



# ARTS SECTOR FACT SHEET

## Cultural and creative activity in Australia 2008-09 to 2016-17

### What is the purpose of the paper?

The paper quantifies the economic contribution of cultural and creative activity in Australia from 2008-09 to 2016-17. Cultural and creative activity is increasingly recognised as an important component of economic growth. It has the potential to increase as the economy transforms in parallel with the growing use of advanced technologies and the rise of automation.

The paper identifies how this activity has evolved over time, and the drivers of change. Measurement of this activity can inform policy makers about how such industries contribute to economic outcomes relative to other industries.

This paper creates a time series of this data for the very first time.

### What is cultural and creative activity?

Cultural and creative activity refers to activities that involve human creativity as a major input. While there is no universally accepted definition, the terms 'cultural' and 'creative' are used to describe activities connected with the arts, media, heritage, design, fashion, and information technology. Cultural activity may also contain intellectual property to communicate symbolic meaning while creative activity requires human creativity as a significant and identifiable input.

The economic value of cultural and creative activity is determined by how it is defined and identified— as either creative, cultural or both. In addition, some cultural and creative activity we know exists may not be captured fully in this approach, owing to methodological difficulties, unavailability of data, and how volunteering and non-market based production have been reflected in the measurements.

This definition of creative and cultural activity is the same one used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2014 publication—([Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts, 2008-09](#) (Cat. 5271.0)).

The definition of creative and cultural activity was decided by the Statistics Working Group (SWG) of the Meeting of Cultural Ministers prior to the 2014 ABS release. SWG manages a national program of cultural data collection, research and analysis to inform policy and decision making by Cultural Ministers.

More information on the definitional decision of SWG can be found in the publication, [Measuring the economic value of cultural and creative industries](#).



## What is a 'satellite account'?

A satellite account is a term used to measure the size of economic sectors that are not defined as industries in national accounts. The ABS has developed satellite accounts such as tourism, non-profit institutions, and cultural and creative activity.

# Industry/Artform Specific Questions

## Which area of cultural and creative activity experienced the largest increase?

Design contributed most to cultural and creative activity during the reference period. It experienced significant growth of \$16.2 billion (or 61 per cent) from 2008-09 to 2016-17, and increased faster than the rest of the economy. This growth was driven mainly by computer system design and related services as workplaces have required regular upgrades and enhancements over the past decade.

## Which area of cultural and creative activity experienced the largest decline?

Literature and print media declined significantly by \$3.4 billion (or 27 per cent) from 2008-09 to 2016-17. This decline was driven by falling demand for traditional print media as consumers have shifted to digital content. Traditional print materials are also comparatively slower to produce and more costly to distribute.

## How can I find out more about the activity captured in each domain?

The paper shows the size of cultural and creative activity in Australia by industry division and by domain—which is grouped in terms of related industries.

Further information on each domain is provided in the paper's appendix. It includes the most granular level of activity data that is publicly available—the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006 (ANZSIC 06) class name. ANZSIC 06 class names are sourced from ABS datasets and are based on national and international standards for industry classification.

## How is the production of Australian visual art represented in the paper?

The production of works of art, such as paintings and sculptures, is captured in more than one domain, including:

- Design: where it is captured as part of the ANZSIC class name 'Other Specialised Design Services' which includes commercial art services, alongside other activities that may be indirectly related to fine art—such as fashion and graphic design activities.
- Performing arts: where it could otherwise be captured under the ANZSIC class name 'Creative Artists, Musicians, Writers and Performers' which includes the services of artists and sculpting, as well as services that may be indirectly related to fine art.

## Which domain captures economic activity from interactive game development and distribution in the paper?

Economic activity from game development and distribution is captured in more than one domain, including:

- Design: including information technology development such as writing, modifying, testing or supporting software to meet the needs of a particular consumer; or planning and designing computer systems that integrate computer hardware, software and communication technologies.
- Other culture goods manufacturing and sales: includes computer game retailing.
- Broadcasting, electronic or digital media, and film: includes software publishing and computer game rental.

## Which domain captures economic activity from festivals in the paper?

Economic activity from festivals is captured across multiple domains because it depends on the type of festival:

- Broadcasting, electronic or digital media, and film: including activity relating to screening motion pictures using a variety of visual media. Included are screening productions at festivals and other similar events.
- Performing arts: operations engaged in providing or producing live theatrical or musical presentations and performances.

## How was cultural and creative activity measured?

The paper uses the same approach taken by the ABS in their original report on cultural and creative activity ([Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts, 2008-09](#) (Cat. 5271.0)).

The paper calculates a time series from the Satellite Accounts definition of cultural and creative activity. The figures presented in the paper, unless otherwise stated, are in current prices and on a national accounts basis. This basis excludes volunteering and non-market based production due to its activity not being captured in the calculation of gross domestic product.

The main components of this measure include activity from cultural and creative industries as well as the wages and salaries, and employers' social contributions received from cultural and creative occupations that are performed outside of these cultural and creative industries.

The paper sources all of its data from ABS publications. This consists of the [Australian System of National Accounts, 2016-17](#) (Cat. 5204.0), [Australian National Accounts: Input-Output Tables](#) (Cat. 5209.0) and [Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts, 2008-09](#) (Cat. 5271.0).

## Methodology Questions

### Are there any differences between the methodology used in this paper and the approach used by the ABS in 2008-09?

Some minor departures from the ABS report were made due to unavailability of data which are outlined in the paper's appendix.

### How does Australia's cultural and creative activity compare to other nations, and across states and territories?

A number of government organisations have reported on the economic impact of cultural and/or creative industries within their economy, particularly in the past five years. However, a variety of statistical definitions and approaches have been used. Due to the subjective nature of what is classified as either cultural or creative activity, there is not a consistent definition to make comparisons across countries.

The ABS data used in the paper does not provide a breakdown of the results at the state and territory level.