

# 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](http://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](http://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

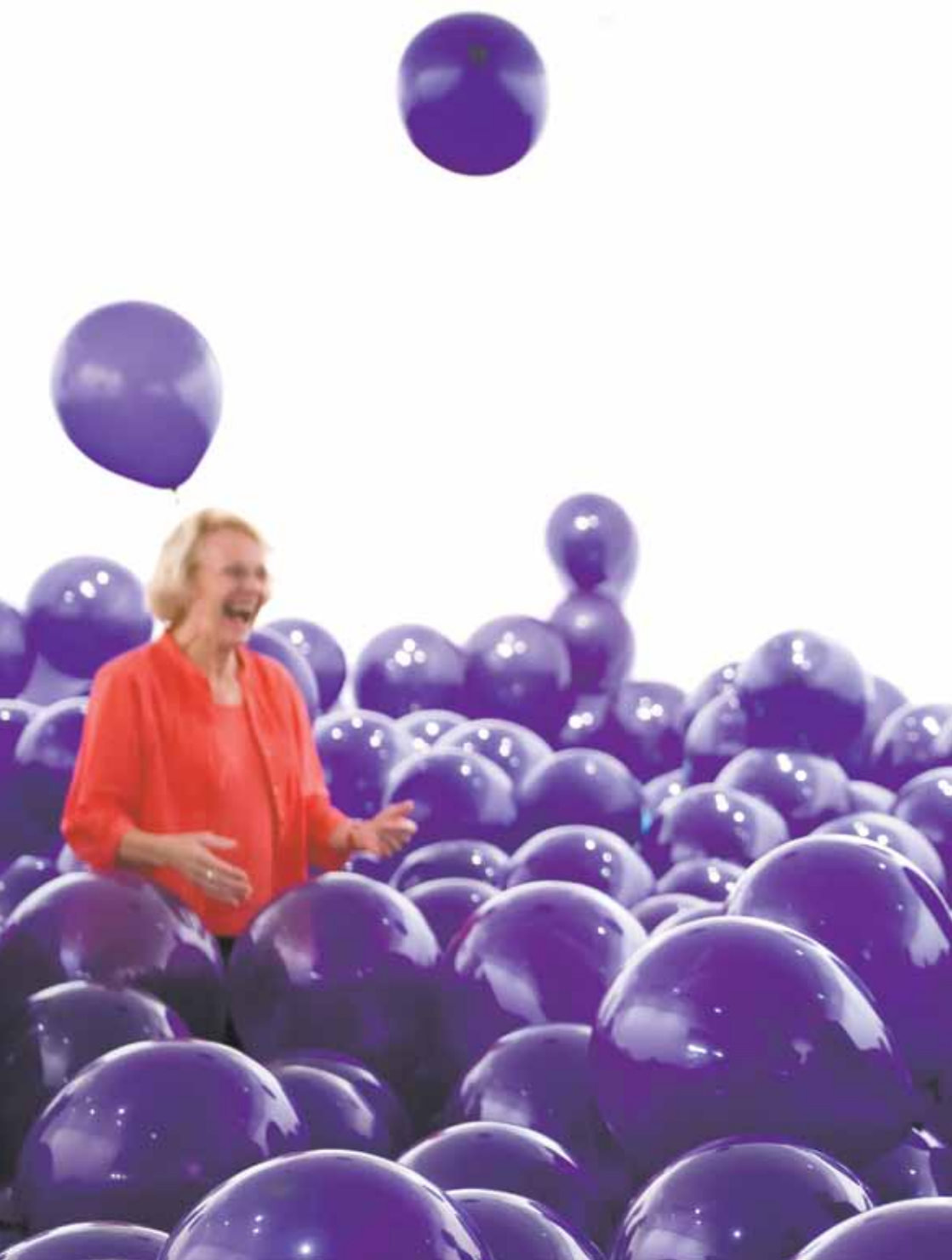
**Art** includes things like being part of the production of theatre or dance, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) music and dance, opera, live classical music, jazz, pop or rock music, visiting art galleries, circus, street arts, painting, crafts, as well as reading books and creative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



