

2022-26

SOUTHERN
GRAMPIANS
SHIRE COUNCIL

ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY



Southern Grampians
SHIRE COUNCIL

Greater
Hamilton
ONE PLACE. MANY POSSIBILITIES



CONTENTS

ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY

- 04 Welcome from the Mayor and CEO
- 05 Reflection from Uncle Johnny Lovett
- 06 Introduction
- 08 Strategic Context
- 10 Methodology
- 14 Key Priorities
 - 14 KEY PRIORITY 1: SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY
 - 18 KEY PRIORITY 2: GROW OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY
 - 20 KEY PRIORITY 3: MAINTAIN AND RENEW OUR INFRASTRUCTURE
 - 22 KEY PRIORITY 4: PROTECT OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
 - 24 KEY PRIORITY 5: PROVIDE STRONG GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP
- 26 Appendix



2022-26

WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR AND CEO

The development of the Arts and Culture Strategy has been an important focus for Council. We are proud to be able to deliver this strategy to assist with the development and delivery of arts and culture projects and activities across the Southern Grampians.

Council supports our creative industries and has seen substantial benefits from encouraging a diverse and creative scene for both artists and residents within our region. This strategy looks to identify new ways to involve wider community groups and individuals in shaping our creative aspirations for the future.

I sincerely thank all community members who have participated in its preparation whether that be through shared insights, ideas, or feedback. On behalf of Council, I am delighted to present this Strategy to our community and look forward to seeing the many outcomes it delivers.



Bruach Colliton
Mayor, Southern Grampians Shire Council

The Arts and Culture Strategy provides a framework to deliver on the 2021-2025 Council Plan, responding to the five key priority areas: Community, Economy, Infrastructure, Environment and Governance.

As a four-year commitment, the Strategy provides Council and the community the opportunity to maximise the creative and cultural potential of our region. It achieves this by recognising and responding to the diverse and unique stories of the Shire, through the delivery of programs, events and activations run through our arts and cultural services, and also via our facilities.

As our community continues to recover from the effects of COVID-19, we look to our creative industries and the experiences they deliver to help us rebuild connection, community spirit and social cohesion.

The Arts and Culture Strategy allows Council and the community to work more effectively towards our shared goals, to celebrate the Southern Grampians' authentic cultural identity, and importantly to see it prosper now and into the future.



Tony Doyle
CEO, Southern Grampians Shire Council

REFLECTION

Acknowledgement of country

Southern Grampians Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung and Bunganditj people, the traditional custodians of the lands where we live and work. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. Southern Grampians Shire Council is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

This acknowledgement, and our commitment to honouring the history, culture and ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Southern Grampians, plays a fundamental role in shaping our region.

Southern Grampians Shire Council is committed to building, growing and maintaining respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and it is in this spirit that we deliver this Arts and Cultural Strategy.

Born in Hamilton and raised in Heywood, Uncle Johnny Lovett is a respected Gunditjmara / Boandik Elder. He is a well-known singer-songwriter and country and western star and has been actively involved in the community advocating for native title rights as well as recognition and compensation for his father and uncles as Aboriginal soldiers who served in World War I and World War II.

Johnny has shown wisdom and leadership in helping us to open-heartedly celebrate and remember the wonder of the Aboriginal culture as well as the struggles that colonialism has wrought on the people and land of the Indigenous people.

Culture and identity are important to me. For over 60,000 years my people have shared stories, lore, language, art, and cultural traditions in our region - on Gunditjmara country.

During settlement, there was a lot of lands taken and there was little that we could do. European settlers were motivated by what they saw best - best for our people, and our future. However, the truth was, that it was an act of genocide against our people. Families were torn apart, people were taken from their land, and they were denied the opportunity to practice and share culture.

While this passing on of knowledge has been disturbed, it has not been extinguished. Throughout it all, the resilience of Aboriginal culture, the oldest continuous living culture on Earth, has survived, through the sharing of knowledge passed down from generation to generation. It is our responsibility to continue to pass on this knowledge; both the good and the bad. Sharing truth is vital to set the record straight and move forward.

Part of this journey includes listening to the truths of Aboriginal people of our region and hearing their pain about historical and ongoing injustices since colonisation. By looking back, and acknowledging the truths in our past, will we be able to move forward.

There is so much that can be done that isn't being done. This strategy is a small piece in moving forward.



Uncle Johnny Lovett,
Gunditjmara / Boandik Elder

INTRODUCTION

Culture is our life, past, present and in the future, the way we do things, and how we express who we are. It is the means by which our values manifest themselves in the ways in which we live.

Arts are the means by which we express our culture through words, literature, music, art, dance, performance, media, craft, food, festivals, celebrations, and customs.

Heritage connects the past with the present and the future through traditions, stories, buildings, places, objects, and preserved memories.

Arts and culture are vital to the health, prosperity and the vitality of our communities. Cultural and creative industries play a key role in defining the character and identity of the places we live, work and visit. They bring us together, help us enjoy our environment and flourish personally. They foster creativity and innovation, provide jobs and celebrate heritage.

