

Impact & Outcomes

Humanities, Arts
and Social Sciences
in Australia

May 2024

dassh Promoting the
Arts, Social Sciences
and Humanities

The humanities, arts and social sciences improve the lives of all Australians

Our graduates have helped build a healthy democracy, regional security, a strong economy, accountable media, ethical industry, a booming tourism sector and so much more.

Australians are healthier, better informed, happier and safer because of the arts, social sciences and humanities.

Our researchers prevent cyber abuse, improve services for Indigenous people, help communities impacted by climate hazards, promote regional industry and increase the sustainability of our ecosystems.

Billions of dollars are generated by arts-related industries and many thousands of jobs. In 2019-20, cultural and creative arts activity in total contributed **\$122.3 billion** to the Australian economy or **6.2 per cent** of GDP.

Humanities, arts and social sciences graduates are also highly sought after. In their global survey of 800 companies, the World Economic Forum found that analytical thinking and critical thinking are the most important skills for workers. These cognitive skills are central to the humanities, arts and social sciences.

You'll find Arts Graduates in all sorts of jobs including:

Graphic and web design **Advertising and marketing**
Journalism **Intelligence and policy analysis** **Teaching**
Performing arts **Visual arts**

But it's not just the economy that benefits. Engagement with the arts can help us think creatively, improve our wellbeing and express ourselves. **85 per cent** of Australians agree that engaging with art, cultural and creative activities can have a positive impact on one's mental health.

This report, and the accompanying report on Aotearoa New Zealand, provides a snapshot of some of the key avenues through which the humanities, arts and social sciences contribute to Australian life.

About DASSH

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities represents more than 250 Deans and Associate and Deputy Deans from nearly every university in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Our members lead schools that are home to more than 100,000 students and thousands of researchers in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities.

We advocate for our disciplines, produce research and policy submissions, and engage with government, members and colleagues in Australia and around the world. DASSH is a hub for members, with networking and professional development events held throughout the year.

Acknowledgement of First Nations

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities proudly acknowledges First Nations people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We acknowledge the powerful opportunity our sector has to embrace, learn from and improve through better understanding and integration of Indigenous Knowledges.

All images courtesy of Unsplash



You might be surprised by some of the jobs Arts graduates end up in

Some of the top occupations for humanities, arts and social sciences graduates include:

- Graphic and web designers
- Advertising and marketing professionals
- Journalists
- Intelligence and policy analysts
- University lecturers and tutors
- Primary and secondary school teachers
- Public relations professionals
- Editors
- Illustrators
- Music professionals
- Photographers
- Fashion designers
- Visual arts and crafts professionals
- Artistic directors
- Media producers and presenters
- Authors
- Industrial designers
- Film, television, radio and stage professionals

Humanities, arts and social sciences graduates are highly adaptable. This is confirmed by data from the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching's Longitudinal Graduate Outcomes Survey.

QILT's data shows that humanities, arts and social sciences graduates are found in more than 300 occupations.

But they are also working in jobs you might not imagine:

- CEOs
- IT professionals
- Defence Force workers
- Farmers
- Health professionals
- Financial investment advisers
- Tourism advisers
- Human resources professionals
- Wool buyers
- Solicitors
- Urban planners
- Diversional therapists
- Miners
- Sports coaches

Want a good job, good pay and a happy boss? Do an Arts Degree

Humanities, arts and social sciences students continue to have outstanding outcomes post-graduation according to the latest Graduate Outcomes Survey.

The 2023 longitudinal together with other Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) surveys shows employers are highly satisfied, that students have had positive experiences at university followed by great employment outcomes and enjoy very good salaries after graduation.

Employers rate humanities, arts and social sciences graduates' foundational, adaptive, collaborative, employment and technical skills as consistently around average for all disciplines.

These include literacy, numeracy, communication skills and the ability to investigate and integrate knowledge, to adapt, apply skills and knowledge and to work independently.

Meanwhile students continue to enjoy high levels of satisfaction, consistently significantly above the average.

Humanities, culture and social sciences students reported **79.1 per cent** were satisfied with the overall education experience compared with the average of 75.9 per cent.

The vast majority of humanities, arts and social sciences graduates are in full-time employment three years after graduating.

Around **90 per cent** of humanities, culture and social sciences graduates are in jobs by then and employment outcomes across the creative arts, communications, and humanities, culture and social sciences are up around **30 per cent** from 2020.

