



# ARTS CULTURE & HERITAGE

REPORT CARD 2022-2023

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 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.

*Artwork: Wabdallah Dja by Shu Brown.*

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# INTRODUCTION

This document is an annual report card detailing the state of the creative and cultural sector in Golden Plains Shire and Council's activities to support it. It follows the gathering of information on the health of the Shire's creative and cultural life where we mapped out the Creative and Cultural Ecology of Golden Plains Shire. This information will further inform the implementation of Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy actions over the next two years to strengthen outcomes for future opportunities beyond the life of the current strategy.

The survey, held in September 2023, aimed to provide valuable insights into the community's artistic and cultural landscape, as well as capture experiences, preferences, and suggestions regarding our creative community.

- 25 arts, culture and heritage organisations and networks
- 59 current and potential venue spaces
- 18 creative education providers
- 14 bespoke community arts, culture or heritage events
- 68 individual practitioners
- Three major music festivals

As part of the survey, Council hosted a series of community forums where residents engaged in meaningful conversations about the future of the Shire's artistic and cultural endeavours. Participation in the forums have contributed to shaping the creative direction and initiatives within Golden Plains Shire.



## SNAPSHOT OF THE SURVEY



**25**

Arts, culture and  
heritage organisations  
and networks



**59**

Current and  
potential venue  
spaces



**18**

Creative education  
providers



**14**

Bespoke community  
arts, culture or heritage  
events



**68**

Individual  
practitioners



**3**

Major music  
festivals

# SNAPSHOT OF OUR CULTURAL ECOLOGY

The overall assessment of our Creative Ecology is behind the average of similar Shires. With the region lying between Ballarat and Geelong, geographically it draws our creative practitioners and the development of activities toward the larger urban audiences. This report, however, gives us a base line from which to improve by building local audiences, bringing in new outside audiences- through emerging opportunities, making visible and leveraging existing community assets and developing a public art policy.

## Key findings

- The Shire contains pockets of creative activity, mostly focused on visual art and craft or making.
- Community interest and engagement with this project through attendance at public forums, or completion of survey was highly skewed towards people who identified as women with only five people who identified as men participating.
- Challenges facing creative practitioners include a lack of local opportunities for engagement, experimentation, and networking.
- Pockets of cultural intensity appear in the far north and far south outskirts of the Shire south of the Shire where cultural practitioners are more likely to benefit from engaging with the regional cities of Ballarat and Geelong for development and presentation opportunities.
- Practitioners also lean on satellite cities such as Geelong and Ballarat to access cultural activities and education opportunities as well as for secondary education.
- Existing networks and organisations primarily cater to the older market, but several groups are experiencing diminishing membership and participation, including volunteering.
- The Shire boasts a wealth of assets and venues, however, access to suitable space for development and presentation of creative and cultural work is limited.



# TRACKING OUR FOUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AGAINST THE 2021-2025 COUNCIL PLAN:

1. Creative Communities
2. Our Stories
3. Our Spaces and Places
4. Toward a Creative Economy

*Image: Wadawurrung man and story teller, Barry Gilson,  
conducting a Smoking Ceremony for launch of Living Sculptures*



# OUR ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE STRATEGY

## 2022-2026 FOUR GOALS:

### 1. Creative Communities

**All members of the Golden Plains Shire community can access and feel able to participate in creative experiences.**

- After a survey found a lack of experimental art and cultural activities in the shire- a co-producer will be identified through and EOI process to facilitate contemporary experimental artists to network in the Shire.
- Council is continuing to partner with GRLC in 2024 to run six **Take Part: Local Art-** artist workshops in 2024.

### 2. Our Stories

**The unique cultural history of local places in Golden Plains Shire is celebrated, preserved, shared and enhanced.**

- Extending the Dr. Vera Scantlebury sculpture program to include the Linton Men's shed, Local young videographer who was mentored by a local professional artist and Working the Mirriyu Consulting Bonnie Chew to facilitate workshop with Linton Primary school.
- Engaging local co-producers to identify needs that network local communities and organisation to build capacity and open up new opportunities- this includes historical societies and small halls.
- Assets and public art will be better managed through the development of a public art policy.



