



# Arts *Culture* Heritage

STRATEGY

2022-2026



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Golden Plains Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar people. We acknowledge them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians.

Council pays its respects to Wadawurrung Elders past, present and emerging. Council also respects Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging.

Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Golden Plains Shire.

*Image: Sunset over Bunjil's Lookout in Maude.  
Artwork: 'Wabdallah' by Shu Brown*





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# MAYOR'S MESSAGE

It is my pleasure to present the Golden Plains Shire Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022–2026 (the Strategy). Our community's shared vision is that Golden Plains Shire is a place of **imagination**, *creativity* and **enterprise**.

The Strategy reflects the diversity of our people, shares their unique stories, improves community wellbeing and increases the attractiveness of our unique places.

The strategic plan has been developed through a series of community engagements and the message from the engaged participants was clear; that our sense of place and cultural identity is closely linked to our understanding and appreciation of our natural environment, our shared histories and our community health and wellbeing.

The Strategy represents a significant commitment by Council to lead, partner and support our communities to participate in, enjoy and develop the creative and cultural life of our Shire.

There is clear evidence about the cultural, economic, tourism and health benefits of arts, culture and heritage. As our population grows, Council recognises that arts and cultural activity is a key ingredient in the liveability of our Shire and that there is a need to build the business case for a stronger arts, heritage and culture presence to highlight our strengths and unique characteristics, while building on our successes and preparing for future population growth.

With the uncertainties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, Council recognises the need for a responsive and flexible approach to arts, culture and heritage provision. This Strategy will create the conditions for creativity to flourish in Golden Plains Shire and pave the way for improved arts, social and economic outcomes.

A great deal has already been achieved. Together we have been working toward building arts, culture and heritage as part of everyday life for residents and visitors and this has been successful through engagement with artists and local communities, the development of events and exhibitions, as well as participatory activities promoting wellbeing and creative ways of celebrating Golden Plains Shire's natural environment.

This Strategy will be key to advancing the goals in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and the Golden Plains Community Vision 2040. Council looks forward to working with individual artists and artist groups, health, education, community and cultural organisations, businesses and creative industry practitioners to raise awareness of and appreciation of arts, culture and heritage.

**Cr Helena Kirby**

Mayor – Golden Plains Shire







# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF GOLDEN PLAINS

In 2021, Golden Plains Shire is home to a diverse creative population, with both professional and non-professional participants who directly contribute to community life, broader education goals, tourism and economic growth.

The Shire is part of G21, a fast-growing region with a population of more than 340,000 people that includes the City of Greater Geelong and surrounding municipalities. Golden Plains Shire's 2.6% population growth rate is set to see the Shire's population almost double by 2041.

Creative Geelong's 2018 Environmental Scan found that the creative industries in the Golden Plains Shire contributed \$46,032 million of the Shire's total 2017 output of \$1,107,065 million.

The Shire's rich cultural heritage and various cultural programs develop key skills for participants in critical thinking, innovation, identity and creativity. These skills are used in the creation of artworks, through participation in and enjoyment of cultural activities, in the growth of creative businesses and in many other areas of residents' lives.

Creating a sense of place is as important to those who have spent their whole lives in the Shire as it is to those who have come from other communities, belief systems and life experiences who now choose to call Golden Plains Shire home.

The wealth of creative endeavours in our Shire has, over time, enabled our community to elevate its ambitions, leading Council and community to ask, 'where to next for culture in Golden Plains Shire?'

The Shire has some key strengths in its delivery of arts, culture and heritage programming. These include:

## PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

The programs and initiatives provided by Council help our community to connect with each other and with other Council services. They promote learning and creativity and are a collaborative process between the Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisor, other Council areas, community groups, learning providers and the broader creative sectors. Key examples from the last two years include the audit and documentation of the Shire's Civic Collection, arts and heritage initiatives included in Council's Community Strengthening Grants Program, Arts Action professional development training sessions for creatives, and collaborative projects such as the 'Your Story, Our Story' exhibition and the popular Zoom Me A River project.

## SPACES IN GOLDEN PLAINS

Our spaces are where our communities come together to meet, discuss and create. Council seeks to ensure they are vibrant, welcoming, flexible and functional so that the community can feel proud of them. Indoor Council spaces that can be used for cultural activity currently include the Bannockburn Cultural Centre and Library, the Well in Smythesdale, and several halls, community centres and historic buildings dotted across the Shire. Bespoke outdoor meeting spaces include Turtle Bend in Teesdale and the Bunjil Lookout near Maude. Many of these spaces are flexible and can be configured and used in a variety of ways for cultural activity.