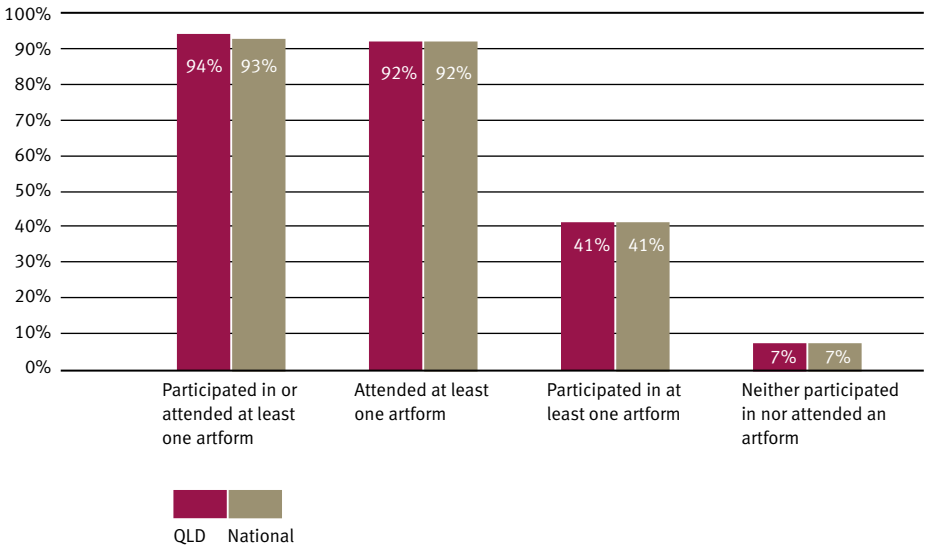
# 9 in 10 Queenslanders are engaged in the arts

## 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)





## 99 per cent of Queenslanders listen to or watch recorded music

### Engagement with artforms

Key findings for each of the artforms are:

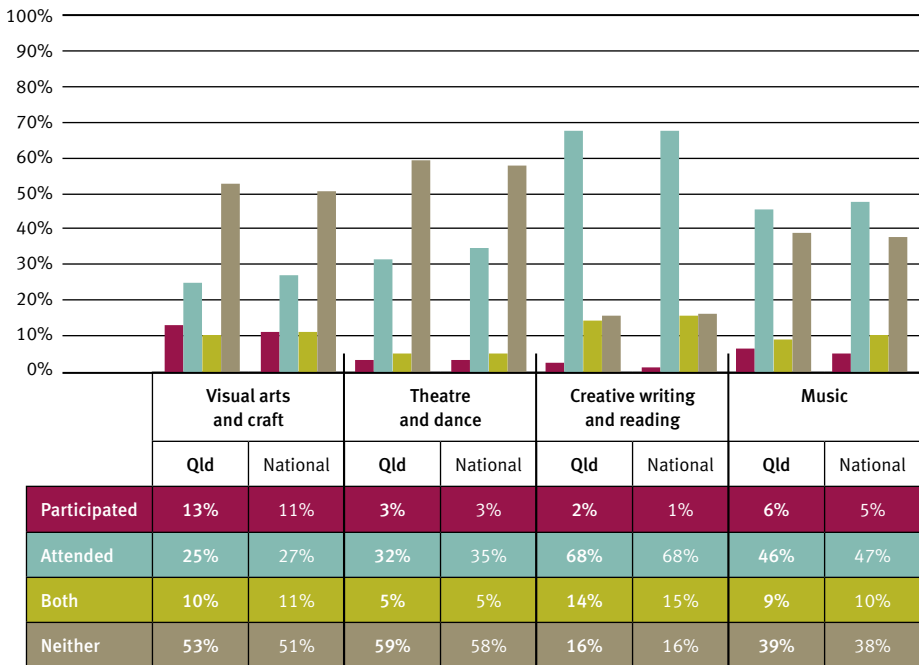
- More than eight in 10 Queenslanders read or have participated in creative writing. Queenslanders mostly read novels (68 per cent) and non-fiction such as biographies, memoirs or history (47 per cent). Creative writing was also popular, with 7 per cent writing a biography, memoir, essay or history and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

Figure 2: Engagement by main artform (Queensland and national)



Note: Reading has been classified as a form of attendance for the purposes of comparing artforms.

