

# Polling - Lockdown and the arts

*May 2020*

## Key results

The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,004 Australians about how they have engaged with the creative arts during lockdown.

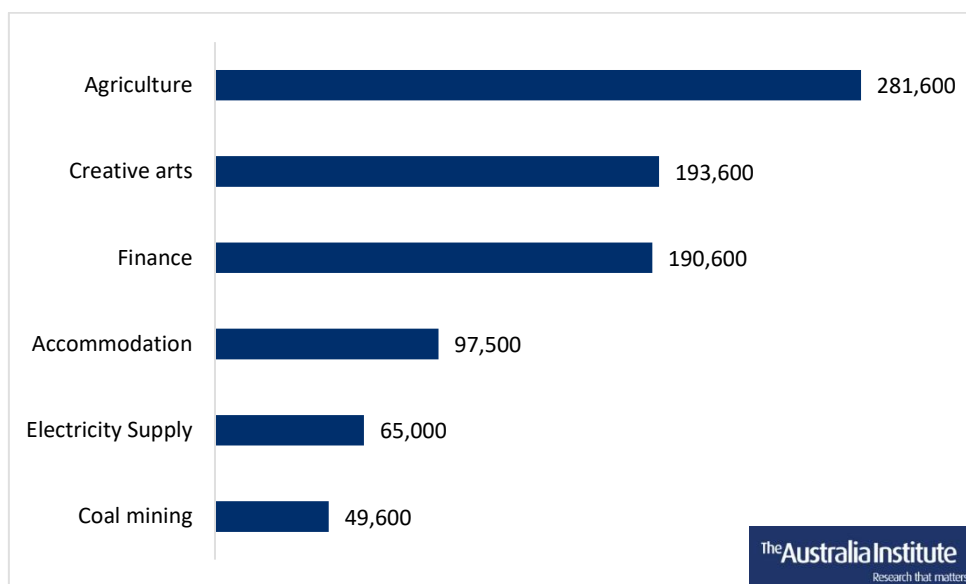
The results show that:

- Most Australians (68%) underestimate the number of people employed in the creative arts relative to coal mining
  - Only 7% correctly answer that the arts employ significantly more than coal mining does.
- During lockdown, Australians are participating in more cultural activities (including watching movies, reading fiction and listening to music).
  - Most Australians are watching more television shows and movies (61% and 54% respectively).
  - 31% of Australians are reading more works of fiction and 25% are reading more non-fiction.
- Three in four Australians (73%) agree that the arts have improved their mood and quality of life during the pandemic (15% disagree).
- More than half of Australians (54%) agree that the pandemic has increased their appreciation for authors, musicians, actors, dancers and other creative artists, compared to 31% who disagree.
- Three in five Australians (62%) agree that streaming sites should have similar obligations to screen and promote Australian content as the TV channels have (23% disagree).
- Half of Australians (51%) agree that the government should double funding for the Australia Council for the Arts to help support the arts during the COVID-19 lockdown, compared to 32% who disagree.

The Australia Institute wanted to see how Australians perceive the relative contribution of the creative arts to the Australian economy.

Australia Institute research shows that the creative arts are a significant employer and make a large contribution to Australian GDP. With 194,000 Australians employed in the creative arts, the sector is a larger employer than finance (190,600), accommodation (97,500), electricity supply (65,000) or coal mining (49,600). The creative arts also contribute \$14.7 billion to GDP each year.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1: Employment by industry sub-division, select sub-divisions**



Note: For full details, see Browne (2020) *Art vs Dismal Science*, <https://www.tai.org.au/content/polling-gov-support-arts-industry-popular-and-necessary>

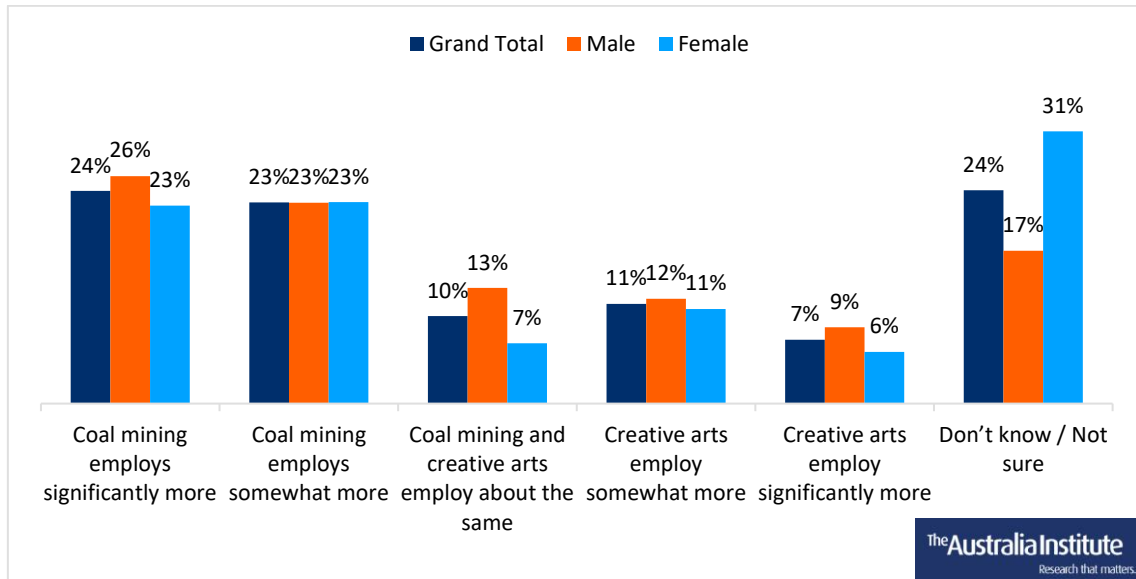
To test how Australians perceive the relative size of the creative arts, respondents were asked which sector employs more people: coal mining or the creative arts. Since the creative arts employ over three times as many people as coal mining, the correct answer is that the creative arts employ significantly more.

