



Australian Government

**Creative  
Australia**

# Creating Value

## Results of the National Arts Participation Survey

# Music factsheet

***Creating Value: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*** is the first survey of its kind to be released by Creative Australia and the fifth survey in the landmark research series from the Australia Council, following iterations in 2009, 2013, 2016 and 2019.

The research series provides a comprehensive overview of Australians' evolving relationships with arts, culture and creativity. By examining our engagement with creativity – both through the lens of self-expression and engagement with arts and creative activities – this series builds the evidence base on participation in the arts in Australia.

The full report includes detailed insights on engagement with specific art forms, including music.

Key findings about **engagement with music**, including listening to recorded music, attending music events and festivals and making music, are included in this factsheet.

**In 2022:**

**91%**

of Australians listen to recorded music

**47%**

of Australians attend live music events or festivals

**17%**

of Australians create music

**Australians**

who attend live music events attend 8.7 music events per year

## Introduction

Music plays a powerful role in the lives of many Australians. Music brings Australian communities together, uplifting us and has proven health benefits. The Australian music industry is known for its wealth of talent and diversity, with numerous musicians and producers achieving global recognition for their work. Findings in *Creating Value* highlight the significant role of music in Australians' everyday life and broader society and economy.

Most Australians engage with recorded music, making music the most accessed, and potentially most accessible, art form. Nine in ten Australians listen to recorded music (91%). Australians are increasingly listening to recorded music through free and paid streaming services and less so through purchased music, such as CDs and paid downloaded music.

Live music events play a critical role in reinvigorating our tourism and hospitality. In 2022, almost half of Australians attended live music events (47%). Festivals also play a key role in bringing people together, fostering community pride, supporting local tourism and offering opportunities for artists to showcase their latest work to new audiences. In 2022, over 9 million Australians attended arts festivals across all art forms (44%). This is up from 42% in 2019.

Along with live attendance and listening to music, 17% also create music themselves by singing, playing musical instruments, or writing, mixing and composing music.

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

For the full report and online resources see: <https://creative.gov.au/advocacy-and-research/creating-value/>

## Music – live attendance

### Half of Australians attend live music events or festivals

In 2022, 9.7 million Australians attended music events or festivals, or 47% of the population aged 15 years and over. This is consistent with 48% in 2019. Two in five Australians attended live music events in 2022 (39% for both 2022 and 2019).

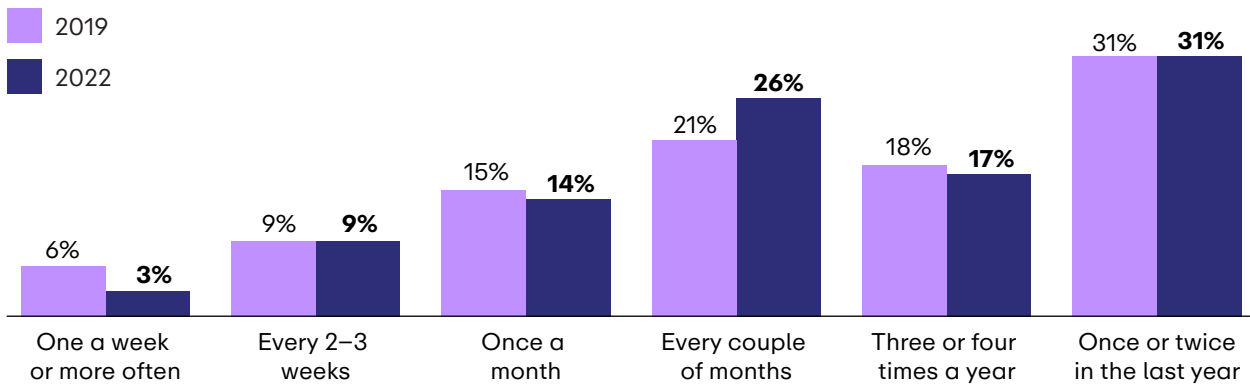
### Australians are attending live music less frequently than before COVID-19

While overall attendance levels have remained the same, Australians are attending less often throughout the year.

Weekly attendance at music events in 2022 dropped by three percentage points (3% compared to 6% in 2019), and, instead, more Australians are attending every couple of months (26% compared to 21% in 2019).

On average, those who attended live music attended 8.7 music events, a drop from 10.9 events in 2019. Across the Australian population, this equates to 3.4 live music events attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.

**Figure 1: Australians' live music event attendance frequency**



Q2\_5. And in the past 12 months, how often did you personally attend these kinds of events (eg, exhibitions, performances, shows)? - Music Base: Those who attended live music events (2022: n=3,810 // 2019: n=3,484)

**What types of live music events do Australians attend?**

- Nearly three in ten Australians attend **contemporary music** such as pop, rock, electronic, dance, hip hop, country, jazz or blues (29% consistent with 28% in 2019).
- One in ten Australians attend **musical theatre or cabaret** (10% consistent with 10% in 2019).
- 7% of Australians attend **classical music** such as orchestral or chamber music (down from 8% in 2019).
- 6% of Australians attend **traditional or folk music** (down from 7% in 2019).
- 5% of Australians attend **art music** such as new classical, experimental new music or sound art, (consistent with 6% in 2019).
- 3% of Australians attend **opera** (down from 4% in 2019).

