More than bums on seats:
Queenslanders and the arts
This report is based on the Queensland data derived from the Australia Council for the Arts’ More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts collected in 2009. It also contains additional Queensland data, using the same survey, collected in November 2010. All surveying was conducted by market research company, instinct and reason: www.instinctandreason.com

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Introduction

In 2010, the Australia Council for the Arts published its *More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts* report. The research provides a comprehensive picture of the high degree to which Australians are involved with the arts and is a benchmark for the health and significance of the arts in Australia.

Arts Queensland obtained the 2009 data from the original Australia Council survey and partnered with the Australia Council again in November 2010 to double the Queensland sample size to explore findings for Queensland in more depth. We specifically wanted to:

- report the findings of active participation, attendance and attitudes of Queenslanders in relation to the arts
- highlight the similarities and differences between the behaviours and attitudes of Queenslanders and the broader Australian population
- explore the differences in behaviours and attitudes across Queensland’s geographic regions (south east, south west, central, northern and far north Queensland) and different types of communities (metropolitan, provincial, rural and remote), as identified in Arts Queensland’s regional arts and cultural strategy *artbeat*
- ask some additional questions, not in the national survey, of relevance to Queensland.

What we found is that Queenslanders love the arts. The research clearly shows Queenslanders place a high value on the arts and see it as an important component of our quality of life. The general public supports public funding for the arts. Many are interested to further their arts engagement in the future.

For policy makers, art makers, producers and company directors and for the arts and cultural sector as a whole, the findings represent significant opportunities to build on the enthusiasm of the Queensland public for the arts. To further develop an active, participatory arts culture in Queensland, we can explore ways to connect our professional, elite artists and arts companies to our passionate and enthusiastic amateurs. These will benefit the entire arts ecology and the vibrancy and liveability of Queensland communities.

We hope the research findings will stimulate debate and discussion and help to redefine and open up new vistas in policy and practice. This summary – *More than bums on seats: Queenslanders and the arts* – is a start. Read the full report and explore the artform and regional fact sheets at www.arts.qld.gov.au
About the survey

The data in *More than bums on seats: Queenslanders and the arts* was obtained through a computer-assisted telephone interview of the Queensland population, weighted using the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ 2006 Census data for Queensland against age, gender and geography. It is a representative sample of the population of Queensland.

The survey was conducted in November 2009 for the national survey data and November 2010 for the additional Queensland data. The samples were identical and were merged to provide a robust Queensland sample size of n=998. Sampling was random, based on all local government areas in Queensland, and is a representative Queensland sample of people over 15 years of age.

The survey covered the major artforms that receive government funding at national and state level – namely music, visual arts and craft, theatre and dance and creative writing and reading. A series of questions was asked about sub-artforms within these major artform categories. More information can be found in the technical appendices to the national survey, which can be found at www.australiacouncil.gov.au/participation

On the whole, Queensland findings are comparable to the national findings. There are very few statistically significant differences between the geographic regions of Queensland and between metropolitan, provincial, rural and remote communities in Queensland.

Key definitions to note

Art includes things like being part of the production of theatre or dance, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) music and dance, opera, live classical music, jazz, pop or rock music, visiting art galleries, circus, street arts, painting, crafts, as well as reading books and creative writing.

Attendance is defined as intentionally going to see a show, concert or exhibition, or reading.

Participation is defined as actively doing something yourself such as creating music, performing or creative writing.

Engagement is both attendance and participation.

Separate questions were asked about listening to recorded music and attending live music events. Reading was specifically reading literary forms, both fiction and non-fiction, including novels, short stories, poetry, biography, history and memoir.
Key findings

1. Queenslanders are highly engaged in the arts
2. Queenslanders are very positive about the role of the arts in the community
3. Queenslanders agree that the arts bring many benefits
4. Queenslanders want more engagement in the arts

These findings show that there are great opportunities to build active participation in the arts and arts audiences in Queensland.
1. Queenslanders are highly engaged in the arts

In the period leading up to the research, 94 per cent of Queenslanders aged 15 years and older had participated in the arts by making something themselves or attended a live event, exhibition or reading.