### 3. Our Spaces and Places

**The Shire's community spaces and places are activated and animated.**

- Creating networking opportunities including Small Halls to shine the spotlight on local creative communities.
- We have worked with our Facilities team to open Council offices for exhibition of creative works in three locations in a pilot program in 2023. Development of a program of exhibitions and a formal launch in June 2024.

### 4. Toward a Creative Economy

**The cultural fabric of Golden Plains Shire evolves as the community develops.**

- Offering Golden Spaces to community for the selling of work and promotion of creative practitioners as a tourist offering.
- Working with grants team to facilitate new grants for creative sector.
- Connecting artists and community groups to the new Community Directory and to regional networks.
- Employing creative practitioners as Co-Producers to network and build capacity for creative communities from the ground-up.

# Comparing the Council Plan 2021-2025 to the goals in the **Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022-2026**

2021-2025 Council Plan	Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022-2026 Goals			
	Creative Communities	Our Stories	Our Spaces and Places	Toward a Creative Economy
Promote and connect Indigenous Heritage 1.2.1				
Recognise rich history and artistic potential 1.2.2				
Support events and activities to bring communities together 1.2.3				
Provide and activate spaces for communities to connect and participate 1.3.2				
Empower and build capacity for residents to contribute to communities 1.3.1				
Provide accessible facilities that promote social connection 2.2.1				
Programs and initiative promoting health and well being and social connection 2.2.2				
Value promote and preserve our cultural and natural heritage for future generations 3.1.2				
Enable access to education, learning, skill development 4.1.2				
Identify and Promote activities that attract visitation and tourism 4.3.2				

# COUNCIL'S COMMITMENTS TO THE FOUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

## **1. Creative Communities**

Council will provide opportunities that develop and nurture talent, innovation and creativity and which are meaningful for a diverse range of people.

## **2. Our Stories**

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.

## **3. Our Spaces and Places**

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.

## **4. Toward a Creative Economy**

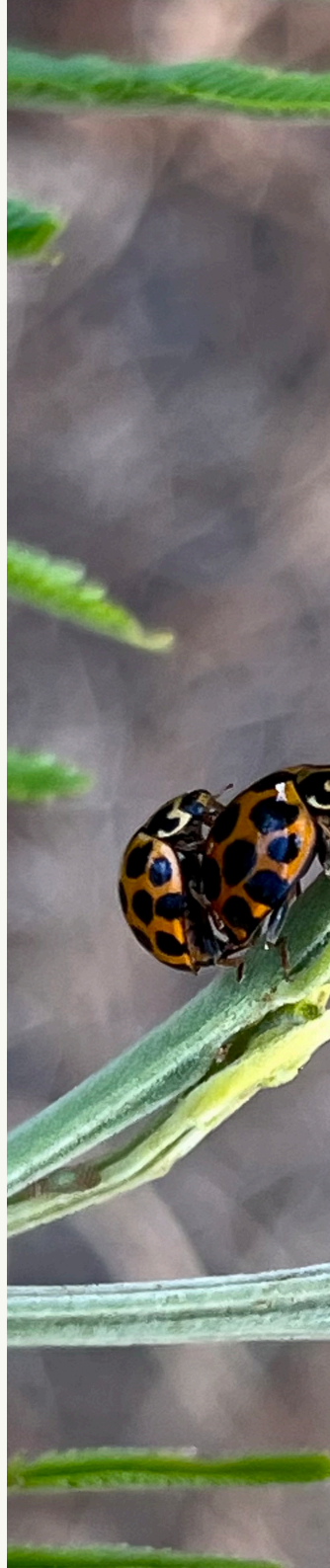
Investment in the arts reaps long-term cultural, social and economic dividends. Council will work with local organisations and groups to build their capacity, develop networks and support creative industries in the Shire.



