GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Arts and Culture Strategy

2018-2022

Draft, 29 June 2018

Introduction – How This Strategy Works

*The **Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2022** is grounded in research drawn from an external and local evidence base. It does not seek to provide a full list of arts and culture activities for the next four years, but sets a strategic framework in which responsive and detailed activity planning can occur.*

Planning Context

The Strategy sits within the public policy domain of culture, which connects to the other public policy domains of social, economic and environmental. By guiding Council towards creative and artistic activities for the next four years, the Strategy will assist Council to achieve its vision of *'A healthy, safe, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community supported by strong leadership, transparent governance and community partnerships – Our Community, Our Economy and Our Pride.'*[1]

The Arts and Culture Strategy sets three key goals, directly aligned to the Strategic Directions in Council Plan. The three goals are:

- *Arts and culture promotes healthy, vibrant and connected communities.*
- *Arts and culture stimulates prosperous local economies.*
- *Arts and culture revitalises local spaces.*

Under this Strategy, the selection of future arts and culture activities will be based on the following six planning principles:

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.

Measurable Outcomes and Evaluation

In addition to Council's quantitative evaluation methods, the Arts and Culture Strategy uses the schema of measurable cultural outcomes developed by the Cultural Development Network (CDN). This has been endorsed by the National Local Government Cultural Forum, an initiative of the Australian Government, CDN and the Australian Local Government Association.

The schema facilitates outcome-focussed planning and the measurement of arts participation and cultural engagement against desired outcomes.[2] The outcomes are:

- **STIMULATION**
  Creativity stimulated. Sparking of the imagination, creativity or curiosity, resulting in increased desire to participate more and/or create new cultural works.
- **ENRICHMENT**
  Aesthetic enrichment experienced. Experiences (familiar or unfamiliar) that come through the senses and are special and outside the everyday; feelings of being moved that are evoked by experiences such as beauty, joy, awe (including discomfort) or wonder.
- **INSIGHT**
  New knowledge, insights and ideas gained. Intellectual stimulation, deeper understanding, critical reflection and creative thinking generated.
- **APPRECIATION**
  Diversity of cultural expression appreciated. Appreciation of different forms of cultural expression: the diverse ways that people express themselves depending on their life experience and interests, and how the interactions between those expressions are valued.
- **BELONGING**
  Sense of belonging to shared heritage experienced. Illumination of the present through a sense of continuity with the past, and a pathway to the future, through connections to present and past. History, heritage, cultural identity appreciated.[3]

[1] *Golden Plains Shire Council Plan 2017 to 2021* https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations/council-plan-2017-to-2021

[2] http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/outcomes

[3] www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/outcomes/

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The Strategy also uses measurable outcomes in the social, economic and environmental domains that relate to Council's Strategic Directions.

Measuring outcomes will take place over the four-year life of the Strategy using a suite of evaluation tools, targeted surveys, exit polls, interviews following new activities, and expert opinion from professional staff. At all times, community consumers and the arts community will be involved in the evaluation process. Reporting to Council and the community will occur periodically during the life of the Strategy.

Research and Evidence Base

Evidence for this Strategy has been gathered from a number of sources including the Council Plan (2017-2021), which includes the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, the Community Engagement Strategy (2016-2020), professional practice knowledge, government policy, surveys, external research, case studies and academic papers.

The findings of the community consultation that led to the current Council Plan have been a primary input to the Arts and Culture Strategy - in particular the ***Golden Plains Shire Council Development of Council Plan 2017-2021 Key Findings Paper***[4]. The Key Findings Paper provides the best available data that reflects community values relating to supporting young and older people; supporting the changing demographic profile of the shire; and supporting community events, markets, activities and health and wellbeing programs.

The **Community Engagement Strategy 2016-2020** survey asked what barriers prevented people from participating in decision-making processes. Out of 122 respondents, 47% said they did not hear about opportunities for participation, 23% nominated issues about daytime availability, and other barriers related to travel and transport issues, lack of confidence in group settings, health, age, time pressure, and Council processes. Although this question related specifically to Council decision-making, the same barriers are thought to apply to participation across the board in Council activities, including arts and cultural activities.