- Seven in 10 Australians (68%) underestimate the size of the creative arts workforce relative to coal mining.
- Only 7% correctly answer that the creative arts employ significantly more than coal mining.

---

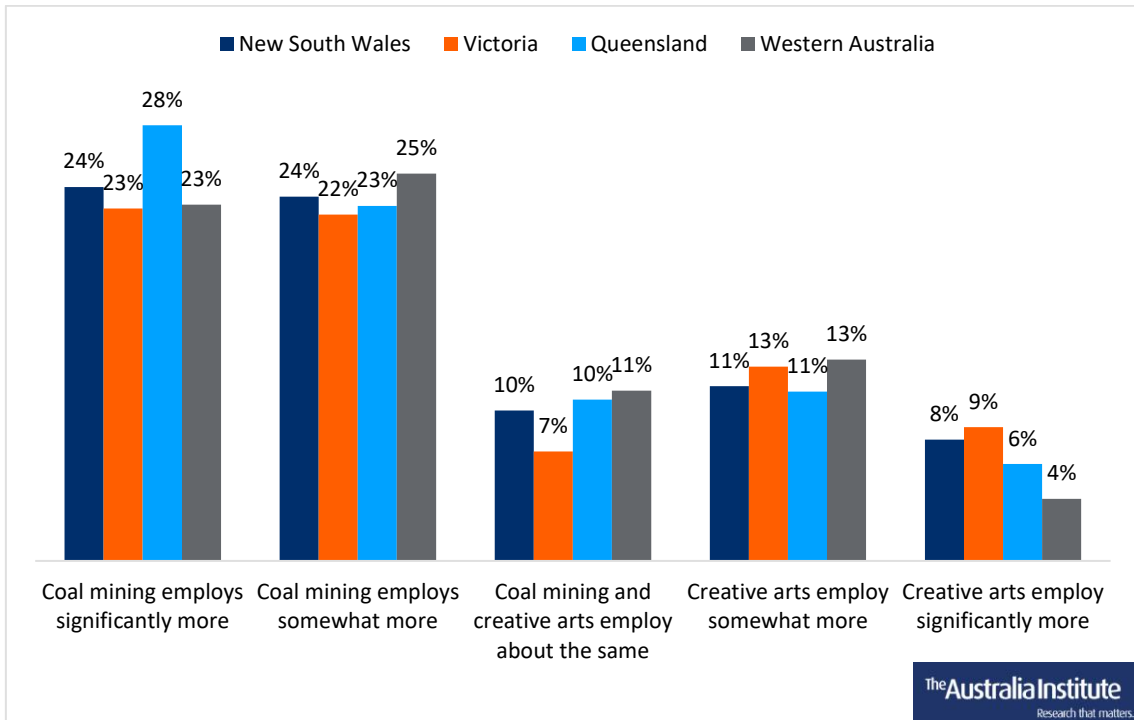
<sup>1</sup> Browne (2020) *Art vs Dismal Science*, <https://www.tai.org.au/content/polling-gov-support-arts-industry-popular-and-necessary>

**Figure 2: Which employs more**



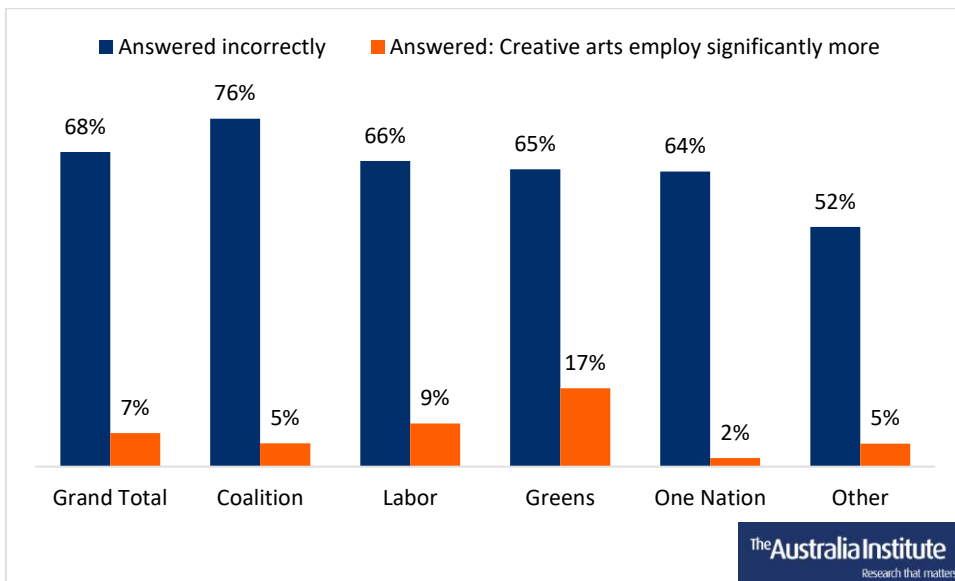
- The effectiveness of the coal mining industry’s lobbying and self-promotion is demonstrated by the 47% of Australians who think coal mining employs more than the creative arts do, despite actually employing about a quarter as many people.
- Among the four largest states, Victorians are most likely to correctly answer that the creative arts employ significantly more people (9%). Even there, respondents are much more likely to answer incorrectly (65%).
- Queenslanders are most likely to answer that coal mining employs significantly more (28%).
- Western Australians are least likely to answer that creative arts employ significantly more (4%).