# THE HEALTH OF OUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Two hundred and five actors, activities and assets were identified and broadly categorised within 7 groupings, highlighting the central drivers of the Golden Plains creative ecology. Although there are a number of cultural actors and activities dispersed throughout the region, there is a concentration in Bannockburn, Meredith, Dereel, Inverleigh, Linton, Smythesdale and Teesdale. No culturally or linguistically diverse creative actors, collectives or activities were identified in the Shire, most tended to operate within Geelong or Ballarat. All cultural institutions (such as public art galleries and performing art centres) are located outside the Shire, however the creative ecology is centrally supported by an array of formal and informal collectives, community organisation, hubs and associated services. Festivals support a number of local artists with three supporting artists of national and international significance.

*Image: 'Two little bugs' by Jessica Richens*



## CONSULTANTS SURVEY OVERVIEW



7

History and heritage  
organisations



24

Education  
programs



54

Venues



6

Networking  
events



17

Festivals and events  
organisations



17

Creative  
organisations



66

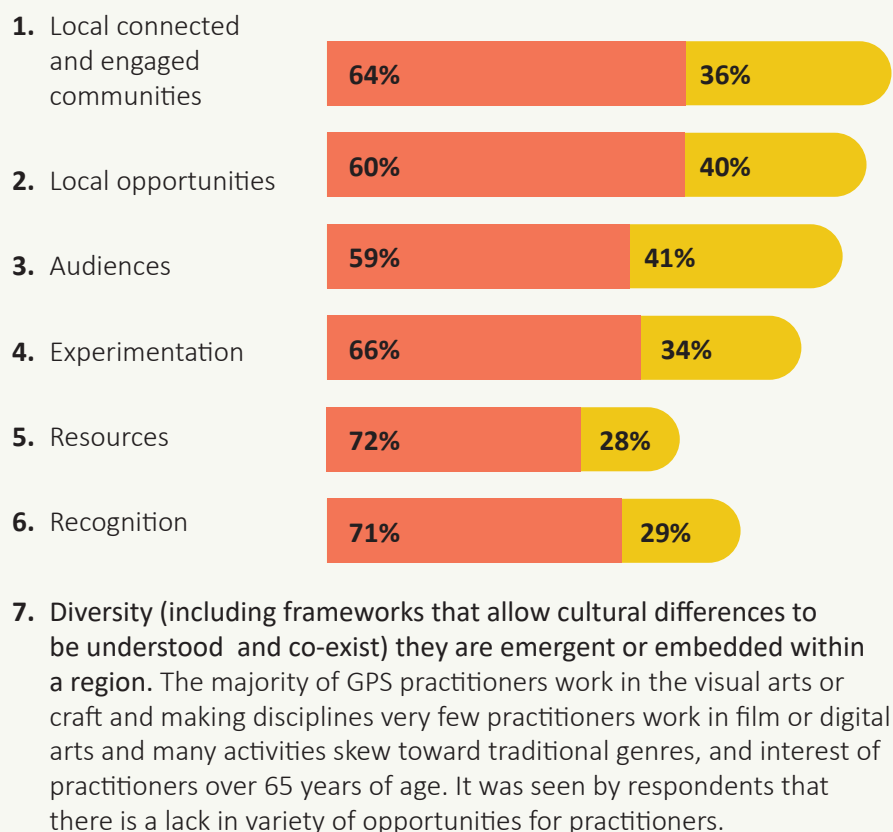
Practitioners

# THE CREATIVE ECOLOGIES FRAMEWORK

The Creative Ecologies Framework (2018) is a collaborative and ongoing investigation of creative activity a region should produce and sets out conditions that will allow it to flourish. Golden Plains' creative ecology has been assessed against the seven characteristics in terms of whether they are emergent or embedded within a region.

## Assessment results of the framework

■ NATIONAL Creative Ecology Survey    ■ GPS Cultural mapping survey



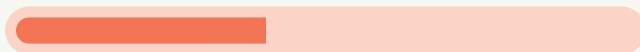
The state of Golden Plains' Creative Ecology based on seven required conditions for a thriving ecology mapped against national data.