Council's role in the Arts and Culture sector is to support, facilitate, advocate, communicate, present and produce, assisting the community to achieve their aspirations.

All Victorians stand to benefit from a strong creative economy and rich cultural life and that's why our government invests in, and champions, our creative industries.

Our Arts and Culture Strategy is a planning tool providing Council with a clear set of priorities for the enhancement of arts, culture and heritage facilities and initiatives across the Shire over the next four years.

It showcases what we value, who we are, and our unique natural environment. It will activate places, introduce new spaces and inspire people – our vibrant creative community, audiences and participants. It also must accommodate unprecedented and as yet unknown cultural changes.

The Arts and Culture Strategy replaces the previous Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2014. Since the previous document was developed, Southern Grampians Shire Council has significantly increased its investment in Arts and Culture.

This has been realised through:

- + The commitment of planning for a New Hamilton Gallery;
- + The creation of the Cultural Arts Unit within the Council which aligns the Hamilton Performing Arts Centre (HPAC), Hamilton Gallery and Hamilton Cinema;
- + Investment in infrastructure renewal and upgrades, improving access and reducing risk (Library refurbishment, Hamilton Gallery lift, HPAC roof replacement);
- + The continued investment towards the development of the art collection through acquisition.

Council has also maintained its commitment to:

- + Supporting the local creative community;
- + Access and engagement activities for our education facilities;
- + Investment in its annual programs, exhibitions and activities through the library, Gallery and HPAC; and
- + Promoted local cultural activities through the provision of community grants.

OUR SHIRE



Population

16,488

(2021)



Country of Birth

Australia 85.6%

United Kingdom 2.4%, New Zealand 1.3%, India 0.5%, South Africa 0.3% Netherlands 0.3% Other 9.6%



Gender

Male

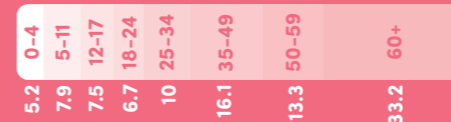
Female

49%

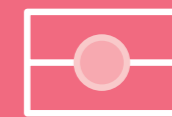
51%



Age



The lands of three Aboriginal nations, Eastern Maar, Gunditjmarra, and Barenji Gadjin people



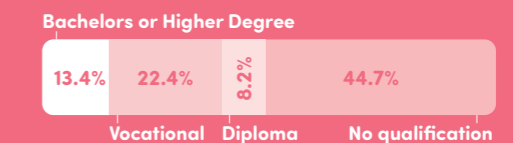
Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Island peoples

2.1%



Education



(Source: 2021 & 2016 census, Australian Bureau of Statistics)

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Arts and Cultural Strategy flows from the Community Vision Framework 2041 and sits under and supports the Southern Grampians Shire Council Plan 2021-25 and other key strategic documents. Council's Reconciliation Action Plan is identified to be undertaken in 2022-23 and once complete, will have key links with this strategy, which will be revised and updated where required.

The Strategy details specific actions that will deliver on Council priorities and initiatives. These activities are implemented through more detailed planning documents at the project and business unit level. This document ensures that cultural outcomes are embraced, delivered and measured across the whole of the organisation.

The Strategy aligns with the objectives of the Council Plan 2021-2025 and represents the key values of the residents of the Shire.

The Strategy will assist Council to achieve its vision: *Southern Grampians is a growing, inclusive and connected community that fosters sustainability, diversity and innovation.*

There are five specific priorities in the Council Plan 2021-2025. These are the desired futures that Council developed after hearing from the community, to achieve our shared vision. The strategy is linked directly to all five key priorities:

- Support our community
- Grow our regional economy
- Maintain and renew our infrastructure
- Protect our natural environment
- Provide strong governance and leadership

Our Strategy will:

- + Recognise First Peoples' knowledge, practice and cultural authority as being integral to our creative industries;
- + Illustrate how arts and culture can positively impact other priority areas of local government. These include the economy (events, activities and increased visitation), society (delivery of activities that enrich the lives of local residents) and environment (wayfinding, respect and understanding of landscape, including our Traditional Owners' stories);
- + Be sufficiently flexible to accommodate a wide range of initiatives that contribute to the Council's vision of a growing, inclusive and connected community that fosters sustainability, diversity and innovation;
- + Be based on community values and a diverse spread of community needs and aspirations;
- + Recognise our strengths in arts and culture and respond to changing needs in our community and in cultural thinking;
- + Tell the story of the current and future contribution of our creative community;
- + Highlight the value of arts and cultural activities within Council and the role these activities play in contributing to the vibrant culture of the region;
- + Support and empower our creative community; and
- + Enrich the development and growth of our region through strategic cultural and financial investment.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Where the Arts & Culture Strategy fits and its relationship between key Council strategies



*Identified to be undertaken in 2022-23

METHODOLOGY

The Strategy's methodology follows the Cultural Development Network's planning framework, adopted by the National Local Government Cultural Forum, the Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria, the Australian Local Government Association and is now used by many councils around Australia as best practice cultural development planning.¹

We use six planning principles focused on goals and outcomes and based on evidence, all underpinned by a theory of change to inform the selection of future activities.

