

Art vs Dismal Science

The economics of Australia's creative arts sector

Conservative estimates find that the creative arts employ 193,600 Australians and contribute \$14.7 billion to Gross Domestic Product. The performing arts in particular have been badly affected by COVID-19 restrictions, and new polling shows Australians support a proposed relief package.

Discussion paper

Bill Browne

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Summary

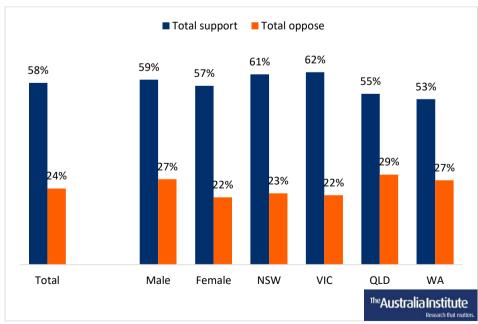
The creative arts make a significant contribution to the Australian economy. They directly employed 193,600 Australians in 2019, and contributed \$14.7 billion to Gross Domestic Product in 2017–18.

In addition to their direct economic contribution, the arts affect our happiness and mental health, and related "cultural and creative" activities are a part of industries as varied as manufacturing, sales, education, design and professional services. The creative arts also make an outsized contribution to life in regional Australia, including making art accessible for those in regional areas and providing regional artists with access to larger markets and a bigger reception.

The performing arts have been particularly affected by COVID-19 regulations and restrictions. The Arts and Recreation industry is the only industry where less than half of businesses are currently trading. Furthermore, the live performance sector reports that hundreds of thousands of people in the sector have already lost hundreds of millions of dollars of contracts. There has been some support for the arts in federal and state stimulus packages, but more would be needed to address the significant losses experienced by the sector.

Fortunately, when asked about a proposal for stimulus for the live performance sector, Australians were broadly supportive, with three in five Australians supporting or strongly supporting a proposed \$750 million federal relief package.





Introduction

Australians place great pride in the creative arts and the artists, authors, performers, producers, musicians and other creative workers who produce them, and the benefits that these creative arts have for our happiness, identity (personal and national), personal development and sense of connection with others and the world.

Among those with a monetary focus, the creative arts' contribution to our economy is also evident. The Australian Trade Commission ("Austrade") promotes our thriving arts, culture, media and entertainment industries to foreign investors and importers. Recent publications draw attention to Australian authors like Thomas Keneally and Bryce Courtenay; artists like Tracey Moffat and Ben Quilty; actors and directors like Nicole Kidman and George Millar; musicians like Gotye and Kylie Minogue; and our theatres and orchestras; as well as the opportunities that Australian stories and landscapes provide to creators around the world.¹

These famous artists do not simply appear. They are supported by a wide ecosystem of small to medium sized arts organisations that play different roles in artists lives through their careers. The quality and quantity of arts in Australia is not simply a function of public and private funding. Arts 'industries' are complex and policy makers need to understand the interaction between the different arts organisations.²

The arts sector was facing many challenges before the COVID-19 crisis. Federal Government arts funding declined by nearly 20% between 2008 and 2014. It is difficult to know whether there has been any recovery since then because the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) stopped producing this data amid its own budget cuts following the 2014 Budget. Certainly funding via the Australia Council declined through to 2016, while the portion of its funding going to major arts organisations increased, making conditions still more difficult for the wider arts community.³

This report does not try to solve the wider policy problems of the arts sector, but serves simply to demonstrate its considerable economic size. Statistics relating to Australia's creative arts focuses on two industries as classified by ABS: Arts and Recreation Services and Information Media and Telecommunications.

¹ Australian Trade Commission (n.d.) *Creative Industries: Industry Capability Reports*, https://www.austrade.gov.au/International/Buy/Australian-industry-capabilities/Creative-Industries

² For more detail on this, particularly in regard to visual arts, see Campbell, Murray, Brennan, & Pettit (2016) S2M: The economics of Australia's small-to-medium visual arts sector, https://visualarts.net.au/advocacy/policy-and-research/small-medium-s2m/

³ Campbell et al. (2016) S2M: The economics of Australia's small-to-medium visual arts sector

These two industries include subdivisions that relate to the creative arts, including visual arts, performing arts, motion picture and sound recording services, library and heritage services, broadcasting and publishing.

