

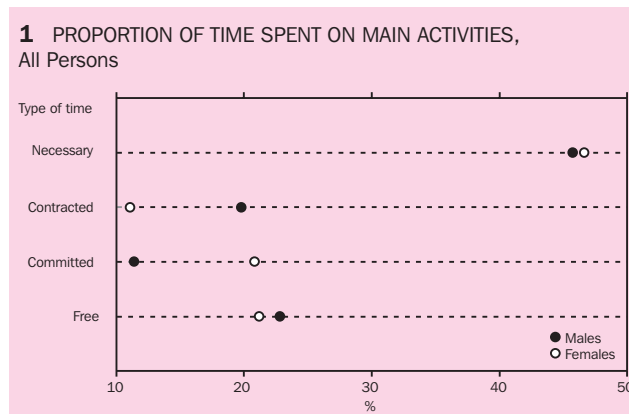
HOW AUSTRALIANS USE THEIR TIME

In December 1998, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) published the results of the second nationwide Time Use Survey in Australia, *How Australians Use Their Time, 1997* (Cat. no. 4153.0). The first Australian Time Use Survey was conducted in 1992. This brochure provides a summary of the findings from the 1997 survey and particularly focuses on culture/leisure data.

TIME SPENT ON MAIN ACTIVITIES, ALL PERSONS

The activities on which people spend their time can be divided into four main categories: necessary time, contracted time, committed time, and free time. Australians spent the largest part of their day (46.2%) on necessary time activities such as sleeping and eating. Contracted time which included employment and education activities took up 15.4% of the day. Committed time accounted for 16.3% of the day and included child care, domestic activities, purchasing goods and services and voluntary work and care. Free time which is the amount left when the previous three types of time have been taken out took up 21.9% of the day and included social and community interaction and recreation and leisure activities.

Males and females spent similar proportions of their day on necessary time and free time activities but there were distinct differences in the amount of time spent on contracted and committed time activities. Males spent a larger portion of their day on contracted time activities while females spent a larger part of their day on committed time activities.



FREE TIME

Most free time (85.8%) was spent on recreation and leisure. The most popular recreation and leisure activity was use of audio/visual media which includes watching TV and video, and listening to radio, CDs and tapes. Australians spent an average of 2 hours 11 minutes per day on these activities. Just under half an hour (27 minutes per day) was spent on sport and outdoor activities and just over half an hour (35 minutes) talking.

2 AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON FREE TIME ACTIVITIES, Main Activities—All Persons			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Males</i> minutes per day	<i>Females</i> minutes per day	<i>Persons</i> minutes per day
Social and community interaction	43	48	45
Socialising	11	11	11
Visiting entertainment and cultural venues	5	6	5
Attendance at sports events	2	1	2
Religious activities/ritual ceremonies	4	5	5
Other	20	24	22
Recreation and leisure	286	257	271
Sport and outdoor activity	33	20	27
Games/hobbies/arts/crafts	17	15	16
Reading	24	26	25
Audio/visual media	145	118	131
Attendance at recreational courses	1	1	1
Talking (including phone)	27	44	35
Other	38	32	34
Total free time	329	305	316

Females spent five minutes more each day on social and community interaction activities than males, whereas males spent an extra 29 minutes on recreation and leisure activities. Males also spent an extra 13 minutes on sport and outdoor activities and an extra 27 minutes on audio/visual media. Females spent an extra 17 minutes talking which included telephone conversations.

UNDERTAKING MORE THAN ONE ACTIVITY AT A TIME

People frequently undertake more than one activity at the same time. The Time Use Survey allowed respondents to record up to two activities as simultaneous activities. Every activity episode had a main activity and 41% also had a simultaneous activity. Collating all activities results in a slight increase in the time spent on most activities, but for some, such as child care, listening to the radio and watching TV there is a substantial increase.

Time spent using audio/visual media showed the largest increase when comparing all activities to main activities. As a main activity an average of 2 hours 11 minutes was spent on audio/visual media. However, when secondary activities were included, 4 hours and 17 minutes was spent on this activity.

3 AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON FREE TIME ACTIVITIES, All Persons

Activity	<i>Main activity</i>	<i>All activities</i>
	minutes per day	minutes per day
Social and community interaction	45	47
Socialising	11	12
Visiting entertainment and cultural venues	5	5
Attendance at sports events	2	2
Religious activities/ritual ceremonies	5	5
Other	22	22
Recreation and leisure	271	505
Sport and outdoor activity	27	28
Games/hobbies/arts/crafts	16	20
Reading	25	37
Audio/visual media	131	257
Attendance at recreational courses	1	1
Talking (including phone)	35	115
Other	34	47
Total free time	316	552

TIME SPENT BY PARTICIPANTS

Presenting information for participants (rather than all persons) provides an indication of the average amount of time spent per day by people who actually did the activity. Differences between all persons and participants are most marked in activities where only a small portion of the population took part. From table 2, the amount of time spent attending sports events for all persons was an average of two minutes per day; however, the people who actually attended sports events spent an average of 150 minutes per day on attendance (table 4).