An independently prepared **2018 Arts Trail Evaluation** report is an important piece of evidence that has also informed this Strategy. The evaluation found that whilst the Arts Trail has been successful in building a solid base on which future arts and cultural development can occur, its cost and resource-intensiveness means that many other potential opportunities cannot be pursued. The Arts Trail evaluation report recommends that the future of the Arts Trail be considered within the broader planning context of this Arts and Culture Strategy. Accordingly, this has been addressed under Goal 2 of this Strategy, where it is recommended that the Arts Trail be retired (or replaced with a smaller and more manageable activity) so as to allow for a range of new arts and cultural activities that would deliver greater overall outcomes and appeal to a wider demographic.

Council's first **Arts and Culture Strategy (2013-2017)** was a milestone in the beginnings of a cultural conversation with community members. However, the Strategy itself has in some ways been a barrier rather than an enabler for several reasons. These include lack of integration with the Council Plan; heavy reliance on lists of actions; action plans retrofitted to reflect 'new' strategic directions; evaluation difficult due to unfocussed nature of intended outcomes; and no allowance for new opportunities during the life of the plan.

This Strategy seeks to address the above through its use of the Cultural Development Network planning framework and measurable outcomes. Importantly, it does not seek to provide a full list of arts and culture activities for the next four years. Instead, it sets a strategic framework in which responsive and detailed arts and cultural activity planning can occur based on opportunities, emerging trends, local interest, evidence and resources.

Document Structure

The following pages set out the three goals for arts and culture including alignment to the Council Plan, a broad summary of what will be done, the measurable outcomes, and the external and local evidence that underpins each goal.

An Action Plan at the rear of this document sets out the likely activities for 2018-19 under each goal.

[4] *Golden Plains Shire Council Development of Council Plan 2017-2021 Key Findings Paper*. Mach2 2017. Section 3.2.

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Goal 1:

Arts and culture promotes healthy, vibrant and connected communities…

Alignment to the Council Plan

Strategic Direction 1:

Promoting healthy and connected communities.

We are committed to creating a healthy, active and safe community that provides opportunities for all residents to connect and engage with their local community.

What we know

- *We know that our community values opportunities to participate in Council activities including arts and cultural activities that offer audience participation for physical and mental stimulation.*
- *We know that our community enjoys informal opportunities to get together in a creative, supportive learning environment.*

What we will do

We will be looking to stimulate good physical and mental health, and to increase useful connections between groups in the community.

We will program activities that target health and wellbeing and that incorporate participatory elements for all age groups.

We will deliver and facilitate activities with other cultural institutions and local groups, and explore program partnerships between Council departments.

We will plan and deliver arts and cultural activities that respond to opportunities, emerging trends, local interest, evidence and resources.

Refer to 2018-19 Action Plan, page 14

Evidence

- Participation in the arts has a big impact on wellbeing and happiness, and a positive correlation with good health.
- Our local community wants arts and cultural activities that offer audience participation for physical and mental stimulation.
- Departments across Council have expressed interest in how cultural activity can relate to them.
- Interaction between disparate demographics encourages communication, better understanding, and opportunities to learn from each other.
- Cross-generational connection within programs is valued and effective, as evidenced by the success of 'Tech Tea and Tales'.

The research and evidence base is detailed on the following pages.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural
- Creativity stimulated.
- New knowledge, insights and ideas gained.
- Diversity of cultural expression appreciated.

Economic
- Employment enhancing skill development facilitated.

Social
- Good physical and mental health stimulated by enhanced social connectedness.

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External Evidence

INFORMING GOAL 1

There is strong external evidence that arts and culture enhances health and well-being in communities. The Victorian state government has a long history of supporting regional community arts. Arts Victoria managed a number of programs in the early 2000s involving diverse communities which may otherwise have had limited access to arts and cultural activities. The results of the Arts Development for Communities program in 2006 show that community-based arts activities generate significant benefits for artists, participants and communities. For example, they can create new career pathways and opportunities for both artists and participants, and can combat social exclusion by building tolerance within communities and by giving participants a sense of belonging. The results demonstrate that programs that use community strengthening practices are effective tools for engaging hard-to reach populations, particularly youth, ethnic and socio-economically disadvantaged populations. They provide a means of expressing issues of importance and visions for the future. They can also create networks and partnerships that make arts and cultural activities more sustainable'[5]