1. Based on values
2. Directed towards goals
3. Focused on outcomes
4. Informed by evidence
5. Underpinned by a theory of change
6. Respondent to evaluation

CONSULTATION

In order to discover what is most important to the community for arts and culture now and in the future, we have drawn on extensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders for the development of the current Council Plan 2021-25 and Community Vision Framework.

COVID-19 impacted our whole community and was particularly disruptive to any planned consultations in the early phases of the Strategy's development. As circumstances eased, we undertook a more focused stakeholder consultation process with those who have a particular interest or investment in cultural development activities in the Shire as

well as a broader online consultation process with the community. This has provided greater insight into current issues and priorities.

We anticipate that ongoing engagement with creative practitioners and progress committees in our townships will continue throughout the life of this strategy.

The findings of the consultations have been used as part of our evidence base for the strategy, incorporated into our objectives, and are recorded in detail in Appendix One. Evidence citations are listed in Appendix Four.

The common key values that emerged from community consultations are:

First Peoples First:

- + Increased recognition, support and learning about our First Peoples culture and heritage
- + First Peoples knowledge, practice and cultural authority at the heart of our creative industries
- + Truth-telling with a local context

Activity and engagement:

- + Community art is valued for building social connection
- + Opportunities to bring together community and share culture
- + Our arts and cultural events and activities are accessible and inclusive

Access and inclusion:

- + Creative professionals are supported and connected
- + A stronger voice for the LGBTQIA+ community
- + A stronger voice and expression for youth arts and greater connection with Council

Creative spaces:

- + Progression of the New Hamilton Gallery project as a priority
- + A modernised HPAC, with increased performance opportunities for local performers
- + Youth-friendly facilities and entertainment options (e.g. Cinema)
- + Technology and innovation are prioritised
- + Our creative infrastructure ecosystem and community hub
- + The library as a community hub, which is fit for purpose
- + Pop-up arts spaces, activation of smaller or underutilised performance venues

Place-making:

- + Art to refresh the CBD, and rural areas
- + Connections with our natural heritage
- + Wayfinding interpretation and public art create points of interest for residents and visitors
- + The uniqueness of our townships is celebrated
- + Celebration of our regionally connected creative ecosystem
- + Our arts support and promote liveability in our towns
- + Opportunity to activate spaces

Information and Awareness:

- + Greater promotion of arts, showcasing regional artists
- + Effective digital communications regarding events and opportunities

Southern Grampians Shire Council, through the Cultural Arts unit, had significant input and commitment to the *Creative Industries Strategy for South West Victoria 2020-24*, developed in partnership with neighbouring local governments in the South West region, State and Federal Governments, and our ongoing partner Regional Arts Victoria

This Strategy supports the delivery of arts and cultural outcomes at a regional level, and many of the insights and outcomes from the *Creative Industries Strategy for South West Victoria 2020-24* relevant to Southern Grampians Shire will be included

1 See Appendix Three for Cultural Development Network's Planning Framework

COUNCIL PRIORITIES UNDERPIN THE STRATEGY

Southern Grampians Shire Council Plan 2021-25 articulates five key priority areas of focus. The breadth of Council's cultural activities across visual and performing arts, libraries and heritage contribute to these priorities defined by our community. The activities that follow this strategy will address these priorities.

The strategy will demonstrate the integrated impact that well delivered, and targeted cultural activities and investments have on these priority areas.

Southern Grampians Shire Council is committed to ensuring culture contributes to the realisation of the key priority areas of the Council Plan and the strategic directions outlined in the Community Vision Framework 2041. We have aligned our cultural aspirations with the directions outlined in both of these key Council plans.

Support our Community

Aspiration: Our Shire is a vibrant cultural centre with an inclusive culture

- + Effective partnerships with First Peoples established
- + More targeted and effective youth support services
- + Facilitate opportunities for people to participate in community life, through volunteering, civic leadership, and social programs, to enable inclusion, social connection and wellbeing
- + Enable an active civic life through delivery of programs in small towns

Grow our regional economy

Aspiration: Cultural industries are an essential part of our progressive economy

- + Clear vision of our visitor experience and product, adequately supported by investment
- + Partner and advocate to recruit skilled staff into the area by addressing worker housing and regional liveability
- + Facilitate sustainable population growth

Maintain and renew our infrastructure

Aspiration: A sustainable and strategic approach to our creative infrastructure is realised

- + Council will deliver a strategic approach to Arts and Culture infrastructure, including progressing the New Hamilton Gallery project
- + Clearer strategic plans for smaller townships
- + Consolidate/strengthen role as a regional leader in digital innovation
- + Hamilton CBD revitalisation

Protect our natural environment

Aspiration: Our natural and built heritage make the Shire a beautiful place to be

- + Celebrate and better manage our environmental assets
- + Position the Shire for renewables investment benefits

Provide strong governance and leadership

Aspiration: We are committed to strong cultural engagement and leadership

- + Maintaining and enhancing liveability status of the Shire

SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

An empowered community that is healthy, inclusive and connected.

Our cultural aspiration: Our Shire is a vibrant cultural centre with an inclusive culture.