**Where do people attend live music?**

- One in five Australians attend live music events at **concert halls and theatres** (19% consistent with 19% in 2019).
- Nearly one in five Australians attend music events at **pubs, clubs or bars** (18% up from 16% in 2019).
- 16% of Australians attend music events at **outdoor public spaces** (consistent with 16% in 2019).
- 14% of Australians attend music events at **stadiums or arenas** (consistent with 15% in 2019).
- 6% of Australians attend music events in **education settings** such as schools, universities or colleges (consistent with 6% in 2019).
- 3% of Australians attend music events at a **place of worship** (consistent with 4% in 2019).

## Who attends live music events and festivals?

- **Men** are more likely to attend live music events and festivals than women (49% compared to 44%), however women are more likely to attend all other art form events.
- **Younger Australians aged 15–34** are more likely to attend live music events and festivals, with attendance steadily decreasing with age (67% compared to 50% of Australians aged 35–49 and 29% of Australians 50 and over).
  - 42% of **Australians aged 15–34** attend contemporary music events, more so than older generations aged 35–49 years (31%) and aged 50 and over (19%).
  - **Australians aged 20–34** are more likely to attend other types of music events as well, including musical theatre 14%, art music 11%, classical music 10%, traditional or folk music 9% and opera 5%.
- Nearly one in five **First Nations respondents** attend traditional or folk music events (18% compared to 6% of non-First Nations respondents), and 12% attend art music (eg new classical, experimental new music, improvised music and sound art), compared to 5% of non-First Nations respondents.
- While First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) respondents are highly engaged in music, a high proportion report feeling that **cultural and creative experiences are not really for them**. Two in five First Nations respondents and one in three CALD respondents report that **cultural and creative experiences are not really for people like me** (39% of First Nations respondents compared to 27% of non-First Nations respondents, and 31% of CALD respondents compared to 27% of non-CALD respondents).
- These seemingly contradictory results, also seen in previous iterations of the survey for some groups, suggest an ongoing disconnection between active participation and engagement, and perceptions of the arts as expensive, hard to access and narrowly defined. They also resonate with observations of the under-representation of non-dominant cultures and groups in audiences for certain forms of publicly funded arts and culture, adding important context to the body of research that seeks to understand who has access to arts and culture and why.<sup>1</sup>



### What do we know from the LPA Ticket Attendance and Revenue Survey in 2019 and 2020?

Live Performance Australia's (LPA) Ticket Attendance and Revenue Survey covers ticketed attendances reported by ticketing companies, self-ticketing venues, event promoters and the Australian major performing arts companies.<sup>2</sup>

Right before the pandemic, in 2019, the live performance industry recorded its second highest revenue, attendance and average ticket price. However, the industry shutdown from March 2020 due to COVID-19, causing significant industry disruption. Findings show:

- Total attendance declined by 68% (to 7.8 million) in 2020.
- Contemporary music was the largest category in the industry in 2019, representing 35% of attendance of the overall live performance market. In 2020, it accounted for 37% of attendance of the overall market share.
- In 2019, special events witnessed the highest increase in attendance (153%) amongst all the categories. The ACT experienced the highest growth in attendance (6%) in Australia.
- In 2020, all categories and states and territories witnessed a decline in attendance. Comedy experienced the highest decline of all categories (84%) and Victoria experienced the highest decline of all states and territories (79%). This was due to bans on mass gatherings, border closures and density limits introduced as part of COVID-19 restrictions, and the extended lockdown in Victoria.

<sup>1</sup> Deakin University 2023, Changing Organisations to Diversity Arts Audiences: Summary of findings from national survey.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst & Young (EY) 2021, LPA 2019 and 2020 *Ticket Attendance and Revenue Report*.

## Listening to recorded music

### Recorded music is a part of nine in ten Australians' daily lives

Music plays an important role in our everyday lives, inspiring and connecting us and improving our mood. In 2022, 18.9 million Australians, or 91% of the population aged 15 and over, listened to recorded music, making music the most accessed, and potentially most accessible, art form.

These findings are in line with the results from the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey which found 92% of Australians listened to recorded music in the previous year.