Every four years, the Australia Council for the Arts produces research with detailed information on how Australians participate in the arts. The latest report from December 2014, *Arts in Daily Life: Australian Participation in the Arts* shows that most of the states and territories highlighted key areas where the arts have a big impact – child development; our ability to express ourselves; our ability to think creatively and develop new ideas; helping us deal with stress, anxiety or depression and; our sense of wellbeing and happiness.[6] 56% of Australians believe that the arts significantly help them deal with stress, anxiety and depression.[7]

A detailed study by Scottish Government analysts confirmed that for the first time in Scotland, participating in culture or attending cultural places or events has a positive impact on health and life satisfaction. The report, *Healthy Attendance: The impact of cultural engagement and sports participation on health and satisfaction with life in Scotland 2013*, identifies a positive link with wellbeing, even when other factors including age, economic status, income, area deprivation, education, qualifications, disability or long-standing illness and smoking are accounted for. Those who had attended a cultural place or event in the previous 12 months were almost 60 per cent more likely to report good health compared to those who had not, and theatre-goers were almost 25 per cent more likely to report good health.[8]

The State Library of Victoria and the Public Libraries Victoria Network published a research document in 2014: *CREATIVE COMMUNITIES: The cultural benefits of Victoria's public libraries.*[9] The comprehensive research used quantitative data, extensive community consultation and case studies from public libraries across Victoria. Insights were gathered from a range of stakeholders of varied ages, locations and backgrounds, including library users and staff, arts professionals and cultural thinkers. The research identified 6 lenses through which the cultural benefits of public libraries can be viewed. These are:

- Libraries as public places of cultural meaning and significance.
- The culture of library spaces.
- Libraries incubating creativity.
- Libraries as cultural connectors.
- Libraries supporting Australia's complex cultural mosaic.
- Libraries nurturing the culture of the written and spoken word.

[5] https://creative.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/56968/AV_DVC_FinalReport_lo_res.pdf 2006 Arts Victoria and Committee for Melbourne
[6] http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/aca_221751_research-fact-sheet-54911b235537d.pdf
[7] Arts in Daily Life: Australian Participation in the Arts, Australia Council for the Arts, May 2014, p. 30.
[8] https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Value_arts_culture_evidence_review.pdf
[9] https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Creative-communities-summary-report.pdf

Local Evidence

INFORMING GOAL 1

❖ Big Tops and Tiny Tots Circus

The recent Big Tops and Tiny Tots Circus Performance and Workshops in Golden Plains, April 2018, in partnership with Regional Arts Victoria and Solid State Circus, were specifically targeted at pre-school children, a group that has hitherto been under-represented in arts and culture in the Shire. There were 3,864 0-11 year olds in the Shire in 2016. The rationale for this project was broadly to estimate the appetite for performance programming and to explore the benefits of arts participation for children and young people.[10] It was the first time any form of circus visited the shire and the introduction of this new idea which was fun and accessible proved to be of great interest to the audience.

The project aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework and ideas and lessons about healthy eating, physical activity and teamwork are woven into the performance. It involved audience participation, stimulating the audience with achievable activities that the children could take away and practice at home with a couple of simple props. The event was advertised in a fun, easy way, a key to attracting 200 people to attend. It stimulated interest across Council program areas including Youth Development and Recreation – and widened understanding of how cultural activity can relate to different areas of Council. This insight will be used to plan similar programs for the future.

Participants reported on social media and by email their delight that a professional theatre company could be accessible to them and their families without having to travel to larger regional centres, and that it was great to see a project focussed on physical activity in such a fun and entertaining way.

Activities of this nature, perceived to be non-threatening and entertaining and providing physical and mental stimulation, will contribute to Council achieving some of its broader directions in health and well-being.