Priority purpose within Arts and Culture: To provide arts and cultural experiences which contribute to healthy, inclusive and connected communities.

Cultural activities have the potential to spark imagination and creativity, encouraging creative expression and stimulating special sensory experiences that are outside the everyday – joy, beauty, discomfort and wonder. They encourage creative thinking and deeper understanding, promote the value of diverse cultural life experiences in our community and deepen the sense of belonging to a shared history and heritage.

What we already know from research, evidence, and knowledge:

- + First Peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse communities use the arts in a vital way to maintain and express their living cultures.
- + Involvement in arts can increase social cohesion and connections, promote a sense of wellbeing, and help to deal with anxiety and stress.
- + Cultural arts investment is an investment in people and social capital.
- + Four in five Australians agree that indigenous arts are an important part of Australia's culture.
- + Arts experiences in adolescence are particularly influential and pivotal to providing good social health and wellbeing for young creatives.
- + Creativity is strong in the regions; residents of regional Australia are more likely to participate in the arts than residents of metropolitan Australia.
- + Arts and cultural activity and engagement bring many direct and sometimes immediate benefits to individuals and society by creating conditions for change, spaces for experimentation, risk-taking, and societal challenges.
- + Rural communities can be activated through arts projects. Factors influencing sustainability for the arts in rural communities include an appreciation of local culture, history and heritage, local people, enthusiastic local leadership, positive attitudes, local entrepreneurship and investment, and a focus on retaining young people.
- + Linking arts programs with other services (e.g. health and social services) improves the uptake of other services required to improve health and wellbeing outcomes, or behavioural change.
- + Libraries in regional areas are places of cultural meaning and significance, gathering places, important for social outcomes, as incubators of creativity, as cultural connectors, as supporters of multiculturalism, and as nurturers of the spoken and written word.



We currently support our community through:

- + Attracting local community and visitors to our venues with diverse programming, exhibitions and activities.
- + Providing safe, professional arts spaces in our venues for local groups to perform, exhibit and work in.
- + Participating in the Vic Health Local Government Partnership program CONNECT YOUTH.
- + Providing learning extension opportunities through library, gallery and HPAC education, partnerships and trainee programs.
- + Celebrating and encouraging engagement with and understanding of First Peoples culture and traditions.
- + Providing professional arts and culture advice and support.
- + Providing and participating in a support network for local artists and community, facilitated through our partnership with Regional Arts Victoria.
- + Communicating a strong creative vision for our community via our professional programs.
- + Community grant funding.
- + Providing quality entertainment options, live music and theatre performances, first run and art house cinema, and screenings as fundraisers.

Our theory of change:

We know that cultural activity plays a vital role in healthy, inclusive and connected communities. It also enhances the quality of life, contributes to health, well-being and social cohesion, encourages creativity and inclusivity and the expression of diversity.

Therefore, we will offer an inclusive range of arts and cultural activities and opportunities throughout the Shire to support our community to live their best creative lives.

Our commitment to supporting healthy, inclusive and connected communities:

- + Celebrate, recognise and respect our cultural heritage through strong and meaningful engagement with our indigenous communities.
- + Encourage, support, celebrate and promote diversity in performances, exhibitions, collections, promotions, events and activities across our venues as well as when partnering with our creative communities.
- + Demonstrate leadership in gender equality, cultural diversity and inclusiveness for all.
- + Maintain relevance with our younger generation; provide, promote and support appropriate and accessible services, facilities and activities for younger residents and young families.
- + Maintain a balance between local creative interests and opportunities and the broader benefits of attracting touring productions and exhibitions of scale.
- + Support and encourage participation in arts and culture, education, leisure, and recreation opportunities.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

CULTURAL:

Creativity stimulated - cultural activities that spark imagination and creativity, encouraging creative expression.

Aesthetic enrichment appreciated - stimulate special sensory experiences that are outside the everyday – joy, beauty, discomfort, wonder; encourage creative thinking and deeper understanding.

Diversity of cultural expression appreciated - promote the value of diverse cultural life experiences in our community.

SOCIAL:

Wellbeing improved - physical and mental health, being comfortable, healthy and coping with life events and challenges.

Social connectedness enhanced - social activities that empower our community, and form bonds between people who share common interests.

GROW OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY

A growing and diverse local and regional economy that supports our local businesses.

Our cultural aspiration: Cultural industries are an essential part of our progressive economy.

Priority purpose within Arts and Culture: To provide support to creative practitioners and businesses that contribute to the growth of a diverse regional economy.

The economic activities undertaken by our creative practitioners, businesses and venues fosters knowledge and experience that can inform creative practice leading to increased productivity and efficiency. This promotes greater capacity to develop skills to gain employment, increases economic wellbeing to meet living costs, as well as contributes significant support to our local economy.

