

DISCOVER / CREATE / SHARE

City of Greater Dandenong
Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy
2022-2026





Acknowledgement

The City of Greater Dandenong respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Australians and the Traditional Owners of the land and continues to acknowledge and respect their continuing connection to culture and Country.

Council acknowledges the contribution of the community, sector and industry who shared their knowledge, experience and aspirations to inform this strategy.

The City of Greater Dandenong is a Child Safe Organisation, working to protect children from harm through upholding the Child Safe Standards in every interaction with children and young people.

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires local government to take positive action towards promoting gender equality in their policies, programs and services. A Gender Impact Assessment has been completed in line with the development of this strategy to ensure that accompanying actions are inclusive and promote equity.

In January 2020, Council declared a 'Climate and Ecological Emergency' and committed to emergency action on climate change. Sustainability is a core principle of this strategy, with emphasis placed upon embedding our commitment across work practices; and in advancing young people and families' efforts to positively contribute to the environment.

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/ FOREWORD



Greater Dandenong City Council is committed to supporting and celebrating the arts, culture, and heritage of our vibrant municipality.

The *City of Greater Dandenong Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022–2026* has been developed in response to community, stakeholder and industry feedback and will guide Council to realise its vision for a vibrant city that celebrates and represents the richly diverse stories of its people; supports the local cultural and heritage services and economy to thrive; and enables all to participate, enjoy and be inspired by arts, culture and heritage.

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges and pays respects to the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters in and around Greater Dandenong.

We value and recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, and connection to land as a proud part of a shared identity for Greater Dandenong.

Greater Dandenong City Council pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging and recognises their importance in maintaining knowledge, traditions, and culture in our community.

Greater Dandenong City Council also respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party responsible for managing the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the land and waters where Greater Dandenong is situated.

Social inclusion and community participation are important to Council as we are enriched by the social, cultural, and economic

contributions of residents and visitors to Greater Dandenong.

The importance of arts, culture and heritage is central to who we are in the City of Greater Dandenong. We look to enhance opportunities for respectful engagement, innovative growth, and creative expression.

Greater Dandenong is Australia's most culturally diverse community, and is known for inspiring social connections and encouraging people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests to come together, and reflect on our proud past and future possibilities.

As the City of Greater Dandenong continues to grow and change, we need to harness the opportunities of our city's growth and protect the things we value.

This strategy outlines how we will work with community, key partners, state government and industry to ensure our stories continue to be well understood, celebrated, and protected.

This strategy will help sustain the diverse aspects of our municipality that are important to us while leaving a legacy for future generations, celebrating contemporary arts and culture, while valuing the heritage of our past.

We look forward to implementing the actions of this strategy to realise our vision, and to respectfully celebrate and meet the ongoing needs of our culturally diverse community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Memeti'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

**Greater Dandenong City Council Mayor,
Cr Jim Memeti**



ABOUT OUR STRATEGY /

The purpose of our strategy and its intent

The City of Greater Dandenong Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022–26 sets the direction for the next four years, guiding Council’s efforts to promote, support and grow arts, culture and heritage in the City of Greater Dandenong. Within it, are themes of discovery, creation and sharing.

As our city continues to change and evolve, our strategy reflects a Greater Dandenong that is vibrant; celebrates and shares the richly diverse stories of its people; supports the local creative and heritage sector and economy and enables all to participate.

This strategy aligns with our Council Plan and Community Vision and was designed through an extensive engagement process with our local communities, our partners, thought leaders, the Bunurong Land Council, staff and other stakeholders.

Definitions

Our strategy relates to arts, culture and heritage. Each of these are unique fields or areas, but also share similarities. There can be multiple interpretations of these terms, and so the definition of each of these areas, as used in this strategy, are detailed below:

Heritage refers to the City of Greater Dandenong’s legacy that is inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. This includes Indigenous and multicultural heritage as well as physical objects and places that we inherit from the past and pass on to future generations to use, learn from and be inspired by. Our heritage invites us to reflect

on where we came from and imagine how we would like things to be in the future.

Culture is about how we express ourselves collectively. It is the shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterise the City of Greater Dandenong and its people. Culture in the context of this strategy focuses on how it is expressed through heritage, festivals, events and the arts.