❖ Library Services

Council and the Geelong Regional Library Corporation currently provide a public library service through the Bannockburn Public Library and the Golden Plains Mobile Library service. The Geelong Regional Library Corporation's 2016–2017 Annual Report provides the following information:

Bannockburn Library

- Members: 3,997
- Visits for the year: 71,239
- Loans for the year: 77,431
- Collection size: 16,800
- Regular events: Weekly Baby Time, Toddler Time and Preschool Story Time.
- Bannockburn Library is part of the Bannockburn Cultural Centre and works closely with the Golden Plains Shire to provide library services and programs tailored to the specific interests and needs of Shire residents.
- The library service complements the large variety of activities that take place in the Centre, making it an important community hub for local residents.
- In 2016/17, the library experienced a 4% increase in visits compared to the previous year.
- Bannockburn Library scored 4.7 out of 5 for customer satisfaction in the latest library survey. *"The library is a gateway to the world – it can cater to any interest, introduce children to a life of learning, connect people, and provide an outlet for homebound or physically disabled people."* (Comment from Bannockburn Library user, 2016 Library Survey).

The Golden Plains Mobile Library service

- The mobile library services geographically-dispersed communities across Golden Plains Shire and ensures residents in these areas have access to a quality library collection and information services.

[10] *The Role of Arts Participation in Students' Academic and Non-Academic Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study of School, Home and Community Factors.* The Australia Council for the Arts, 2013.

- The mobile library provides a weekly service at eight stops: Cape Clear, Dereel, Enfield, Haddon, Linton, Meredith, Rokewood and Smythesdale; a monthly service to Grenville; and an additional Saturday visit to Smythesdale for the monthly Community Market.
- Over the past year 5,457 visitors to the mobile library borrowed over 19,000 collection items.
- The Golden Plains Mobile Library Service achieved 4.9 out of 5 customer satisfaction rating in the latest library survey. *"A good meeting place for small communities that are a long way from Ballarat and Geelong. Brings locals together to chat – swap books, magazines, videos – always pleasant event due to our helpful library person who gets out of her way to find what we want."* (Comment from Golden Plains Mobile Library member, 2016 Library Survey).

❖ Tech Tea and Tales

During 2017, the *Tech, Tea and Tales* project was established to address a two-fold challenge - lack of employment opportunities for young people, and technology assistance for seniors.

Held at several venues in the Shire, the project employed 15 young people from the Golden Plains Shire to work with 32 older participants, helping the older participants learn how to use technology to connect with friends, family, interests and information. They also recorded the older participant's stories and life experiences, resulting in 22 life stories.

The program concluded with a community event for National Youth Week held at the Bannockburn Cultural Centre, which brought together over 70 members of the community to celebrate the programs and the stories that had been recorded and shared.

Bannockburn Library supplied spaces for collaborative learning and interviewing, free wi-fi, and the use of technological devices as required. The branch librarian oriented the program's participants with some of the library's digital e-resources, including e-audio and e-books, which participants learned to download and use on their own devices. Participants were either library members coming back into the library after some time, regular visitors, or joined up during the program.

The program was so successful that both Golden Plains Shire and Geelong Regional Library Corporation teams decided to repeat the 'tech help' element of the project during Senior's Week in 2017. This ran over two Council venues and employed 6 young people for sessions with 10 seniors.

90% of the older participants reported greater confidence in their use of technology as a result of the program and 43% said that their perception of young people in the shire had positively changed.

Critical to the success of the program was the fact that technology was central to the project. Two seemingly disparate groups came together around the very thing that many people perceive as dividing them. This is where new knowledge and insight was born, along with knowledge of the possibilities that exist beyond perceived demographic limitations.

There was no cost to participants, which made it equally accessible to as many community members as possible. 100% of the youth participants reported that the skills and experience they gained through the program had increased their confidence to apply for new jobs, courses or programs. Crucially, they also reported an improvement in soft skills and behaviours, such as the ability to communicate, self-esteem and improved attitudes towards older people.

The program bridged the gap between old and young and improved attitudes to each other. This type of cross-generational connection is both valued and effective, and has wider possibilities for other activities in other settings.

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Goal 2:

Arts and culture stimulates prosperous local economies…

Alignment to the Council Plan

Strategic Direction 2:

Enhancing local economies.

We will work with business, government and community partners to sustain a diverse, resilient, prosperous and socially responsible economy through investment attraction, supporting local business, and tourism development.

What we know

- *We know that cultural goods and services have quantifiable economic value.*

What we will do

We will be looking to support to the local artistic community.

We will offer opportunities for artists to promote, showcase and sell their work.

We will introduce new ideas and inspiring content to local creatives.