**Figure 3: Which employs more, by state**



- Among every voting intention, half or more of respondents answered incorrectly.
  - Greens voters were most likely to answer correctly, but even they were more than three times as likely to select an incorrect answer than a correct answer (17% correct vs 65% incorrect).
  - A person choosing randomly between the five options would be more likely to choose the correct answer than even a Greens voter.

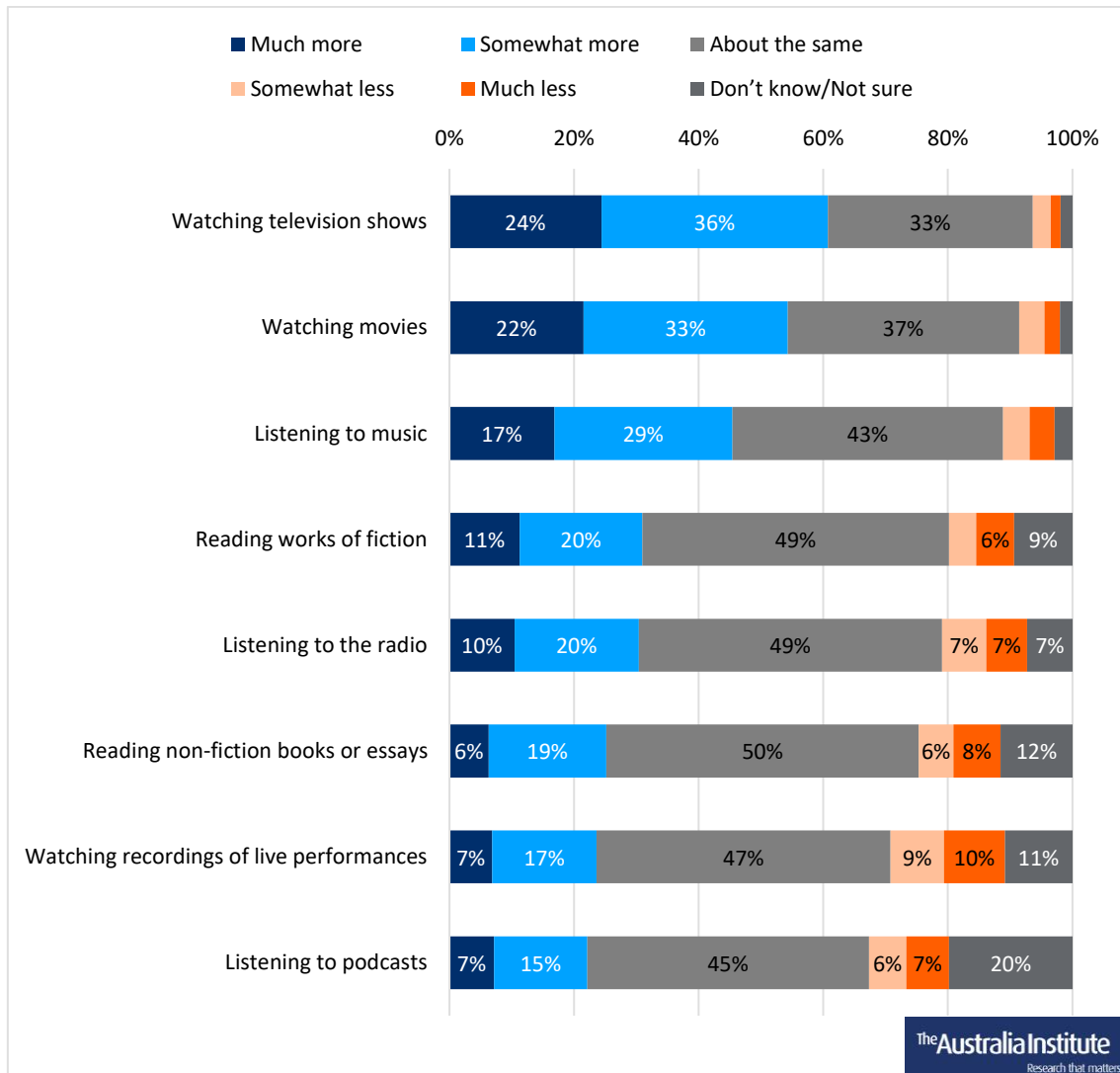
**Figure 4: Perceived size of coal mining and arts employment, by voting intention**



Australians were asked which of a list of eight cultural activities they have done more or less of during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Most Australians are watching more television shows and movies (61% and 54% respectively).
- 45% of Australians are listening to more music, compared to 8% who are listening to less music.
- Reading has also seen a significant increase, with 31% of Australians reading more works of fiction and 25% reading more non-fiction.
  - 10% are reading less fiction and 13% are reading less non-fiction.
- People are also listening to radio and podcasts more often (30% and 22% respectively).
- There are mixed results for watching recordings of live performances, with 24% saying they are watching more and 18% saying they are watching less.