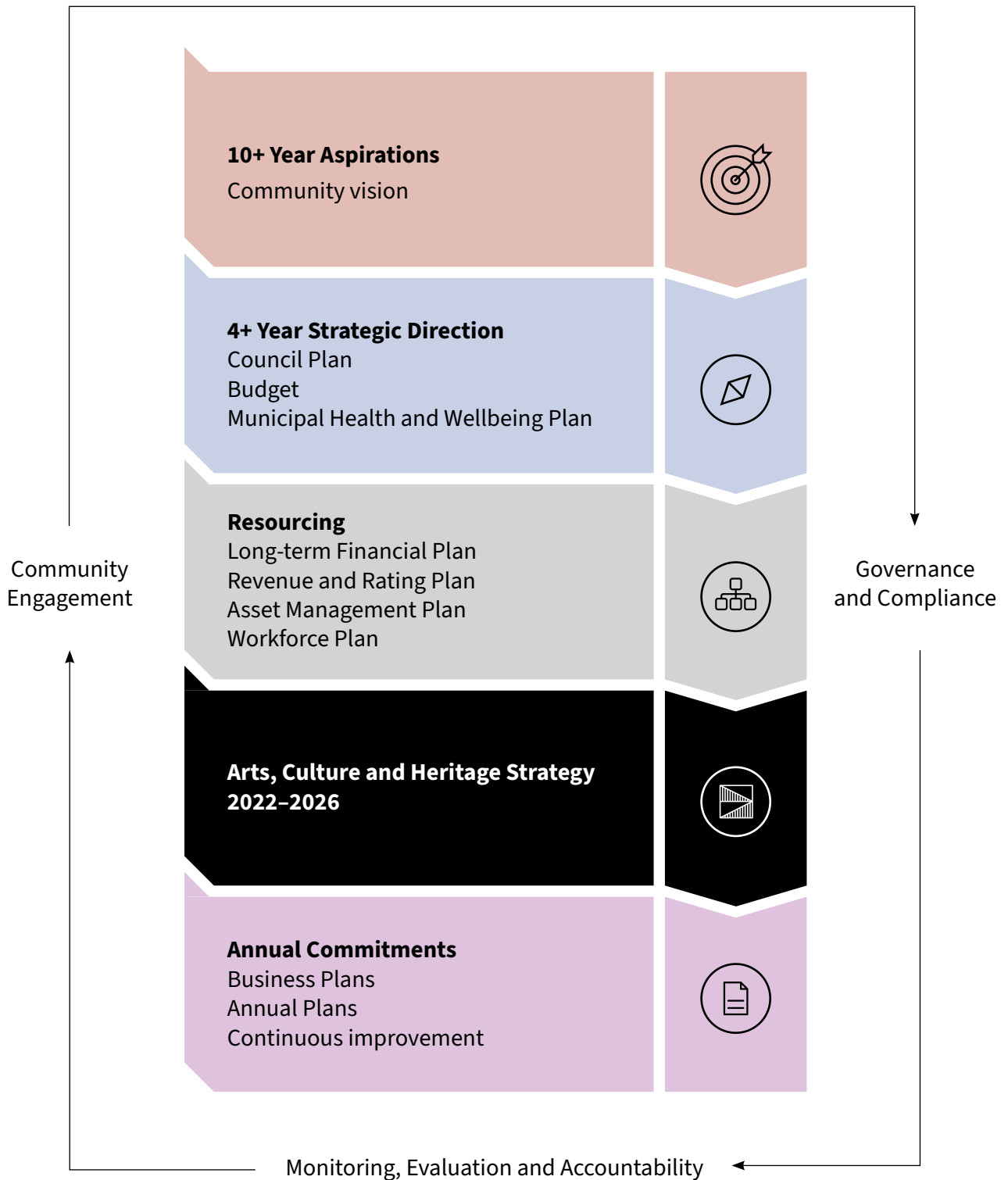
Arts encompass creative pursuits across all arts disciplines, in the creation and enjoyment of art. Arts can inspire, challenge, and connect us to self, and to others. The arts includes, but is not limited to:

- Performing arts: including music, dance, comedy, circus, puppetry, drama, etc.
- Literary arts: including creative writing, poetry, play and script writing, etc.
- Visual arts: including painting, drawing, pottery, sculpture, sewing, other crafts, video and film-making, etc.

Sector refers to the broader context of arts, culture and heritage, recognising the contribution these areas have on the economy as well as our social fabric. It represents activity from community, not-for-profits and professional enterprises and guides best practice, collegiality and advocacy.

