



**Macedon
Ranges**
Shire Council

Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028



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Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Macedon Ranges Shire is located on Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Country whose ancestors and their descendants are the traditional owners of this Country.

We acknowledge that they have been custodians for many centuries and continue to perform age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

Arts and Culture in Macedon Ranges

Art and culture have always been central to human life – it tells the story of who we are through all the ways we express ourselves in our daily lives including language, art, history, education, architecture, music, work and recreation.

Local culture provides a sense of identity and connection for communities. It is integral to everyone's quality of life and well-being, and for these reasons culture is one of the pillars of long term sustainability, alongside the environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

Broad community participation in creative activities creates the cultural vitality that is as essential to a healthy and sustainable society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability. Art is important to culture for many reasons including that it communicates in a way that cuts across many boundaries - racial, cultural, social, educational and economic. This strategy recognises that, in addition to the arts, our future cultural vitality depends on our community's ability to embrace and celebrate multi-culturalism, indigenous reconciliation, and diversity in all its forms.

The arts and culture sector is an integral part of our growing economy. There is significant potential to build on the opportunities our geography, location and history offer. Macedon Ranges sits within a 'cultural corridor' offering diverse and fascinating arts and culture experiences from Melbourne to Echuca. We have a beautiful environment and spectacular natural assets that captivate locals and visitors alike, such as the instantly recognisable Hanging Rock and Mt Macedon, and the nationally significant Aboriginal site at Mt William Stone Axe Quarry. Other relatively unknown but significant sites for future focus include the megafauna archeological dig site at Lancefield and the historic Malmsbury Common.

We also have a diverse range of cultural facilities that range from the historic and grand bluestone halls, theatre and museum, to the private art galleries and workshops around the shire and the small community halls that provide a meeting place and cultural hub for those who live around them.

Together with these special places, our cultural ecology - the artists, local stories, creators, commercial arts-based businesses, cultural activators and volunteers – provides the opportunity to provide new and unique cultural experiences that will attract visitors. This includes growing our support for existing and emerging arts-based businesses that cover disciplines as diverse as game development and graphic design, fashion and filmmaking, performing arts and publishing, architecture and advertising, media and music, comedy and craft. Working together to build on this strong foundation will enable us to set Macedon Ranges apart in a way that recognises and nurtures the unique identity, creativity and cultural life of our many towns and villages.

Culture and the arts can also benefit the community in many and varied ways. They have the ability to move us, inspire us, challenge or outrage us, show us different perspectives, and create curiosity about the world and people around us. This provides great opportunity to use arts and culture as a vehicle for social connection; shaping our understanding of, and response to, social issues; and for public discussion of every kind.

Our strategy guides how we will promote, support and invest in arts and culture in the Macedon Ranges over the next decade. The objectives and strategic actions identified are high level because 10 years is a long period for planning, and the proposals need to be sufficiently flexible to be able to be adapted to reflect changes in Government policy and funding frameworks, and to be able to capitalise on opportunities that emerge.

The long-term nature of the strategy allows us to focus on assisting our communities to realise their vision for arts and culture through partnerships between Council, community groups, business and other levels of government. Community ambitions identified through the development of this strategy include:

- Lancefield Megafauna and Ingenious Interpretive Centre at Lancefield.
- Develop the Kyneton Town Hall as a vibrant cultural hub
- New cultural spaces in Gisborne
- Future libraries that have spaces and technology to better engage creative people
- A cultural centre at Woodend
- A cultural centre at Hanging Rock
- A new local grants program for the arts
- A cohesive Kyneton Cultural Facilities Precinct
- Summer cultural events in our parks, gardens and open spaces.

More detailed implementation plans will be developed each year to progress the strategic actions identified in the plan. Council's Public Art and Memorial policies to guide new installations also sit under this strategy and can be found on Council's website.

The strategy's background document (also available on Council's website) presents the significant amount of research and consultation undertaken during development. We are very appreciative of the time given by a community members and other interested parties to meet with us to help shape the Arts and Culture strategy. We've taken on board those new ideas and suggestions while also acknowledging the community's desire that Council should continue its long history of supporting arts and culture in the shire by presenting an annual performing arts program, facilitating community events and activities and assisting artists and arts-businesses through community funding and in-kind support.

The calendar of well established and emerging community-led arts and cultural events in the Macedon Ranges have long been a key ingredient in our cultural scene. The strategy focusses on supporting these to prosper but also on how we can value add other community events and activities by integrating arts and culture, for example through temporary art and storytelling. We will build our partnerships with local Aboriginal Groups to ensure indigenous voices and culture are part of our projects and programming.