These two industries also have sub-divisions not related to the creative arts. For example, sports and gambling both come under Arts and Recreation; telecommunications services and internet services both come under Information Media and Telecommunications. Where possible, this report counts only those sub-divisions that relate to the creative arts,

This is a conservative approach. Calculations by the ABS of the total economic contribution of creative and cultural activities (including manufacture and sales of creative goods, etc) have found a much larger economic impact. The much larger contribution to the economy from cultural and creative activities is discussed below, as well as the difference between the ABS methodology and the ones used in this paper.

Employment

Collectively, the Arts and Recreation Services and Information Media and Telecommunications industries directly employ about 459,600 people (as their primary occupation), or about 3.5% of all employment in Australia.⁴

As shown in Table 1, 193,600 Australians are employed by the creative arts more specifically. In addition, there are likely to be many more for whom the creative arts is a source of income but not their main form of employment.

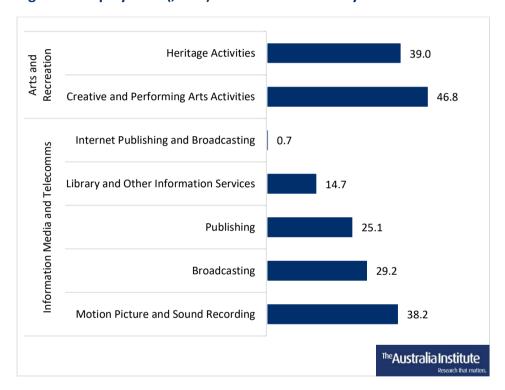


Figure 1: Employment (,000s) in the creative arts by sector

Source: See Table 1.

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⁴ ABS (2020) *6291.0.55.003 - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, Feb 2020,* https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.003Feb%202020?OpenDocument

Table 1: Employment by sub-division (calendar year 2019)

Sub-division	Classification	Employment				
Arts and Recreation Services						
Heritage Activities	Creative arts	39,000				
Creative and Performing Arts Activities	Creative arts	46,800				
Sports and Recreation Activities	Other	133,500				
Gambling Activities	Other	31,500				
Arts and Recreation Services nfd	Other	100				
Information Media and Telecommunications						
Publishing (except Internet and Music Publishing)	Creative arts	25,100				
Motion Picture and Sound Recording Activities	Creative arts	38,200				
Broadcasting (except Internet)	Creative arts	29,200				
Internet Publishing and Broadcasting	Creative arts	700				
Telecommunications Services	Other	91,600				
Internet Service Providers, Web Search Portals and Data	Other	9,300				
Processing Services						
Library and Other Information Services	Creative arts	14,700				
Information Media and Telecommunications nfd	Other	0				
Total						
Total Arts and Recreation and Information Media and		459,600				
Tech						
Total creative arts		193,600				
The Australia loctitute						

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Source: ABS (2020) 6291.0.55.003 - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, Feb 2020, https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.003Feb%202020?OpenDocume nt

Note: Employment calculated from the average of the four quarters in 2019.

Employment of 193,600 people puts the creative arts on a bar with several significant industry sub-divisions. More Australians are employed in creative arts than finance (190,600), accommodation (97,500), electricity supply (65,000) or coal mining (49,600), but more Australians are employed in agriculture (281,600) than the creative arts.

Agriculture 281,600

Creative arts 193,600

Finance 190,600

Accommodation 97,500

Electricity Supply 65,000

Coal mining 49,600

Figure 2: Employment by industry sub-division, select sub-divisions

Source: ABS (2020) 6291.0.55.003 - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, Feb 2020

Note: There is discussion about what the best measure of employment by industry sub-division is. The Labour Account gives a lower figure of 39,700 employed in coal mining in 2019. For more details, see RMIT ABC Fact Check (2019) Fact check: How many people are employed in thermal coal mining?, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-11/fact-check-are-there-54000-jobs-in-thermal-coalmining/11198150

Gross Domestic Product

In 2019, the Arts and Recreation industry contributed \$16.0 billion to GDP. Over the same time, the Information Media and Telecommunications industry (other than telecommunication services) contributed \$22.3 billion to GDP.⁵

The ABS does not break down GDP data by sub-division (in most cases) in its quarterly national accounts. However, it has released figures for industry sub-divisions for the financial year 2017–18. In that year, the creative arts contributed \$14.7 billion in value added (GDP).

