

The Creative Economy in Australia



This factsheet is an output of an Australian Research Council Linkage project (LP160101724) led by Queensland University of Technology in partnership with the University of Newcastle, Arts Queensland, Create NSW, Creative Victoria, Arts South Australia and the WA Department of Culture and the Arts.

This factsheet presents an economic overview of cultural and creative activity in Australia, drawing on custom tables from the Australian Bureau of Statistics's Census collection.

Highlights:

- Employment in the creative economy represented 5.5 per cent of the Australian workforce in 2016
- Creative employment is growing at nearly twice the rate of the Australian workforce
- Creative industry incomes are on average higher than those in other industries, but their rate of growth is not keeping pace with the average earned by the Australian workforce
- On average, the creative industries provide employment to 1.5 times as many people in support roles as in core creative roles

Table 1: Employment by industry and occupation for creative and other sectors, 2016 (persons)

593,830 <i>Total creative</i>	Creative industries	Other industries	Total
Creative occupations	162,160	185,020	347,190
	<i>Specialist</i>	<i>Embedded</i>	
Other occupations	246,650	10,090,000	10,336,650
	<i>Support</i>	<i>Other</i>	
Total	408,810	10,275,030	10,683,840
			<i>Workforce</i>

Table 2: Creative employment as a share of the Australian workforce, 1985 to 2016 (per cent)

Year	Creative industries	Embedded in other industries	Creative employment
1986	2.5	1.2	3.7
1991	2.6	1.4	4.0
1991	3.3	1.3	4.7
1996	3.9	1.6	5.4
2001	3.5	1.7	5.2
2006	3.5	1.6	5.1
2011	3.7	1.6	5.3
2016	3.8	1.7	5.5

Table 3: Average annual growth in employment, 2011-2016, (per cent)

2.3 <i>Total creative</i>	Creative industries	Other industries	Total
Creative occupations	2.1	2.9	2.5
	<i>Specialist</i>	<i>Embedded</i>	
Other occupations	1.8	1.2	1.2
	<i>Support</i>	<i>Other</i>	
Total	1.9	1.2	1.2
			<i>Workforce</i>

5.5 per cent of Australians are in creative employment...

In 2016, total creative employment accounted for 593,830 people, or 5.5 per cent of the Australian workforce (tables 1 and 2).

... with 408,900 people employed directly in the creative industries...

In 2016, creative industries employed nearly 409,000 people, 3.8 per cent of the total Australian workforce. With more than 162,000 people employed in creative occupations (specialist creatives), the creative industries provide employment to 1.5 times as many people in support roles.

... and more than 182,000 people outside the creative industries

An additional 185,020 people working in creative occupations were employed—embedded—in industries other than the creative industries, including finance, government, hospitality, education and manufacturing.

Creative employment is a growing segment in the workforce

As a share of the Australian workforce, creative employment has increased relatively consistently since the 1980s—from 3.7 per cent in 1986 to 5.4 per cent in 2001, a post-Olympics contraction to 5.1 per cent in 2006, followed by continued increases to 5.3 per cent in 2011 and 5.5 per cent in 2016 (table 2). Much of this growth was due to change in creative industry employment as a share of the workforce, which fell from 3.9 per cent in 1996 to 3.5 per cent in 2001, before recovering to 3.8 per cent in 2016, while embedded creative employment share was been stable at 1.6 to 1.7 per cent.

Growth in creative employment is nearly twice that of the Australian workforce

Between the 2011 and 2016 Census collections, creative employment grew by an average of 2.2 per cent per annum, nearly twice that of the Australian workforce (table 3). Employment in creative industries grew by

Table 4: Average annual growth in employment by state, 2011-2016 (per cent)

	Creative industry	Embedded	Total creative employment	Total workforce
NSW	1.8	2.9	2.1	1.5
Vic	3.0	2.9	3.0	1.6
Qld	1.8	1.5	1.7	0.9
SA	1.1	-0.8	0.5	0.2
WA	0.4	1.4	0.7	1.1
Tas	1.4	-3.9	0.0	-0.1
NT	-1.4	-5.9	-2.6	0.8
ACT	0.3	-0.5	0.0	1.0
Aust	1.9	2.9	2.2	1.2