What we already know from research, evidence and knowledge:

- + Creative industries make up an important economic sector capable of generating wider economic benefits. Findings in regional NSW suggest 8.5 new jobs for every 10 full time jobs in the cultural arts sector. Similar findings would be likely in Victoria. When communities seek urban renewal of existing settlements, investment in cultural arts is often a substantial driver.
- + Arts and culture activity can strengthen local businesses and attract tourists and new residents.
- + Arts tourists are more likely to travel outside capital cities than overall tourists.
- + Heritage tourism activities contribute to longer stays, as well as attracting new visitor markets to regional Australia - for example, the success of the Silo Art Trail has brought flow on benefits for small rural communities in regional Victoria.

- + Practitioners are not typically high earners, but their presence and activity generate and attract tourist visitation and entrepreneurial investment.
- + Practitioners are mostly sole traders working from home offices and studios which limits growth in collaboration and networking.
- + Creative thinking, engagement with people and flexibility are likely to become important attributes for the future of work, skills that are already embodied in artistic practice of all kinds.
- + Post-COVID recovery of the arts requires support, to encourage sustainability, and to continue impact on cultural tourism and local economy. The cultural sector nationally and the overall sole trader sector have been under-supported in economic support packages during lockdowns.

We currently support growth in our regional economy through:

- + Attracting travelling professional productions to HPAC to encourage increased audiences.
- + Providing venues for conferences, workshops, large meetings, seminars, weddings and events.
- + Providing a venue for local performers, schools, and amateur groups to perform and sell tickets.
- + The flow-on economic benefits to local businesses from our cultural venues.
- + Employment for artists, curators and arts professionals, photographers, videographers, skilled technical professionals, administration professionals, marketing and engagement professionals, sign-writers, painters, caterers, casual staff, and trainees.
- + Attracting tourists to the arts and entertainment precinct in Hamilton CBD.
- + Upskilling staff through industry training and networks.

Our theory of change:

We know that cultural activity and a skilled creative sector can provide employment opportunities, contribute to the regional economy and attract cultural tourism. Therefore we will continue with innovative programs and events at our venues, and support capacity building for creative practitioners and businesses to participate in a range of growth opportunities. We do this to stimulate the sector and contribute to cultural tourism and the regional economy.

Our commitment to supporting growth of the regional economy:

- + Support and facilitate sustainability and capacity building for creative communities – shared resources, business development workshops, connections, networking opportunities, and partnership programs.
- + Identify and/or support cultural tourism opportunities, such as, local markets, trails, and open studios.
- + Encourage collaboration between small art and historical groups across the region.
- + Maintain and encourage the distinctive attributes of our small towns and their cultural offerings.
- + Position Cultural Arts services as a driver for local economic development through programming and education for the community and visitors.
- + Invest in and advocate for the improvement and maintenance of the Shire's cultural attractions to improve the visitor experience.
- + Develop strategies that attract visitors and encourage them to consider living, learning or investing in the Shire and grow the visitor economy.
- + Support and promote a collaborative approach to marketing and investment.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

CULTURAL:

Creativity stimulated - cultural activities that spark imagination and creativity, encouraging creative expression.

New knowledge, ideas and insight gained - intellectual stimulation, critical reflection, creative thinking and deeper understanding.

ECONOMIC:

Professional practice capability increased - leading to more effective use of resources, increased productivity and potential for practice leadership.

Local economy supported - goods and services that benefit financially directly or indirectly by cultural activities.

MAINTAIN AND RENEW OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Provide access to a high-quality built environment and infrastructure that meets community needs.

Our cultural aspiration: A sustainable and strategic approach to our creative infrastructure is realised.

Priority purpose within Arts and Culture: The community, creative practitioners and visitors have access to upgraded, well maintained and appropriately located cultural infrastructure that meets their needs.

The built cultural infrastructure of our libraries, performance and exhibition venues, and spaces housing collections of art and heritage are key community-owned facilities invested in by previous generations. As such, it is Council's responsibility to maintain, develop and enhance access to all venues, and the collections they can hold and present.

Our cultural programs activate and add value to the built infrastructure, and streetscapes, gardens and our many heritage buildings located in and between our townships are maintained by communities and that innovative arts activities can revitalise the infrastructure.

What we already know from research, evidence and knowledge:

- + HPAC is central to the cultural and social well-being of the community as a significant cultural landmark in the Shire. It requires a priority upgrade to be fully functional as a contemporary performance venue.
- + The community and key Gallery stakeholders would like to see a resolution to the future site and development for Hamilton Gallery.
- + Libraries are great cultural connectors and have a significant impact on community well-being. Programs cannot be expanded in the Hamilton Library without addressing the issue of space. Flexible library spaces of the future need to be a community learning space, a gathering place, a brain gymnasium, a youth hub, a repository, documenter and disseminator of local knowledge and a local business hub.
- + There is currently no sustainable Public Art Policy for the Shire.
- + There is economic, cultural and social value in using vacant spaces as temporary art spaces.
- + Creative place-making seeds the conditions for creative practitioners to thrive, which leads to other recreational and lifestyle business into communities— more activity in the whole of the region stimulates creativity in unexpected ways, and contributes to community safety.