We will use art and culture to support economic development across the shire.

We will plan and deliver arts and cultural activities that respond to opportunities, emerging trends, local interest, evidence and resources.

Refer to 2018-19 Action Plan, page 14

Evidence

- Cultural industries are an important economic sector, and significant contributors to Victoria's GDP.
- High level of career satisfaction in these industries, but economic factors inhibit career progress.
- Supporting cultural industries strengthens diversity of local industry, retains businesses and potentially attracts more.
- Regional arts drives new ideas that ignite community imagination and attract visitors.

The research and evidence base is detailed on the following pages.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural
- Creativity stimulated.

Economic
- Indirect employment stimulated.

Social
- Active citizenship and leadership stimulated.

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External Evidence

INFORMING GOAL 2

In 2017, the Australia Council for the Arts commissioned a report by David Throsby, *Making Art Work – An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*[11] This major national survey looks at demographics, education and training, career progression, professional practice, multi-tasking, employment, the changing nature of work, gender issues, CALD artists, regional artists, artists with disability, subjective wellbeing, age, and mobility. In terms of regional artists, '*only 21% of artists across all artforms indicated that living and working outside a capital city had no effect on their work… On most measures there are few differences between artists according to their location. However, we can observe that on the whole artists living outside capital cities appear to earn significantly less than their urban counterparts'.*

25% of artists in regional cities or towns among visual artists and craft practitioners and 20% writers and musicians. Across all art forms, 27% of artists who reside in rural areas are community cultural development artists. The single most important factor identified by artists as inhibiting their career progress is lack of income, both throughout their professional lives and at the present time. The data does not reveal any significant differences between capital city and regional artists in the obstacles they face in their professional development; both groups see economic factors as the most important in approximately equal numbers.[12] Artists generally enjoy a higher level of career satisfaction and report better general well-being than other full-time employment.

The global economic contribution by cultural and creative industries (CCI) in 2015 reveals US$2,250b of revenues generated and 29.5 million jobs worldwide. CCI revenues worldwide exceed those of telecom services (US$1,570b globally), and surpass India's GDP (US$1,900b). Within the total, the top three earners are television (US$477b), visual arts (US$391b), and newspapers and magazines (US$354b). With 29.5 million jobs, CCI employ 1% of the world's active population. The top three employers are visual arts (6.73m), books (3.67m) and music (3.98m)[13].

At a local level, Creative Victoria estimates that collectively, Victoria's creative industries make up 8% of the economy, contributing almost $23 billion and 220,000 jobs[14] Clearly, arts and culture is a significant contributor to global and local economies.

Local Evidence

INFORMING GOAL 2

❖ Arts Trail

The Golden Plains Arts Trail is an annual event which features open artist studios and cultural venues over two weekends in March. 2018 was the 10th year and to date has been Council's most consistent vehicle for facilitating arts and cultural activity in the Shire. The 2018 edition attracted 1519 visitors, 105 paid artists and 130 participating artists and creatives.

The 2018 Arts Trail Evaluation recommends that the future of the event be considered in the broader context of this Strategy, with consideration as to whether it should continue in its current form.

Based on event surveys referred to in the Arts Trail Evaluation, the event has been successful in:

- Engaging and strengthening community
- Providing a platform for artists to exhibit their work
- Raising artist profiles
- Promoting and encouraging creativity
- Raising aspirations for young artists
- Strengthening connections – professionally, artistically and personally
- Attracting tourists/ travellers into the shire and encouraging those living within the shire to explore their municipality.

While the Arts Trail has been a great success in encouraging interest and engagement with arts and

[11] http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/making-art-work-throsby-report-5a05106d0bb69.pdf
[12] Ibid, Chapter 13
[13] *Cultural times: The first global map of cultural and creative industries. CISAC and Ernst and Young. Dec 2015.* http://www.worldcreative.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EYCulturalTimes2015_Download.pdf
[14] *Creative State Excecutive Summary.* Creative Victoria 2017. https://creative.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/110947/creativestateexecutivesummary-2.pdf

culture in the shire, it is labour and resource intensive. However, the successful outcomes listed above (previous page) are not exclusive to the Arts Trail program and could be achieved – and in fact maximised – through other arts and culture activities that are less resource intensive and with a wider community reach. Indeed, the Arts Trail has provided a solid base on which to build and reinvest in other activities.