### Who is listening to recorded music?

- **CALD respondents** are more likely to listen to recorded music than non CALD respondents (96% compared to 91%).
- **People under the age of 45** are more likely to listen to recorded music than people aged 45 and over (96% compared to 87%) – they are also twice as likely to listen to music streamed through a paid subscription (69% compared to 32%).
- **People aged between 50 and 64** are most likely to listen to music on the radio and/or television (72%).
- **Parents with children under 16** are more likely to listen to recorded music than people without children under 16 (96% compared to 90%).
- **People who are employed** are more likely to listen to recorded music than people who are unemployed (95% compared to 86%), especially music streamed through a paid subscription (61% compared to 35%).
- **Those with higher incomes** are more likely to listen to recorded music than those with lower incomes (85% of people who earn \$40,000 or less listen to recorded music compared to 96% of those who earn \$100,000 or more). People earning \$100,000 or more are also more likely to stream music through a paid subscription than people earning \$40,000 or less (65% compared to 32%).

### How are Australians engaging with recorded music?

Australians are increasingly listening to recorded music through **free and paid streaming** services and less so through purchased music, such as CDs and paid downloaded music. The percentage of Australians who pay for streamed music is increasing at stronger rates than those who opt for free streamed music, suggesting that Australians are increasingly willing to pay for copyrighted material if it is accessible.

Australians listen to recorded music:

- on the **radio and/or through the television** (64% down from 68% in 2019)
- through **paid and free streaming platforms** (75% up from 67% in 2019)
  - through **streaming platforms for free** (59% up from 55% in 2019)
  - through **streaming services with a paid subscription** (50% up from 36% in 2019)
- through **purchased music**, either by downloading or buying a physical copy (26% down from 37% in 2019).



## Music – creative participation

### 3.5 million Australians create music

In 2022, 3.5 million Australians, or 17% of the population aged 15 years or over, created music. This includes those who created music to engage with their own cultural background, language group or community, a slight decrease from 18% in 2019.

8% of Australians created music to engage with their cultural background in 2022. This is a slight decrease from 9% in 2019.

Excluding those who created music to engage with their own cultural background, language group or community, 14% of the population aged 15 years or over, created music in 2022. This is consistent with 15% in 2019.

In addition, one in seven Australians participate in community arts which includes community choir among other community activities such as community theatre (15%).

### Who makes music?

Of the 17% of the population aged 15 years or over who create music, including to engage with their own cultural background, language group or community:

- Two in five **gender diverse** respondents create music (41% compared to 19% of men and 14% of women).<sup>3</sup>
- One in five **respondents with disability** create music (22% compared to 16% of those without disability).
- One in four **First Nations respondents** create music (27% compared to 16% of non-First Nations respondents).
- More than a quarter of **CALD respondents** create music and are more likely to do so than non-CALD respondents (28% compared to 14%).
- **Young Australians** are more likely than older Australians to create music (33% of those aged 15–24 compared to 20% of those aged 25–49 and 8% of those aged 50 and over).

### How are Australians making music?

14% of the population aged 15 years or over create music, excluding to engage with their own cultural background, language group or community:

- One in ten Australians **play a musical instrument** (10% consistent with 10% in 2019).
- 5% of Australians **sing** (slightly down from 6% in 2019).
- 5% of Australians **write songs, mix or compose music** (slightly down from 6% in 2019).

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the sample size of gender diverse respondents is much lower than the sample size of women and men respondents (n=41 gender diverse, compared to n=4435 men and n=4901 women. Of the n=41 gender diverse sample, n=18 aged 15–24, n=17 aged 25–49, n=6 aged 50 and over).



## Case study

### Alter Boy

Alter Boy, an alt-pop band from Perth, have become increasingly popular over the last few years by making music for everyone.

Alter Boy's brand of pop is unique and influenced by the group's vastly different backgrounds and inspirations. The band's front person, Molly Priest, is hard-of-hearing and all of Alter Boy's songs are performed in Australian Sign Language (Auslan) by the band's interpreter. The group offer a greater understanding of the different ways deaf/hard-of-hearing individuals experience the power of music.

Alter Boy celebrate inclusivity and empowerment, believing 'everybody should be welcome in the arts and that barriers to access and inclusion should be witnessed and removed where possible.'<sup>24</sup>

In June 2022, Alter Boy performed at Sydney venue Carriageworks as part of Vivid Sydney 2022. They are currently working on their debut album.

Alter Boy.  
Credit: Treh Ivory.

## Research approach

The 2022 National Arts Participation Survey was conducted in September – October 2022 and the results are based on a nationally representative sample of 9,396 people. The previous National Arts Participation Survey was conducted in 2019, prior to the disruptions of COVID-19 and provided a benchmark of Australians' arts engagement before the pandemic. The 2022 survey results, in comparison, provide an update on arts engagement in the wake of COVID-19.

The 2022 survey results provide critical insights into how Australians' arts engagement might be changing following the disruptions felt by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to the role of the arts for our individual and collective wellbeing. The 2022 survey closely examined Australians' relationship with the arts throughout lockdown periods, providing insights into the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and wellbeing. It asked participants to reflect on their digital arts engagement throughout this time and to share their own perceptions of how their engagement might have changed.

4 Staff Writer 2021, 'Alter Boy Champion Inclusivity And Empowerment With 'Act Of God'', *Frooty*, 27 July.