Our vision that 'Macedon Ranges has a thriving arts economy, fosters local talent and offers cultural experiences that delight, engage and challenge locals and visitors' means we need to engage with all the ways that people experience, participate and produce in arts and culture - as practitioners, volunteers, teachers, students, consumers and supporters.

We understand the challenges to participation that exist in a rural areas, such as isolation, transport disadvantage, and the social disconnection and lack of time that can be a product of a commuter lifestyle. We will seek to address these barriers. We also recognise the need to continue to support volunteers who are the lifeblood of the arts and culture sector. Many of our creative program and events would not exist if not for their dedication and enduring passion for the arts.

Arts and Culture is not an optional extra for Local Government - it plays an essential role in helping the community define 'who we are' by enabling local people to participate in artistic and culture expression. This strategy is our commitment that Council will work to ensure that Macedon Ranges grows our arts economy and provides cultural activities that are engaging, accessible and diverse so all can participate and feel represented.

Our framework

Vision	
Macedon Ranges has a thriving arts economy, fosters local talent and offers cultural experiences that delight, engage and challenge locals and visitors	
Goals	Objectives
1. Opportunities for all local people and visitors to participate in artistic and cultural appreciation and expression	1.1 Provide diverse opportunities for people to explore arts and culture
	1.2 Encourage the use of the arts as a process for addressing and raising awareness about social, environmental and sustainability issues
2. Connect our community by interpreting and celebrating our region's stories	2.1 Collect and interpret local stories that represent our cultural diversity
	2.2 Use collections, historical knowledge and activities to inform life-long learning
3. Partnerships that inspire and support innovative arts and culture projects and activities	3.1 Identify and foster local and regional partnerships to support our community
	3.2 Engage and mentor young people in the arts
4. Enhance the local economy by providing opportunities for local talent and arts-related businesses to thrive	4.1 Support local artists and arts-based businesses
	4.2 Seek partnerships and support within the broader business sector
5. Cultural planning integrated with other planning disciplines and placemaking	5.1 Work collaboratively across the organisation to consider arts and culture in social, recreational, environmental, event and town planning
6. Our community has access to a range of diverse, viable and vibrant cultural assets across the shire	6.1 Promote Kyneton Town Hall as the premier cultural venue in the shire
	6.2 Provide sustainable facilities that are resourced to be-fit-for purpose
	6.3 Manage collections to industry standards
	6.4 Support the provision of viable creative spaces for making and exhibiting art

How we developed our strategy

Context

Council provides a wide range of services, facilities and infrastructure for our communities. Our Arts and Culture Strategy aligns with state government and Council policy and is informed by both the opportunities offered for regional infrastructure development by Regional Development Victoria and those offered for arts and cultural development programs by Creative Victoria.

The Council Plan 2017-2027 is the primary goal setting document for Council which, together with the Municipal Strategic Statement and Strategic Resource Plan, guide our decision-making. This Arts and Culture Strategy sits under the Council Plan and all five Council Plan priority areas are reflected in our vision and goals for arts and culture in Macedon Ranges. This strategy directly addresses our commitment to fostering arts and culture; celebrating and respecting Indigenous culture; fostering social connection and inclusion; balancing maintenance and renewal of community assets; and encouraging economic vitality.

The Arts and Culture Strategy complements many of Council's existing policies and plans including the Municipal Early Years Plan, Positive Ageing Plan and Environment Strategy. There are a number of key strategic documents under development that will potentially influence or inform the strategy's annual action plans including, but not limited to, the Youth Strategy; Hanging Rock Master Plan; Community Access and Inclusion Plan; Visitor Economy Strategy; and Economic Development Strategy.

Consultation

We started our consultation for the Arts and Culture Strategy in December 2017 with an online survey, receiving over 330 responses. The survey focused on four aspects: participation in arts and culture in the shire; the local arts economy; cultural facilities; and planning for the future.

Survey results demonstrate how important it is to our community to be able to access arts and culture locally. Other key findings include:

- Very positive feedback on Council's arts and culture program and services
- Support for approaching the corporate sector to fund Council's performing arts program, providing the sponsorship arrangements were appropriate and transparent.
- The need for Council to review fees and charges for venue hire, with some respondents identifying high rental rates as a barrier for some community groups.
- Theatre and live music identified as the most popular cultural events in the shire

During January and February 2018 we met with key stakeholders including Council staff; Council's Youth Strategy Co-Designers; Goldfields Library Corporation staff; and representatives from the three Registered Aboriginal Parties to understand how our strategy might support their initiatives and aspirations. We also met with various interest groups to understand how we might support projects they have proposed.

