

# CREATIVE COLAC OTWAY

Arts & Culture Strategy | 2018 - 2022

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands included within the Colac Otway local government area. We recognise the spiritual, social, and cultural connections with traditional lands and we express our sincerest gratitude for the contribution of the Eastern Maar, Gulidjan, Gadubanaud and Kuuyang Maar people to our region's living culture. We honour and respect the cultural heritage of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Written and prepared by Wheelhouse  
for Colac Otway Shire Council  
November 2017

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Creative Colac Otway Arts Strategy 2018 – 2022 is a strategic arts and culture plan for Colac Otway Shire.

The purpose of this plan is to:

- ▷ Guide the future provision for arts and culture in Colac Otway Shire
- ▷ Assist with the planning, development and resourcing of cultural facilities
- ▷ Support key organisations and groups in the provision of arts & cultural activities
- ▷ Further increase community participation in arts and culture activities
- ▷ Provide direction for the type and level of support Council should give to arts and cultural activities, and;
- ▷ Better position the Shire to advocate for arts & cultural activities and events

The consultation process identified a role for Council to provide broader support mechanisms to the sector and to ensure that the programs and services provided directly to the community through COPACC and the Library remain relevant into the future. The community highly value the role of the arts in providing opportunities for social connection, developing local identity and civic engagement, supporting a local economy and building resilience in high risk and recovering communities.

The consultation process included contributions from over 200 residents and stakeholders through an online survey as well as the inclusion of over 50 people representing a diverse range of practices, organisations and partners.

The plan includes goals and strategies to support the implementation of Creative Colac Otway. These are grouped under 4 themes:

- ▷ **Quality cultural facilities and community spaces**
- ▷ **Increased participation in arts and cultural activity**
- ▷ **Support and advocacy for artists and creative industries**
- ▷ **Creativity social cohesion and connections**

Successful implementation of Creative Colac Otway requires commitment from Council and its partners to lead the way in supporting and developing the creative sector of the Colac Otway Shire. A whole of Council approach is required to integrate outcomes across a range of Council programs. Building new and authentic partnerships will be crucial in implementing Creative Colac Otway and ensuring the continued development of artists, creative business and organisations.

Creative Colac Otway reflects the strong values of the community to build and connect a strong creative arts and cultural sector. The plan provides goals which will allow Council and partners to work collaboratively into the future to implement the vision.





## CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
<b>Part One   Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
Mayor's Message	7
Introduction to the Strategy	8
Principles	10
<b>Part Two   Context</b>	<b>12</b>
The role for Council	13
Methodology	15
What we heard from the community	16
Shire Overview	17
<b>Part Three   Creative Colac Otway</b>	<b>20</b>
T1: Quality cultural facilities & community spaces	22
T2: Increase participation in arts & culture activity	25
T3: Support and Advocacy for artists & industries	29
T4: Creativity, social cohesion and connections	33
Implementing the plan	37
References	38
Image List	39



# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

**VISION: Colac Otway Shire honours and is inspired by its history, while also encouraging new and contemporary interpretations of arts and culture that reflect our present. Colac Otway is a connected and engaged community with a reputation for supporting and celebrating its artists and its creative industries.**

## Mayor's Message

I am pleased to present Creative Colac Otway, Arts and Culture Strategy 2018 – 2022. This is a strategy that sets the pathway forward for our creative pursuits into the future.

Council recognises the important role arts and culture plays in the lives of our residents. These activities help to build community resilience and wellbeing, whilst developing the unbelievable talent and skills in our great shire. We are fortunate to have the beginnings of some significant creative industries in Colac Otway Shire which this strategy looks to support and grow into the future.

This strategy wouldn't be possible without the many members of the community who have contributed to its development. I thank them for their time, effort and dedication to our arts. I would also like to acknowledge council staff for their work towards preparing this strategy.

I look forward to seeing the actions of this strategy continue to grow the many creative strengths we have in this region.

Cr Joe McCracken  
Mayor  
Colac Otway Shire



## WHAT IS ART & CULTURE?

Arts and culture usually mean something different to everyone, dependent on their life experience and background. Individuals generally rank arts and culture as holding different levels of importance within their lives depending on their prior experiences and engagement.

Art is most generally related to creativity, imagination and expression. The most usual expressions of art are: visual arts, performance, live arts, digital arts and literary arts.

Culture is our way of life, which evolves and is influenced on a global scale. Culture represents the shared values, beliefs and characteristics that define who we are as individuals and as a society, recognising our multicultural and contemporary diversity in our background. Culture is also key to our history and our shared stories are usually impacted by our culture.

*“Culture consists of all distinctive, spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional features which characterise a society of social group”* - United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)<sup>1</sup>

Council takes a broad approach to the definitions of arts and culture for the purposes of this plan and Council recognises that arts, heritage and culture:

- ▷ Tell our stories and help build our identity
- ▷ Strengthen social cohesion and community engagement
- ▷ Drive creativity and innovation
- ▷ Provide entertainment and enjoyment for people of all ages and backgrounds
- ▷ Contribute to employment and economic development
- ▷ Provide opportunities for life-long learning

## ENGAGEMENT IN THE ARTS

People participate in the arts in a variety of ways and for a number of reasons or outcomes. People intersect with the arts at different stages in their lives and may have different requirements depending on interest or skill. For some, involvement will be as a hobby or interest, while for others it may represent their livelihood, or a means to engage with their community.

It is widely recognised that arts and culture contribute to a sense of belonging and community inclusion. A recent survey of Colac Otway residents<sup>2</sup> showed that 73% of respondents participate in the arts as a recreation or hobby, 30% identify as professional or practicing artists and 26% work in an arts-related business or organisation.

In terms of attending arts and cultural experiences, 89% of respondents had attended Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre (COPACC) within the past 12 months, and 87% had been outside of the Shire to attend an arts related activity or event, with most popular destinations being Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING ARTS & CULTURE

The provision of arts and cultural services and activities is increasingly an expectation of modern, contemporary places where people want to live and visit. It is recognised that although not everyone may be involved in arts and cultural activities, people still expect and value the availability of these opportunities.

Arts and cultural services and activities provide direct and indirect benefits to local communities and economies through their impact on the social, cultural, environmental and economic sectors. The broader creative sector plays an essential role in creating resilient and growing local economies.