## STAFF AND RESOURCES

Council's staff actively engage with the community to promote access to local spaces, resources and programs. Council's Arts and Culture Advisor, staff in the Library service and other key Council teams including Communications, Engagement and Advocacy; Youth, and Health and Wellbeing all enhance our services in the delivery of cultural initiatives. Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisor supports community cultural development through participatory arts programs, curated exhibitions and programs and learning initiatives.



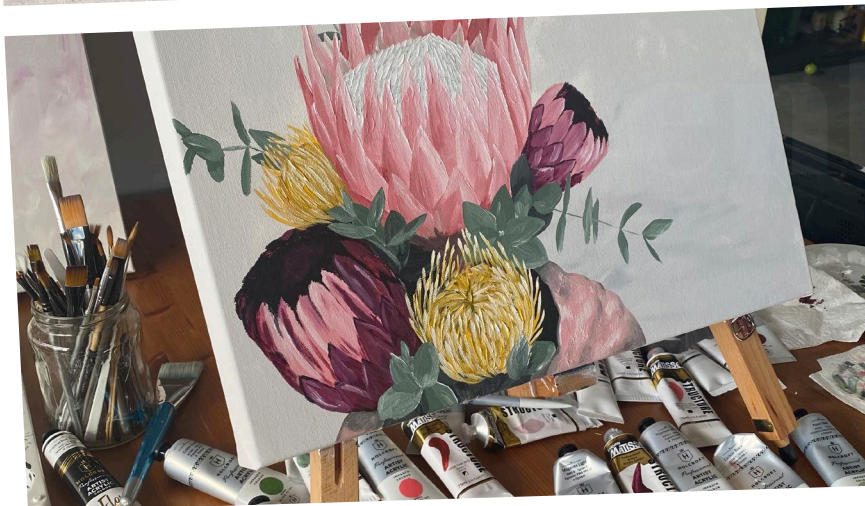




# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS

Golden Plains Shire Council acknowledges the relevance and importance of arts, cultural and heritage activity in achieving key goals set out in its Council Plan 2021–2025 and the relationship between arts, culture and heritage with the key themes and priorities of the Golden Plains Community Vision 2040: Community, Liveability, Sustainability and Prosperity and Leadership.

Golden Plains Shire Council is also part of the G21 Regional Alliance, which comprises five neighbouring municipal areas who have a co-ordinated approach to delivering projects which benefit the region's economy and liveability. In 2021, the G21 Alliance is preparing a Creative Industries Strategy which will provide a regional framework focussing on opportunities, investment and infrastructure projects.



# ASPIRATIONS FOR GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Golden Plains Shire is a place of:

**imagination,**  
*creativity &*  
**enterprise.**

The cultural aspirations of Council and the community are:



Give all community members access to cultural experiences and activities



Provide services that reflect community needs and aspirations



Integrate arts, culture and heritage across other areas of Council services



Ensure that a strong dialogue is established with Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Traditional Owners and wider First Nation's communities



Connect our communities through arts, cultural and heritage activities



Use our cultural strengths to tell our story and promote our identity as we develop and grow.



# COUNCIL'S ROLE IN ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Council has a vital leadership role in arts, culture and heritage development. Council's actions bring focus and momentum to cultural activities and its work aligns with other areas of Council and services in the tourism, health, community and business sectors. Given the growth in the Shire's creative communities and the ever-changing conditions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, to achieve the goals of the Strategy, Council will be flexible, proactive and responsive.

## COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

Council will work with and enable the communities and a wide range of stakeholders and partners. Council's Arts and Culture Advisor provides:

- Specialist knowledge to lead the implementation of the Strategy;
- Arts, culture and heritage planning services;
- Liaison with internal Council units;
- Advice to both internal and external stakeholders on best practice and current trends;
- Support for community members to participate in creative activities;
- Professional development opportunities for residents;
- Administration of arts, culture and heritage grants; and
- Managing and promoting all aspects of arts, culture and heritage in the Shire.

