



Artist Culture Strategy

2019-2023





Contents

INTRO AND WELCOME | 05

THE LOCAL CONTEXT | 06

BROADER POLICY CONTEXT | 08

GOALS | 10

**CULTURAL POLICY
DOMAINS FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT PLANNING** | 12

PRINCIPALS | 12

OUTCOMES | 15

GOAL ONE | 16

A CONNECTED AND VIBRANT COMMUNITY

GOAL TWO | 18

A CULTURALLY CAPABLE COMMUNITY

GOAL THREE | 20

A DIVERSE COMMUNITY THAT RECOGNISES, EXPRESSES
AND CELEBRATES CREATIVITY AND HERITAGE

IMPLEMENTATION | 22

EVALUATION AND REVIEW | 23

“Strathbogie Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land now known as the Strathbogie Shire and values the significance of the first peoples history as essential to the unique character of the Shire.”



GALLERY OF ABORIGINAL ART,
MITCHELTON WINERY

Intro

Strathbogie Shire Council is pleased to present the 2019 – 2023 Arts and Culture Strategy. Supported by a lengthy consultation process incorporating community workshops, interviews, focus groups, research and reviews of best practice. The strategy will assist to provide a clear direction for the development of Arts and Culture over the next four years.

Based on community values, the evidence gathered has identified three clear goals that we will be working towards, with a focus on outcomes that will enhance our community's creative and cultural conscious.

Welcome

The development of Strathbogie Shire's first Arts and Culture Strategy has been an important focus for Council, and we are proud to be able to deliver this strategy to assist our community with developing and delivering arts and culture projects and activities across our region.

This strategy highlights the positive changes we can achieve as a collective community working together. It was a clear focus within our Council Plan to raise the importance of arts and culture within our municipality in recognising its significance to the health, wellbeing and social connectedness of the wider community.

We would also like to acknowledge all of the many people who provided input into this strategy, and thank them for their time, effort, passion and dedication to the continued development and growth to our vibrant and creative community.


Cr Amanda McClaren (Mayor) 

The Local Context

Culture is built on a community's beliefs and values, and the arts are an expression of our culture. Cultural planning is based on core community values.

During 2019 a number of workshops and online surveys were undertaken to obtain community perspectives and identify key values relating to arts and culture.

177 people participated in the engagement process via the following activities



Our Culture Matters Community Workshops were held in each ward of Strathbogie. The demographics were diverse; young people to seniors, representatives from the arts, local history groups and youth programs.

From this engagement the following core values were identified;



The Arts and Cultural Strategy will:

Align with the goals of the Council Plan 2017 – 2021

- To enhance community health and wellbeing
- To sustainably manage our natural and built environment
- To provide quality infrastructure
- To support and drive economic development
- To be a high performing Shire

Be based on community values and a diverse spread of community needs and aspirations

Be evidence informed

Enable the community to actively contribute to the development, implementation and evaluation of the plan

Align with the Cultural Development Network's schema for Measurable Outcomes for evaluation

Align with the priorities of the 2017-2021 Liveability Plan (Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan):

- Stronger Together
- Respectful Relationships
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Rural Lifestyle
- Health Systems

The Community Called For...

- Opportunities to tell our stories and celebrate our local identities and community
- Provision of entertainment and community events
- Access to arts and cultural experiences



Broader Policy Context

The National Local Government Cultural Forum brings together representatives from local government and seeks to promote stronger cultural development practice in local government across Australia, by articulating and developing a national perspective. This forum is managed by the Cultural Development Network (CDN) and is supported by the Australia Council for the Arts and in partnership with the local government associations and capital cities.

Participation in the cultural life of the community and enjoyment of the arts is a fundamental human right under Article 27 of the Declaration of Human Rights. The 'Australia Council for the Arts' is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body, and defines their purpose as being: to champion and invest in Australian arts and creativity.

Local governments have a responsibility to set long-term objectives for cultural planning and the arts, support local services such as libraries, museums and artistic spaces, and to utilize the arts to improve community health and wellbeing. These objectives align with Council's Liveability Plan and Council Plan.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) also acknowledge that arts and culture facilities and programs can collectively enrich the quality of life by providing vital social and community connections, as well as employment and learning opportunities. People are increasingly recognising the powerful role of the arts in stimulating our minds, assisting with stress or anxiety, and improving our sense of wellbeing and happiness.