We currently maintain and renew our infrastructure through:

- + Recognising that renewal, upgrading and maintenance of our valued cultural infrastructure will have positive benefits for cultural activity, well-being and economic growth in the Shire.
- + Assessment of the status of infrastructure through condition reports and analysis.
- + A commitment to continuous improvement to support and encourage needed maintenance and improvements.
- + A commitment to adhering to industry best practice in both venue, equipment and staff skills and training.
- + Adhere to OH&S and risk management regulations and full commitment to the safety of staff, local and non-local performers and crew and our audiences.
- + Work with other Council departments to assess and audit accessibility for all people.

Our theory of change:

Cultural activities are supported and enhanced by accessible and well-functioning venues backed by policy development and resourcing. We also know that good infrastructure is central to liveability in the Shire. Place-making can stimulate creativity, inspire regeneration and social cohesion, therefore we will deliver strategic approaches for the future of our current infrastructure, and extend our range of activities to outdoor experiences.

Our commitment to supporting the maintenance and renewal of infrastructure:

- + Ensure arts and culture is a key consideration in the design, development and delivery of the Hamilton CBD, in particular the New Hamilton Gallery project, to ensure creative and innovative activations, events and activities.
- + Identify external environments for activation as art spaces.
- + Extend the range of the current infrastructure, e.g. outdoor cultural experiences integrating into our small towns.
- + Identify and deliver a renewed Public Art policy that reflects our local character.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

CULTURAL:

Sense of belonging to shared cultural heritage deepened - how identity and values are rooted within a history and heritage that is shared with others.

SOCIAL:

Social connectedness enhanced - bonds between people who share common characteristics or interests.

GOVERNANCE:

Sense of positive future for community inspired - a belief that the community has a positive, prosperous future.



PROTECT OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Act as community leaders to promote and enhance a clean, green and sustainable environment

Our cultural aspiration: Our natural and built heritage make the Shire a beautiful place to be.

Priority purpose within arts and culture: To ensure that our cultural activities contribute to the protection and sustainability of our natural environment in partnership with the traditional owners of the land.

Our natural environment has been managed over thousands of years by the traditional owners. The landscapes of the region that are unique to the Shire and the South West region have a history that attracts many of the region's visitors. Protecting the natural environment in partnership with traditional owners ensures the sustainability of the environment into the future.

What we already know from research, evidence and knowledge:

- + Our traditional owners' cultural practice is embedded in the land, they are its protectors and leaders in its sustainability for the future.
- + Our community values their natural world and heritage.
- + Our community has a sense of pride in the distinctive small towns of our region.
- + Environmental art programs stimulate awareness of climate change, and can be an effective way to foster understanding of current environmental issues.
- + Regional festivals around environment can be successfully run by communities and attract regular visitors to our townships.
- + There are opportunities to grow cultural tourism that focus on the natural environment.
- + Our policy and processes are focused on good environmental practice.

We currently protect our natural environment through:

- + A commitment to sustainable industry methods and environmentally friendly practices.
- + Implementing the use of QR code tickets over hard printed tickets.
- + Commitment and encouragement for recycling and sustainable practices.
- + A focus on digitising past analogue processes.

Our theory of change:

Knowing that cultural activities can stimulate awareness and understanding of environmental challenges, we will activate those that build a sense of awareness and care for our local environment, and together with our traditional owners, be leaders in environmental best practice.

Our commitment towards the protection of our environment:

- + Partner with our traditional owners to encourage cultural activities that support, educate and engage the community in environmental values and best practice.
- + Promote and support natural resource management with stakeholders as part of organisational projects.
- + Review opportunities to enhance our art trails and walks.
- + Support design and delivery of the Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan to plan for climate resilience in cultural infrastructure.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

CULTURAL:

Aesthetic enrichment experienced - stimulate special sensory experiences that are outside the everyday – joy, beauty, discomfort, wonder.

Sense of belonging to shared cultural heritage deepened - how identity and values are rooted within a history and heritage that is shared with others.

ENVIRONMENTAL:

Valued connection to natural world inspired - its connection to use is recognised, understood and appreciated.

Understanding of ecological issues increased - increase our understanding of sustainability and the impact of environmental issues.



PROVIDE STRONG GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Strong leadership, good governance and effective service delivery

Our aspiration: We are committed to strong cultural engagement and leadership.

Priority purpose within Arts and Culture: to demonstrate cultural leadership, good governance and responsive service delivery for the benefit of our community.

The strategy will be able to demonstrate the progress it makes in addressing the key priorities of Council. The measurable outcomes and evaluation, together with Council reporting procedures, provide transparency for the community and aims to encourage greater participation in the cultural life of the Shire.

What we already know from research, evidence and knowledge:

- + The community guides the values of Council.
- + There are well-established best practice planning frameworks in place for all aspects of Council planning.
- + The development of the Arts and Culture Strategy for the next four years is evidence of Council's recognition of the importance of resourcing arts and culture for the benefit of community and visitors.
- + Culture impacts on all other priority areas of Council.
- + Including measurable cultural outcomes in arts and culture planning provides valuable insights into previously intangible and immeasurable aspects of cultural engagement.
- + Planning frameworks using measurable outcomes and evaluation across all policy domains are recognised by national and international local governments, cities and cultural institutions.