Community-led initiatives

The current suite of community events and festivals in the shire are strongly supported by the local community. By continuing to support and build on these activities, Council has an opportunity to attract more visitors, thereby supporting the growth of the local arts economy.

A number of community-led projects with a strong arts and culture focus have been presented to Council with a request for support or resources. These projects were referred to the strategy development process. Over the life of this ten year strategy we anticipate other community-led initiatives will emerge that will align with our vision and goals. This strategy provides a clear framework for ensuring our response to future projects is consistent and equitable.

There are many opportunities open to Council for future cultural programming; however, these usually come at a cost and would therefore need to be funded either through direct or indirect subsidy from Council, funding from the State or Federal Government, philanthropy or corporate sponsorship.

Cultural facilities audit

We conducted an audit of cultural facilities across the shire; the audit report is part of the background document (available on Council's website) and provides details of key facilities, including each venue's role and function, current use, proposed future use and issues related to amenity and requirements to make the facilities fit for purpose over the next ten years.

Population growth

We reviewed current and projected population data to understand the changing demographics of the shire and how community needs may shift or increase.

It is anticipated that by 2028 the population of Macedon Ranges Shire will reach about 57,500 (source: Forecast ID). Much of the shire's population growth is expected to occur in Gisborne and surrounds, which will increase demand for arts and cultural activities and improved cultural facilities. Greatest growth is expected in the over 70 age group which will have implications for accessibility of facilities and services, particularly in and around Gisborne and Kyneton; and in families with young children, particularly in the south of the shire.

Depending on the source used, there are different growth levels predicted over the next 10 years and beyond. However, irrespective of the source, the total population of the Shire is expected to increase over the next 20 years (ie to 2037) and requires consideration in this strategy.

This data highlights the challenge for Council to provide relevant arts and cultural programming to meet increased demand from a wide-range of demographic groups. We currently program for the over 70 age group in the Morning Musicals series and we increasingly see older audiences attending music and drama evenings. We have placed a particular emphasis on engaging young people as they are not attending our programming to the same extent as older people.

The review of population data combined with the survey results and the outcomes of key stakeholder consultations and the cultural facilities audit informed the development of the strategic framework.

Implementation

We will develop annual action plans that detail how we will work towards achieving our goals and objectives. These action plans will be prepared in line with Council's budget cycle and will allow us to respond to emerging opportunities such as new streams of government funding or community-led initiatives. We will use this annual planning cycle to review and refresh the strategy as required.

Detailed strategic framework

We have identified high level actions, outcomes and performance indicators against each objective to guide how we promote, support and invest in arts and culture in the shire over the next ten years. We will develop annual action plans that detail how we will work towards achieving our objectives, outcomes and indicators. These action plans will be prepared in line with Council's budget cycle and will enable us to respond to emerging opportunities.

*Specific measures to be developed as part of the evaluation plan for each performance indicator.

Goals	Objectives	Ten Year Actions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators*
1. Opportunities for all local people and visitors to participate in artistic and cultural appreciation and expression	1.1. Provide diverse opportunities for people to explore arts and culture	1.1.1. Develop an annual cultural program that takes advantage of the diversity of settings, partnerships and existing talent in the shire, e.g. Summer in the Parks	More people engage in arts and culture due to the increase in diversity of events and locations	Number of visitors and participants at events and activities
		1.1.2. Identify and support initiatives that involve participatory arts practices	More participatory arts and cultural opportunities across the shire	Number of events and activities that use participatory arts practices Level of engagement with these events and activities
		1.1.3. Work with our Communications and Economic Development & Tourism teams and external stakeholders to collate and promote the range of arts and culture experiences available in the shire	More comprehensive approach to marketing arts and culture due to cross-organisational collaboration	Development of annual marketing plan Level to which interdepartmental participation and visitation data informs future marketing
		1.1.4. Work with early years services and schools to create opportunities to engage children and young people in arts and culture	More children and young people engage in arts and culture	Level of engagement with local early years services and schools Number of targeted activities
		1.1.5. Develop an evidence based framework to guide the selection of activities for Council's performing arts program	Best practice engagement programming methods identified and reviewed	Development of performing arts selection framework includes best practice engagement programming methods