“I feel we need to preserve our past to educate our future citizens.” – *Community member*

Council context





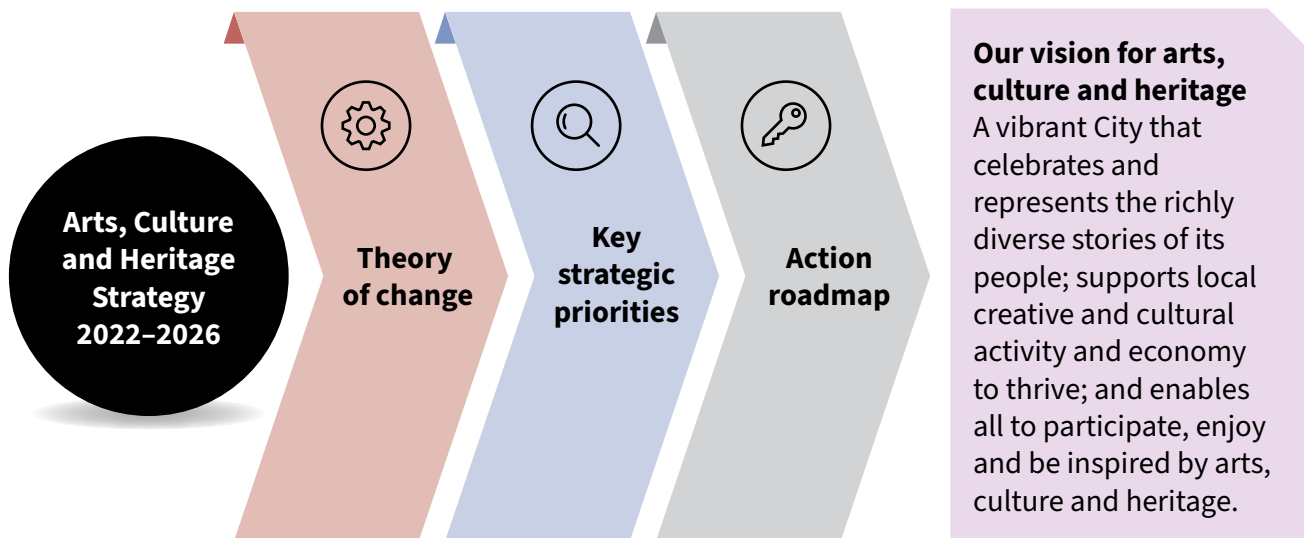
What our strategy consists of

Our vision encapsulates our community’s aspirations for arts, culture and heritage. It sets the long-term goal we seek to achieve.

Our theory of change articulates the medium and long-term impacts we seek to create for arts, culture and heritage in the City of Greater Dandenong, and how we will achieve it.

Our key strategic priorities detail what we will focus on in order to bring our vision to life.

Our action roadmap details the key projects and activities we will undertake over the next four years to deliver on our key strategic priorities.



Our vision for arts, culture and heritage

A vibrant City that celebrates and represents the richly diverse stories of its people; supports local creative and cultural activity and economy to thrive; and enables all to participate, enjoy and be inspired by arts, culture and heritage.

/ THEORY OF CHANGE

Our theory of change articulates the medium and long-term impacts we seek to create for the City of Greater Dandenong through arts, culture and heritage activity, and how we will achieve it.

OUR CONTEXT

The City of Greater Dandenong is rich in history and culture; the expression of arts, culture and heritage helps create a flourishing, vibrant and healthy city for all. It supports social connection and wellbeing; creates a sense of place and community pride; enables expression and breaks down barriers. However, many factors have made this harder in recent times.

For our community arts, culture and heritage is a critical mechanism to address social issues, build community cohesion, represent one's culture, feelings and emotions. However, there are barriers to inclusion and engagement, as well as challenges in scaling and growing creative activity. For those that can, they also face challenges in scaling and growing their activity.

For artists, creatives and those in the heritage sector, there are challenges around job security and career pathways, audiences and markets, industry stability and collaboration. This can make it harder to attract, develop and retain talent.

Arts, culture and heritage has the power to bind fractured communities by enabling and empowering individuals and groups to express their stories, experiences and identity. Over the coming years we will support our community to tell their stories and celebrate the history, creativity and culture of our City.

OUR ACTIVITIES

We protect, maintain and preserve heritage assets – tangible and intangible.

We run events, programs and exhibitions that showcase local talent, stories and collections.