Earnings for humanities, culture and social sciences graduates remain steady at around **\$82,000** three years after graduating. This is on par with the wider university average of \$83,500.

More graduates of the arts, social sciences and humanities go into management roles than the average graduate. Around **11 per cent** of communications and creative arts graduates go into management roles compared with the national average of 7.8 per cent.

The results paint a picture of humanities, arts and social sciences students who are highly satisfied with their studies moving into well paid and rewarding careers where their employers appreciate their independence, critical thinking, adaptability and ability to communicate.

Australians love the arts

Creative Australia's 2022 National Arts Participation Survey shows most Australians take part in a range of arts activities, such as listening to music, reading books and attending live performances.

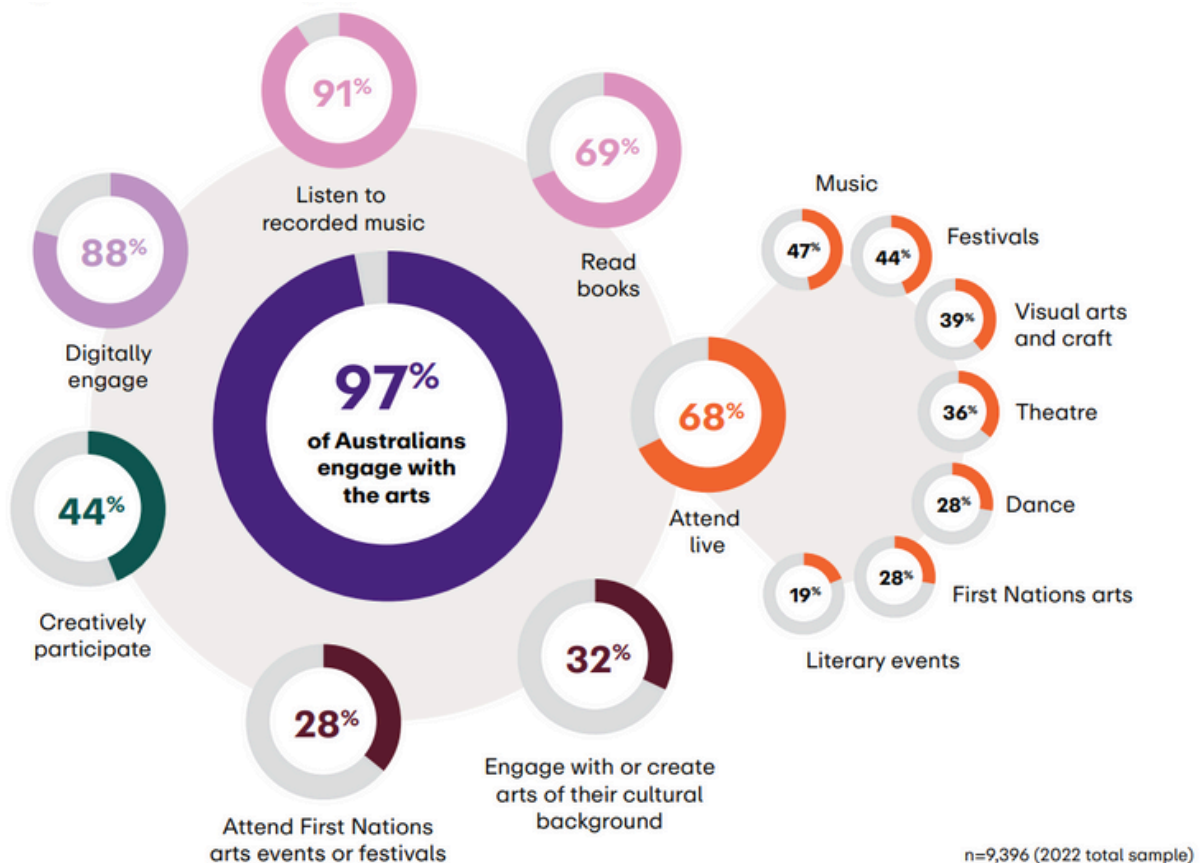
97 per cent

The number of Australians who engaged with the arts in 2022

68 per cent

The number of Australians who attended arts events or festivals in 2022

Percentage of Australians (aged 15 and over) that engaged with the arts and creative activities in 2022:





Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

Here are some industries with great economic outcomes driven by Arts graduates

Screen industry

\$9.2 billion

Gross value added by the screen industry in 2017-18

84,982

Number of full-time equivalent jobs in the screen industry in 2017-18

\$752 million

Tourism expenditure generated by Australian screen content each year

230,000

Number of international tourists that visit Australia or extend their stay each year due to Australian screen content

Sources: Olsberg SPI. (2019). [*Study on the Economic Contribution of the Motion Picture and Television Industry in Australia*](#); Screen Australia. (2016). [*Screen Currency: Valuing Our Screen Industry*](#); Ernst & Young. (2020). [*The Economic Contribution of Australia's Live Entertainment Industry: How Has COVID-19 Impacted the Industry?*](#); Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. (2023). [*Australia's Live Music Sector: An Occupation-Based Analysis: Working Paper*](#); Deloitte. (2023). [*Connecting Communities: The Economic and Social Contribution of Commercial Radio and Audio in Australia*](#).

The screen industry makes a major contribution to the Australian economy, generating \$9.2 billion in revenue every year. Arts graduates make up a significant proportion of the thousands of jobs in the screen industry. The screen industry also has strong flow-on impacts in terms of tourism.

The music industry likewise represents significant value for the Australian economy. It provides jobs for thousands of Australians, including many Arts graduates.

Music industry

\$5.7 billion

Value added by the live music industry in 2019

41,000

Number of workers in the live music sector in 2019-20

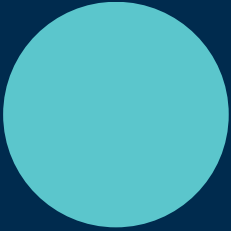
38 per cent

The number of musicians among primary live music workers in 2019-20

\$1 billion

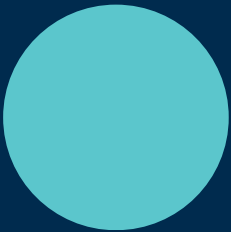
Value added by commercial radio and audio to the Australian economy in 2022

There are some great examples of arts, social sciences and humanities research changing the way we live



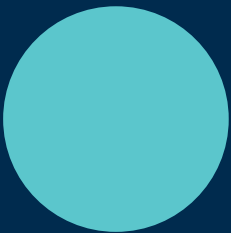
Harnessing the Power of Ordinary People to Prevent Cyber Abuse

Criminology researcher Dr Zarina Vakhitova leads this project which aims to prevent cyber abuse victimisation and to reduce the cost and burden of cyber abuse on the criminal justice system.



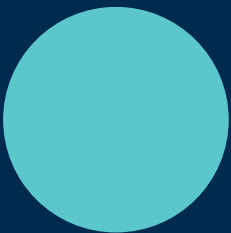
Interpreting Services for Australian Aboriginal Languages

This project, led by languages researcher Dr Maria Karidakis, aims to improve interpreter service delivery for Indigenous people.



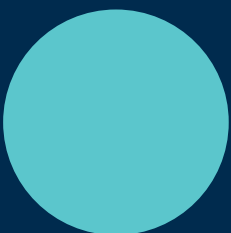
Building Community Resilience to Coastal Climate Hazards in Australia

Human geographer Dr Carmen Elrick-Barr leads this project which aims to help coastal communities be more prepared and better able to respond to climate hazards.



Cultivating Digital Music Making in Regional Australia

This project, conducted by a team of sociologists and musicians, aims to promote and support digital music creators in regional communities.



Increasing the Sustainability and Resilience of Coral Reef Fisheries

Social scientist Professor Joshua Cinner leads this project which seeks to increase the sustainability and resilience of coral reef fisheries, both in Australia and overseas.

It's not just the economy...

The arts not only contribute to the economy but to our **wellbeing** and **happiness**. They also help build **creativity** and represent an important avenue of **self-expression**.

The 2021 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes and the 2022 National Arts Participation Survey provide further evidence of the benefits that can come from engaging with the arts:

85

Percentage of Australians who agree that engaging with art, cultural and creative activities can have a positive impact on one's mental health

62

Percentage of Australians who believe that the arts have a big impact on our ability to express ourselves

59

Percentage of Australians who believe that the arts have a big impact on our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas

56

Percentage of Australians who believe that the arts have a big impact on our sense of wellbeing and happiness