Goals	Objectives	Ten Year Actions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators*
			Increased attendances due to selection decisions informed by evidence	Number of ticket sales
		1.1.6. Review the fees and charges for Council's cultural programs and venues to encourage community participation	Increased access by smaller community groups through a more equitable fee structure	Level of community satisfaction assessed via exit surveys Increase in number of venue users Increase in venue occupancy rates
	1.2. Encourage the use of the arts as a process for addressing and raising awareness of social, environmental and sustainability issues	1.2.1. Build partnerships across our organisation that use arts and culture to address and raise awareness of social, environmental and sustainability issues	Clear process and understanding about how and when art can be used to engage the community around social, environmental and sustainability issues	Number of partnership projects delivered using arts and cultural activities to address and raise awareness of social, environmental and sustainability issues
		1.2.2. Proactively engage the Arts and Culture team in planning for emergency recovery and projects related to other social issues	Arts and culture team part of emergency recovery planning processes and connected to other relevant working groups and networks	Art & Culture staff actively engaged in relevant committees, working groups and networks
2. Connect our community by interpreting and celebrating our region's stories	2.1. Collect and interpret local stories that represent our cultural diversity	2.1.1. Support the delivery of arts and cultural activities that celebrate multiculturalism and international relationships	Increased cultural experiences that delight, engage and challenge	Number of events and activities that have a multicultural or international focus or aspect
		2.1.2. Collaborate with our three local Aboriginal groups to understand and share indigenous stories and culture	Trust and cooperation built to enable local Aboriginal groups to share their stories and culture	Amount of local indigenous content in annual programming or collaborations
	2.2. Use collections, historical knowledge and activities to inform	2.2.1. Work with historical societies, Aboriginal groups, libraries, museum and other stakeholders to engage the community in exhibitions, art projects, activities and education	Community demonstrates a sense of ownership and engages with the Macedon Ranges cultural collection	Number of attendances to events and activities Number of volunteers engaged in managing and interpreting collections Level of collaboration with external

Goals	Objectives	Ten Year Actions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators*
	life-long learning			organisations
3. Partnerships that inspire and support innovative arts and culture projects and activities	3.1. Identify and foster local and regional partnerships to support our community	3.1.1. Actively participate in regional cultural networks and funding opportunities	Council able to influence and benefit from regional initiatives	Council engaged with new regional arts and culture initiatives
		3.1.2. Develop a more sustainable funding model for Council's performing arts program	Performing arts program continues beyond current funding arrangements	Percentage of performing arts program self-funded and funded externally
		3.1.3. Identify and support volunteers and voluntary community groups that contribute to arts and culture in the shire	Vibrant and well-supported voluntary arts and culture sector	Number and diversity of volunteers and voluntary community groups Level of collaboration with volunteers and voluntary community groups
		3.1.4. Work with existing partners such as Goldfields Library Corporation and Neighbourhood Houses to develop creative and artistic initiatives	Libraries and neighbourhood houses host and participate in arts and culture initiatives	Number of events and activities delivered in partnership with libraries and neighbourhood houses
		3.1.5. Work with Goldfields Library Corporation to understand how our communities value libraries	Evidence of how community views inform future planning for libraries	Extent to which annual survey results inform planning processes
		3.1.6. Explore partnerships that can increase arts and culture activity at Hanging Rock	Increased arts and culture activity at Hanging Rock in line with Hanging Rock Masterplan recommendations	Number of partnerships developed Number of activities at Hanging Rock
		3.1.7. Partner with Music Victoria and local organisations to support emerging musicians and the local music scene	Activities and professional development available to local musicians	Number of local musicians who increase income or become professional/commercial
			Increased music events/activities in the region	Number of events and activities delivered in partnership with Music Victoria and local organisations
		3.1.8. Work with the Environment team to minimise the environmental impact of arts and cultural activities	Waste minimisation strategies at events are supported by Council	Waste, recycling and litter rates at public events show improvement over time

Goals	Objectives	Ten Year Actions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators*
		3.1.9. Support the Lancefield Megafauna Group with their vision of a permanent interpretative centre in Lancefield	Megafauna Group supported through each stage of their quest including feasibility, planning and consultation processes	Group effectively navigates all stages of the process.
		3.1.10. Support the Gisborne Regional Events Activities and Tourism (GREAT) group with their vision of an amphitheatre and sound shell in Gisborne	GREAT group supported through each stage of their quest including feasibility, planning, and consultation	Group effectively navigates all stages of the process
	3.2. Engage and mentor young people in the arts	3.2.1. Work with the Youth Development team to deliver arts and culture related actions in the Youth Strategy	Arts & Culture team involved in implementing arts and culture aspects of the Youth Strategy	Level of youth engagement in arts and cultural programs
4. Enhance the local economy by providing opportunities for local talent and arts related businesses to thrive	4.1. Support local festivals, artists and arts-based businesses*	4.1.1. Work with the Economic Development and Tourism team to develop and facilitate a network of local creatives and arts businesses	Creative industry people in the shire connect and support one another	Network established Membership numbers and level of activity within the network
		4.1.2. Develop a competitive funding program to support the development of the arts and artists in the shire (possibly via an arts and culture stream of the existing Community Funding Scheme or Events & Festivals Grant Program)	New and innovative community projects and activities	Number and quality of new arts and culture projects
		4.1.3. Support the development of local festivals, events and cultural activities.	Organisers assisted to navigate Council processes and access Council support to plan and market festival, event or activity	Level of efficiency and effectiveness in planning and delivery of events Increased attendance numbers
		4.1.4. Create opportunities for local artists to build skills and connect with marketplace	Activities and professional development in arts practice available to creative people	Number of creatives who increase income or become professional/commercial