## 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.



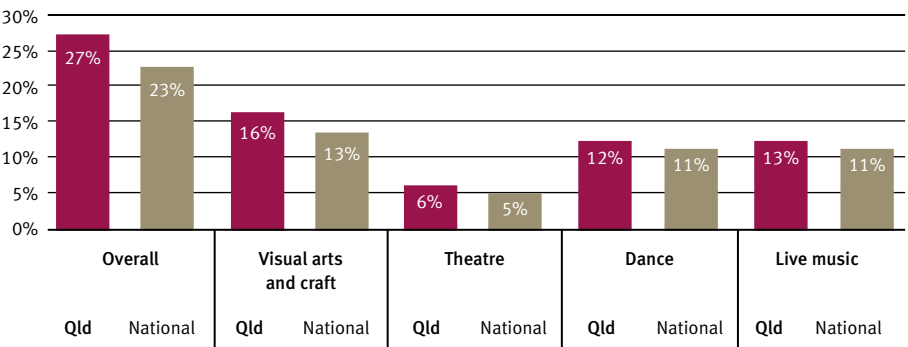
# 17 per cent of Queenslanders volunteer for the arts

## 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)



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**

**More than 9 in 10 Queenslanders agree people can enjoy both the arts and sport**

## 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)**

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



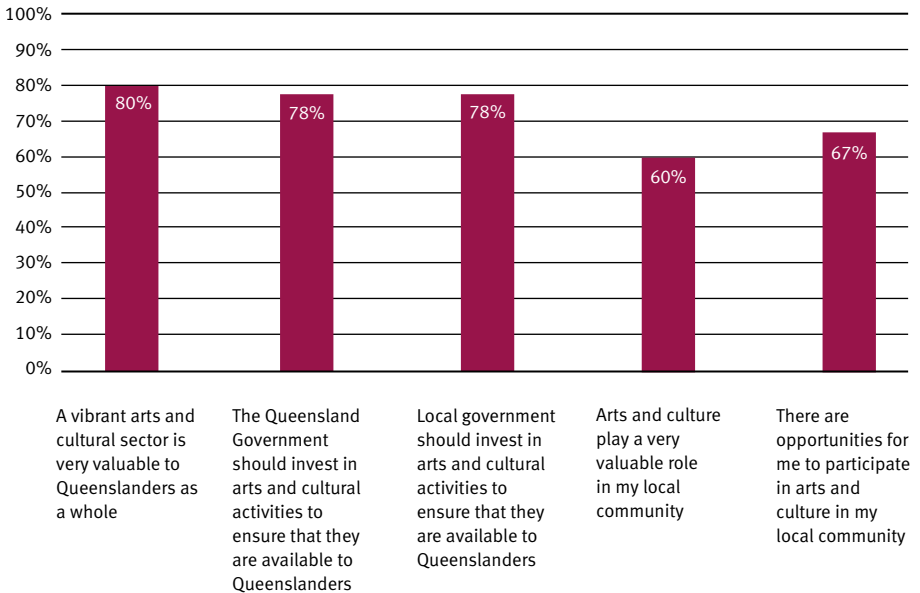


## 80 per cent of Queenslanders believe that a vibrant arts and cultural sector is valuable to Queenslanders

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**





## 9 in 10 Queenslanders agree the arts are an important part of helping people to express themselves or to think and work creatively

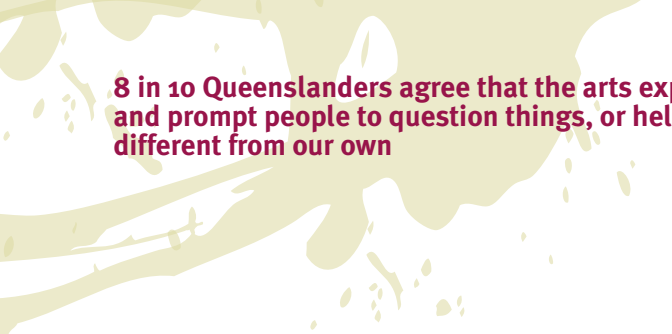
### 3. Queenslanders agree that the arts bring many benefits

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)

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





**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 in 10 Queenslanders, who currently do not attend the arts, are interested in attending in the future**

## **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.