## IN THE COMMUNITY

### FACILITATE

- Facilitate activities and opportunities for community members and stakeholders to work together to realise a shared vision for arts, culture and heritage
- Ensure that local creative communities continue to have access to Council decision-makers

### FUND

- Plan for and resource communities to realise their creative projects
- Resource and (where appropriate) manage cultural spaces in the Shire

### CONNECT

- Create opportunities to bring communities together to share stories, practice and new ideas
- Create strategic partnerships that broaden the reach of arts, culture and heritage in the Shire
- Make spaces available to communities for arts, culture and heritage uses

## EMPLOY

- Where possible, engage local artists to work on Council projects

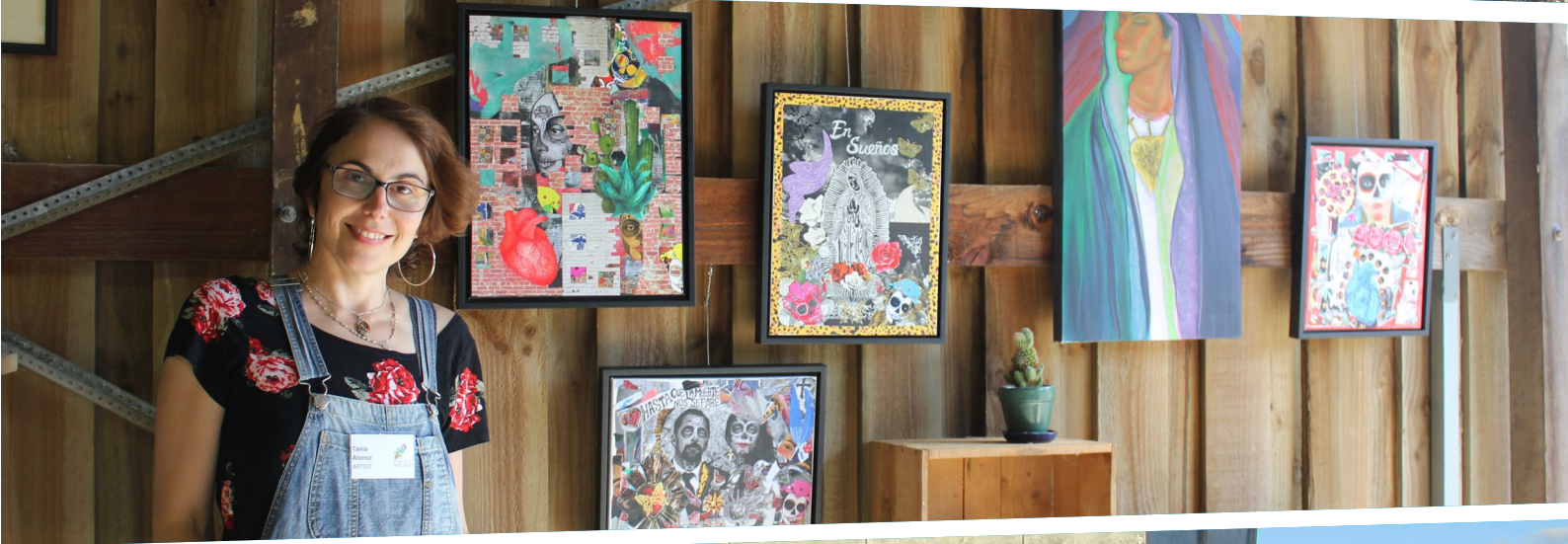
### CHAMPION

- Champion arts, culture and heritage as an important part of the Shire's liveability
- Advocate (where appropriate) on policies and practices that impact the community of Golden Plains

### REPORT

- Listen and respond to changing community arts, culture and heritage needs
- Evaluate and report on the work that Council actions in this area.







# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Council's key focus in providing arts, culture and heritage programming is to enable its communities by facilitating, advocating and engaging residents and visitors in ways which encourage independence, collaboration and creativity.

*Whether we are artists, employees of Council, or members of the community, we all have a role. We all want a strong arts, culture and heritage offer so we can tell the many stories about this place that are yet to be told.*

Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy Reference Group Member



Through research, analysis and engagement with the Golden Plains community, key challenges and opportunities include:



## DEVELOPING A CASE FOR CULTURE

Arts, culture and heritage are key contributors to social, wellbeing, community and economic prosperity. There is an opportunity for the Shire's creative communities to highlight their contributions in these areas.

## TELLING THE GPS STORY

Golden Plains Shire is home to a range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories and heritage. A key priority is to find new ways of bringing this history to life as a means of preserving the past and informing the future.