1. Participants are connected and engaged

**Minimal**



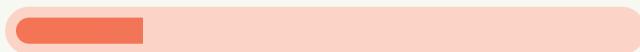
2. There are Local opportunities and possibility for growth **Minimal**



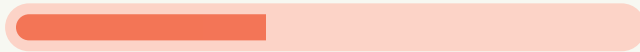
3. Audiences are central **Emergent**



4. Experimentation is encouraged **Emergent**



5. Resources are available **Minimal**



6. Contribution of the arts is recognised by the wider community **Minimal**



7. There is a diverse creative output and support communities **Emergent**







# **SIGNIFICANT PROJECT AND PROGRAMS 2022-2023**

- Dr Vera Scantlebury Brown sculpture
- Living Sculptures
- Spring in the Shire
- GRLC workshops
- Golden Spaces pilot
- Survey and database consultants
- Public art and memorial maintenance program
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Golden Plains Stories

# DR VERA SCANTLEBURY BROWN SCULPTURE

## Linton

With Linton and District Historical Society, Linton and District Men's Shed, Linton Primary School, Red Echidna Studio, Mirriyu Cultural Consulting and Dr Li Ping Thong.

In 2022-23 a significant new acquisition to our Public Art collection, funded by the Victorian Woman's Public Art Program, was commissioned. The bronze sculpture of Linton-born Dr. Vera Scantlebury Brown was by Wingeel artist, Lucy McEachern.

The project was driven by the Linton Community, in particular the Linton and District Historical Society who acted as commissioner for the project. The Linton and District Men's Shed have designed and made two contemplative seats to accompany the sculpture in the Avenue of Honour, and an extended education and craft program was undertaken by the Linton Primary School, proud local Wadawurrung woman, Bonnie Chew, and ceramic artist, Barry Wemyss.

A video mentoring program for a young Local videographer was undertaken with RMIT New Media lecturer and Corindhap resident, Dr Li Ping Thong.

*Image: Artist Lucy McEachern with the sculpture model*









# LIVING SCULPTURES

## With local artists and community

A First Nation-designed garden in the Edinburgh Reserve in Linton, was funded by Regional Arts Victoria. The sculptures were a community-based project by artists Kate James and Forest Keegel, involved the Linton Progress Association, Linton Primary School and members of the community. Ongoing maintenance will be by the community in conjunction with the Wadawurrung Natural Resources Caring for Country team.

*Image: Launch Living Sculptures September 2023*



# SPRING IN THE SHIRE

## With young people across the Shire

This year the themed photographic essay competition, Photo[Synthesis] had three award categories; Adult, Young adult and Junior which were awarded at the Twilight Market and presented by the Mayor, Cr Brett Cunningham. Sponsors, Geelong Land Care and Turosi Giving provided \$1000 of prize money.

The 27 finalists will be exhibited in the BCC until April, then they tour to the Well in Smythesdale for 4 months then back to the Golden Plains Civic Centre. As a prelude to the competition, a photographic workshop at the Teesdale grasslands was conducted by the Youth Activation Committee, some of whom joined 2 professional university lecturers who mentored them in the judging process.

*Image: Winner 2023 Spring in the Shire Competition Keema Rowan*





# GRLC WORKSHOPS

## Employing 6 local artists

In 2023, six artists were selected for a pilot partnership program with the Geelong Regional Library in Bannockburn, called Take Part: Local Art. All the workshops conducted by the artists were fully ticketed and the program received many comments about the continuing program through participant feedback. In 2024 the program continues to support learning opportunities and contributes to the economic development of the Shire's practitioners who conduct the workshops.