Creative Victoria is the peak statutory body for arts and culture in Victoria and their 'Creative State' Strategy identifies that local governments play a critical role in building access to, and increasing participation in, cultural and creative activities.



ELLOURA COLOUR SPLASH NOW FESTIVAL, NAGAMBIE



Goals

A goal is defined here as: *the result or achievement toward which effort is directed; in this case, an intention for the desired future of residents of Strathbogie Shire.*

The Cultural Development Network states that goals should be determined as a result of community consultation and policy requirements, legislative or other. All other policies and plans of Council should respond to that document, including the Arts & Culture Strategy. Because the Council undertakes community consultation to determine values of the community and then sets goals to address those, cultural development planners do not need to undertake extensive consultation themselves to identify values or goals, as this has already been undertaken in the development of a Council Plan.

Goals should assist communities to live according to their values. They are often aspirational and therefore are likely never to be reached. For example, the goal of 'a culturally vibrant community' will be ongoing beyond a current planning period; we can always strive to be more culturally vibrant, and therefore cannot claim to have reached a point of absolute cultural vibrancy – otherwise there would be nothing left to do!

Source: extracts taken from the Cultural Development Network website www.culturaldevelopment.net.au

"...there are many talented people in the shire that participate in many different areas of the arts. The more we talk to people, the more aware we become of these talents."
Euroa Resident

The goals we are working towards in this strategy are...

Goal 1

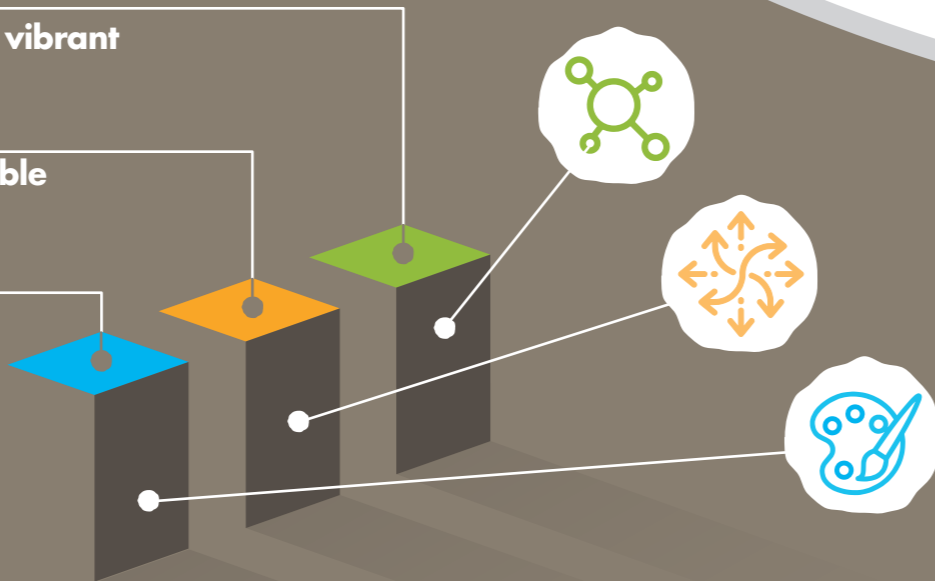
A connected and vibrant community

Goal 2

A culturally capable community

Goal 3

A diverse community that recognises, expresses and celebrates its creativity and heritage



Cultural Policy Domains for Local Government Planning

This Framework recognises five public policy domains of local governments' work: Cultural, Social, Economic, Governance and Environmental. All council goals and related activity can be considered within these domains, and together they enable the desired endpoint of flourishing and fulfilled individuals.

Each domain includes a relevant desired goal or outcome (ie. what would we want our community to look like?) and these goals also have values contained within them. For example, in the cultural domain, if a rich and vibrant culture is a goal, this is based on values related to cultural richness and vibrancy.



Principles

The Arts and Culture Strategy Plan incorporates the following six planning principles, that have assisted with the process of deciding what our activities should be, based on the goals identified, the evidence base resulting from the consultation process, community needs and available resources.