Queensland findings are comparable to national findings. Differences across Queensland regions are statistically insignificant on the whole. Only a small group were not engaged in the 12 months prior to interview.

Figure 1: Levels of participation and attendance (Queensland and national)
Engagement with artforms

Key findings for each of the artforms are:

• More than eight in 10 Queenslanders read or have participated in creative writing. Queenslanders mostly read novels (68 per cent) and non-fiction such as biographies, memoirs or history (47 per cent). Creative writing was also popular, with 7 per cent writing a biography, memoir, essay or history and 5 per cent writing a novel, short story or poetry.

• Nearly all Queenslanders listen to or watch recorded music, with 76 per cent intentionally listening or watching recorded music at least twice a week. Three in five Queenslanders (61 per cent) attend live music or actively participate in creating music. Queenslanders are 8 percentage points more likely to engage community music (26 per cent) than the national average.

• More people create visual arts and craft (23 per cent) than any other artform. Nearly half of Queenslanders (48 per cent) engage with visual arts and craft. Active participation is more popular in craft (9 per cent), photography (9 per cent) and painting and drawing (7 per cent) than sculpture (2 per cent). One in three participate in visual arts and craft in a community context.

• Four in 10 Queenslanders engage with theatre and dance. Queenslanders are more likely to participate in traditional theatre or social or ballroom dancing and more likely to attend traditional theatre, circus and ballet than other theatre and dance forms.
More than 7 in 10 Queenslanders are using the internet, of which 41 per cent are using it for the arts

Using the internet for arts

Queenslanders are using the internet for the arts. Queenslanders are more likely to watch, listen and research art events and artists on the internet than to post or use the internet to create their own work (such as posting work, writing a blog or participating in online communities or social networks concerned with arts). This is consistent with national findings.
Volunteering in the arts

Volunteers make an important contribution to arts and culture in Queensland. Seventeen per cent of Queenslanders volunteer for the arts. Most Queenslanders volunteer for performing arts centres, arts and cultural organisations, galleries and museums and festivals. The top three reasons for volunteering are to support the arts, to help others or the community and for personal satisfaction.

Indigenous arts

Figure 3: Attendance at Indigenous art (Queensland and national)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Visual arts and craft</th>
<th>Theatre</th>
<th>Dance</th>
<th>Live music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six in 10 Queenslanders (61 per cent) have either a strong or growing interest in Indigenous arts. Indigenous arts attendance is highest in visual arts and craft (16 per cent), followed by music (13 per cent), dance (12 per cent) and theatre (6 per cent).
88 per cent of Queenslanders agree that Indigenous arts are an important part of Australia’s culture.
2. Queenslanders are very positive about the role of the arts in the community

Queenslanders have positive attitudes to the arts. This is consistent with national findings and across Queensland regions.

Queenslanders generally agree that people can enjoy both the arts and sport, Indigenous arts are an important part of Australia’s culture and the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian.

Table 1: Attitudes to the arts (Queensland and national)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queenslanders agree or strongly agree that:</th>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People can enjoy both the arts and sport</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous arts are an important part of Australia’s culture</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts should receive public funding</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts make for a more richer and meaningful life</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is exciting to see new styles and types of art</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts should be as much about creating/doing these things yourself as being part of an audience</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are plenty of opportunities for me to get involved in the arts</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts are an important part of my lifestyle</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts require understanding to appreciate them fully</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts are too expensive</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts are OK they are just not relevant to me</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts tend to attract people who are somewhat elitist or pretentious</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts are not really for people like me</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three in five Queenslanders agree the arts play a valuable role in community. Over two-thirds believe that there are opportunities at the community level to participate in arts and culture.

More than seven in 10 Queenslanders believe that investment by both local and state government is needed to ensure that arts and cultural activities are available to all Queenslanders. Eight in 10 agree that a vibrant arts and cultural sector is very valuable to Queensland.