**Figure 5: During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you done more or less of ...**

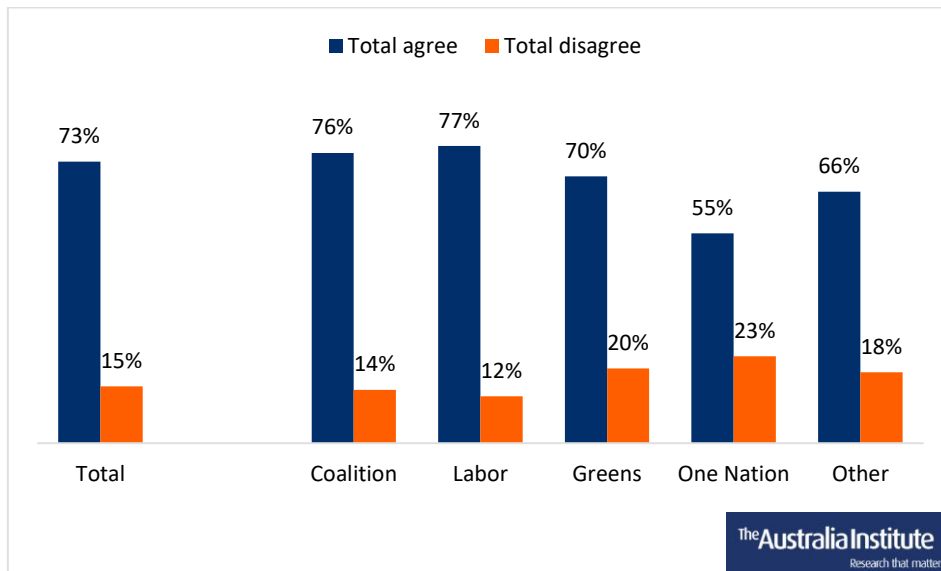


Australians were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with four statements about the arts.

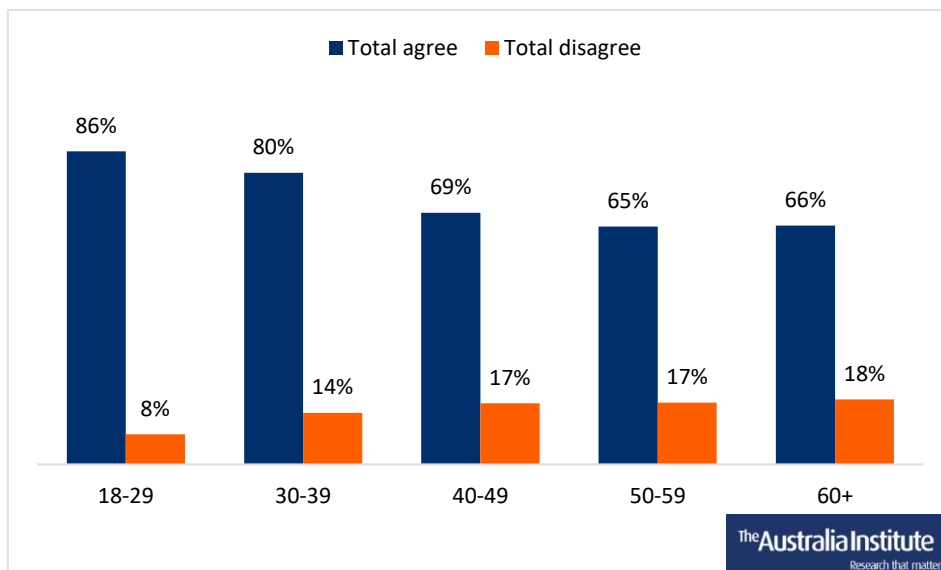
Three in four Australians (73%) agree that the arts have improved their mood and quality of life during the pandemic, including 18% that strongly agree.

- 15% disagree that the arts have improved their mood and quality of life.
- By voting intention, Labor and Coalition voters were most likely to say that the arts had improved their mood and quality of life (77% and 76% respectively).
- Younger people were most likely to agree that the arts have improved their quality of life. However, among every age group two in three or more agreed.