These principles are:

- ► **Based on values** - the plan responds to the collective values of the community that underpin the strategy of the Council Plan
- ► **Directed towards goals** - the plan is directed towards goals, the desired long-term future determined by the Council and articulated in the Council Plan. Objectives (intended outcomes) are set to enable specific measurable achievement towards the goals.
- ► **Focused on outcomes** - the plan is focused on outcomes, that is, the difference our work will make to those we are responsible to serve, rather than the activity undertaken to get there. Measurable outcomes help us determine whether objectives were met.
- ► **Informed by evidence** - the plan involves decisions informed by evidence. This includes practice knowledge, published research or data that provides information about the local context, the issue being addressed and possible ways to address it.
- ► **Underpinned by a theory of change** - the plan uses a theory of change to assist and explain choices of activities. Theory of change is the reason why we do what we do.
- ► **Respondent to evaluation** - the plan includes evaluation consistently as part of the normal work process. Evaluation findings are used to inform future decision-making.





Outcomes

The Arts & Culture Strategy plan is working towards these Cultural outcomes that form a part of the Cultural Policy Domains for Local Government planning. The intended outcomes that we are working towards in this strategy will be highlighted under each of the three identified goals.



Creativity stimulated:

The sparking of imagination, creativity or curiosity that leads to a desire for creative expression



Aesthetic enrichment experienced:

Experiences that come through the senses that are special and outside the everyday. This might include being moved or challenged through feelings such as beauty, awe, discomfort, joy or wonder.



New knowledge and insight gained:

Intellectual stimulation, critical reflection, creative thinking and deeper understanding.



Diversity of cultural expression appreciated:

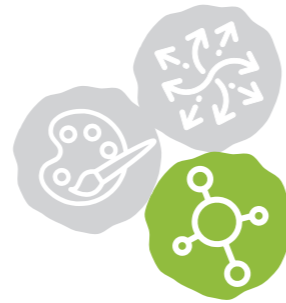
Valuing the different ways people express themselves through diverse cultural forms, reflecting their life experience and interests.



Sense of belonging to shared heritage experienced:

How one's identity and values are rooted within a history and heritage that is shared with others.

The measurable outcomes as identified within each goal will be evaluated and reported on to determine to what degree these outcomes were achieved, and what impact they may have provided in relation to Arts & Culture within the Shire and for the broader community.



A connected and vibrant community



"The arts, festivals, etc are integral for community cohesion, broadening horizons, tourism, economic development, mental health, maturity... so many things!"
Euroa Resident

Goal One

To strengthen the strong sense of belonging and community pride, by increasing the opportunities for creative stimulation and connectedness.

What we know

- Communities are connected locally within their townships
- Number of existing and active community groups already delivering arts and culture initiatives
- There is a desire for more arts, culture and music events
- We have several community halls that could potentially be a venue for touring art

Our approach

1. We will support initiatives that bring people together, encourage collaboration and partnerships and create networks.
2. We will celebrate diversity and build connections between different age groups and demographics through the sharing of artistic and craft skills, providing opportunity for social connections
3. We will support locally produced and touring art, including visual arts and theatre to be delivered in the Shire.
4. We will provide avenues for communities to produce and preserve stories both personal and of local heritage and culture

Intended outcomes

Cultural:

1. Creativity stimulated
2. Diversity of cultural expression appreciated
3. Connection to shared cultural heritage deepened
4. Aesthetic enrichment experienced

Social:

1. Social connectedness enhanced
2. Wellbeing (physical and /or mental) improved
3. Social differences bridged
4. Feeling valued experienced

Economic:

1. Local economy supported

Environmental:

1. Positive sense of place (built and/or natural environment) enhanced

Governance:

1. Sense of civic pride enhanced
2. Agency and voice enabled

"Art and culture bring people together. Events bring people together. Facilities and opportunities to create together brings people together. Bringing people together fosters good community spirit, pride and participation... which makes our area a more enjoyable and productive place to live and work."
Violet Town Resident

"We need to source the hidden creatives within the region showing that art is beneficial in so many ways and gives us a much needed break from the constraints of our ho hum everyday routines."
Violet Town Resident

Example of Goal One: The Twilight Hawkers Market, Euroa Breaking down the process...