Note that these figures do not include government business entities, which particularly affects the heritage activities and library sectors.⁶

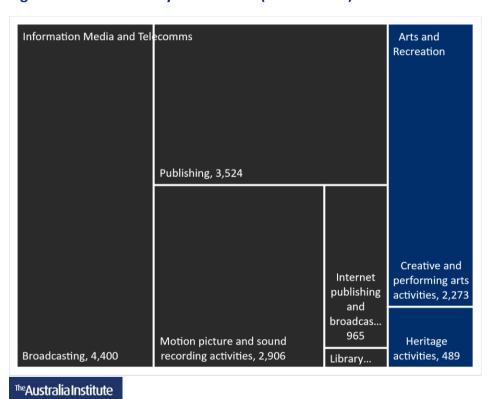


Figure 3: Value added by sub-division (creative arts)

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⁵ ABS (2020) *5206.0 - Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product, Dec 2019*, https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/5206.0Dec%202019?OpenDocument

⁶ For example, the national accounts (including government jobs) gives 37,900 employed in heritage activities in 2017–18, while the Australian industry estimates (excluding government jobs) give 7,000 employed in heritage activities. ABS (2019) 8155.0 - Australian Industry, 2017-18, https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/8155.0Main+Features12017-18?OpenDocument; (2020) 5206.0 - Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product, Dec 2019

Source: Table 2.

Table 2: Value added by sub-division (financial year 2017–18)

Classification	Value added (\$m)					
Arts and Recreation Services						
Creative arts	489					
Creative arts	2,273					
Information Media and Telecommunications						
Creative arts	3,524					
Creative arts	2,906					
Creative arts	4,400					
Creative arts	965					
Creative arts	116					
Total						
	14,596					
	16,567					
	14,673					
	Creative arts					

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Source: ABS (2019) 8155.0 - Australian Industry, 2017-18,

https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/8155.0Main+Features12017-

18?OpenDocument

Note: For brevity, the non-creative arts sub-divisions have been excluded from this table. The full list is in Table 1.

The creative arts' contribution of \$14.7 billion to GDP represents about 0.8% of Australia's total GDP of \$1.9 trillion in 2018–19. While this is a significant contribution, it is small compared to industries like Manufacturing or Professional, Scientific and Technical Services. However, the arts have a much greater economic impact than simply their production value. Art makes a significant contribution to shaping people's individual tastes and preferences. The core theories of economics stem from the idea that each individual has a set of preferences that decide what goods and services they will consume. Yet these theories are silent on how such preferences arise. Clearly culture and art play a large part in this process of shaping individual preferences, and aligning preference across individuals, and subsequently indirectly shape major investment and consumption decisions that are based on those preferences.

Most art is enjoyed not only for stimulating individual thought and reflection, but also for the way it stimulates conversations, discussion and debate among a broad range of people. By doing so it ultimately contributes to crafting a social set of views of the world, and is often a means to pass down 'cultural norms' across generations. This type of argument forms part of the basis for requirements on broadcasters to provide Australian-produced

content, along with other arguments based on potential economies of scale overwhelming local production.

Cultural and creative activities

When the ABS calculated the economic impact of cultural and creative activities in 2014, it found that cultural and creative activity contributed \$86.0 billion to GDP, or 6.7% of GDP, and was the primary employment for 972,200 people in 2008–09.⁷

In 2018, the Bureau of Communications and Arts Research in the Department of Communications updated the figures. The bureau found that cultural and creative activity contributed \$111.7 billion to GDP in 2016–17, or 6.4% of GDP.⁸ Academics have calculated creative employment at 593,830 people in 2016, or 5.6% of the workforce.⁹

Both the ABS and the Bureau of Communications and Arts Research use a "satellite account" method for calculating the economic impact of cultural and creative activities. In the "satellite account" method, the size of a sector is approximated from all the industries that it may be involved in.

For example, the "cultural and creative activities" figures include professional design services (e.g. architecture, fashion); the manufacture and sales of arts, crafts and publications; the economic activity at pubs, clubs and restaurants during live performances; the administrative services of cultural and creative organisations; etc.

The Arts and Recreation industry is actually one of the smaller contributors to these cultural and creative activities calculations, as shown in Figure 4.

Though it uses similar ABS data sources, The Australia Institute's methodology is more conservative. It only looks at sub-divisions linked to the creative arts in two industries, not all cultural and creative activities anywhere along the supply chain.