**Figure 6: The arts have improved my mood and quality of life during the pandemic**



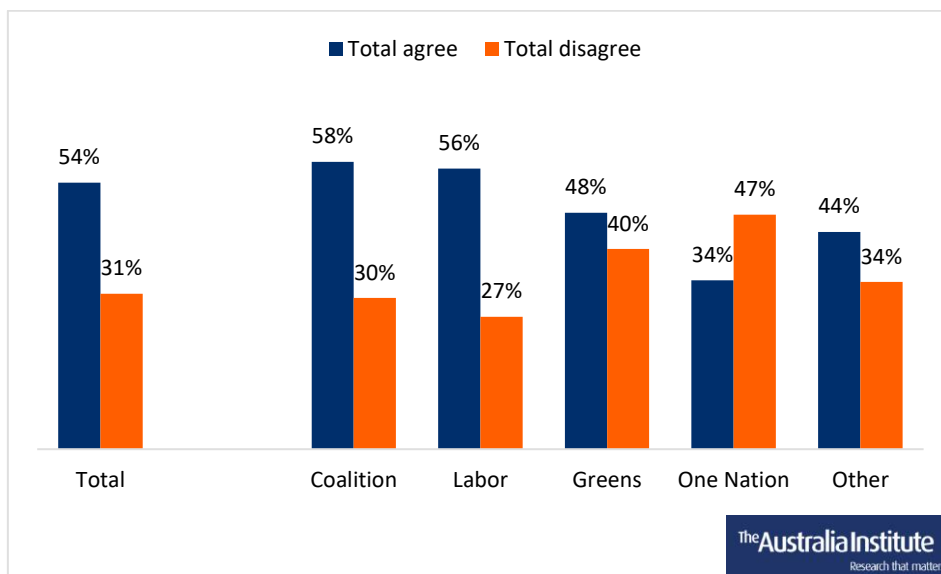
**Figure 7: The arts have improved my mood and quality of life during the pandemic**



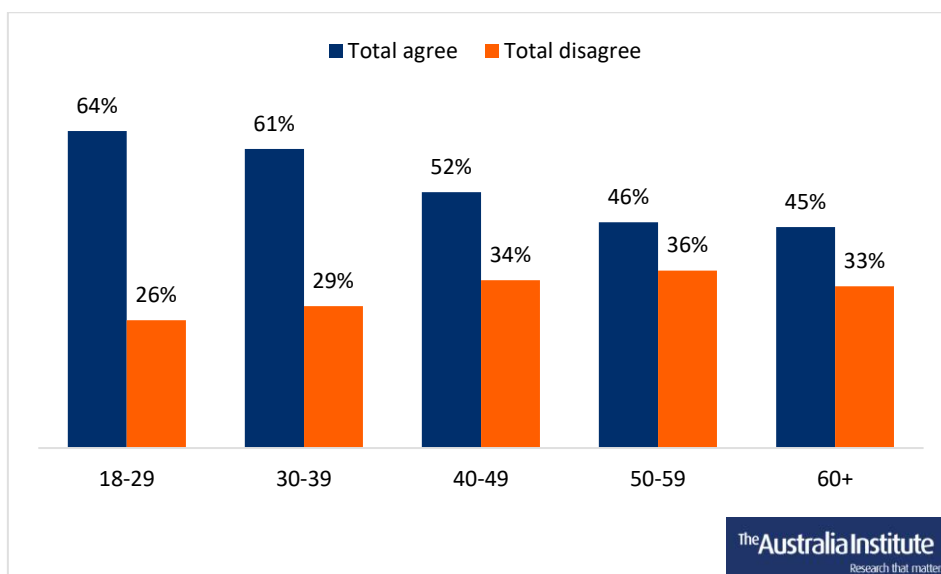
More than half of Australians (54%) agree that the pandemic has increased their appreciation for authors, musicians, actors, dancers and other creative artists, including 14% who strongly agreed.

- Three in 10 (31%) disagree that the pandemic has increased their appreciation for creative artists.
- By voting intention, Coalition and Labor voters were most likely to have an increased appreciation for creative artists (58% and 56% respectively).
- Younger age groups were more likely to have an increased appreciation of creative artists, with those 18–29 most likely (64%).

**Figure 8: The pandemic has increased my appreciation for creative artists**



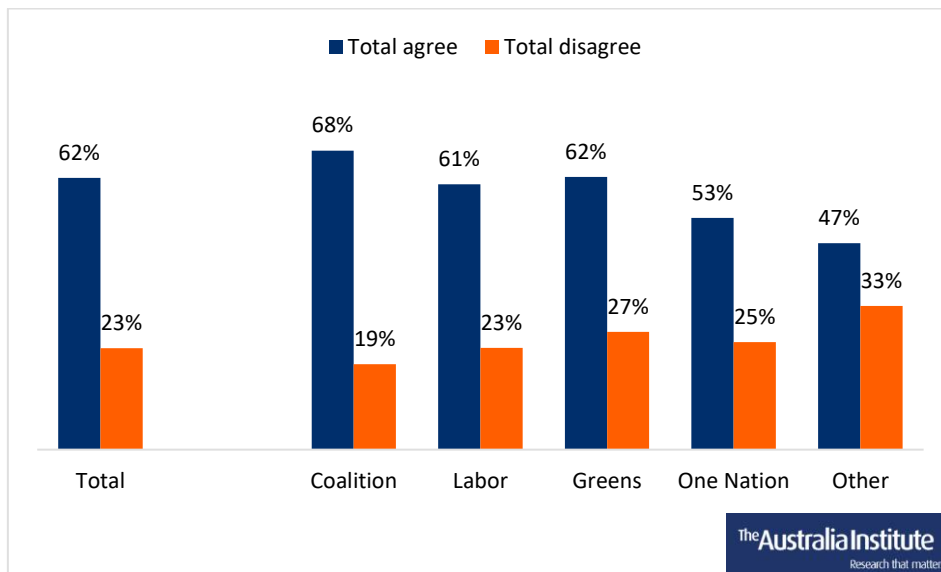
**Figure 9: The pandemic has increased my appreciation for creative artists**