We currently support strong governance and leadership by:

- + Being responsible for the review and development of the Arts and Culture Strategy.
- + Incorporating community engagement feedback into the Arts and Culture Strategy.
- + Participating in the development and subsequent delivery of the Creative Industries Strategy for South West Victoria.
- + Integrating social, environmental, economic and governance leadership principles into our core business and decision making.
- + Assisting to build the reputation of the Southern Grampians Shire Council at a regional, state and national level.

Our theory of change:

We know that through best practice planning and service delivery, that has community values at its heart, we achieve good governance. Our mission is to ensure that this Arts and Culture Strategy represents community aspirations, puts culture on an equal footing with other policy domains, focuses on measurable outcomes and is regularly reviewed and evaluated.

Our commitment to support strong governance and leadership:

- + Embed the Arts and Culture Strategy as a whole-of-Council document, so that the cultural domain is equally recognised with social, economic, environment and governance domains within all Council plans and activities.
- + Maintain a clear focus on measuring outcomes and evaluate the strategy throughout its life.

- + Policies relating to arts and culture are reviewed, revised and renewed as necessary.
- + Continue to explore and participate in regional partnerships to advocate and maintain our Shire's standing regionally, statewide and nationally.
- + Use digital solutions in service delivery to maximise efficiency of outcomes.
- + Improve customer experience by delivering accessible and responsive customer service.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

CULTURAL:

New knowledge, ideas and insights gained - intellectual stimulation, critical reflection, creative thinking and deeper understanding.

GOVERNANCE:

Sense of a positive future for community inspired - a belief that the community has a positive, prosperous future.

Building a learning culture through evaluation and reflection - The Arts and Culture Strategy will adopt best practice in cultural activity planning and evaluation as it measures its progress in addressing all five priority areas of the Council Plan.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: How the Strategy was Prepared

STAGE 1

June to November 2021

- Background research and community consultation provided direction for the Strategy
- Community comment: Internal workshops, stakeholder consultation, First Peoples engagement sessions and CVF2041/Council Plan consultation data

STAGE 2

January to July 2022

- Draft document developed based on industry and community feedback from Stage 1
- Community comment: Online data collection, surveys, and face-to-face meetings

STAGE 3

July to October 2022

- Draft Strategy developed based on feedback from Stage 2
- Community comment: Draft strategy exhibited for comment

STAGE 4

October to November 2022

- Draft strategy refined based on feedback from Stage 3
- Final Strategy to Council for adoption

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The strategy has been developed with extensive community engagement and consultation and it seeks to respond to what the community has told us is important. The strategy has been informed by:

- Southern Grampians Community Vision Framework and Council Plan engagement data and feedback
- First Peoples engagement sessions
- Targeted stakeholder consultations
- 1528 online engagements
- 56 comments on online Ideas Wall
- 21 Survey responses
- Face-to-face meetings with community members
- Ongoing engagement with local Indigenous elder
- 3,531 on the mailing list
- 30 hard copy postcards
- Radio interviews, social media posts and information sheets distributed.

The Ideas Wall, including comments collected from face-to-face and postcard responses, can be viewed via <https://sthgrampians.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/arts-and-culture/ideas>

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

Please see the body of the document under specific priority areas for analysis of consultation. The following lists key areas captured through phase 2.

- Greater understanding and representation of First Peoples's cultural and creative practices
- Activate public and private spaces
- Signage of creative and cultural places is improved, including recognition of traditional owner place naming
- Grow networks that are supportive and inclusive
- Recognise the importance and benefits of creativity including connection
- Resolution, commitment and progression of New Hamilton Gallery project
- Connect and collaborate with other creatives as well as non-creatives
- Initiation of art trails and prizes
- More planning and opportunities for public art
- Focus on supporting local creative individuals and businesses
- Access to affordable and flexible spaces
- Supporting young creatives and initiatives through empowerment and providing opportunities
- Outreach and collaboration across our small towns

Appendix 2: Documents reviewed for this Strategy

SGSC Council Plan 2021-25

Southern Grampians 2041 – Community Vision Framework

2021 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Report

Arts and Culture SGSC Strategic Plan 2014

What It Means: A creative Industries Strategy for South West Victoria 2020-24, RAV

Great South Coast Creative Ecology Report, Future Tense October 2019

Libraries Change Lives. Victorian State Budget 2020-21

Victorian Public Libraries 2030 Strategic Framework

SGSC Community Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25

SGSC Recreation and Leisure Strategic Plan 2019-29

SGSC Heritage Strategy 2018-22

Council Policy – Asset Management Plan July 2020

SGSC Economic Development Strategy 2011-21

SGSC Sustainability Strategy 2010-20

Hamilton PAC Development Plan SGSC

Brown Street Arts and Cultural Precinct Concept Plan, David Lock Associates, Geografica 2011

Illuminate: Arts and Culture in the Shire, SGSC discussion paper 2013

APPENDIX CONT.

Appendix 3: Cultural Development Network methodology

The Cultural Development Network has developed six essential steps that enable us to undertake outcome focussed planning and evaluation.