Table 5: Share of creative employment and the Australian workforce by state, 2016 (per cent)

	Creative employment	Total workforce
NSW	38.8	31.6
Vic	29.4	25.6
Qld	15.0	20.0
WA	7.3	10.8
SA	4.9	7.0
Tas	1.1	2.0
ACT	2.9	1.9
NT	0.5	1.0
Aust	100.0	100.0

Table 6: Creative employment as a share of workforce by state (per cent)

Year	2011	2016
NSW	6.5	6.7
Vic	5.9	6.3
Qld	4.0	4.1
SA	3.8	3.8
WA	3.7	3.7
Tas	3.3	3.3
NT	3.3	2.8
ACT	8.7	8.3
Aust	5.3	5.5

Table 7: Mean annual income, 2011 to 2016, (per cent)

\$76,200 <i>Total creative</i>	Creative industries	Other industries	Total
Creative occupations	\$69,600 <i>Specialist</i>	\$78,000 <i>Embedded</i>	\$74,800
Other occupations	\$79,200 <i>Support</i>	\$60,000 <i>Other</i>	\$60,800
Total	\$75,700	\$60,700	\$61,400 <i>Workforce</i>

Table 8: Mean annual income (2016 values, adjusted using the CPI)

	2011	2016	Average annual change (%)
Creative industries	\$73,500	\$75,700	0.6
Creative occupations	\$73,100	\$74,800	0.5
Total workforce	\$59,000	\$61,400	0.8

1.9 per cent, including growth in employment in specialist creative roles of 2.1 per cent, while embedded employment experienced the strongest growth at 2.9 per cent.

Creative employment's share of the workforce is increasing...

Victoria's 2.9 per cent average annual growth between 2011 and 2016 is the highest of all the states and territories and is 2.5 times higher than the growth rate of its whole workforce at 1.2 per cent (table 4). NSW's rate of 1.9 per cent was 50 per cent higher than its workforce rate, while Queensland with a relatively low workforce growth rate of 0.6 per cent grew its creative employment at a rate of 1.6 per cent.

... and remains concentrated in the ACT, NSW and Victoria

In 2016, NSW hosted the largest proportion of Australia's creative workforce, at 39 per cent (table 5). The proportion of creative workers in each state was substantially progressively lower—29 per cent in Victoria, 15 per cent in Queensland and 7 per cent in WA. As a share of the workforce, creative employment was highest in the ACT at 8.3 per cent, followed by NSW and Victoria at 6.7 and 6.3 per cent respectively (table 6). Between 2011 and 2016 creative employment as a share of the workforce increased in most states, with the notable exceptions of the ACT, which maintained its position as the state with the highest creative employment share despite the decrease, and the Northern Territory.

Creative incomes are higher on average...

In 2016, the mean creative employment annual income of \$76,200 was 24 per cent higher than that of the Australian workforce, at \$61,400 (table 7). Incomes vary across creative sector occupations—those in specialist creative occupations earned a mean of \$69,600 per annum while those embedded in other industries earned more at \$78,000. People working in non-creative support roles in creative industries earned the highest mean income at this level of analysis, at \$79,200.

... but they are not keeping pace with the Australian workforce

Between 2011 and 2016, the real rate of growth (adjusted for inflation) was lower for both all employment in creative industries and specialist employment in creative occupations, at 0.6 and 0.5 per cent per annum respectively, than for the total Australian workforce at 0.8 per cent (table 8).

Definitions

The *creative industries* embrace cultural production (including film, television and radio, music and performing arts, publishing and visual arts) and creative services (including advertising and marketing, architecture and design, and software and digital content).

Specialist creatives work in creative occupations within the creative industries.*

Support professionals work in support roles (not defined as creative occupations) within the creative industries.

Embedded creatives work in creative occupations in industries other than creative industries.

* Detail on the official classifications of occupations and industries and further insights into the creative industries are available at <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/92726/>. Applying the NESTA Dynamic Mapping definition methodology to Australian classifications.

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