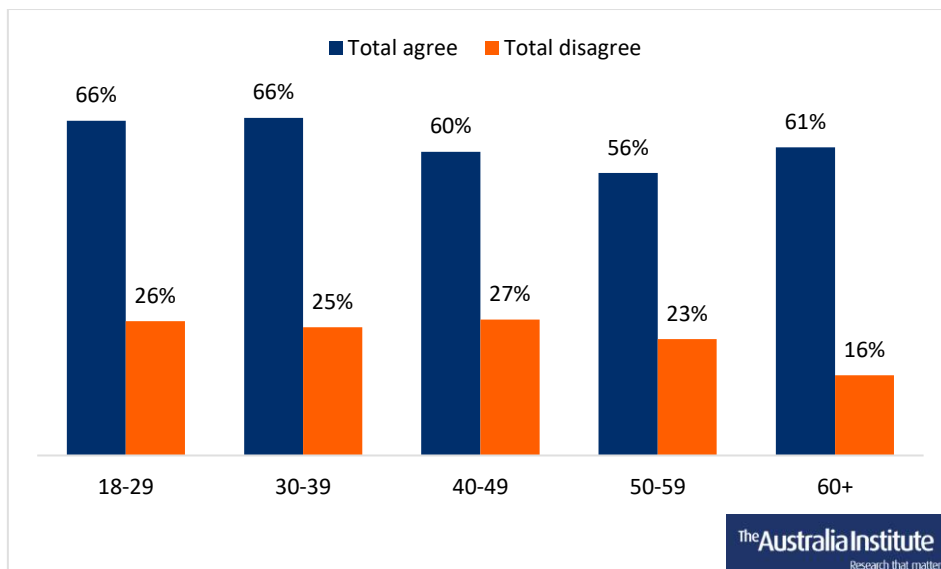
Three in five Australians (62%) agree that streaming sites should have similar obligations to screen and promote Australian content as the TV channels have.

- One in four (23%) disagree.
- Seven in 10 Coalition voters (68%) agree that streaming sites should have Australian content obligations.
- 61% of Labor voters and 62% of Greens voters agree that streaming sites should have Australian content obligations, as do 53% of One Nation voters.
- Agreement is similar across age groups.