Arts and culture contribute to:

- Enhancing the “liveability” of a region to attract and retain people to work, live and invest
- Developing a sense of place and social connection for residents
- New experiences that resonate in their interpretations of local history and stories

Residents of Colac Otway Shire appreciate and value the role of arts and culture and this was reflected in the community consultation conducted for the development of the Council Plan 2017 - 2021. These consultations found statements relating to ‘Celebrating Arts and Culture’ were ranked as ‘Important’ with the highest rankings given to:

- Funding buildings and other facilities for active recreation activities
- Supporting local community groups providing arts, culture and recreation
- Promoting local artists and cultural activities

## WHY DO WE NEED AN ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY?

Creative Colac Otway - Arts and Culture Strategy 2018 – 2022 provides a framework to guide the planning and provision for arts and cultural services and facilities. The purpose of this plan is to:

1. Guide the future provision for arts and culture in Colac Otway Shire
2. Assist with the planning, development and resourcing of cultural facilities
3. Support key organisations and groups in the provision of arts and cultural activities
4. Further increase community participation in arts and culture activities
5. Provide direction for the type and level of support Council should give to arts and cultural activities
6. Better position the Shire to advocate for arts & cultural activities and events



# PRINCIPLES

The principles of Creative Colac Otway provide a framework for how Council staff, partners and stakeholders can help support and implement the vision for a Creative Colac Otway. These principles were identified within the consultation process as appropriate for guiding the project planning and program development of initiatives as prioritised within the strategy.

## Access

We will promote and support access to and participation in local arts and culture ensuring equity across our programs and service.

## Create

We will identify opportunities to intersect, support and develop arts and culture in conjunction with potential partners and collaborators.

## Nurture

We will advocate for opportunities to help our artist and creative industries to further develop, evolve and flourish.

## Invest

We will commit to contributing the time and resources required to enable our creative industries to grow and prosper. We are aware of the financial environment and will work in a sustainable manner.

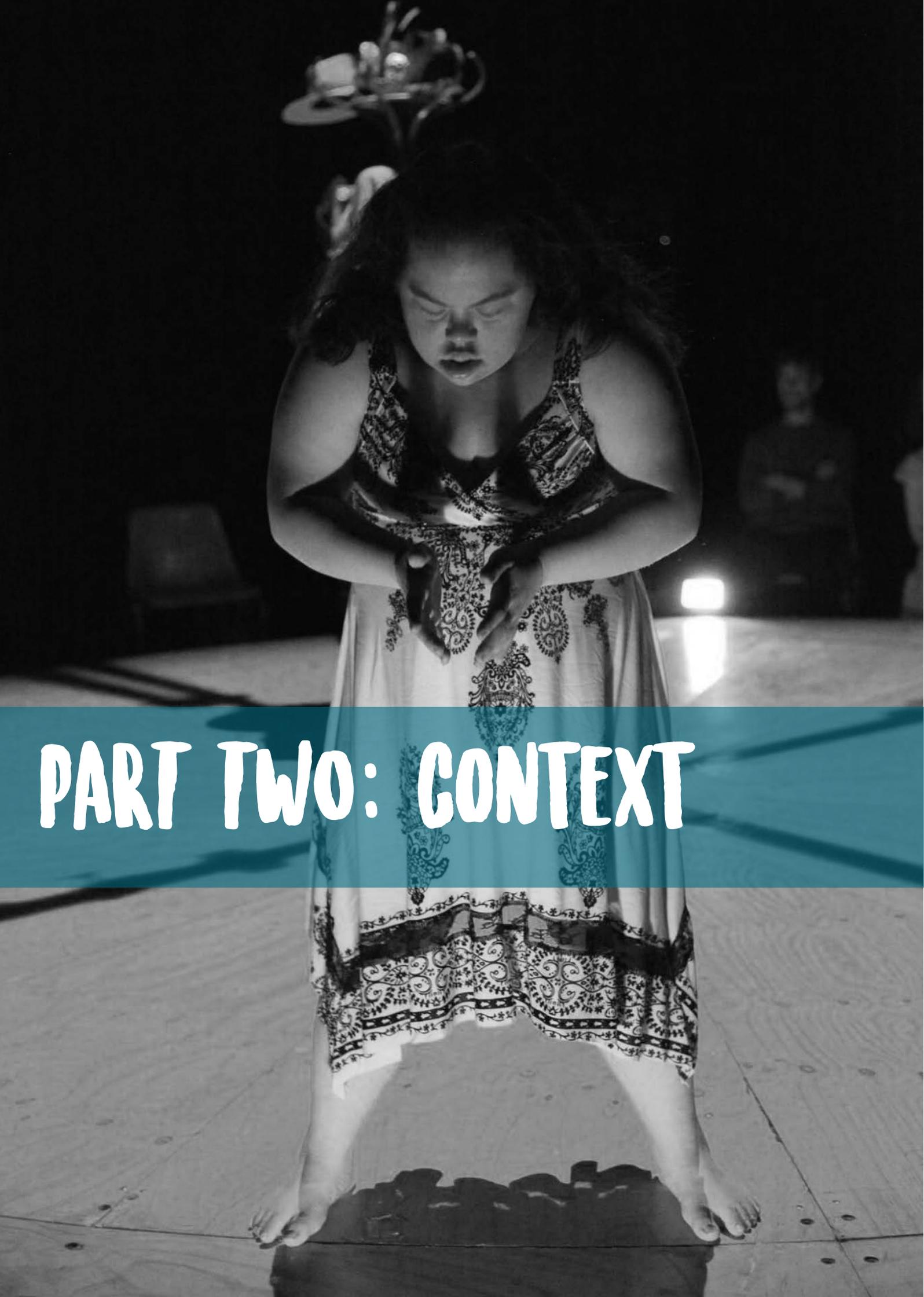
## Entrepreneurial

We will support innovative thinking and be responsive to the opportunities to support and activate the local arts economy.

## Leadership

We acknowledge our role in developing capacities to enhance creative outcomes and support a vibrant creative sector.





**PART TWO: CONTEXT**

# THE ROLE FOR COUNCIL

Local governments have a key role in the direct investment and support of arts and culture through the provision of infrastructure, services, programs and staff. Over the last decade the investment of local government in arts and culture has grown at a faster rate than State and Commonwealth investment and appropriate planning is warranted<sup>3</sup>.