## DEVELOPING AND ENGAGING IN APPROPRIATE ADVOCACY TO SHARE PRACTICE

Building local cultural networks will enable Council to deliver more targeted and sustainable programs in-line with changing community need.

## DEVELOP MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Resources are not likely to grow in-line with aspiration and need. Working in strategic partnerships will create synergy and help a broad range of Golden Plains Shire organisations and communities to reach collective cultural outcomes.

## DEVELOPING THE ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

There is a growing population of professional and non-professional artists and creatives in Golden Plains Shire who have similar needs to other business communities, including business and professional development. There is a need to build capacity by creating opportunities for artists and cultural organisations to grow while developing excellence and innovation.

## CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Golden Plains is a growing Shire and there are recognised gaps in provision and an increased demand for services. Providing affordable spaces will assist in building a more sustainable cultural infrastructure.



# STRATEGY ENGAGEMENT

Golden Plains Shire Council embarked on a series of engagements to gain feedback about the community's vision for arts, culture and heritage and better map and understand their interactions with arts, culture and heritage in the Shire.

The engagements were widely promoted through Council's website and social media, at community events and in the Golden Plains Times and the Gazette which is delivered to all residents. There was a diverse range of options for artists, creatives and community members to have their say including a in-person workshops, a community survey and the establishment of a community reference group.



## COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online survey was distributed through the Have Your Say page on Council's website. The survey was also available in hard copy from key Council outlets. The survey consisted of free-text and targeted answers to align with the themes of the Golden Plains Community Vision 2040.

A total of 35 participants filled in the survey.

## FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENTS

Eight facilitated workshops were held across Golden Plains Shire covering different aspects of arts, culture and heritage activity. Each workshop focussed on a different area: Creative Communities, Creative Industries, Festivals and Events, Heritage, and Youth Arts, Culture and Heritage Engagement.

A total of 40 participants attended the workshops.

## ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE REFERENCE GROUP

A Reference Group for the Strategy was established through an Expression of Interest process. Six community participants were selected and the make-up of the Reference Group reflected a diverse mix of interests and expertise ranging from professional and non-professional artists, community members and creative business owners.

The Reference Group participated in two workshops covering all aspects of cultural activity- Creative Communities, Creative Industries, Festivals and Events, and Heritage.





## KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

In contributing their time, knowledge and expertise, engagement participants identified a series of common themes which Council has reflected vision and strategic directions for the Strategy.

### ACCESS AND EQUITY

- Accessibility to cultural experiences for all Shire residents
- Bringing communities and townships together through arts, culture and heritage
- Arts education for young people
- Funding to enable artist-run initiatives and the community's ability to gather, share, exhibit, manage and build creative communities

### FIRST NATIONS DIALOGUE

- To strengthen constructive dialogue, actively engage with and reflect the needs and cultures of Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Traditional Owners
- Engage with and embed First Nations voices into the Shire's distinct cultural offer

## SPACES AND PLACES

- Access to, preservation of and support for local built and natural heritage
- Map heritage, creative and artistic hotspots
- Continue to maintain Council buildings
- Provide low-cost access to and incentives for the use of spaces for creative use in local areas – e.g. co-working/re-use.
- Investigate establishment of a performance space

### LEADERSHIP AND INVESTMENT

- Continue to invest in the Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory role
- Provide funding for artist-run initiatives and community-based arts
- Develop a strong economic case for investment in arts, culture and heritage
- Ensure that arts, culture and heritage are considered and incorporated across other Council functions including tourism, economic development, and health and wellbeing

## MAKING CULTURE PART OF THE GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE CONVERSATION

- Be proud of the Shire's distinctive cultural identity and celebrate its rich natural, built and cultural heritage
- Talk-up the benefits of arts, culture and heritage and encourage all members of the community to participate, make, create, attend, listen or view
- Ensure that Council continues to listen to its growing cultural community, apply what it has learnt and adapt its cultural offer



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## STRATEGY 1: CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