Goals	Objectives	Ten Year Actions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators*
	4.2. Seek partnerships and support within the broader business sector	4.2.1. Explore opportunities for sponsorship and philanthropic support of arts and cultural activities	Diverse funding streams making arts and culture activities more sustainable	Number of new funding sources and amount of external funding secured for arts and culture
5. Cultural planning integrated with other planning disciplines and placemaking	5.1. Work collaboratively across the organisation to consider arts and culture in social, recreational, environmental, event and town planning	5.1.1. Guide the development of new public art and memorials	New public art and memorial proposals developed in line with Council policies	Number of new public art and memorials that adhere to Council standards for public art and memorials. Level of community satisfaction with process
		5.1.2. Arts and Culture team proactively engage in significant infrastructure planning to incorporate consideration of art and culture where appropriate	Consideration of arts and culture improves Council's placemaking initiatives	Number of new placemaking projects that have an arts and culture aspect
		5.1.3. Incorporate the consideration and need for arts and cultural facilities into the preparation of township/precinct structure plans, streetscape plans and development plans.	Relevant arts and culture infrastructure is identified and planned for in the strategic planning processes. It would need to be consistent with Council's long term vision for facilities provision and support the inclusion as an infrastructure item within the application of a development infrastructure contribution planning process. It should also have the potential to seek external funding from other sources, in collaboration with community	Relevant arts and culture infrastructure items identified in town planning strategies and precinct/development plans
6. Our community has access to a range of diverse, viable and vibrant cultural assets	6.1. Promote Kyneton Town Hall as the premier cultural venue in the shire	6.1.1. Continue upgrades to ensure the Kyneton Town Hall is accessible and able to appropriately host significant events and performances	Increased use of refurbished and accessible Kyneton Town Hall as our premier cultural hub	% of production infrastructure that meets industry standards

Goals	Objectives	Ten Year Actions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators*
across the shire		6.1.2. Activate the Kyneton Town Hall as a vibrant cultural hub		Number and diversity of events and activities held
		6.1.3. Develop a Kyneton Cultural Facilities plan to guide the future of the Town Hall, Museum, Bluestone Theatre, Redbrick Hall, Mechanics Institute and former Primary School site in consultation with the community	Identification of the facilities that will form the agreed future Kyneton Cultural Precinct and future options for other buildings.	Establishment of Kyneton Cultural Precinct Recommendations to Council for future of the other buildings
	6.2. Provide sustainable facilities that are resourced to be-fit-for purpose	6.2.1. Develop a whole of organisation approach to manage Council's cultural facilities across the shire	Streamlined and more efficient management of cultural facilities	Increased efficiency of booking and maintenance systems and processes
		6.2.2. Rationalisation of cultural facilities across the shire to provide fewer but better equipped and maintained cultural facilities	Council's suite of cultural facilities are appropriate, sustainable and well maintained	Levels and diversity of use Condition of facilities
		6.2.3. Support small hall committees to improve, program and promote the community halls	Community halls in the shire meet community need, are well used and fit for purpose	Effectiveness of committees to manage halls and meet community need
	6.3. Manage collections to industry standards	6.3.1. Develop and implement action plan in line with the collection recommendations in this strategy	10-year plan to bring the management of the Councils cultural collection in line with industry standards	Triennial Museum accreditation outcome Standard of storage and display Extent to which historical societies are supported to better manage their collections
	6.4. Support the provision of viable creative spaces for making and exhibiting art	6.4.1. Explore partnerships and funding opportunities that may facilitate the use or repurposing of existing buildings as creative spaces.	Affordable spaces available to the community for making and exhibiting art	Number and diversity of spaces Number of exhibitions Number of artists using spaces

*Arts-based businesses are enterprises that cover disciplines as diverse as game development and graphic design, fashion and filmmaking, performing arts and publishing, architecture and advertising, media and music, comedy and craft.