The implementation of Creative Colac Otway requires Council to;

- ▶ Understand the community's values
- ▶ Provide opportunities for cultural development and creative expression
- ▶ Support the development of a resilient creative economy
- ▶ Work more effectively across the organisation and institute evaluation processes
- ▶ Effectively address local needs through arts and cultural programs

Colac Otway Shire Council's support for arts and culture will include:

- ▶ Offering direct provision of arts and culture programs and facilities
- ▶ Using local government expertise, information and resources to facilitate and support arts organisations and individual artists
- ▶ Supporting and funding artists and community groups to build arts and culture activities and events
- ▶ Managing open spaces and policies that support arts and culture development

Council's approach to arts and culture needs to be flexible enough to respond to the needs identified by: recreational arts enthusiasts, the community in need of social cohesion and engagement, and the needs of the professional artist, small businesses & creative practitioners. Doing this effectively requires a balance between taking the lead, acting as an advocate, and stepping out of the way to allow others to take the lead.

The Colac Otway Shire Council Plan 2017-2021 strategic theme 'our community' visions a socially connected and inclusive community. It is widely recognised that strengthened arts and culture results in;

- ▶ Increased social connection opportunities
- ▶ Connection of people through events and activities
- ▶ The provision of opportunities for the community to participate in lifelong learning

Creative Colac Otway - Arts and Culture Strategy 2018 – 2022 complements Council's community vision, contributes to a broader strategic focus for Colac Otway Shire, and outlines how Council can capitalise, resource and strengthen its professional and community-based arts and cultural activities.

Recognition of sculpture - B. Anshing plaque  
- On Website  
- tourist promotion

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
A place where you can paint rainbows

If we had an largest art space we could attract Arts education eg SWTAFE

Keep public Art in all Streetscape projects.  
\* MUST HAVE not nice to have

Employment in the ARTS PLEASE

Arts and culture IS core business for Council

There needs to be a Arts + Culture Group of volunteers to direct the future - not Council run + financed

Big idea  
Why an artist team to be involved in all working parties - ie. Colac 2050, Lake Colac Masterplan, Local Entrances. We need right brain input into structural decisions to ensure a balanced outcome that reflects arts ideas + input.

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
more after performing arts for mums + kids + more up to date play areas

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
a Emma sculpture

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
meerkats

Public ART STRATEGY.  
to support from shire

My BIG IDEA for arts and culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
More parking

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
theatre + film in primary / early care

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
I would love to see the walking track to Cororobee built and maintained

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
A museum based off the stolen Generation (for school students to learn)

Activating empty spaces / empty shops for artists - aka Renew Newcastle

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
More musicals a year

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
A network of trails coordinate with community and collectives

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
Have an "Otway Idol" held at the Apollo Bay and Otway District Agricultural Show. I love the show and think that is a wonderful part of and celebration of our town.

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
Lucas Julian have some ideas  
- A gaming arcade which could be an arts and crafts centre for making things  
- A skate park or making music

Open Studios annual program  
Syl coast hillwimbikie + many other good models

Please look at the Box Hill Arts Centre that structure would be GREAT

My BIG IDEA for arts & culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
Plastic Bag Free TOWN

My BIG IDEA for arts and culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
Colac should be plastic free

BIG, CHALLENGING, AVANT GARDE ARTS FESTIVAL IN APOLLO BAY THAT WILL DELIGHT + OFFEND !!

My BIG IDEA for arts and culture in Colac Otway Shire is:  
Food & Fibre Festival that is the best in the country!

ARTS + CULTURE STRATEGY CROSSSES COUNCIL DEPARTMENTS + THEIR ROLES IT CANNOT GET IN ISOLATION.

IDEA  
Regional programming sessions / roundtable between Colac + other shires

# METHODOLOGY

## What you told us:

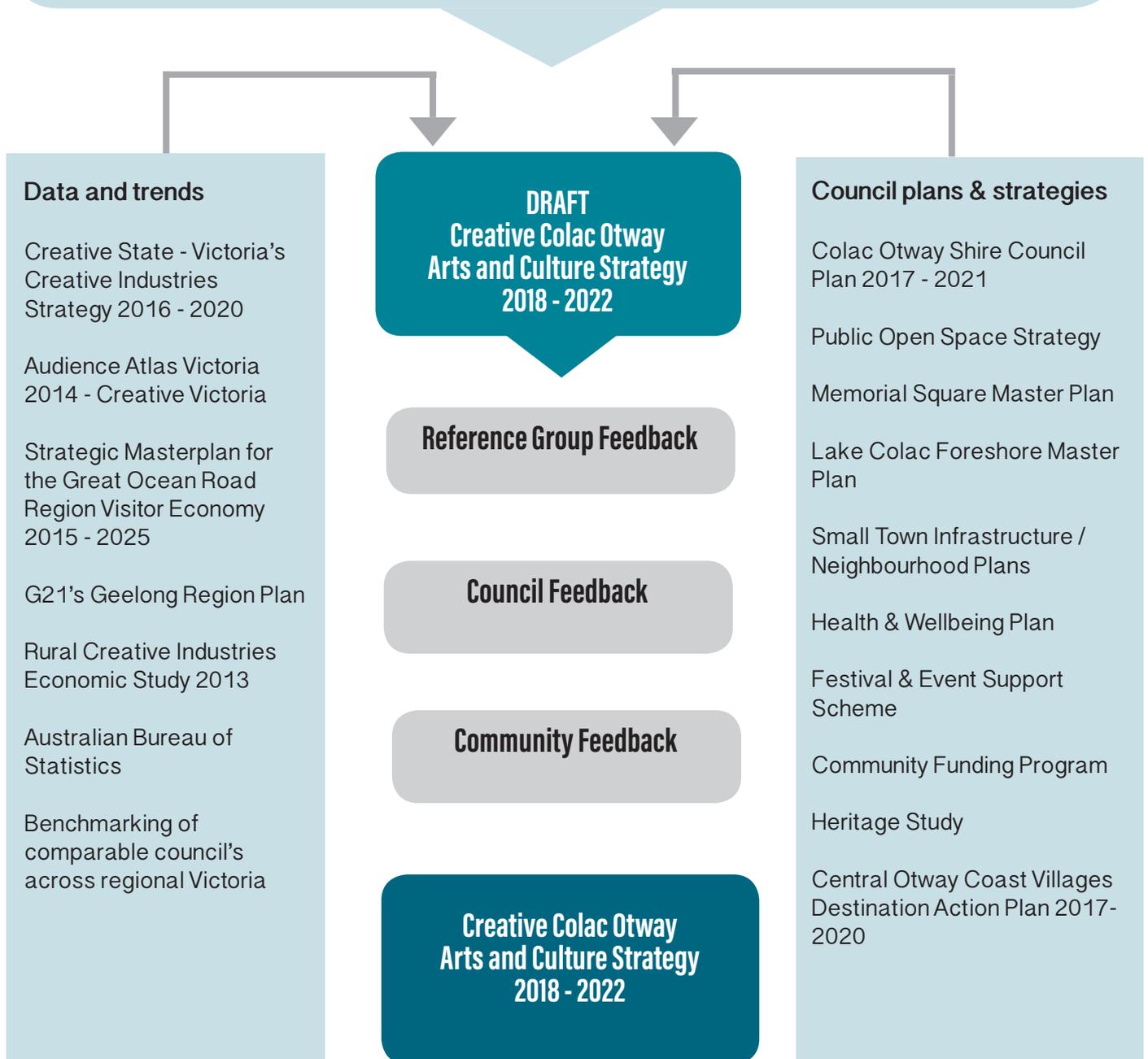
- Community consultations -
- Birregurra Hall
  - Red Rock Regional Theatre & Gallery Cororooke
  - Marrar Woon Neighbourhood Centre, Apollo Bay
  - Forrest SoupFest
  - COPACC, Colac