These essential steps are:

- Based on values
- Directed towards goals
- Focused on outcomes
- Informed by evidence
- Underpinned by a theory of change
- Respondent to evaluation

BASED ON VALUES

The plan responds to the collective values of the community that underpin the strategy. Gained from existing documents and supplementary consultations to complete information or test assumptions. Values will be evident in the council's stated goals (vision, purpose, mission etc.).

DIRECTED TOWARDS GOALS

The plan is directed towards goals, the desired long-term futures determined by the council and articulated in the Council's strategic plan. The existing six guiding principles of Councils are set to enable specific measurable achievement towards the goals.

FOCUSSED ON OUTCOMES

The plan is focussed 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, and therefore addressing the goals.

INFORMED BY EVIDENCE

The plan will articulate decisions informed by evidence. This includes practice knowledge, published research or data that provides information about the local context, the issues being identified that will help or hinder the way forward, and approaches to reaching the intended outcomes.

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. It can be represented by this short summary:

We are looking for . . . (this strategic objective), and we know . . . (this evidence), therefore, we will do . . . (these activities)

This section is where the previous four sections come together to form the 'plan' into strategic objectives which are unique to the organisation, given the context above.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

The schema of measurable outcomes of cultural engagement is based on the premise that cultural products and activities do not hold intrinsic value in and of themselves. Value is generated or experienced as humans engage with the artwork or experience, with different individuals perceiving or receiving this value in different ways. Therefore, the outcomes are not assessing 'quality' or 'excellence' of the cultural experience, but the impact on the person who engages with it.

EVALUATION

The plan includes evaluation consistently as part of the normal work process. Evaluation findings are used to inform future decision-making.

Appendix 4: Evidence citations

KEY PRIORITY 1: SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

- Living Culture: First Nations arts participation and wellbeing, Australia Council for the Arts, September 2017
- The Arts and Creative Industries in health promotion, Sax Institute March 2020
- Persistent Encounters, Creative People and Places. Karen Smith, Arts Council England, Feb 2018
- Arts in Daily Life: Australian participation in the Arts, Australia Council for the Arts, 2014
- The Arts in Regional Australia: a research summary. Australia Council for the Arts, 2017
- Creating Our Future: Results of the 2019 National Arts Participation Survey. Australia
- Understanding the value of arts and culture – The AHRC Cultural Value Project 2016 – Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kazynska Council for the Arts, 2019
- Developing and Revitalising Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity: Kim Dunphy, Cultural Development Network 2009
- Closing The Gap, Supporting healthy communities through arts programs, Vicki-Ann Ware, 2014
- Active Citizenship, Participation and Belonging, Centre for Multicultural Youth
- CREATIVE COMMUNITIES The cultural benefits of Victoria's public libraries Summary Report, State Library of Victoria. 2014
- Creative State 2025, Creative Victoria 2021
- Southern Grampians 2041 – Community Vision Framework

KEY PRIORITY 2: GROW OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY.

- The Impact of COVID-19 on the Arts, Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, Parliament of Australia 2021
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 Yarra City Council. Also see City of Melbourne Creative Strategy 2018-28 for discussion on how arts and culture activates economy
- Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the country. Australia Council for the Arts, Feb 2020

APPENDIX CONT.

- International Arts Tourism: Connecting Cultures, Australia Council for the Arts, July 2020
- Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia, David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya, Australia Council for the Arts, 2017
- When The Show Cannot Go ON: Rebooting Australia's Arts and Entertainment Sector After COVID-19. Alison Pennington, Ben Eltham, Australia Institute July 2021
- Southern Grampians 2041 – Community Vision Framework

KEY PRIORITY 3: MAINTAIN AND RENEW OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Hamilton PAC Development Plan SGSC
- CREATIVE COMMUNITIES The cultural benefits of Victoria's public libraries Summary Report, State Library of Victoria. 2014
- Temporary Use of Space, Ali Madinapour, Urban Studies, April 2018
- Reimagining Where We Live, Prf. Flora Samuels, Quality of Life Foundation for DCMS UK Feb 22
- Our Town, National Endowments for the Arts, USA, ongoing creative placemaking program
- SGSC CBD Renewal Plan 2020
- Southern Grampians 2041 – Community Vision Framework

KEY PRIORITY 4: PROTECT OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Traditional Owner and Aboriginal Community Engagement Framework, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Victoria 2019
- What can the arts do in the face of climate change? Dr Christiaan de Beulaker, University of Melbourne, Pursuit 2019
- Mair, J. (2015) The role of events in creating sustainable destinations. In Hughes, M., Pforr, C. & Weaver, D. (Eds) The Business of Sustainable Tourism. Routledge
- Southern Grampians 2041 – Community Vision Framework

KEY PRIORITY 5: PROVIDE STRONG GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

- Cultural Development Network <https://culturaldevelopment.net.au/measurable-outcomes/about-measurable-outcomes/>
- Southern Grampians 2041 – Community Vision Framework



SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

111 Brown Street (Locked Bag 685)
Hamilton Victoria 3300

p: (03) 55730444

e: council@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au

w: sthgrampians.vic.gov.au

