

Spotlight

Skills, jobs and economic prosperity

Creative skills are key to future workforces

In Australia and internationally, creativity is recognised as critical to growth in the modern, knowledge-based economy. Research repeatedly identifies creative skills as essential in generating a resilient labour force and creativity as key to the 21st century professional skillset.⁴⁶

Creative skills have been integral to the fast-growing industries in Australia over the past decade,⁴⁷ and Australian and international studies have identified a growing need for creative thinking and skills in the workforces of the future.⁴⁸

Results from the 2022 National Arts Participation Survey show that a large number of Australians recognise the importance of creative skills in the future of work and the key role they play in learning and development. One in two Australians says the arts have a 'big' or 'very big' impact on **building creative skills that will be necessary for the future workforce** (46%) and three in five Australians say the arts have a 'big' or 'very big' impact on **our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas** (59%).



Footnote numbers correspond to those in the full **Creating Value: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey 2022 Report**.

46 World Economic Forum 2016, *New Vision for Education: Fostering social and emotional learning through technology*. Easton E and Djumalieva J 2018, *Creativity and the Future of Skills*. Cunningham S, Theilacker M, Gahan P, Callan V and Rainnie A 2016, *Skills and Capabilities for Australian Enterprise Innovation*, Australian Council of Learned Academies.

47 Including 'professional, scientific and technical services'. Australian Bureau of Communications and Arts Research 2019, *Creative Skills for the Future Economy*.

48 McKinsey Global Institute 2021, *The Future of Work After COVID-19*. Bakshi H, Downing J, Osborne M and Schneider P 2017, *The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030*, Pearson and Nesta.



Hatched Opening Night Party,
Perth Institute of Contemporary
Arts (PICA), 2023.
Credit: Danika Zuks.

First Nations and CALD respondents are the most likely groups to attend arts events to *develop skills for education, training or work* (23% of First Nations respondents and 19% of CALD respondents, compared to 12% of Australians overall). In addition, four in five specifically-engaged respondents with intellectual disability value the arts as *they help them understand and learn things* (83%).⁴⁹

Australian creatives are applying their skills in other industries

Creative skills are embedded across the workforce and economy in a range of sectors. In 2021, nearly 220,000 people were employed in creative roles embedded in other industries, including in education, finance and manufacturing.⁵⁰ Around a quarter of those employed in information, media and telecommunications, and a fifth of those employed in professional, scientific and technical services hold a formal qualification in a creative skill.⁵¹

Research shows strong evidence that creative workers embedded in industries other than creative industries are in high demand.⁵² The incomes of creative workers (creative occupations in the creative industries and in other industries, as well as other occupations in the creative industries) are on average higher than the income of those without creative skills or not working in the creative industries. However, cultural production workers, particularly in music and performing arts, have lower incomes and work fewer hours than other creatives, for example industrial design professionals and those employed in software development occupations.⁵³

Arts and creativity play a key role in learning, development and education

The arts have the power to help students develop personal, social and cognitive skills that transfer to and improve performance in a wide range of academic and social situations.⁵⁴

Australians value arts and creativity in education for the positive benefits they can have on our future generations' lives. Three in five Australians say the arts have a 'big' or 'very big' impact on *child development* (61% compared to 63% in 2019). Three in four Australians agree that *creative activities should be an important part of education* (74% compared to 75% in 2019). Women are more likely than men to agree *creative activities should be an important part of education* (80% compared to 68%).

There is strong support for public funding for the arts for educational outcomes. The second top funding priority among Australians is *ensuring young people have access to art and creative experiences to support their learning and development* (65%). Parents with children under 16 place particular importance on art education for young people, with three quarters choosing *ensuring children and young people have access to art and creative experiences to support learning and development* in their top three funding priorities (74%).

49 Based on a sample size of 93 specifically-engaged respondents with intellectual disability. This cohort completed an Easy Read focused version of the survey and therefore is not included in the total of 9,396 people surveyed in 2022. The methodology for capturing insights from people with intellectual disability in 2022 differs from the methodology used in 2019, and therefore it cannot be directly compared. See 'Research Approach' (page 17) for more detail.

50 University of Canberra 2022, *The Creative Economy in Australia: What Census 2021 tells us, Briefing paper 1*.

51 Australian Bureau of Communications and Arts Research 2019, *Creative Skills for the Future Economy*.

52 University of Canberra 2022, *The Creative Economy in Australia: What Census 2021 tells us, Briefing paper 2*.

53 University of Canberra 2022, *The Creative Economy in Australia: What Census 2021 tells us, Briefing paper 2*.

54 Australia Council 2020, *Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning program in schools*.

Creativity has the power to drive local and regional economies and foster more prosperous, connected communities

Arts and creativity are critical to bringing life back into our cities, regions, culture and economy. Our creative industries are a powerful driver of regional, domestic and international tourism, supporting small businesses, regional and remote economies and creative ‘hotspots’.⁵⁵

Prior to border closures, arts and cultural tourism had become a substantial – and growing – driver for domestic and regional tourism, drawing ‘high-value’ travellers (those likely to spend more, go further and stay longer).⁵⁶ The arts were also increasingly on the itinerary for international visitors.⁵⁷

Live music, performance and arts events play a critical role in reinvigorating our tourism and hospitality. In 2022, 14.1 million Australians, or 68% of the population aged 15 and over, **attended arts events or festivals**. This is consistent with the survey findings from 2019 which found 68% of Australians **attended arts events or festivals**, showing that, while frequency of attendance has decreased since the pandemic, the overall proportion of people attending is consistent with pre-pandemic levels.

Australians increasingly recognise the positive impacts that arts and culture can have in driving financial growth for small businesses. Two in five say the arts have a ‘big’ or ‘very big’ impact on **bringing customers to local businesses** (43% consistent with 41% in 2019).

Local community infrastructure is vital to cultural participation, providing public spaces for communities to gather to share and celebrate culture. Of the Australians who attend arts events to engage with their cultural background or community, two in five **attend at concert halls or theatres** (37% compared to 36% in 2019) and more than one in four **attend at local parks** (29% compared to 28% in 2019) and **community centres** (28% consistent with 28% in 2019).

The cultural and creative industries are a major driver of economic growth, and their impact across society and industry relies on the ground-breaking work of creatives

The experimental and innovative work of artists and creatives helps foster thriving cultural and creative industries that drive economic and social impacts for all Australians. Artists generate new ideas, original intellectual property (IP) and new creative practice.

Australians increasingly recognise the important contribution artists make to our everyday life. Seven in ten Australians agree **artists make an important contribution to Australian society** (72% compared to 71% in 2019) and that **artists should have freedom of expression** (74% compared to 75% in 2019).

Investment in arts and creativity can cultivate new ideas, technologies and cutting-edge innovation, as well as fuelling our talent pipeline and job growth. For independent artists, creative work is precarious and often risk-taking, involving substantial self-funded development. Public investment and public policy settings enable creators to take risks with creative content and ideas. One in five Australians prioritise **investment in art that pushes boundaries and drives innovation** (22% ranked this in their top three priorities for public or private investment, a decrease from 26% in 2019).

⁵⁵ QUT and the University of Newcastle, *Australian Cultural and Creative Activity: A population and hotspot analysis*, an Australian Research Council Linkage project.

⁵⁶ Australia Council 2020, *Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country*.

⁵⁷ Australia Council 2018, *International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures*.