



News release

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Australians support live performance in record numbers in 2023

- **First full year of operation since pandemic led to record attendance and revenue**
- **International touring supports strong growth in contemporary music and comedy**
- **Headline results offset by significantly rising production and touring costs**

Australia's live performance industry reported record levels of attendance and ticket revenue in 2023 in its first full year of operation without any COVID-19 related disruptions or restrictions.

Live Performance Australia's 2023 Ticket Attendance and Revenue Report shows total revenue was \$3.1 billion while ticketed attendance reached 30.1 million. These are the highest recorded attendance and revenue since the report commenced in 2004 due to a strong line-up of events and performances across all categories, as well as rising ticket prices driven by higher operating costs.

NSW accounted for the highest market share of revenue (33.3%) and shared with Victoria the highest market share for attendance (30.6%). NSW and Victoria accounted for 64.7% of all live performance revenue and 61.2% of attendance.

All states and territories recorded revenue growth, and all experienced growth in attendance except the ACT and Tasmania. WA and Queensland recorded the largest growth in revenue and attendance.

There were more than 12 million ticketed attendances for **contemporary music** during 2023 (39.9% of market share) and \$1.5 billion in ticket revenue (47.4% of market share). The average ticket price for contemporary music increased to \$128.21, up from \$87.01 in 2022.

There's always a degree of variability in the yearly results for contemporary music depending on artist touring schedules. Australia was part of a global trend which saw a resurgence in international touring activity during 2023, and a shift towards bigger stadium-level concerts by some headline artists.

Contemporary music festivals achieved over 2 million attendances and \$355.1 million in revenue in 2023. Revenue growth was driven by a 12.4% increase in ticket prices, reflecting large increases in operating costs for the sector. While attendance and revenue peaked at its highest ever level in 2023, the pausing or cancellation of festivals in 2024 underscores the significant financial challenges facing music festival organisers as well as cost of living impacts and changing preferences among audiences.

Musical theatre was the second largest category for attendance (4.3 million) and revenue (\$542.2 million) in 2023. Its year-over-year increases were much more modest, with revenue increasing by only 4.5% and attendance up by just 0.4% compared to the previous year. These results highlight the ongoing challenges for the industry particularly around increased production and touring costs. The



average ticket price for musical theatre was \$131.10, up by just 2.4% on the previous year and less than the annual inflation rate of 4.1% in 2023.

Theatre experienced marginal growth in revenue to \$121.8 million, while attendance rose moderately by 5.4% to 1.44 million in 2023. The average ticket price remained virtually unchanged at \$91.16 and is well below pre-COVID levels. 38% of revenue and 47.6% of attendance was generated by companies that are funded through the National Performing Arts Partnership, highlighting the critical role for ongoing and increased public investment in this vital sector which includes a strong focus on the creation of new and diverse Australian works.

Comedy was in the top five categories for revenue and attendance in 2023, generating almost 2.9 million attendances (up by 35% on the previous year) and \$199 million in ticket revenue (up by 72.9%). Major festivals, such as the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and Brisbane Comedy Festival, and tours by international artists such as Dave Chapelle, Kevin Hart and Michael McIntyre were key drivers of growth. Between 2009 and 2023, revenue for comedy has grown by 402.4% and attendance has increased by 274.5%.

LPA Chief Executive Evelyn Richardson said: ‘Despite cost of living pressures, Australians continued to strongly support live performance. It’s clear they value engagement with all categories of live performance, from ballet and dance, classical music and comedy through to musicals, theatre and festivals as well as tours by their favourite Australian and international acts.

‘However, behind the headline figures there continues to be real pressures on many of our performing arts organisations. All categories are managing significant increases in their operating costs with limited scope to pass these on to audiences through higher ticket prices. For many, a ‘full house’ now means just breaking even, leaving little scope for reinvestment in new productions or rebuilding of financial reserves.

‘It’s essential that governments at all levels recognise the cultural, social and economic importance of our live arts and entertainment industry and continue to invest in Australia’s creative capability and potential.

‘Government needs to step up public investment in our small to medium not-for-profit and national performing arts organisations, as well as incentivise more private investment through LPA’s proposal for a live theatre tax offset.

‘Our live performance industry is an important driver of jobs and economic activity in addition to its artistic and cultural value, and with the right policy settings and investment frameworks in place will continue to enrich Australia’s social and economic life in years to come,’ Ms Richardson said.

Detailed breakdowns by state/territory and category are [available here](#).

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Data sources: *Data has been compiled from ticketing companies, self-ticketing venues, event promoters and National Performing Arts Partnership (NPAP) companies. A list of the data providers and methodology is provided in Appendix A of the Report. Due to limitations on data collection, the Report provides a conservative estimate of the total ticket revenue and attendances at live performance events in Australia throughout 2023.*