**Figure 10: Similar content obligations for streaming sites as for TV channels**



**Figure 11: Similar content obligations for streaming sites as for TV channels**

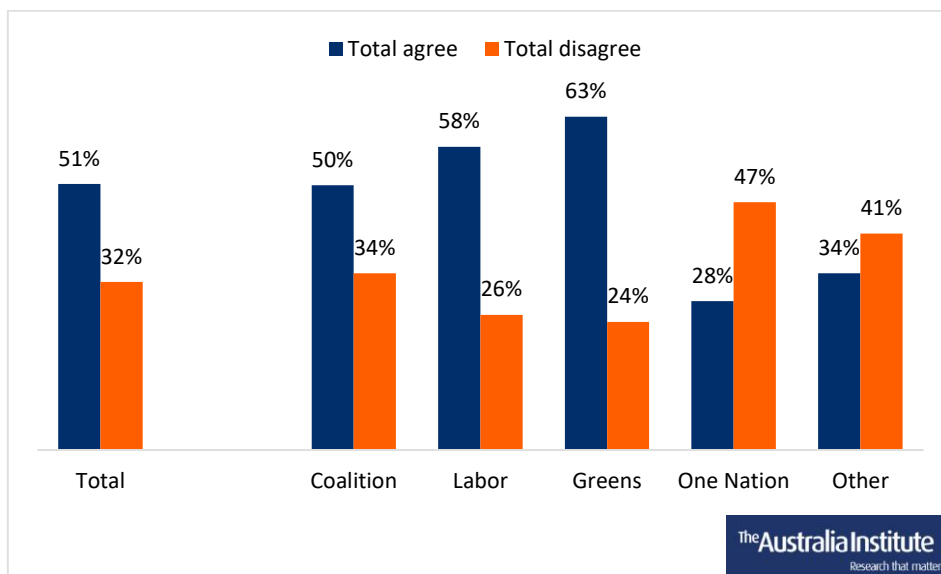




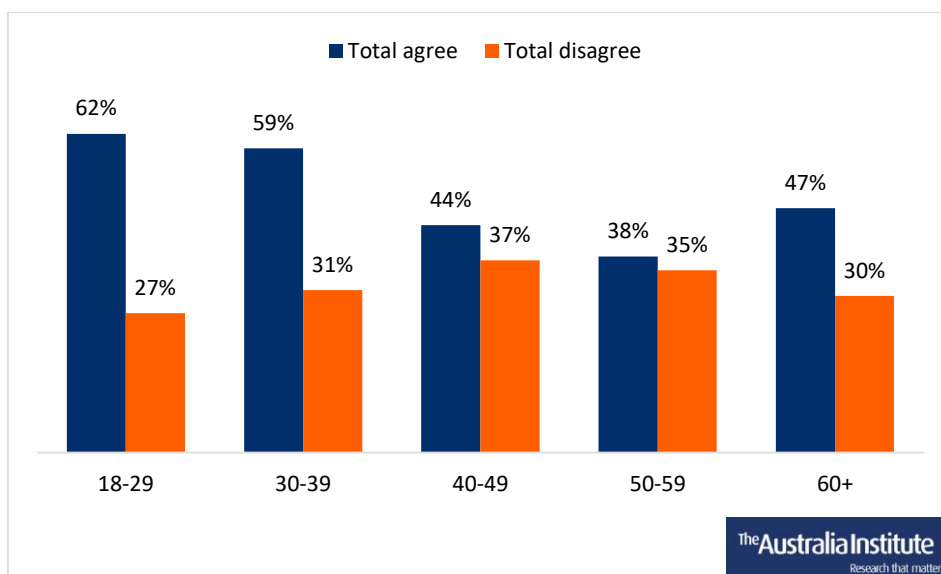
Half of Australians (51%) agree that the government should double funding for the Australia Council for the Arts to help support the arts during the COVID-19 lockdown.

- One in three (32%) disagree that the government should double Australia Council funding.
- A majority of Coalition (50%), Labor (58%) and Greens (63%) voters agree that Australia Council funding should be doubled.
- Support for doubling funding for the Australia Council was highest among those 39 and younger and those 60 years and older. Across every age group more agreed than disagreed that funding should be doubled.

**Figure 12: Double funding for the Australia Council for the Arts**



**Figure 13: Double funding for the Australia Council for the Arts**



## Method

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,004 people on 8–9 May 2020, online through Dynata’s Rapid Results polling, 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

*To the best of your knowledge, which sector employs more people in Australia: coal mining or the creative arts?*

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA
Coal mining employs significantly more	24%	26%	23%	24%	23%	28%	23%
Coal mining employs somewhat more	23%	23%	23%	24%	22%	23%	25%
Coal mining and creative arts employ about the same	10%	13%	7%	10%	7%	10%	11%
Creative arts employ somewhat more	11%	12%	11%	11%	13%	11%	13%
Creative arts employ significantly more	7%	9%	6%	8%	9%	6%	4%
Don't know / Not sure	24%	17%	31%	24%	27%	21%	24%

	Coalition	Labor	Greens	One Nation	Other
Coal mining employs significantly more	27%	25%	17%	25%	16%
Coal mining employs somewhat more	25%	22%	27%	23%	17%
Coal mining and creative arts employ about the same	13%	7%	11%	9%	9%
Creative arts employ somewhat more	11%	13%	10%	8%	10%
Creative arts employ significantly more	5%	9%	17%	2%	5%
Don't know / Not sure	19%	24%	18%	34%	43%

	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
<b>Coal mining employs significantly more</b>	23%	25%	23%	22%	27%
<b>Coal mining employs somewhat more</b>	28%	29%	15%	21%	20%
<b>Coal mining and creative arts employ about the same</b>	17%	15%	5%	8%	5%
<b>Creative arts employ somewhat more</b>	8%	10%	9%	11%	17%
<b>Creative arts employ significantly more</b>	6%	5%	13%	7%	6%
<b>Don't know / Not sure</b>	19%	15%	35%	31%	25%

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you found yourself doing more or less of each of the following*

	Much more	Somewhat more	About the same	Somewhat less	Much less	Don't know/Not sure
<b>Watching television shows</b>	24%	36%	33%	3%	2%	2%
<b>Watching movies</b>	22%	33%	37%	4%	2%	2%
<b>Listening to music</b>	17%	29%	43%	4%	4%	3%
<b>Reading works of fiction</b>	11%	20%	49%	4%	6%	9%
<b>Listening to the radio</b>	10%	20%	49%	7%	7%	7%
<b>Reading non-fiction books or essays</b>	6%	19%	50%	6%	8%	12%
<b>Watching recordings of live performances</b>	7%	17%	47%	9%	10%	11%
<b>Listening to podcasts</b>	7%	15%	45%	6%	7%	20%

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

**‘The arts (including books, TV shows, movies, music and audio) have improved my mood and quality of life during the COVID-19 pandemic.’**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>WA</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	18%	19%	17%	21%	21%	13%	15%
<b>Agree</b>	55%	56%	55%	55%	49%	59%	62%
<b>Disagree</b>	11%	11%	12%	13%	11%	13%	6%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%	3%	5%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	12%	11%	13%	9%	15%	12%	12%
<b>Total agree</b>	73%	75%	71%	76%	70%	72%	77%
<b>Total disagree</b>	15%	14%	16%	15%	15%	16%	11%