*Image: GRLC partner workshop with Lindy Allinson*

# FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES OF THE WORKSHOPS

*'I thoroughly enjoyed Rosie's workshop making paper clay mushrooms. It was fun. It has given me a new direction and for other involvement with the library. It's great to have something creative to do at the weekends in my local area. It offers a chance to meet like-minded people and get out of the house.'*

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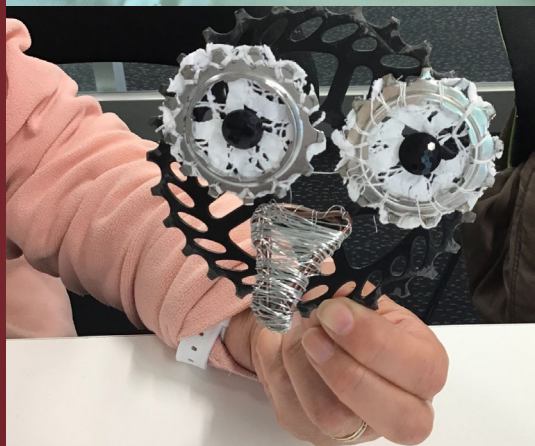
*'The community art session was very enjoyable. Lindy gave good guidance and help. I find the art sessions are good for mindfulness. More art session would be wonderful. Thanks.'*

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*'Thoroughly enjoyed our workshop. Great to meet like-minded people and learn new things. Lyn was all prepared and offered some interesting concepts and freedom to explore our own ideas. Thanks for offering these important workshops in our Shire.'*

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*'Wonderful art session organised by the library. Thanks for engaging with local artists so they can share their passion and skills. I like that the Local Art Workshop Series works with a variety of artists and mediums – great work Bannockburn Library!'*





# GOLDEN SPACES PILOT

## With 47 artists

An opportunity for using existing Council public spaces was opened up through a collaboration between the Facilities team and Arts and Culture. New wall infrastructure was added to the BCC which created a gallery style foyer as a working gallery.

New hanging systems were added to the space, the Well and the GPCC. Over the space of the year we highlighted the work of over 40 artists in the Shire, opening opportunities for exposure to new audiences and enabling artist to offer works to the public for sale. In 2024 a new permanent program will be launched in June.





# PUBLIC ART AND MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Ongoing maintenance has been undertaken with major works at Inverleigh Memorial and gazebo as well as a renovation of a major public artwork in Meredith..

*Image: Mark Cuthbertson Auntie Meredith Couch 2014  
(restoration 2023)*



# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP)

2023 was a year of structural change within the 26 member RAP Working Group. Three working subgroups were formed to target specific areas of our reconciliation journey.

The Staff Engagement Sub Group, The RAP Review team and the Embedding Culture teams have met regularly throughout 2023. We also continued the monthly staff consultations with Wadawurrung Corporation.

*Image: Intergenerational Talk NAIDOC Week 2023*





# GOLDEN PLAINS STORIES

As part of a Public Records Office of Victoria- funded program Council has supported local resident and RMIT academic, Dr Li Ping Thong in developing a dedicated website to cultural oral histories. Taking a number of towns and districts within the Shire, Dr Thong is working with historical groups to record and video stories.

**In the 2022-23 period there has been:**

- \$146,811.00 in external grant funding delivered to cultural and creative initiatives.
- \$54,282.00 money spent by Council on cultural initiatives.

*Image: Historical building: Former Lock Up, Bannockburn*

# WHAT'S AHEAD FOR THE NEXT YEAR

## What is coming up

- 2024 has seen a more strategic set of actions in the arts culture and heritage areas.
- Public art and asset management policy development.
- Strategic alliance and funding opportunities with the wider Community Wellbeing teams that embed arts culture and heritage into other areas such as health and wellbeing and the environment.
- Continue to grow the Golden Spaces program to include more youth activities.

## New programs and opportunities

- Continue to support the four Co-producer networks, Small Halls, Craft and Makers, Contemporary Art Practitioners and Historical societies. The Co-Producers will be chosen through an EOI process to deliver what the community wants and will be their voice to Council. All activities undertaken will be identified through community participation and supported by Council for external funding.
- Furthering our commitment to First Nations reconciliation and cultural heritage, we aim to build on programs that enhance and identify local places of significance and to review our Council's Reconciliation Action Plan journey in conjunction with Reconciliation Australia and our wider community.



*'Freddy the Frog' by Amelia Preston*







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### **Bannockburn Customer Service Centre**

2 Pope Street, Bannockburn, VIC 3331

8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

### **The Well, Smythesdale**

19 Heales Street, Smythesdale, VIC 3351

8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday



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