We advocate for greater investment into, and recognition of, the arts, culture and heritage sector.

We facilitate connections within the arts, culture and heritage sector.

We build awareness of local arts, culture and heritage events.

We build skills for local arts, culture and heritage sector professionals.

We provide financial and non-financial support for the sector.

We help create opportunities for all community members to participate in arts, culture and heritage and tell their story.

We maintain and provide access to high-quality arts, culture and heritage infrastructure.

OUR OUTCOMES



OUR IMPACT

A socially connected, safe and healthy city

- Increased engagement with creative and heritage activity.
- Broader engagement from diverse communities.
- Increased health and wellbeing of participants in arts, culture and heritage activity.

A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts

- Increased diversity of themes explored through programs, exhibitions and collections.
- Increased targeted opportunities to share diverse stories and histories.
- Increased co-design of arts, culture and heritage activity with the Bunurong people.
- Implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Increase in the number of arts, culture and heritage organisations based in our city.
- Increased opportunities for funding, training and employment.

A city of accessible, vibrant centres and neighbourhoods

- Increased activation of public spaces to showcase arts, culture and heritage.
- Increased heritage protection and overlays.

A green city committed to a sustainable future

- Implementation of sustainable practices in arts, culture and heritage work.

Discover

Community members have accessible and inclusive entry points to arts, culture and heritage activity. Arts, culture and heritage activity creates positive impacts by supporting dynamic and resilient economies and a healthy, safe and inclusive society.

Create

We have a multifaceted approach to fostering, developing and showcasing local talent, stories and history. The arts, culture and heritage sector is equipped with resources and connections that enable meaningful and sustainable career pathways, opportunities and collaboration.

Share

Our City recognises and invests in arts, culture and heritage. Its spaces and places reflect the arts, culture and heritage of its people and our teams are involved in city-wide initiatives and collaborations. The cultural heritage of our City is identified, protected and valued, allowing us to celebrate the past and inform our future.

Our vision for arts, culture and heritage

A vibrant City that celebrates and represents the richly diverse stories of its people; supports local creative and cultural activity and economy to thrive; and enables all to participate, enjoy and be inspired by arts, culture and heritage.

Community Vision and Council Plan

Arts, Culture and Heritage will support the Community Vision and Council Plan to create a city that is healthy, vibrant, innovative and creative.

Council Plan Strategic objective

Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy response



**A socially connected,
safe and healthy city**

- Development of equitable and accessible pathways for all people to participate in arts, culture and heritage activity as creators, participants or audience members.
- Listen and engage with community voices to inform and design council's cultural priorities, to empower our residents with a sense of belonging and civic participation.



**A city that respects and
celebrates diversity,
our history and the arts**

- Enable self-determination through partnerships with the Bunurong People to ensure they are empowered and represented in arts, culture and heritage activity.
- Enhance pathways to participate in arts, culture and heritage activities through partnership with creative and cultural organisations, local businesses, education institutions, community groups and peak bodies.



**A city of accessible,
vibrant centres and
neighbourhoods**

- Activate public spaces to create immersive arts, culture and heritage experiences that attract people to visit, live, grow and thrive in our city.
- Establish and maintain plans, procedures and policies to guide the conservation and management of Council's own arts and heritage assets and demonstrate best practice.



**A green city committed
to a sustainable future**

- Leverage arts, culture and heritage activity to build awareness of environmental sustainability and issues relating to climate change.
- Ensuring all our work is guided by environmental sustainability practices.

WHAT YOU TOLD US /

“(Greater) Dandenong is incredibly diverse and unique, and has much to offer to the arts scene in general. Celebrate Dandenong’s uniqueness through the arts, build community pride, cohesion and a sense of belonging.”

– *Community member*

Resilience in a changing world

It is recognised that all sectors need to be resilient to navigate change. Changes may include the COVID-19 pandemic; impacts from climate change; and economic uncertainty. These and other changes have and will continue to have significant impacts on individuals, audiences and organisations in the arts, culture and heritage sector.

How will we respond?

- Supporting the financial sustainability of those in the arts, culture and heritage sectors;
- Building the capability of our sector and its people;
- Promoting the work of our local sector at a state and national level; and
- Nurturing a sector that supports each other.

Broader positive impact

Arts, culture and heritage have significant positive impacts on the social, economic, environment and health and wellbeing of a city.

How will we respond?

