms and more Australians were only attending every few months.

"While there's been a shift toward attending less frequently, there has been a concurrent increase in the proportion of people who want to attend more. Cost and location continue to be the main barriers to attendance," said Mr. Collette.

Entertainment, social connection, and a desire to understand other perspectives and cultures continue to be the most common reasons for attending arts and cultural events.

The results also show Australians are increasingly sharing, connecting, creating, and experiencing arts and culture online. Almost 9 in 10 Australians (88%) engaged with arts and culture online in 2022, up from 82% in 2019.

“Australians value what arts and cultural engagement brings to their lives and want to engage more. Given cost of living pressures and barriers to attendance, Australians value how digital technology broadens access to arts and creative experiences, enabling flexibility and providing access to a range of creative experiences that wouldn’t otherwise be available. However, many also miss the atmosphere of live events when viewing online,” said Mr. Collette.

About the National Arts Participation Survey

The 2022 National Arts Participation Survey is the latest in a landmark series that has been tracking Australians’ engagement with arts and creativity since 2009. It was conducted in September–October 2022 and the results are based on a nationally representative sample of 9,396 people aged 15 years and over.

Additional bespoke surveys were conducted with First Nations people living in regional and remote communities, Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with intellectual disability.

This latest edition provides insights into Australians’ arts engagement following the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to the role of arts and culture for our individual and collective wellbeing.

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