What were they looking for? | (intended outcomes)

Strathbogie Inc is a community group that have successfully run a Twilight Hawkers Market on three separate occasions. What they wanted to achieve was to bring cultural diversity to our community through food, music and dance. They wanted the event to be accessible to ALL and be kind to the environment with a ZERO WASTE ethos.

What did they already know? | (evidence)

Having previously executed two other successful twilight market events they knew that there was a desire for more cultural events within Strathbogie Shire.

Therefore, they decided to... | (the activity/project)

Continue to evolve the Twilight Hawkers Market achieving the goal of "A connected and vibrant community".

What it achieved | (outcomes)

- The 2019 event brought a varied demographic of people together as it was a FREE to attend event that attracted over 1000 attendees
- It was for all ages and encouraged intergenerational engagement and social connection
- The 2019 event incorporated a 'Bollywood Theme' and music was provided to enhance and stimulate enjoyment of music
- Dancing and dance instruction was included encouraging people to experience the dances of alternate cultures and be immersed in the experience
- A variety of cultural foods were on offer for people to experience
- An important facet of the event for the organisers was its ZERO WASTE ethos

A culturally capable community



Goal Two

To increase the capacity of the community to lead and deliver arts and cultural experiences, by supporting opportunities for growth and learning.

What we know

- Our community has demonstrated capability by facilitating events such as Twilight Hawkers Market, Show and Shine, NOW Festival, various art shows etc.
- We can build on the existing skills that are already present and support further development in this area.
- There is an identified need to have formally designated, permanent creative participation art spaces.
- We have a number of community halls and open spaces which are at times used for art exhibitions/workshops/music events
- There is a strong respect for our natural environment and a desire for greater ecological awareness

Our approach

1. We will provide opportunities for individuals and groups to develop skills and leadership.
2. We will embed place-making principles within Council's planning and development processes.
3. We will work with community to develop engaging open spaces that encourage interaction through public art and events.
4. We will explore the possibility of permanent art spaces in the Shire.
5. We will support access to appropriate facilities across the Shire for arts and culture workshops, programs and cultural gatherings.

Intended outcomes



Cultural:

1. Creativity Stimulated
2. Aesthetic enrichment experienced
3. Knowledge, ideas and insight gained



Social:

1. Wellbeing (physical and/or mental) improved
2. Social connectedness enhanced



Economic:

1. Professional and/or practice capability increased
2. Local economy supported



Environmental:

1. Positive sense of place (built and/or natural environment) enhanced
2. Understanding of ecological issues expanded
3. Motivation for environmental stewardship increased

"It would be wonderful to support the existing local creators and makers and to foster the arts more in the region. Providing free or subsidised arts training, facilities and education across all demographics would be fantastic"

Violet Town Resident

Example of Goal Two: The Nagambie On Water Festival (NOW), Nagambie

Breaking down the process...

What were they looking for? | (intended outcomes)

The development of an event for both the community and visitors that provides excitement, entertainment and education for all ages, whilst showcasing Nagambie and its water attractions and acknowledging the essential ingredients that make the community such a unique place to live, work and play.

What did they already know? | (evidence)

The NOW Festival has been going since 2008 and it draws good participation from both the local and wider community. However to continue to evolve the event they want to continue to encourage more community groups and business to become involved.

Therefore, they decided to | (the activity/project)

Continue to evolve the NOW Festival, both in the activities provided and by the skills development of those managing the events, which supported the goal of "A culturally capable community".

What it achieved | (outcomes)

- The 2019 event attracted regional participation, in particular in the lake swim
- Encouraged additional community groups and local business to participate in the festival
- Created a sense of pride in what the township of Nagambie has to offer
- Created learning opportunities for locals to develop skills in event management
- Brought people from around the region into Nagambie to enjoy and participate in the activities of the festival, which provided an immediate and proposed future economic benefit to both the town and the region through return visitation.

"You just need to tap in to the wealth of knowledge & enthusiasm that already exists."