Online Survey  
Council Plan Consultations

## Information & Workshops:

- Workshop with Council staff  
Workshop with COPACC staff  
Project Reference Group meetings

Community Submissions



# WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- ▶ No dedicated visual arts exhibition spaces
- ▶ Lack of clarity in Council's role in commissioning, planning and maintaining public art - current collection is not consistently maintained
- ▶ Identified opportunities for additional services and facilities in a redeveloped precinct around COPACC
- ▶ Opportunities to enhance public space with art and design
- ▶ Issues with COPACC - no permanent exhibition space, the size and location of the Historical Society and shared performing arts / cinema space that negatively impacts on both programs

Need to operate, maintain & plan for the provision of relevant cultural facilities & assets

Opportunities to integrate art and interpretive elements into public spaces

- ▶ Limited collaborative projects between independent arts organisations and Council
- ▶ Experiences of Council processes as being prohibitive
- ▶ FESS timeline doesn't fit with our timelines which means we can't really access it
- ▶ Cost of hiring COPACC is seen as prohibitive to some users
- ▶ We don't attend COPACC because it is difficult to get home after shows and too expensive

Opportunity to implement programs in a collaborative way and create new opportunities

Need to address barriers to participation

- ▶ Lack of support to develop arts and creative projects
- ▶ Limited support and collaboration opportunities for key arts organisations to work with Council
- ▶ Minimal support for the broader creative sector from Council
- ▶ The sector is active and but there is a lack of connection across the Shire
- ▶ Identified links between arts enterprises & tourism
- ▶ There are commercial areas with high levels of vacancy that could be used by the creative sector
- ▶ Frustration around Council's centralised and facility focused service provision (COPACC) and arts program
- ▶ Strong demand for shared spaces to make and exhibit work

Opportunity to develop the strength of the creative sector

Need to acknowledge the role of arts, culture and heritage in placemaking, liveability and cultural economies

- ▶ Identified role of the arts in celebrating First Nations culture
- ▶ Non-aboriginal community members identified a significant gap in being able to connect with local Aboriginal culture
- ▶ Lack of leadership from Council in facilitating cultural experiences and knowledge
- ▶ Missed opportunities to develop local stories and integrate these more broadly across the shire
- ▶ Minimal integration of arts & culture programs across Council
- ▶ Perception that neighbouring shires have better support services for the arts

Opportunity to program cultural works and support organisations that celebrate First Nations culture

Need to foster a cross organisational approach to supporting the arts



# AN OVERVIEW OF OUR SHIRE

Colac Otway Shire is located 160km west of Melbourne in regional Victoria. Colac Otway encompasses an area of 3,433 km<sup>2</sup> in a natural environment which includes State Forests, National Park and part of the Great Ocean Road. Recent years have seen very low levels of population growth in the Shire, however, the shire is within commuting distance of Geelong, which has been experiencing significant population and employment growth in recent years.

The population in 2015 for Colac Otway Shire is 20,255 with 12,000 people living in Colac, the shire's major industrial, commercial and service centre. The second major urban centre is Apollo Bay, which has a permanent population of 1,598 that swells to more than 15,000 during the busy summer tourist season<sup>4</sup>.

The original inhabitants of the area are the Gulidjan people (from the Colac region) and the Gadubanud people (from the southern area of the municipality). The indigenous population represents 1.2% of the total population, which is lower than the representation for Regional Victoria at 1.6%. A desire for a greater representation of indigenous culture is reflected in this plan<sup>5</sup>.