4 AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON SELECTED FREE TIME ACTIVITIES, All Activities—Participants

Activity	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
	minutes per day	minutes per day	minutes per day
Social and community interaction	98	90	94
Socialising	118	96	106
Visiting entertainment and cultural venues	129	114	120
Attendance at sports events	164	133	150
Religious activities/ritual ceremonies	103	85	92
Recreation and leisure	508	502	505
Sport and outdoor activity	117	87	103
Games/hobbies/arts/crafts	107	103	105
Reading	79	73	76
Audio/visual media	277	265	271
Attendance at recreational courses	150	105	123
Talking (including phone)	157	167	162

Table 5 shows the average time participants spent on visiting specific entertainment and cultural venues and attending specific sports events. For all those venues/events which involve being a part of an audience (such as theatre, concert and sports match), participants on average spent over two hours at the event.

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
	minutes per day	minutes per day	minutes per day
Socialising	118	96	106
Visiting entertainment and cultural venues			
Attendance at movies/cinema	132	132	132
Attendance at concerts	137	108	121
Attendance at theatre	112	150	135
Attendance at library	30	33	32
Attendance at museum/exhibition/ art gallery	*104	112	109
Attendance at zoo/animal park/ botanic garden	*136	119	126
Attendance at amusement park	*246	*194	220
Attendance at other mass events	153	125	136
Attendance at sports events			
Attendance at sports match	156	117	140
Attendance at racing events	233	213	225
Religious activities/ritual ceremonies	103	86	92

* Estimates of relative standard error between 25% and 50%.

Table 6 shows that the sport and outdoor activity that occupied the most time was fishing and participants spent an average of just under four hours per day on this activity. Television was the most time consuming audio/visual media activity, with participants spending over three hours a day watching TV.

For all the identified recreation and leisure activities, except handwork and crafts, and reading magazines, males spent more time engaged in the activity than females.

Males spent substantially more time fishing, computing and engaging in hobbies and collections than females.

6 AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON SELECTED RECREATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES, All Activities—Participants

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
	minutes per day	minutes per day	minutes per day
Sport and outdoor activity			
Sport formal	155	129	147
Sport informal	131	104	123
Exercise	64	55	60
Walking	61	53	57
Hiking	93	66	79
Fishing	249	196	239
Holiday travel, driving for pleasure	151	148	150
Games/hobbies/arts/craft			
Card/board/paper games	82	75	78
Games of chance/gambling	81	80	81
Computing	119	70	103
Arcade games	73	45	65
Hobbies, collections	117	72	103
Handwork and crafts	113	126	126
Arts	100	94	97
Performing/making music	66	56	61
Reading			
Reading book	80	69	73
Reading magazines	43	43	43
Reading newspapers	53	40	47
Audio/visual media			
Watching TV	187	177	182
Watching video	120	103	111
Listening to radio	141	130	135
Listening to CD/records/tapes	104	82	91
Accessing the internet	81	60	75
Talking including phone	157	167	162

PARTICIPATION RATES

Table 7 shows that while almost half the population (49.2%) undertook some form of social and community interaction, almost everyone (99.1%) engaged in some form of recreation and leisure activity. Most of the population (94.5%) engaged in audio/visual media activity, almost half (48.0%) engaged in reading, and almost one-third (27.1%) undertook sport or outdoor activities.

Participation rates for specific activities are lower than those reported in other ABS surveys, due to differences in definitions and collection methodologies used. The Time Use Survey results relate to the number of people participating in the activity on a single day and are derived from data that take all days of the week into account as well as different seasons of the year. Other surveys ask respondents to recall participation in activities over a longer period (e.g. 12 months). Participation rates for these surveys refer to any incidence of participation over that period.

7 PARTICIPATION RATES FOR SELECTED FREE TIME ACTIVITIES, All Activities

	Males	Females	Persons
Activities	%	%	%
Social and community interaction	44.3	54.1	49.2
Socialising	10.3	12.5	11.4
Visiting entertainment and cultural venues	3.8	5.4	4.6
Attendance at sports events	1.5	1.1	1.3
Religious activities/ritual ceremonies	4.4	6.6	5.5
Recreation and leisure	99.1	99.1	99.1
Sport and outdoor activity	29.8	24.5	27.1
Games/hobbies/arts/crafts	18.6	20.5	19.6
Reading	45.6	50.3	48.0
Audio/visual media	94.2	94.7	94.5
Attendance at recreational courses	0.6	1.0	0.8
Talking (including phone)	64.6	77.1	70.9

CHANGES IN TIME USE 1992 TO 1997

Because of coding changes that were made to the 1997 survey, direct comparisons between the 1992 and 1997 survey data are complex for some activities. Therefore no comparison data have been included here. For further information see *How Australians Use Their Time, 1997* (Cat. no. 4153.0).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated; without it the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- for information on Time Use, see the following ABS publications:
How Australians Use Their Time, 1997 (Cat. no. 4153.0)
Time Use Survey, Australia—Users' Guide, 1997
(Cat. no. 4150.0)
- for information about the Time Use Survey, contact
Family and Community Statistics Subsection in Canberra
on 02 6252 7030.
- for information about the availability of culture/leisure statistics,
contact Lisa Moutzouris on Adelaide 08 8237 7455.

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Produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics
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Recommended retail price: \$1.10



2417300001978

ISBN 0 642 27495 9