

## Art Facts provides a statistical overview of the Australian arts sector.

It draws on the latest data collected by the Australia Council, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and our stakeholders throughout the sector to profile arts creation, industry, participation, global trade and industry and support.

### Key areas of growth and opportunity

Australians value the arts and are becoming more engaged with them. There are a growing number of people studying creative arts and many go on to use their skills in non-arts industries. However, the number of practicing professional artists has plateaued and arts incomes continue to lag behind other workers.

For the arts industry we see philanthropic support growing steadily – particularly for the Major Performing arts organisations. However, the big picture shows that Australia still imports many more cultural goods and services than it exports. And its cultural exports to Asia are surprisingly low despite some growth in key markets such as China.

### Australians value the arts

The arts are constantly evolving, and the statistics show many positive trends.

[Our arts participation research](#)<sup>1</sup> shows that overwhelmingly, Australians value the arts and recognise individual and community benefits from the arts. 89 percent of us agree that the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian and a further 72 percent of us agree that there are plenty of opportunities to get involved with the arts.

Attitudes towards the arts are increasingly positive, with perceptions of elitism and high cost decreasing between 2009 and 2013.



<sup>1</sup> Australia Council for the Arts 2014 'Arts in Daily Life: Australian participation in the arts'

## Arts participation continues to grow

Almost all Australians (94 percent) attend at least one art form or read literature, and there has been an increase in those participating creatively to 48 percent in 2013, from 41 percent in 2009.

92 percent of Australians believe Indigenous arts are an important part of Australia's culture with interest in Indigenous arts growing along with attendance to Indigenous arts events and exhibitions.

More broadly, [attendance at cultural venues and events](#)<sup>2</sup> is growing over time, with 86 percent of Australians attending at least one cultural venue or event in 2009/10 which is estimated to be around 55 million attendances.

## Youth are especially engaged with the arts

Australia Council research shows there is strong support for the arts as an important part of the education of every Australian, and children's engagement with the arts continues to increase. [35 percent of children participate](#)<sup>3</sup> in at least one cultural activity outside of school.

Young people are highly engaged, and more likely to participate creatively than the rest of the population. Almost two thirds of young people created arts in 2013.

## Many industries benefit from the creativity of artists

Increasing numbers of students are graduating from creative arts courses. Most graduates use their artistic training in other industries, including careers in the creative industries such as advertising and graphic design. [Throsby and Zednik's research](#)<sup>4</sup> found that just over one in three artists had used their artistic skills in some other industry outside the arts.



<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, Australia, 2009-10 (cat. no. 4114.0)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, 2012(cat. no. 4901.0)

<sup>4</sup> Throsby D and Zednik A, 2010, 'Do you really expect to get paid? An economic study of professional artists in Australia'

## Artists continue to face challenging conditions

There have been important changes in the profile of artists' careers. The number of professional artists is levelling out, after periods of strong growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Throsby and Zednik's research suggests persistently difficult conditions for professional artists.

Artists earn lower incomes than the rest of the workforce, despite relatively high levels of educational attainment, and [analysis of the 2011 Census](#)<sup>5</sup> shows artists have not shared in the rising trend in real incomes that have been experienced across the workforce at large. In 2011, the median annual full-time income of arts workers was \$6,000 lower than the general workforce, and the rate of growth in arts incomes between 1996 and 2011 was almost half that experienced by the average Australian worker.

## Philanthropic support for the arts has grown strongly

Arts organisations have increased their revenue from sponsorships and donations over time. On average, private sector support now accounts for 10 percent of the revenue of arts organisations. Philanthropic donations have overtaken corporate sponsorships to become the primary source of private sector income. [Philanthropic income received by Major Performing Arts organisations from 2009 to 2013 has doubled](#).<sup>6</sup>



## There are opportunities to build markets here and overseas

Australia continues to [import significantly more cultural goods and services than it exports overseas](#)<sup>7</sup>, particularly in terms of music royalties, books and magazines. This means that within Australia there is a higher demand for international artists and artworks than for those locally.

The overall value of cultural exports has been declining since 2005-06, particularly for the UK and USA. Despite the geographic proximity, our exports to Asia remain relatively low, but have increased slightly for China, Japan and Papua New Guinea.

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

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This Fact Sheet has been produced by the Australia Council for the Arts



<sup>5</sup> Cunningham and Higgs, forthcoming 'Arts Employment - What the 2011 Census tells us'

<sup>6</sup> Australia Council for the Arts, Arts Organisations division (unpublished)

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Arts and Culture in Australia: A Statistical Overview, 2011' (cat. no. 4172.0)