Figure 4: Queenslanders’ attitudes to the arts

A vibrant arts and cultural sector is very valuable to Queenslanders as a whole

The Queensland Government should invest in arts and cultural activities to ensure that they are available to Queenslanders

Local government should invest in arts and cultural activities to ensure that they are available to Queenslanders

Arts and culture play a very valuable role in my local community

There are opportunities for me to participate in arts and culture in my local community
3. Queenslanders agree that the arts bring many benefits

The majority of Queenslanders agree that the arts benefit their individual wellbeing, as well as the health of their community and Queensland. This is consistent with national findings.

Table 2: Benefits of the arts (Queensland and national)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queenslanders agree or strongly agree</th>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The arts are an important part of helping people to express themselves</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts are an important way of helping people think and work creatively</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find the skill of a great artist very inspiring</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts expose us to new ideas and get us to question things</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts help us to understand others whose lives are different from our own</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to the arts is a great way of spending time with friends</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good when I can express myself creatively</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts help us express and define what it means to be Australian</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts help me deal with stress, anxiety or depression</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes, the arts are the only way of saying something important that needs to be said</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts help me feel part of my local community</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 in 10 Queenslanders agree that the arts expose us to new ideas and prompt people to question things, or help us to understand lives different from our own

Benefits to personal wellbeing

Queenslanders believe that the arts can have personal benefits for them socially as a way to spend time with friends (82 per cent) and also as a source of inspiration (85 per cent) and a way to express themselves creatively (75 per cent).

Queenslanders also believe that the arts can have an effect on health and wellbeing, with three in five agreeing that the arts helps them deal with stress, anxiety or depression.

Benefits to the community

Queenslanders agree that the arts can have a number of benefits within and for a community. The arts are also a factor in helping Queenslanders express and define what it means to be Australian (71 per cent) and feel part of their local community (50 per cent).
4. Queenslanders want more engagement in the arts

Two in three Queenslanders who had not attended the arts in the past 12 months had attended the arts before. Of those, 39 per cent are interested in attending in the future.

Difficulty finding time, cost and lack of interest are the most common reasons for not attending the arts.

One in three Queenslanders who had not actively participated in the past 12 months had participated in the arts before. Of those, over a quarter are interested in participating in the future.

Difficulty finding time and lack of interest are the most common reasons for not participating in the arts.
Want to know more?

A full copy of the Queensland report *More than bums on seats: Queenslanders and the arts* and summary fact sheets are available on the Arts Queensland website: www.arts.qld.gov.au

**Contact:** Ms Lone Keast, Director Policy, Planning and Performance, Arts Queensland  
**Email:** lone.keast@arts.qld.gov.au

*More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts* – a comprehensive picture of how Australians participate in the arts: www.australiacouncil.gov.au/participation

Visit the Australia Council research hub to find out about this research and other information on the arts: www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research_hub  
**Contact:** Dr Nick Herd, Director Research and Strategic Analysis, Australia Council for the Arts  
**Email:** n.herd@australiacouncil.gov.au

Image credits
Page 2  Emma Lindsay, *Carnage*, 2010, Mixed media & live performance installation. Photo: Carl Warner


Page 7  The Honey Month. Photo: Justin Edwards


Page 11  Finale Concert of Pemulwuy National Male Voice Festival, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane, 2011. Photo: Michael Andrew Dare

Page 13  Yarn bombing activity during *Jumpers and Jazz* in July in Warwick, 2010. Photo: Loretta Grayson

Pages 14 and 15  Mornington Island Dancers, The Dreaming Festival 2010. Photo: Roger Phillips

Page 17  Murris in ink artist, James Billy, in a lithography master class at James Cook University, Townsville. The workshop was organised by Umbrella Studio Contemporary Art as part of its ongoing commitment to skills development for Indigenous artists. Photo: Clive Hutchison

Page 19  Cultural Centre, South Bank, Brisbane. Photo: Justine Walpole

Page 21  Aurukun artist and Elder Mavis Ngallametta at work in the ghost net weaving tent at Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2010. Photo: David Campbell Photography

Page 23  CRUSH – A Bundaberg Regional Council event. Photo: Paul Beutel