- Support and advocate for the role arts, culture and heritage plays across a range of domains from the health and wellbeing of our community; to addressing social challenges; and creating community connection.
- Explore opportunities to better measure the impact we create through arts, culture and heritage activity across each of these areas. In doing this we will also acknowledge and celebrate the intrinsic value of arts, culture and heritage in this city.

Empowerment

Our community expressed a desire to be supported by council to empower community-led arts, culture and heritage activity and decision making.

How will we respond?

- In addition to direct service provision, initiatives and program in the arts, culture and heritage space, Council will also actively seek to partner with and support community to take ownership of their pursuits within in arts, culture, and heritage as empowered, engaged citizens.

/ OUR STRATEGY IN DETAIL

Council's 2040 Community Vision

The City of Greater Dandenong is a home to all. It's a city where you can enjoy and embrace life through celebration and equal opportunity. We harmonise the community by valuing multiculturalism and the individual. Our community is healthy, vibrant, innovative and creative. Our growing city is committed to environmental sustainability.

Our vision for arts, culture and heritage

A vibrant City that celebrates and represents the richly diverse stories of its people; supports local creative and cultural activity and economy to thrive; and enables all to participate, enjoy and be inspired by arts, culture and heritage.

The roles we play

Over the coming years, we will increase our focus on empowering community and sector-led decisions and activity in addition to direct service provision. We will do this by listening and advocating for community, facilitating opportunities, and providing resources and support. Some of the key roles we will play include:



Preserving and protecting our city's heritage – places, buildings and collections.



Providing high-quality events and programs that showcase our city's arts, culture and heritage.



Advocating for the needs of our community arts, culture and heritage sectors.



Facilitating connections within the arts, culture and heritage sectors.



Building awareness of arts, culture and heritage activity and creating opportunities to participate.



Providing financial and non-financial support for the arts, culture and heritage sectors.



Creating opportunities for all to participate in arts, culture and heritage and tell their stories.



Maintaining and providing access to high-quality arts, culture and heritage infrastructure.



Our long-term aspirations

The long-term aspirations we have for our community, sectors and team and which help us deliver on our vision:

Discover

Accessible and inclusive sectors that create broad positive impact

Community members have accessible and inclusive entry points to arts, culture and heritage activity as creators and audiences. Arts, culture and heritage activity creates positive impacts by supporting; dynamic and resilient economies; and a healthy, safe and inclusive society.

Create

A sustainable arts, culture and heritage ecosystem

We have a multifaceted approach to fostering, developing and showcasing local talent. The arts, culture and heritage sectors are equipped with resources and connections that enable meaningful and sustainable career pathways, opportunities and collaboration.

Share

Arts, culture and heritage is recognised, represented, and protected in our City

Our City recognises and invests in arts, culture and heritage. Its spaces and places reflect the arts, culture and heritage of its people and our team is involved in city-wide initiatives and collaborations. The cultural heritage of our City is identified, protected and valued, allowing us to acknowledge the past and inform our future.

Our strategic enablers

In order for us to drive and deliver on our strategy we need:

- Recognition and self-determination of the traditional owners, the Bunurong people.
- Profile and recognition that builds trust, awareness and engagement with our community peers and partners.
- Evidence-based, transparent decision making guided by robust data collection, measurement and evaluation practices.
- A workforce that reflects our diverse city and is well-equipped with technical skills and financial resources.



Artist is Residence Brooke Hyrons, work in progress.

Our strategic priorities in detail

1 Priority 1: Support the development of strong and connected local arts, culture and heritage sectors

Over the next four years, we will support the development of strong, connected and self-sustaining local arts, culture and heritage sectors, where individuals, community and organisations collaboratively create and lead activity; and local talent and career pathways are developed and fostered.

As part of this we will also seek to elevate the contribution of local sectors across state-wide, national and international contexts.

“...capacity building for (the) local artist community to allow them to build their career and improve their craft and self-sustain themselves in their creative endeavours through broader private/public partnership and opportunities.”

– *Community member*

Projects and initiatives

1.1	Support local arts, culture and heritage practitioners, collectives and groups to collaborate and lead local arts, culture and heritage activity.
1.2	Connect local individuals and organisations in the arts, culture and heritage sectors with local, national and international networks, opportunities and best practice learnings.
1.3	Advocate and explore opportunities for local arts, culture and heritage activity across national and international platforms.
1.4	Continue to provide accessible and fit for purpose arts, culture and heritage spaces and infrastructure locally.