⁷ ABS (2014) *5271.0 - Australian National Accounts: Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts, Experimental, 2008-09,* https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/5271.0Main+Features12008-09?OpenDocument

⁸ Bureau of Communications and Arts Research (n.d.) *Cultural and creative activity in Australia 2008-09 to 2016-17*, https://communications.e-

newsletter.com.au/pub/pubType/EO/pubID/zzzz5976fe3908a3e171/interface.html

⁹ Cunningham & McCutcheon (2018) *The Creative Economy in Australia: Cultural production, creative services and income*, https://research.qut.edu.au/dmrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/03/Factsheet-2-Employment-by-sector-V5.pdf

Figure 4: Contribution to cultural and creative activity (\$m)



Research that matter

Source: Bureau of Communications and Arts Research (n.d.) Cultural and creative activity in Australia 2008-09 to 2016-17, p. 11, https://communications.e-

newsletter.com.au/pub/pubType/EO/pubID/zzzz5976fe3908a3e171/interface.html

Contribution to regional Australia

While much attention focuses on the big names and big shows of the big cities, small to medium arts enterprises make a major contribution to Australia's art and culture outside of the major cities. There are at least 102 regional galleries in Australia, meaning there are more small-to-medium sized galleries in regional Australia than there are in metro areas.¹⁰

Regional galleries act as a hub for the cultural life of the regional community, offering work and meeting space for members of the local artistic community. They expose the regions to art from elsewhere, and help regional artists get exposure locally and elsewhere. Some have considerable collections and specialise in a particular artform.

Regional galleries are mainly closely related to local governments, although some are independent and privately funded. While some are relatively remote and modest, others are important cultural centres recognised within their state and relatively large. A handful have over 10 full time employees, making them significant local employers. Other economic aspects of regional galleries are summarised in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Activities of regional galleries 2015-16

Visitors	4,106,182
Artists paid	3,366
Residencies	204
Staff	904
Volunteers	3,978
Volunteer hours	65,632
Value of volunteer hours	\$7,824,216

Source: Campbell, Murray, Brennan, & Pettit (2016) *S2M: The economics of Australia's small-to-medium visual arts sector*, https://visualarts.net.au/advocacy/policy-and-research/small-medium-s2m/

Table 3 shows that not only are regional galleries significant contributors to visual arts in Australia, but they benefit hugely from volunteer efforts. The value of volunteer time is second only to local government funding as a source of support for regional galleries, representing over 20% of total funding received. Given that both volunteer capacity and local government funding are likely to be reduced by the COVID-19 crisis, regional art galleries and their communities could be greatly assisted by increased federal and state government stimulus funding.

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¹⁰ All information in this section is based on Campbell et al. (2016) S2M: The economics of Australia's small-to-medium visual arts sector

Losses from COVID-19

I Lost My Gig Australia, an initiative of the Australian Festivals Association and the Australian Music Industry Network, is tracking how many in the creative industries have lost jobs and contracts.

As of 7 April, the tally is \$330 million lost. ¹¹ I Lost My Gig Australia in March reported there have been 470,000 workers affected, with 240,000 job opportunities lost. ¹²

The COVID-19 related losses have been exacerbated by the Australia Council's decision to "transition out" a number of important arts organisations from its funding. Journalist Ben Eltham writes:

The list of organisations being "transitioned out" of Australia Council funding includes the Sydney Writers' festival; many of the nation's literary magazines, including Australian Book Review, Overland and the Sydney Review of Books, and a long string of theatre and dance companies, such as Sydney's Australian Theatre for Young People, Adelaide's Restless Dance Theatre, Perth's Blue Room and Melbourne's famous small theatre La Mama.¹³

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has calculated the business impacts of COVID-19. In the week commencing 30 March, 90% of businesses were operating. However, only 47% of Arts and Recreation Services businesses were operating, making that industry the worst affected. The next most affected were Information Media and Telecommunications (which also includes creative arts businesses) at 65% operating and Accommodation and Food Services at 69% operating.¹⁴

¹¹ I Lost My Gig Australia (2020) Have you lost work?, https://ilostmygig.net.au/

¹² https://ilostmygig.net.au/latest-news/f/music-industry-calls-for-750m-relief-package

¹³ Eltham (2020) We are witnessing a cultural bloodbath in Australia that has been years in the making | Ben Eltham, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/apr/06/we-are-witnessing-a-cultural-bloodbath-in-australia-that-has-been-years-in-the-making

¹⁴ Overall, 70% of businesses not trading were not trading because of COVID-19. ABS (2020) *Business Indicators, Business Impacts of COVID-19, Week Commencing 30 March 2020*, https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/5676.0.55.003Main%20Features2Week%20Commencing%2030%20March%202020

Support for the creative arts

State and federal governments have made additional funding available for the arts, or moved forward existing funding. However, this funding is limited compared to the identified losses experienced by artists, musicians and others in the creative industries.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

On the 9th of April, Federal Arts Minister Paul Fletcher and Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack announced a \$27 million funding package, consisting of:

- \$10 million for regional artists and organisations, to be delivered through Regional Arts Australia;
- \$7 million to support Indigenous artists and art centres; and
- \$10 million for Support Art, a charity that delivers crisis relief services to artists, crew and music workers.