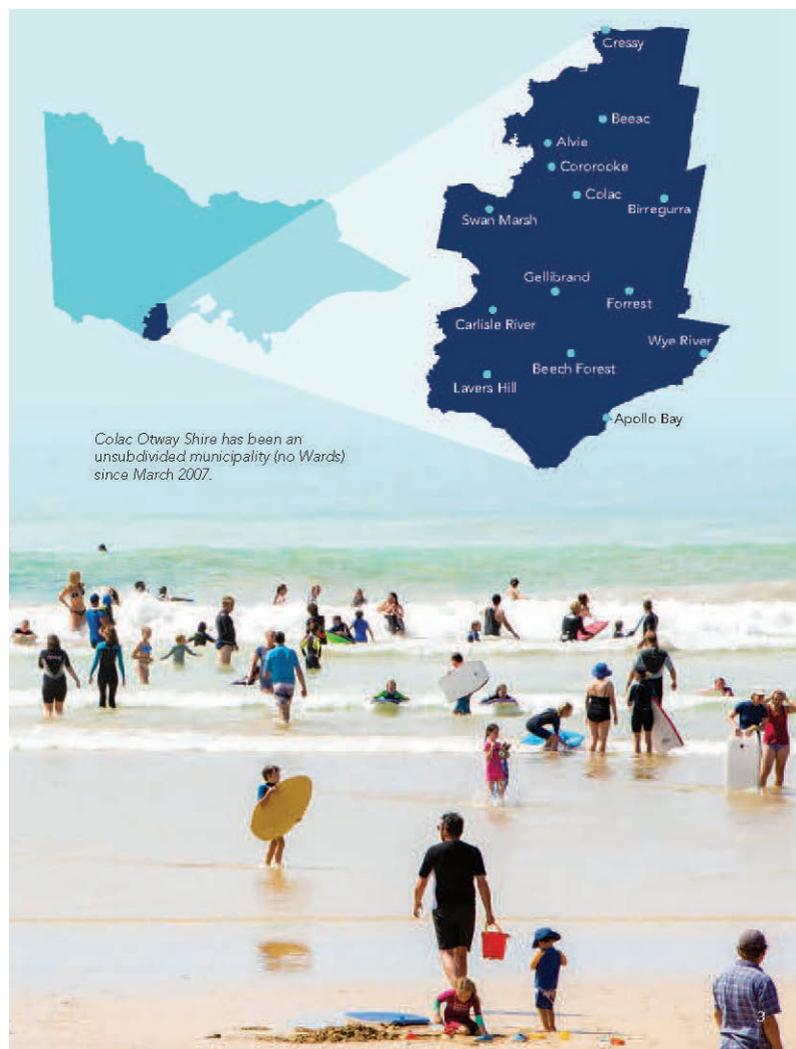
Colac Otway Shire has a low share of specialist managers (eg. marketing managers, business admin managers, education / health managers), potentially indicating a skills gap in the region. Additionally there are a larger share of residents that were classified as labourers comparative to regional Victoria, with more than a third of these being factory process workers<sup>6</sup>.

The shire has fewer individuals in low income categories, but also a lot less in the highest income quartile group. The most significant change to the structure

of households for Colac Otway Shire is a significant growth and increase in single person households. This growth could have significant impacts on issues related to social isolation<sup>7</sup>.

The Council, elected in November 2016, is strongly committed to engaging with its community. The Council Plan 2017 – 2021 incorporates community feedback following a significant and broad-ranging engagement program.

This plan considers arts and culture as being vital to creating healthy and connected communities and makes recommendations specific to the demographic profiling where appropriate.



# ARTS AND CULTURE IN COLAC OTWAY

Council makes a significant contribution to arts and culture in the local community. The current provisions of arts and cultural services offered by Council include the following:

## Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre (COPACC)

Council's primary arts and culture programs and services are delivered through COPACC. As Colac Otway's regional cultural facility. COPACC includes:

- ▷ 344 seat Auditorium
- ▷ 118 seat cinema
- ▷ History Centre
- ▷ Gallery space
- ▷ Civic Hall/Black Box and meeting spaces

COPACC is home to the Colac History Centre and its tenant groups – Colac and District Family History Group and the Colac and District Historical Society. Cinema services are leased to a private operator.

## Festivals & Events

Through the Festival and Events Support Scheme and the Event Approval process, Council supports in excess of 50 events per year.

Council also produces a number of events and festivals, most notably an annual Australia Day celebration and World Environment Day.

## Public Art

Council is supportive of the installation of public art to improve the aesthetics of urban development. Across the shire, there are varying levels of quality and condition of art in public areas. The Apollo Bay Foreshore Sculptures are an example of high quality and well maintained public art infrastructure that is well received by both the local community and visitors alike.

## Library Services

Council has static library branches in Colac and Apollo Bay along with outreach services to eight rural locations across the shire.

## Community Grants Program

Council's Community Grants Program offers funding support to a broad range of community recreation, arts and cultural activities and projects. The program offers funding of up to \$5,000 on a \$1 for \$1 basis. The annual allocation is currently \$145,000.

A category of the program is the COPACC Assistance stream, which provides grants to community organisations to offset the cost of hiring COPACC.



**PART THREE:  
CREATIVE COLAC OTWAY**

# CREATIVE COLAC OTWAY

The recommendations for Creative Colac Otway Arts and Culture Strategy for Colac Otway Shire Council have been compiled into four key themes:

1. Quality cultural facilities and community spaces
2. Increase participation in arts and cultural activity
3. Support and advocacy for artists and creative industries
4. Creativity, social cohesion and connection

These themes are expanded into goals, strategies and recommended actions. The role for council has been identified and definitions are consistent with the council plan. The strategy acknowledges that Council's role may change over time and that many projects are driven by an active community, with Council support.

COUNCIL'S ROLE	COUNCIL WILL	EXAMPLE
Leader	Lead by example and take the initiative to make something change or happen	Demonstrate leadership in initiating a partnership between community arts organisations
Service Provider	Deliver services to meet community needs	Delivery of COPACC annual season of performances
Partner	Contribute staff time or funds	Community funding program
Facilitator / Broker	Promotion or bringing together people who have a stake in an issue	Work with coastal management stakeholders on better event approval processes
Advocate	Proactively make representation to organisations and governments on key issues	Advocate for the inclusion of arts and culture activities in tourism publications

# Theme 1:

## QUALITY CULTURAL FACILITIES & COMMUNITY SPACES

Council's arts programs and services are primarily delivered through Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre (COPACC). Nominated for three Drover Awards in recent years for Best Regional Venue, COPACC has a well-regarded reputation within the broader performing arts sector and high satisfaction levels from audiences.

The current constraints of COPACC include: a lack of exhibition spaces and visual arts programming, the placement of the Historical Society's collection, and the current shared arrangement for theatre and cinema services. Coupled with the age of the building, these concerns identify a real need to commence planning for future service delivery and location of these key cultural services.

Vibrant public spaces help to create and support resilient, active communities, providing opportunities for both informal gatherings and the celebration of community and civic events within a public sphere.

Public art is an effective way of activating open spaces and providing a visible presence of arts and cultural activity within our shire. Public art can provide meeting places for our community and visitors, as well as providing opportunities for our artists to exhibit larger scale works in public spaces.