2 Priority 2: Strengthen the resilience of the local arts, culture and heritage sectors to withstand the challenges of today and tomorrow

In a rapidly evolving landscape, there are many challenges that make the arts, culture and heritage sectors, vulnerable. Some emerging and existing changes in the operational environment include economic crises, the impact of climate change, and communicable diseases such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of this priority, we seek to build resilience in the sector to withstand rapid changes. This is about enhancing stability through investment in local talent development and employment opportunities; and supporting innovative approaches to sustain the arts, culture and heritage sectors in different formats and structures.



The Home of Earthly Delights, 2020, David Lee Pereira and Goodie

“The arts seem to be an answer to so many of the social challenges we face, particularly as we emerge from a pandemic.”
– *Community member*

Projects and initiatives	
2.1	Invest in capacity and capability building programs that support the development of the local creative economy.
2.2	Support connection to funding pathways for local arts, culture and heritage practitioners and organisations, including supporting access to income generation opportunities, government grants, philanthropic and other in-kind contributions.
2.3	Progress planning and development of creative industry production hub in central Dandenong.
2.4	Complete and launch Dandenong New Art.
2.5	Undertake a feasibility study for Civic Archive Capacity Expansion.



Spreading the Message, 2020, Ian Harrison



3 Priority 3: Elevate and expand the impact and representation of arts, culture and heritage

Arts, culture and heritage help create stronger communities by contributing in many key policy domains: cultural, health and wellbeing, democracy, sustainable environments, resilient economies, and diversity and inclusion.

In order to achieve this priority, we will focus on deliberately recognising the important contribution of arts, culture and heritage to community wellbeing priorities, and measuring the positive impacts generated through targeted arts, culture and heritage activity. In doing this we will also acknowledge and celebrate the intrinsic value of arts, culture and heritage in this city.

A critical part of this priority is expanding partnerships with community development, health and business sectors. From an advocacy

perspective, we will advocate for, and respond to, our community's arts, culture and heritage needs and voice; and ensure that the tangible and intangible heritage assets of our community are protected and represented for future generations.

“The benefits are multidimensional. It benefits mentally, socially, financially, economically, individually, collectively etc. It improves the purpose, image and name of the City of Dandenong.”

– Community member

Projects and initiatives	
3.1	Deliver arts, culture and heritage initiatives through local cultural facilities and beyond, including exhibitions, performances, festivals and events.
3.2	Measure, evaluate and communicate the health, wellbeing, social, cultural and economic impacts created by arts, culture and heritage activities.
3.3	Activate public places to create innovative and immersive arts, culture and heritage experiences.
3.4	Strengthen partnerships and synergistic opportunities across Council teams, community organisations, peak bodies, the private sector and other councils.
3.5	Review and revise Council's relevant plans and policies (including Public Art Policy, Heritage Study including Thematic Environmental History, Festival and Events Plan, and Collections Policy).
3.6	Integrate arts, culture and heritage expression in new and existing infrastructure projects.
3.7	Seek opportunities to integrate arts, culture and heritage expression and approaches through Council Service delivery.
3.8	Increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in arts, culture and heritage activity.
3.9	Invest in supporting digitisation of civic and local heritage collections.

4 Priority 4: Foster inclusive pathways for community to participate in arts, culture and heritage activity




To ensure arts, culture and heritage activities are inclusive and accessible to all, we must ensure our community has ample opportunity to discover, create, share and engage with cultural activities both as a participant and/or audience member. This is also about representing the diversity and individual histories of our people, and recognising that diversity comes in many forms from cultural background to gender to forms of expression. By representing this diversity, we ensure that all in our community feel connected to the activity in this space, fostering greater engagement.

“The ‘arts’ are the main part of how we display/define ourselves and they are, collectively, a huge part of how we interact with others and their ideas/memories/understandings.”

– *Community member*

Projects and initiatives	
4.1	Provide pathways for community to participate in arts, culture and heritage activities.
4.2	Pursue opportunities and support the Bunurong People to lead and design activities and programs that celebrate their arts, culture and heritage.
4.3	Pursue and support opportunities for diverse community groups to lead and design activities and programs.
4.4	Support local arts, culture and heritage organisations to increase participation and engagement.
4.5	Create an audience development plan for cultural facilities to increase engagement.
4.6	Increase the accessibility of our arts, culture and heritage programming, activities and infrastructure.



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