Earlier that month, the federal government also moved forward \$5 million in funding from the Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund and expanded eligibility to metropolitan publishers and "other content service providers".¹⁵

State governments have announced support for the arts as part of larger stimulus packages. Of course, many arts organisations are also likely to be eligible for general support for businesses from federal and state governments.¹⁶

In the Australian Capital Territory, creative arts and entertainment businesses are among those exempted from payroll tax for six months. \$500,000 in grants funding for the arts will also be made available. ¹⁷

Tasmania's stimulus package includes \$1.5 million in funding and \$2 million in "operational measures" (e.g. earlier payment of money owed by government, grace periods for loan repayment, etc) for the cultural sector. Measures include grants for arts and screen sectors

¹⁵ Calver (2020) *Gov releases \$5 million from regional paper fund,* http://www.theland.com.au/story/6715414/gov-releases-5-million-from-regional-paper-fund/

¹⁶ See for example Caust (2020) What the latest stimulus measures mean for artists, https://indaily.com.au/arts-and-culture/2020/03/24/what-the-latest-stimulus-measures-mean-for-artists/

¹⁷ ABC News (2020) Coronavirus stimulus package to give local economy a \$137 million booster, two new cases confirmed, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-20/act-government-stimulus-package/12073774; Jenkins (2020) ACT stimulus package to keep Canberrans in jobs, says Barr,

https://www.themandarin.com.au/128081-act-stimulus-package-to-keep-canberrans-in-jobs-says-barr/

to collaborate, grants for contemporary musicians that have lost work, larger grants for screen development and extending the funding of arts organisations.¹⁸

The South Australian government's \$250 million support fund for community organisations and training explicitly identifies arts bodies as candidates for funding.¹⁹ It also has a dedicated \$1.5 million grants support package for the arts.²⁰

Arts Queensland has waived rent for tenants of government-owned arts venues and extended organisational funding for an additional year. Together the measures are worth \$8 million.²¹

SHELTERING LIVE MUSIC VENUES

Music Victoria is concerned that if live music venues close, it will be very difficult to re-open them. Once a venue loses its lease, it is difficult to get it back. Live venues and studios are often desirable for developers to repurpose for other development.

Therefore Music Victoria wants a 24 month ban on planning applications to change the use of a live music venue, and a moratorium on immediate costs faced by venues.²²

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR LIVE PERFORMANCE RELIEF

The live performance industry have requested a \$750 million "federal relief package", consisting of:²³

- Cash injections for businesses
- Rebating transaction fees
- Grants for live music venues
- \$180 million to Australia Council

¹⁸ Arts Tasmania (2020) *Cultural and Creative Industries stimulus package*, https://www.arts.tas.gov.au/news_articles/cultural_and_creative_industries_stimulus_package

¹⁹ Marshall (2020) *\$1 billion stimulus package to save SA jobs, businesses*, https://www.premier.sa.gov.au/news/media-releases/news/\$1-billion-stimulus-package-to-save-sa-jobs,-businesses

²⁰ Caust (2020) What the latest stimulus measures mean for artists

²¹ Enoch (2020) *Queensland Government to assist arts sector through COVID-19 crisis*, http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2020/3/18/queensland-government-to-assist-arts-sector-through-covid19-crisis

²² Donovan (2020) *Our famed music venues could disappear if we don't act,* https://www.theage.com.au/culture/music/our-famed-music-venues-could-disappear-if-we-don-t-act-20200319-p54btx.html

²³ I Lost My Gig Australia (2020) *Music industry calls for \$750m relief package*, https://ilostmygig.net.au/latest-news/f/music-industry-calls-for-750m-relief-package

• \$20 million for Support Act (mental health)

The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,008 Australians about the proposed "federal relief package" for live music.²⁴ Results show that Australians broadly support the proposed relief package

- Three in five Australians (58%) support the proposed \$750 million relief package, including 25% who strongly support the package.
 - o 24% of Australians oppose the package, including 8% strongly opposed.
- The package is supported by a majority of men and women, and Australians in all large states.