Longwood Resident

"...look at incorporating a Leadership and Civic participation group to help workshop ideas that incorporates local history, promoting venues such as the museum, butter factory and other historical places of interest... The dynamics in the town are changing and the town needs to change and grow with the differing art and cultural needs of the community."

Euroa Resident



A diverse community that recognises, expresses and celebrates creativity and heritage



Goal Three

To increase levels of appreciation, belonging and equality of opportunity for all people, by supporting creative communities to preserve heritage and foster diverse cultural sustainability.

What we know

Strathbogie Shire:

- Is located on the land of the Traditional custodians
- Has become a Refugee Welcome Zone
- Possesses natural qualities and environments
- Has cultural and historical significance
- Geographically, is well placed in terms of economic and tourism potential, and quality of life
- Has groups within the Shire who are actively engaged in projects/activities that address this goal

Goal Commitments

1. We will support the preservation of the heritage of the region to ensure it is acknowledged and celebrated for both locals and visitors alike.
2. We will build on a positive sense of place by ensuring there are resources available for financial assistance and in kind support for the community to promote and deliver arts and culturally sustainable activities within the Shire.
3. We will further develop and strengthen our communities understanding and knowledge of all cultures.

Intended Outcomes

Cultural:

1. Knowledge, ideas and insight gained
2. Cultural diversity appreciated
3. Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage deepened

Social:

1. Wellbeing (physical and/or mental) improved
2. Social connectedness enhanced
3. Social differences bridged

Economic:

1. Local economy supported

Environmental:

1. Positive sense of place
2. Natural world valued

Governance:

1. Positive future inspired
2. Sense of civic pride enhanced

"Our natural heritage is I believe very worthwhile and for the future too. It is an attraction to outsiders and tourists and should be celebrated and preserved."
Euroa Resident

Example of Goal Three: The Southern Aurora Commemorations, Violet Town

Breaking down the process.....

What were they looking for? | *(intended outcomes)*

Members of the Violet Town community wanted to bring awareness of the wide reaching impact the Southern Aurora crash had on those who were involved either directly or who offered assistance after the crash. They wanted to respectfully remember a tragic event that occurred 50 years ago and affected an entire community, many of whom are still alive and living within the Shire.

What did they already know? | *(evidence)*

They knew that there was a desire for some type of commemorative event and permanent memorial where people could come together, share experiences and also learn more about this tragedy and the indomitable human spirit that prevailed.

Therefore, they decided to | *(the activity/project)*

Started planning two years in advance to organise a commemoration for the 50th anniversary of the crash, which involved a 3-day commemorative event and the development of a Memorial Garden that offers information boards and places for quiet reflection.

This project supported the goal of "A diverse community that recognises, expresses and celebrates creativity and heritage".

What it achieved | *(outcomes)*

- The 2019 event brought together members of both the local and wider community who were involved in the tragedy 50 years ago
- Provided an opportunity for people to share their experiences with others, which also assisted with the continued healing for many who are still affected by this event
- Created an awareness of the tragedy and subsequent events that did not exist previously
- Developed a Memorial Garden that can be utilised as a rest and reflection stop which also provides information about the tragedy
- Brought people from all over Australia into Violet Town for the commemoration activities, which also provided an economic benefit to both the town and the region

Implementation

Successful implementation of the Arts and Culture Strategy requires a joint commitment from Council, Community and Businesses. Maintaining existing partnerships and the establishment of new partners will be crucial to achieving the identified outcomes.

An annual action plan will be developed for each year of the plan outlining achievable activities to be implemented by Council, Community Groups and Businesses who are committed, well-resourced and have capacity to implement within the identified time frame.

Evaluation and Review

Assessing the success of the Arts and Culture Strategy and improving its next iteration is essential to building the capability, increased productivity and value of cultural development activities to the Council and will involve the following;

Each activity nominated in the Arts and Culture 12 month action plan will have an evaluation process associated with it that will be undertaken at the end of the 12 month period. This will provide guidance and direction for the development of the following 12 month action plan.

At the end of the four year strategy an overall evaluation of the strategic document will occur, which will inform the planning and development of future alignments.t

This process will involve all key stakeholders, partners, community groups, businesses and Council who have been allocated responsibility against the individual action items.





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