This Arts and Culture Strategy is focused on outcomes and evaluation, providing a framework for Council to select a range of activities targeted to different demographics, and that can deliver on outcomes over the life of the plan. Examples of the type of activities are listed in the Year 1 Action Plan (page 14), however most of these cannot take place if the Arts Trail is to continue in its current form. It is recommended, therefore, that the Arts Trail be retired in its current form, and that resources and effort be concentrated on new activities and programs that are based on evidence, which support the Strategy's goals, and which appeal to a broader demographic across the community.

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Goal 3:

Arts and culture revitalizes local spaces…

Alignment to the Council Plan

Strategic Direction 3:

Managing natural and built environments.

We will work to promote and protect the natural environment and ensure that growth and change in the shire will be managed for the benefit of all of the community.

What we know

- *We know that people have a strong connection to Golden Plains Shire's natural environment and public places.*

What we will do

We will be looking to enhance a sense of community belonging and civic pride.

We will offer activities that reflect and encourage interaction with Golden Plains Shire landmarks, landscapes and heritage.

We will plan and deliver arts and cultural activities that respond to opportunities, emerging trends, local interest, evidence and resources.

Refer to 2018-19 Action Plan, page 14

Evidence

- People have a strong connection to the Shire's natural environment and enjoy exploring the creative possibilities offered by the varied landscape and rich history and heritage.
- Art and culture in public places enhances pride, belonging, local awareness and aesthetic values.
- The 'Spring In The Shire' photography competition resulted in increased social capital.

The research and evidence base is detailed on the following pages.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural

- Aesthetic enrichment experienced.
- New knowledge, insights and ideas gained.
- Sense of belonging to shared heritage experienced.

Environmental

- Valued connection to the natural world is inspired.

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External Evidence

INFORMING GOAL 3

The Australia Council for the Arts paper *The Arts In Regional Australia – A Summary*[15] collates research publications to build the evidence base about regional arts and artists, and engagement with the arts in regional Australia. Some key findings are that:

- People living in regional Australia increasingly recognise the positive impacts of the arts on their daily lives and communities.
- Creativity is strong in the regions – residents of regional Australia are as likely to creatively participate in the arts as residents of metropolitan Australia, and living in a regional area does not substantially affect overall arts attendance.
- 1 in 6 professional Australian artists live in regional cities or towns, and around 1 in 10 live in rural, remote or very remote areas. Craft practitioners, visual artists and community arts and cultural development (CCD) artists are the most likely to live outside capital cities.
- Regionally based artists have increasingly negative perceptions about the impact of their location on their practice. Artists living in the regions earn almost a third less than their city counterparts for creative work. These are trends to watch to understand the degree to which artists can maintain practice in regional Australia.
- 1 in 3 First Nations people in remote Australia creatively participate in First Nations arts and almost 1 in 10 earn income from the arts. However, remote creative arts participation rates declined between 2008 and 2014–15 driven by declines in remote NT and Queensland – a concerning trend given the importance of First Nations arts to cultural and economic sustainability, and community wellbeing.

Regional arts drive new ideas that ignite community imagination and attract visitors. Seeded in the local arts ecosystem, regional arts are exported to major exhibitions and festivals locally, nationally and globally, contributing to the cultural, social and financial capital of the country. Regional Arts Australia's paper Regional Arts Impact Australia – That's A Fact[16] provides a snapshot and case studies of the cultural value of arts in regional Australia.

A research paper by Dr Kim Dunphy for the Cultural Development Network examined the contribution of arts and creativity to the development and revitalisation of regional, rural and remote communities[17]. The paper describes factors that are critical to building long-term sustainability for arts in rural communities, including an appreciation of local culture, history and heritage, local people, assets and characteristics; enthusiastic local leadership, positive attitudes, local entrepreneurship and investment; retaining young people through employment, recreational, and educational initiatives. The paper also argues for more support for arts in communities through networks of regional arts development officers and assistance for volunteers (including training), and reduction of bureaucratic obstacles. Also suggested are better funding programs, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes, as well as data collection about arts activities and outcomes at a local level.