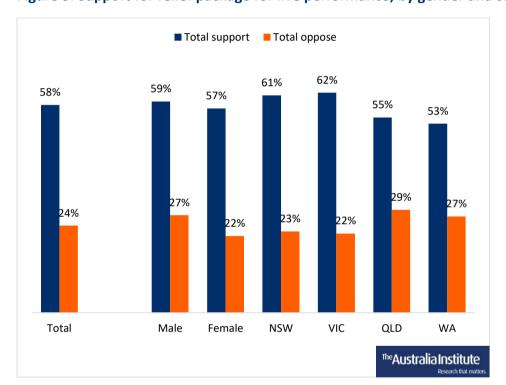


Figure 5: Support for relief package for live performance, by gender and state

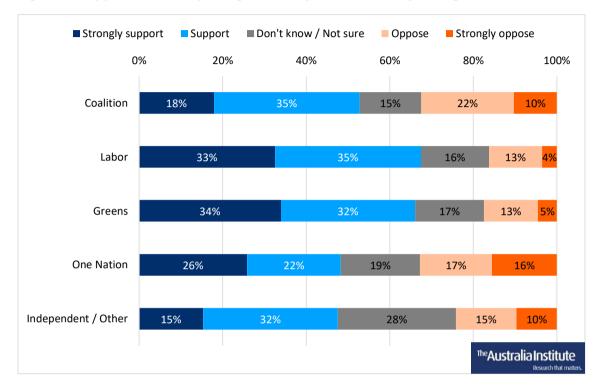
Support for the relief package for live performance exceeds opposition among all voting intentions.

- More than half of Coalition voters (53%) support the relief package, including 18% who strongly support it.
 - One in three Coalition voters (32%) oppose the relief package.
- Two in three Labor (67%) and Greens voters (66%) support the relief package; about half of those are strong supporters of the package.
 - o 16% of Labor voters and 17% of Greens voters oppose the package.

²⁴ For details of the package, see I Lost My Gig Australia (2020) *Music industry calls for \$750m relief package*, https://ilostmygig.net.au/latest-news/f/music-industry-calls-for-750m-relief-package

 Just under half of One Nation and Independent voters (both 48%) support the relief package for live performance, compared to 33% of One Nation and 24% of Independent/Other voters who oppose.

Figure 6: Support for relief package for live performance, by voting intention



Method and full results in the appendix.

Conclusion

The creative arts make a major contribution to the Australian economy, employing 194,000 Australians and contributing \$15 billion to Gross Domestic Product. However, the sector has been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and extremely restrictive (albeit necessary) limitations on public gatherings and events. Half of businesses in the Arts and Recreation industry are not operating, worse than any other industry. 470,000 workers in the live performance sector have lost \$330 million-worth of work.

Given the economic and cultural importance of the creative arts, federal financial support for the creative arts is required. The music industry has already suggested a live performance relief package; support for other parts of the arts should also be pursued.

Appendix: Polling

Method

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,008 people between 3 and 6 April 2020, online through Dynata's weekly "OmniPulse", with nationally representative samples by gender, age and region.

The margin of error (95% confidence level) for the national results is 3.1%.

Results are shown only for larger states.

Voting crosstabs show voting intentions for the House of Representatives. Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs. "Coalition" includes separate responses for Liberal and National. "Other" includes Centre Alliance, Jacqui Lambie Network and Independent/Other.

Detailed results

The live performance industry has called for a \$750 million "federal relief package" for live music to support the arts during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis.

The proposed package would include:

- cash injections for the sector, including for performing arts companies and venues,
- mental health support for artists, performers, musicians, crew and technicians,
- live music venue grants, and
- the extension of all current government funding arrangements.

Do you support or oppose such a package?

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
Strongly support	25%	27%	23%	26%	27%	21%	26%
Support	34%	33%	34%	35%	35%	33%	27%
Oppose	17%	18%	16%	15%	15%	21%	18%
Strongly oppose	8%	9%	6%	8%	7%	8%	9%
Don't know / Not sure	17%	13%	21%	16%	16%	16%	20%

	Coalition	Labor	Greens	One Nation	Other
Strongly support	18%	33%	34%	26%	15%
Support	35%	35%	32%	22%	32%
Oppose	22%	13%	13%	17%	15%
Strongly oppose	10%	4%	5%	16%	10%
Don't know / Not sure	15%	16%	17%	19%	28%