Facilities and venues within our smaller towns have been operating arts and culture services and programs with minimal support from Council. They provide an opportunity for Council to take on a leadership role in initiating partnerships and providing support to the variety of arts activities occurring in addition to COPACC.

The area and streets surrounding COPACC are co-located next to Council services, transport links, open space areas and adjacent to the Colac CBD. They present an obvious opportunity to consider the feasibility of further development as a cultural precinct.

### GOAL 1: COLAC OTWAY PERFORMING ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTRE IS RECOGNISED AS A PREMIER CREATIVE AND CULTURAL FACILITY

Strategies		Role of Council
1.1.1	Undertake a service review of COPACC programs to ensure they meet current and future demands while making best use of available resources	Service Provider
1.1.2	Commence a Masterplan for the refurbishment of COPACC	Leader
1.1.3	Continue to deliver a diverse and inclusive annual program of performing and visual arts for COPACC audiences	Service Provider

Strategies		Role of Council
1.1.4	Partner with arts organisations and community groups across the shire to increase the delivery of programming within alternative venues	Leader
1.1.5	Work in partnership with state government and industry groups (eg. Creative Victoria, VAPAC, NETS) to ensure best practice models are followed	Leader
1.1.6	Identify solutions to provide appropriate visual arts programming and exhibitions	Leader
1.1.7	Review operational models for COPACC including the provision of cinema and visual arts programming	Leader
1.1.8	Consider best practice archival & presentation methods for local heritage and historical collections within COPACC	Partner
1.1.9	Renew branding and signage for COPACC and work to improve visitor experience of the facility	Leader
1.1.10	Investigate new models including trusts and foundations that may providing additional funding and input to support the development of COPACC	Leader

## GOAL 2: OUR OPEN SPACES SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES TO CELEBRATE AND GATHER TOGETHER

Strategies		Role of Council
1.2.1	Consider lighting, seating, power, public art and crowd experience in the development of open spaces	Leader
1.2.2	Commission practical but creative street furniture	Service Provider
1.2.3	Develop consistent way-finding signage that guides and enhances visitor experiences	Service Provider
1.2.4	Integrate and prioritise public art and design elements into future capital works & open space / public realm improvements	Leader
1.2.5	Integrate interpretive heritage information and features into open spaces	Service Provider

**GOAL 3: ACTIVATE OPEN SPACES AND OUTDOOR MEETING PLACES THROUGH PUBLIC ART**

Strategies		Role of Council
1.3.1	Adopt a public art policy to guide the acquisition, commissioning, leasing & decommissioning of public artworks	Leader
1.3.2	Identify themes, locations and partnerships through the development of a Public Art Strategy	Facilitator / Broker
1.3.3	Explore funding opportunities to help support an increase in the number of public artworks	Leader
1.3.4	Review current public art with a view to decommissioning works that are no longer compliant with OH&S requirements	Service Provider
1.3.5	Review and upgrade the Sculpture Park in accordance with the Lake Colac Foreshore Master Plan	Leader

**GOAL 4: OUR COMMUNITY HALLS AND ARTS FACILITIES WITHIN OUR SMALLER TOWNS AND REGIONS ARE WELL USED AND MAINTAINED**

Strategies		Role of Council
1.4.1	Support committees and organisations to continue current programming in halls and arts facilities outside of Colac	Facilitator / Broker
1.4.2	Prioritise asset renewal and facility maintenance to support venues and communities that are providing strong creative programming	Leader
1.4.3	Invite representatives of community spaces to partner with COPACC on programming, marketing and shire-wide networking opportunities	Facilitator / Broker

# theme 2:

## INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN ARTS & CULTURE ACTIVITY

Council believes that our lives are made richer through participation in arts and culture activities. Through this participation we develop skills, gain knowledge, build community connections and have the opportunity to share our stories. Art, heritage and culture help us create better communities.

Independent organisations and facilities outside of Colac, including Red Rock Regional Theatre and Gallery, Birregurra Arts Groups, and Apollo Bay Arts Inc., have consistently generated significant creative activity with limited support from Council. Providing new approaches to collaborations will provide strong benefits for audiences and visitors.

There are opportunities for COPACC to broaden and diversify its audiences and user groups to ensure it remains well utilised as a community and cultural facility. Population demographics show an increase in elderly residents, people with disabilities and young people and these should be target audiences for increased access and participation.

Providing access to arts and cultural activities ensures Colac Otway grows its reputation as a creative place to live, work and visit.

Council supports its partners in the provision of direct services, including Corangamite Regional Library Corporation.

### GOAL 1: DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN ARTS AND CULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

Strategies	Role of Council
2.1.1 Coordinate regular networking meetings with key arts organisations including Red Rock Regional Theatre and Gallery, Apollo Bay Arts and Birregurra Arts Group	Facilitator / Broker
2.1.2 Lead the consolidation and delivery of shire-wide marketing between key arts organisations	Leader
2.1.3 Undertake audience engagement and development research for COPACC	Leader

Strategies		Role of Council
2.1.4	Review the 'Festival and Events Support Scheme' (FESS) guidelines to ensure that timelines and support mechanisms are appropriate to the creative sector	Facilitator / Broker
2.1.5	Work with coastal management stakeholders to support event infrastructure and consolidate approval processes particularly within the Apollo Bay foreshore	Advocate
2.1.6	Review event procedures & processes to help streamline processes and reduce red-tape	Leader
2.1.7	Support community events and festivals that engage with target audience groups or underrepresented groups	Leader

**GOAL 2: OUR ARTS AND CULTURE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS ARE ACCESSIBLE**

Strategies		Role of Council
2.2.1	Test initiatives to foster audience growth at COPACC – provide group transport to shows, access needs, review concession prices and offer discounts to residents living outside Colac	Leader
2.2.2	Subsidise and support community hire of COPACC	Leader
2.2.3	Review COPACC Assistance guidelines to ensure they continue to meet community needs and encourage use from local groups and audiences	Leader
2.2.4	Consider long term partnership and residency models with arts organisations to support deeper audience engagement and long term audience development	Partner

**GOAL 3: LIBRARY SERVICES ARE ACCESSIBLE AND RESPOND TO OUR COMMUNITIES NEEDS AND INTERESTS**

Strategies		Role of Council
2.3.1	Review best practice & service delivery models for libraries, ensuring leadership and governance works collaboratively with Council	Service Provider
2.3.2	Ensure library services integrate a broad range of technology and delivery methods	Leader
2.3.3	Support library services to deliver public programs	Service Provider





## Theme 3:

# SUPPORT & ADVOCACY FOR ARTISTS & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The creative sector is appreciated for the significant role it plays in creating a strong and growing economy. The creative sector is identified as the largest sector in the Victorian economy after Agriculture<sup>8</sup>. Creative Victoria's 'Creative State Creative Industries Strategy 2016 – 2020' found that the creative industries contribute \$22.7 billion to Victoria (or 8% of the total economy) and they contribute immeasurably more in terms of social and cultural value. In the G21 region there are 1,489 people currently employed within the arts and recreation service sector and this is identified as a growth area<sup>9</sup>.