GOAL	COMMITMENT	KEY ACTIONS
<b>All members of the Golden Plains Shire community can access and feel able to participate in creative experiences.</b>	Council will provide opportunities that develop and nurture talent, innovation and creativity and which are meaningful for a diverse range of people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise and stimulate creative connections within and across townships to enhance the community's ability to gather, share and build local creative communities.</li> <li>• Continue to fund and look for new funding avenues to increase the community's ability to access, manage and deliver artist-run initiatives.</li> <li>• Ensure a strong community voice to Council to advise on matters of importance to the community.</li> <li>• Identify initiatives which target the specific needs, aspirations and interests of young people.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for the whole Golden Plains Shire community to be exposed to, participate in and enjoy arts, culture and heritage and widely communicate them.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGY 2: OUR STORIES

GOAL	COMMITMENT	KEY ACTIONS
<b>The unique cultural history of local places in Golden Plains Shire is celebrated, preserved, shared and enhanced.</b>	Council will create a sense of place and identity by developing and preserving history and heritage that reflects and contributes to the Shire's unique built and natural environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge, recognise, celebrate and engage with Traditional Owners and places of significance to local Aboriginal communities.</li> <li>• Develop a series of initiatives which preserve the tangible and intangible built and cultural heritage of Golden Plains Shire for future generations.</li> <li>• Ensure the ongoing maintenance of and access council-owned heritage assets.</li> <li>• Develop tourism activity that will responsibly reflect and promote Golden Plains Shire's historic and cultural assets.</li> <li>• Partner with key stakeholders, other levels of government, education and business to ensure local stories are proudly communicated.</li> </ul>



## STRATEGY 3: OUR SPACES AND PLACES

GOAL	COMMITMENT	KEY ACTIONS
<b>The Shire's community spaces and places are activated and animated.</b>	Council will ensure that the community has capacity to access, manage, maintain and use available cultural spaces through events, festivals, community programs and use of facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate new ways to activate the Shire's wide range of spaces and places for arts, cultural and heritage uses and/or potential re-use.</li> <li>Ensure that communities across the Shire enjoys equitable access to spaces and places for arts, cultural and heritage uses.</li> <li>Implement new programs which widen access to spaces for creative and community-led initiatives such as co-working opportunities.</li> <li>Establish a public art program to open up the Shire to new and unexpected experiences.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGY 4: TOWARD A CREATIVE ECONOMY

GOAL	COMMITMENT	KEY ACTIONS
<b>The cultural fabric of Golden Plains Shire evolves as the community develops.</b>	Investment in the arts reaps long-term cultural, social and economic dividends. Council will work with local organisations and groups to build their capacity, develop networks and support creative industries in the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scope the feasibility of direct economic investment in the creative industries and advocate for this as appropriate.</li> <li>Partner with key stakeholders, other levels of government, education and business to support and stimulate industry collaborations.</li> <li>Ensure that all arts, culture and heritage initiatives are considered through the lens of tourism, economic development and health and wellbeing functions of council.</li> <li>Commission local creatives and promote local products, experiences and places.</li> <li>Continue to understand the opportunities presented by creative industries, regularly communicate these with the community and co-design a series of initiatives to strengthen the Shire's creative industry offer in partnership with the community.</li> </ul>



# TRACKING THE SUCCESS OF THE STRATEGY



A yearly action plan will be shared with the community and outcomes will be measures against Council's goals. It will align with available resources, community needs and the renewal of other key Council strategies and plans.



Council will establish an Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Group to give community members a direct voice in the decision-making process.



An industry standard evaluation framework will be developed to plot short, medium and long-term outcomes. This will include:

- Baseline data measurements to track the Strategy's progress over time
- Up-to-date local, state and national data and measures (including measures relating to usage/ attendance, cultural, social, economic and environmental) to see that Council's commitment is wisely invested
- New funding partnerships and revenue streams to ensure the effective use of Council's budgets
- Evaluation of projects which are of strategic importance to help direct investments over the four-years of the Strategy.

## REFERENCES

### **A New Approach Insight Reports 1-5 – Australian Academy of the Humanities**

<https://www.humanities.org.au/new-approach/report5/>

### **G21 Regional Growth Plan**

[https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/94514/G21\\_Regional\\_Growth\\_Plan\\_-\\_April\\_2013\\_-\\_low\\_Res.pdf](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/94514/G21_Regional_Growth_Plan_-_April_2013_-_low_Res.pdf)

### **Creative Geelong Environmental Scan**

<https://creativegeelong.com.au/CreativeGeelongBooklet.pdf>

### **Golden Plains Shire Council Plan 2021-2025**

<https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations/council-plan-2021-25>





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The Well, Smythesdale  
8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

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