Local Evidence

INFORMING GOAL 3

❖ Photography Competition

In November 2017, Council initiated a new photography competition designed to encourage participants to connect with the landscape and landmarks of the Shire. Held at the Meredith Interpretive Centre, Council partnered with commercial enterprises, Bendigo Bank/Buninyong & District Community Bank, Bannockburn Pharmacy, Pink Carnation Gift Shop, BOP Arts Collective. Prizes sponsored by these businesses amounted to $1200. The competition attracted 200 entries, from which 30 finalists were chosen. The works of the finalists were on display at Bannockburn Cultural Centre for 3 months.

Photography is a great medium for community engagement; it's easy for most people to take photographs on their mobile devices. It encouraged broader participation as no specialised

[15] http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/regional-arts-summary/ November 2017
[16] https://d33dlkmx851fuz.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RAA%E2%80%94Thats-a-fact1.pdf 2016
[17] Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity: AUSTRALIA. Kim Dunphy, Cultural Development Network. This paper is part of the "Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity" project, prepared for the Creative City Network of Canada, March 2009. ©The author, the Creative City Network of Canada, and the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association 2009.

photography skills were required – simply an enthusiasm to interpret the shire in whatever way the photographer chose. With the permission of the finalists, their work is now being used by Council in promotional materials.

The accessibility of this program provided a pathway to new knowledge – of the capability of smartphones, of the surrounding natural and built environments, and of other community members' interpretation of the shire.

From the comments collected at the opening event and via email and social media, participants expressed pleasure at being able to showcase and talk about their work to friends, family, other community members and artists.

The social capital resulted from the choice of thematic content. Based on anecdotal evidence from the opening night, the most positive responses were about seeing images of shire locations people had not visited, not heard about, or had visited and were seeing through new eyes. This appreciation of place has added to a sense of civic pride and the community has unequivocally called for the competition to be run again.

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2018-19 ACTION PLAN

As explained throughout this Strategy, the intention is not to provide a definitive list of arts and culture activities for implementation over the four years 2018-2022.

Instead, Council will plan and deliver arts and cultural activities consistent with the three goals contained in the Strategy, and which respond to opportunities, emerging trends, local interest, evidence and resources.

Notwithstanding the above, the following activities are earmarked for Year 1 (2018-19):

Goal 1 – Arts and culture promotes healthy, vibrant and connected communities

1.1 Establish and fund a Christmas Community Choir, with intention for community to continue in the future.

1.2 Fund, promote and program School Holiday programs that where possible employ local artists. (Recent examples are the Tiny Tots Circus show, Pencil Workshops with Youth, African drumming at the community markets, and 3D card making workshops.)

1.3 Work with CAKE INDUSTRIES (Experimental Artists and Robot creators) to engage with youth via its gallery/workspace in Linton.

1.4 Support "GP ARTS INC" with its future programs and events/funding assistance.

1.5 Support and promote LOLA (Linton on Literary Arts) to deliver a weekend arts event in October (Funded by Reginal Arts Victoria) celebrating the township and history of Linton by the written and spoken word.

Goal 2 – Arts and culture stimulates prosperous local economies

2.1 Support and promote an arts exhibition delivered by Meredith History Group in conjunction with history week in October.

2.2 Support the "Art In Dereel" group to deliver its 12 month plan (including exhibitions, workshops, guest speakers and public art).

2.3 Fund and deliver the new program to stimulate and inspire shire-based creative industries. The program will include two events/workshops a year including guest speakers.

2.4 Support and promote the WAMA project (The Wildlife Art Museum of Australia) to hold an exhibition in the shire in November 2018.

Goal 3 – Arts and culture revitalises local spaces

3.1 Create/fund and deliver the new promotional booklet, "Creative Wonderings", that will promote our professional creative studios, public art, creative infrastructure and inspiration for half day creative experiences, all year round.

3.2 Program and deliver a "Spring in the Shire" photography competition and exhibition.

3.3 Contribute to relevant planning and design processes to ensure places for visual and public arts.

Note:

The above assumes that the Arts Trail will not be funded and arranged by Council in 2019. If the Arts Trail were to be funded and arranged by Council, the only other activities likely to occur are Actions 1.5, 2.1, 2.2 and 3.3.

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