Community consultation identified the role of arts and creative businesses and artist run initiatives in:

- ▷ Transforming retail spaces and triggering economic renewal
- ▷ Enhancing liveability and attractiveness of the region
- ▷ Attracting tourism and visitor markets
- ▷ Sharing risk and generating increased impact for arts collectives and micro businesses

Cultural experiences and events are significant motivations to draw visitors to the region. The Colac Otway region has a range of creative and cultural assets that could be better supported to capitalise on the tourism and visitor economy within the region. These assets range from artist and industry led events, studios, galleries, art in public spaces,

heritage, fibre and contemporary festivals and events. Current tourism and destination plans for the region identify the growth of the visitor economy as having the potential to be the major economic driver for the region. The role of the creative sector in supporting this growth is significant. Future work by individuals, organisations, businesses, Council and tourism groups should focus on the inclusion of creative and cultural experiences to enhance the existing nature-based offerings and extend yield for visitors, which will result in benefits for the broader local economy.

Certain initiatives around the provision of spaces and facilities often require investment from businesses. Roles were identified for Council including: providing development support for arts; advocating for the inclusion of creative experiences in shire wide promotions; supporting artist run initiatives; and providing spaces for experimentation and incubation.

Online engagement with the arts is booming. Digital technology is expanding opportunities for: creating, accessing and sharing arts; facilitating more direct connections between artists and audiences; and transforming many aspects of the sector. The internet provides a medium to experience and share arts, to reflect on or promote arts experiences, and to share information about arts events. Creative Colac Otway cross promotes arts events and uses social media as a cost-effective way of networking and communicating between arts organisations and with the wider community.

## GOAL 1: ARTS AND CULTURE IS CENTRAL TO VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Strategies	Role of Council
3.1.1 Support major art events and cultural experiences by prioritising their inclusion in tourism and advertising campaigns	Leader
3.1.2 Develop the role of Council to include advocacy and support for event organisers to achieve better outcomes for events	Leader
3.1.3 Assist creative industries to access small business grants and opportunities	Facilitator / Broker
3.1.4 Encourage smaller arts organisations to explore enterprise models and incubators as alternative lower cost business models	Facilitator / Broker
3.1.5 Encourage creative industries to use social media to grow networks, share resources and distribute information	Advocate
3.1.6 Ensure that creative industries are included in small business and tourism communications or e-newsletters	Leader
3.1.7 Lobby for fast speed internet and mobile coverage throughout the shire	Advocate

## GOAL 2: THE CREATIVE SECTOR BENEFITS FROM ADVOCACY AND CONNECTIONS

Strategies	Role of Council
3.2.1 Broaden the delivery of Council's art and leisure team to enable increased support for the sector	Leader
3.2.2 Continue to partner with organisations and businesses on collaborative projects that reflect the region and drive visitation	Leader
3.2.3 Work in partnership with the arts community to identify locations and opportunities for low cost rehearsal and studio spaces	Leader

Strategies		Role of Council
3.2.4	Facilitate opportunities to provide low cost spaces for creative practitioners in vacant buildings or within under-utilised facilities	Leader
3.2.5	Connect artists and creative industries to industry and sector support	Partner
3.2.6	Work with Regional Arts Victoria (RAV) to look at ways of providing development support to artists and organisations within the Shire	Partner
3.2.7	Utilise existing resources such as Arts Atlas to connect and promote the shire across virtual and social media platforms	Partner
3.2.8	Institute a 'Creative Colac Otway' roundtable comprising representatives from council directorates and arts and culture leaders from the community to discuss upcoming council projects and look at arts and culture intersections	Leader





## theme 4:

# CREATIVITY, SOCIAL COHESION & CONNECTIONS

Colac Otway Shire is made up of highly engaged communities that demonstrate independence, leadership, high levels of civic engagement and resilience. The shire boasts strong rates of volunteerism, which are reflected in the number of events and programs that take place across the Shire.<sup>10</sup>

The arts are a source of pride for local communities and the consultation processes identified the role of arts in celebrating the character and stories of the community.

An identified area of focus was the prioritisation of sharing and celebrating First Nation's culture and stories through the arts.

In 2016, 47% of Australians were actively interested in First Nations arts.<sup>11</sup> Locally, non-aboriginal community members felt that there was a significant gap in connecting with local Aboriginal culture and identified the need for leadership from Council to initiate this dialogue. Participants identified recent projects that shared local First Nations Culture, as well the integration of new events into existing programs as being ways to celebrate local Aboriginal culture.

Residents acknowledge the vulnerability of the Shire to disaster and emergencies and noted the role of arts in recovery and resilience.

Participants in community consultations identified fragmentation and a lack of connectedness across the creative sector. Roles for Council and partner organisations were identified in connecting the groups and individuals across the Shire. The perceived impact would be: greater audiences for work; resource sharing; professional development skills, innovation and networking within the sector; as well as the practicalities of organising and promoting complementary activities.

The consultation process identified a consistent acknowledgment that arts and culture are important in providing a way to interpret, acknowledge and expand local stories and communities and to celebrate the uniqueness of communities to other residents and visitors. Colac Otway Shire is home to a number of local historical and heritage interest groups with a strong desire to integrate interpretation and stories into the public realm.