	<b>Coalition</b>	<b>Labor</b>	<b>Greens</b>	<b>One Nation</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	16%	21%	27%	11%	15%
<b>Agree</b>	60%	56%	43%	43%	50%
<b>Disagree</b>	12%	9%	15%	15%	14%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	2%	3%	5%	8%	4%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	10%	10%	11%	23%	16%
<b>Total agree</b>	76%	77%	70%	55%	66%
<b>Total disagree</b>	14%	12%	20%	23%	18%

	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
<b>Strongly agree</b>	30%	23%	15%	14%	8%
<b>Agree</b>	56%	57%	54%	51%	58%
<b>Disagree</b>	7%	11%	13%	14%	13%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	1%	4%	4%	3%	5%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	6%	6%	14%	18%	17%
<b>Total agree</b>	86%	80%	69%	65%	66%
<b>Total disagree</b>	8%	14%	17%	17%	18%

**'The COVID-19 pandemic has increased my appreciation for authors, musicians, actors, dancers and other creative artists.'**

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	14%	13%	15%	14%	19%	12%	13%
<b>Agree</b>	39%	39%	40%	43%	30%	38%	47%
<b>Disagree</b>	25%	28%	22%	26%	22%	33%	17%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6%	7%	6%	6%	8%	4%	8%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	15%	14%	17%	11%	22%	14%	15%
<b>Total agree</b>	54%	52%	55%	57%	49%	50%	60%
<b>Total disagree</b>	31%	35%	28%	32%	29%	36%	25%

	Coalition	Labor	Greens	One Nation	Other
<b>Strongly agree</b>	14%	19%	15%	8%	7%
<b>Agree</b>	44%	38%	33%	26%	37%
<b>Disagree</b>	25%	21%	35%	30%	25%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6%	6%	5%	17%	8%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	12%	17%	12%	19%	23%
<b>Total agree</b>	58%	56%	48%	34%	44%
<b>Total disagree</b>	30%	27%	40%	47%	34%

	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
<b>Strongly agree</b>	18%	23%	12%	11%	7%
<b>Agree</b>	47%	37%	40%	35%	38%
<b>Disagree</b>	23%	22%	27%	30%	24%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	3%	7%	7%	6%	9%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	10%	11%	14%	18%	22%
<b>Total agree</b>	64%	61%	52%	46%	45%
<b>Total disagree</b>	26%	29%	34%	36%	33%

**‘Streaming sites like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Stan should have similar obligations to screen and promote Australian content as the TV channels have.’**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>WA</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	20%	21%	19%	20%	23%	20%	17%
<b>Agree</b>	42%	41%	43%	41%	37%	44%	55%
<b>Disagree</b>	18%	19%	16%	20%	18%	17%	6%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6%	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%	9%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	15%	14%	15%	14%	17%	14%	13%
<b>Total agree</b>	62%	62%	62%	61%	60%	64%	72%
<b>Total disagree</b>	23%	24%	22%	25%	23%	22%	15%

	<b>Coalition</b>	<b>Labor</b>	<b>Greens</b>	<b>One Nation</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	21%	22%	20%	15%	13%
<b>Agree</b>	47%	39%	43%	38%	34%
<b>Disagree</b>	15%	18%	18%	21%	26%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	5%	6%	9%	4%	7%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	12%	16%	11%	23%	20%
<b>Total agree</b>	68%	61%	62%	53%	47%
<b>Total disagree</b>	19%	23%	27%	25%	33%



	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
<b>Strongly agree</b>	26%	19%	17%	18%	20%
<b>Agree</b>	40%	48%	43%	38%	41%
<b>Disagree</b>	21%	19%	20%	16%	12%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6%	6%	7%	7%	3%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	8%	8%	14%	22%	24%
<b>Total agree</b>	66%	66%	60%	56%	61%
<b>Total disagree</b>	26%	25%	27%	23%	16%

**'The government should double funding for the Australia Council for the Arts (the national arts funding body) to help support the arts during the COVID-19 lockdown.'**

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA
<b>Strongly agree</b>	14%	17%	12%	15%	17%	12%	8%
<b>Agree</b>	36%	37%	36%	40%	31%	36%	44%
<b>Disagree</b>	23%	22%	24%	23%	22%	29%	24%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	9%	11%	7%	9%	10%	6%	8%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	17%	14%	21%	13%	21%	17%	16%
<b>Total agree</b>	51%	53%	48%	55%	47%	48%	52%
<b>Total disagree</b>	32%	33%	31%	32%	32%	35%	32%

	Coalition	Labor	Greens	One Nation	Other
<b>Strongly agree</b>	13%	17%	29%	6%	5%
<b>Agree</b>	37%	41%	34%	23%	29%
<b>Disagree</b>	24%	19%	22%	23%	31%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	10%	6%	2%	25%	10%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	16%	17%	12%	25%	25%
<b>Total agree</b>	50%	58%	63%	28%	34%
<b>Total disagree</b>	34%	26%	24%	47%	41%

	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
<b>Strongly agree</b>	22%	14%	12%	13%	11%
<b>Agree</b>	40%	45%	32%	25%	37%
<b>Disagree</b>	21%	23%	28%	24%	20%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6%	8%	9%	12%	10%
<b>Don't know/Not sure</b>	11%	10%	19%	27%	22%
<b>Total agree</b>	62%	59%	44%	38%	47%
<b>Total disagree</b>	27%	31%	37%	35%	30%