**GOAL 1: FIRST NATIONS CULTURE IS CELEBRATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED**

Strategies		Role of Council
4.1.1	Develop and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal elders, community members and organisations	Leader
4.1.2	Support and encourage new commissions that respond and celebrate local Aboriginal stories and culture	Service Provider
4.1.3	Ensure First Nations content is presented within existing Council programs and events	Leader
4.1.4	Partner with key organisations to deliver cultural awareness training and enhance understanding of local culture	Partner

**GOAL 2: USE LOCAL HISTORY STORIES AS A CONNECTOR FOR THE COMMUNITY**

Strategies		Role of Council
4.2.1	Ensure that 'Festival and Events Support Scheme' (FESS) supports events to make new contemporary work that responds to local issues and stories	Leader
4.2.2	Integrate relevant local knowledge and historical stories into public art and program commissions	Leader
4.2.3	Value the natural environment and messages of sustainability through the programming of World Environment Day	Partner

**GOAL 3: ARTS ARE PRIORITISED AS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF SUPPORTING A CONNECTED AND COHESIVE COMMUNITY**

Strategies	Role of Council
4.3.1 Integrate arts and cultural activities into emergency response and recovery plans for vulnerable communities	Facilitator / Broker
4.3.2 Arts and cultural activities are integrated into a wide variety of health, community development and therapy programs across the Shire	Facilitator / Broker
4.3.3 Support and encourage arts programs that engage artists who work in partnership with the community	Facilitator / Broker





# IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Creative Colac Otway Arts Strategy 2018 – 2022 represents the first major strategic arts and culture plan for Colac Otway Shire. Successful implementation of Creative Colac Otway requires commitment from Council and its partners to lead the way in supporting and developing the creative sector of the Colac Otway Shire. A whole of Council approach in conjunction with a review of core staff responsibilities and programs will allow the integration of these outcomes within current resource restraints. Building new and authentic partnerships will be crucial in implementing Creative Colac Otway and ensuring the continued development of artists, creative business and organisations.<sup>12</sup>

Following formal adoption of the Plan the following key actions are proposed:

- ▶ Collation of an annual action plan with tasks allocated across available roles within Council
- ▶ Prioritisation of initiatives for future budget allocations
- ▶ Annual reporting to Council for Creative Colac Otway and COPACC facility and program

Recommended initiatives to foster the integration of Creative Colac Otway into multiple directorates and teams across Council include:

- ▶ Formal presentations across Council directorates of Creative Colac Otway to highlight initiatives in other Council plans and policies that intersect with the strategy and work together to

incorporate these into strategies, plans and projects

- ▶ Developing an internal strategic working group for Creative Colac Otway - this may become the working group for 'Creative Colac Otway Roundtables', it may include community members, or have flexible attendance as required
- ▶ Integrating KPIs for Creative Colac Otway into reporting software

In demonstrating contemporary leadership and innovation Council needs to better value the creative skills, strong aesthetic solutions, design focus and problem solving abilities of the creative sector and effectively integrate these creative thinking approaches into critical strategic, operational and capital projects.

Recommended initiatives to help support this leadership include:

- ▶ Advocacy for the arts and creative sector from all Council staff – this may require capacity building to develop understanding of where arts and culture can value add to future projects and programs.
- ▶ Position statements and recognition of arts and culture activities, artists and the broader sector included in public events as appropriate
- ▶ Demonstrating understanding and appreciation of the creative sector from Councillors and Executive Staff, through the release of positive media & position statements as well as attendance at key events across the Shire

# REFERENCES

1. Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127162e.pdf>
2. Community Engagement Results of Community Feedback- Colac Otway Shire Council 2016-2017
3. Dunphy, K. & Smithies, J. (2015). Findings of 2014 survey of Victorian councils' cultural development activity, Melbourne: Cultural Development Network 2015 <http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/publications/research-reports/>
- 4 – 7 Australian Bureau of Statistic 2016 Census Community Profile [http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA21750?opendocument](http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA21750?opendocument)
8. Creative State Victoria's First Creative Industries Strategy 2016-2020 [http://creative.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/110948/creativestate-4.pdf](http://creative.vic.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0005/110948/creativestate-4.pdf)
9. G21 Economic profile Latest REMPLAN data incorporating Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) June 2016 Gross State Product, 2013 / 2014 National Input Output Tables and 2011 Census Place of Work Employment Data. found at <http://www.economyprofile.com.au/geelongregion/industries#bar-chart>
10. Community profile id from .idcommunity demographic resources <http://profile.id.com.au/colac-otway/volunteering>
11. Connecting Australians RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL ARTS PARTICIPATION SURVEY JUNE 2017 <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/connecting-australians-natio-59520692c614a.pdf>
12. Making Culture Count: the Politics of Cultural Measurement, 2015 Editors: Lachlan MacDowall, Marnie Badham, Emma Blomkamp and Kim Dunphy published by Cultural Development Network

# IMAGE LIST

Cover page:	CrossXpollinatioN 2016, Artwork by Helen Lancaster
Page 4	Oceanarium at COPACC, World Environment Day 2017 – Photo courtesy of Bec Nevin
Page 7	Australia Day Celebrations 2016, James Blundell – Photo courtesy of Andrew Currie
Page 8	X pollination – CrossXpollinatioN 2015, Artist: Catherine O’Leary, “Friendship Lost & Found”
Page 9	COPACC program, 2015, “Tijuana Peanuts”
Page 11	Birregurra Festival 2014 – Photo courtesy of Brad Wilson
Page 12	COPACC program, 2014, “The Other Film Festival” Production/Touring Company: Arts Access Victoria, 2015
Page 14	Responses from community consultation ‘Big Ideas Jar’
Page 17	Birregurra Ukulele group, 2015
Page 18	Colac Otway Shire Council Plan
Page 20	COPACC program 2016, Adam Harvey, “The Man in Black – The Johnny Cash Story” Production Company: Room 8 Productions
Page 27	‘Art and Ecology’ exhibition opening, March 2016 - Photo courtesy of Doug Gimsey
Page 28	COPACC program 2015, School Show: “Roald Dahl’s Revolting Rhymes & Dirty Beasts”, Photo Credit: Dylan Evans, Production Company: Shake & Stir
Page 31	COPACC program 2015, “The Other Film Festival”, Production/Touring Company: Arts Access Victoria
Page 32	COPACC Program 2016, “The Little Prince”, Photo Credit Jessica Web, Production Company: Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
Page 35	COPACC program 2015, “Head Full of Love”
Page 36	Image supplied by Colac Otway Shire Council

