



DRAFT

Arts and Culture Strategy




2020-26

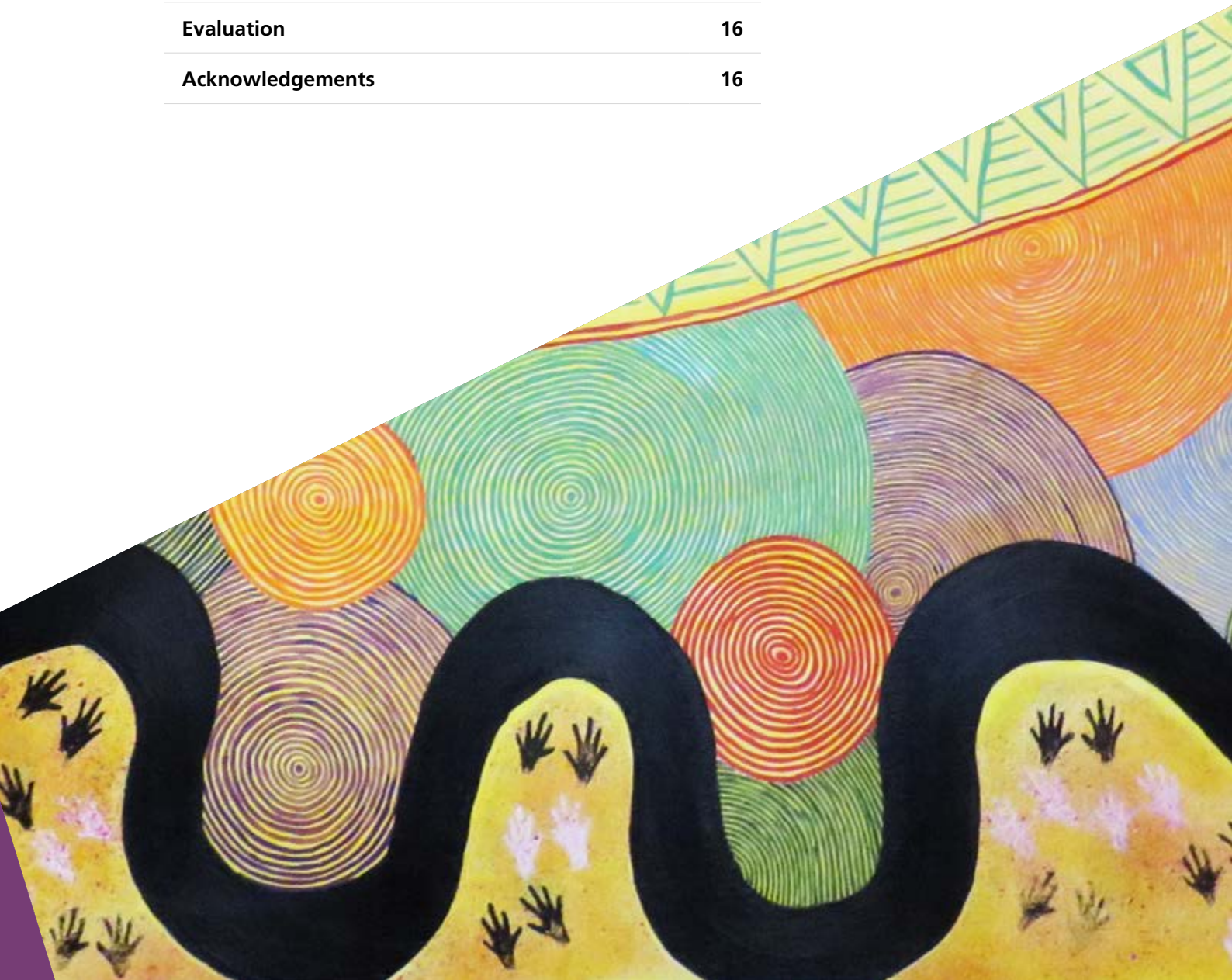


Acknowledgement of Country

The Moira Shire Council acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are the first Australians. The Shire recognises that the arts have played an integral role in indigenous life and culture for more than 50,000 years. The Shire appreciates that indigenous peoples hold ancestral connections to the land where the Moira Shire Council meets, and that the traditional owners bare a unique cultural responsibility toward the land and the Murray and Goulburn Rivers.

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Foreword



As a vibrant Australian Shire in the twenty first century we celebrate our First Nation peoples', our cultural heritage and the creativity and cultural diversity of our community.

Artistic and Cultural activity showcases the unique characteristics of the Shire and strengthens community social connectivity, wellbeing and identity, while celebrating the prosperity and vibrancy of the citizens who have built Moira Shire.

The Arts and Culture Strategy 2020-26 identifies 3 strategies and 6 goals in the Moira Shire Council Plan 2017-2021 through which the arts can progress implementation of the Council vision of a prosperous rural community.

The strategies and goals identified correspond with the wide range of views and aspirations expressed by the community in the formulation of the Arts and Culture Strategy.

Through delivery of this strategy in conjunction with community, we want to continue to grow a thriving, cultural environment that respects the arts and the unique cultural values and identity of Moira Shire.

Cr Libro Mustica
Mayor



Our Unique Cultural Identity and Environment

Moira Shire encompasses some of the richest heritage associated with the mighty Murray River incorporating natural resources such as the Barmah National Park and Wetlands (Ramsar site) and unique species of Flora and Fauna. River Steamers and punts once chugged their way up and down the Murray and its tributaries, developing the rich cultural commercial heritage, and providing vital social and economic connections on which our unique cultural identity was forged.

Moira Shire is located in the Hume region of Victoria and spans 4,045 square kilometres, with a population of 29,000 people encompassing a number of diverse cultural groups.

The broad cultural mix includes indigenous First Peoples, Soldier Settlers, Italian, Arabic and Filipino migrants to name but a few.

The economic strengths incorporate intensive irrigated and dry land agricultural production, the dairy industry, associated food processing industries and tourism. Moira Shire celebrates the cultural heritage and the growth of local creative talent in the form of visual artists, musicians, dancers, performers and creative arts groups.

Our 4 major centres are Yarrowonga, Nathalia, Cobram, and Numurkah where annual arts and cultural events are delivered through groups such as Mac Inc., The Grain Store, Across the Arts, the Numurkah Singers, Barmah Forest Heritage and Education Centre and the Allegro Theatre Company, along with artists, artists' groups, libraries and historical societies.



Development of Arts and Cultural Strategy

Cultural activity makes us proud of our community and gives us a sense of achievement, and connection.

The four recognised areas (Pillars) for Community Sustainability are economic, environmental, cultural and social (Hawke). If we think of this in terms of a structure, each area (or pillar) holds up a harmonious, nurturing, engaged and healthy community.

Cultural Area (Pillar)

Moirā Shire communities recognise that a creative community concept is inclusive of all arts forms, and also has a broader reach to include architects, town planners, landscapers, engineers, performers, artists and musicians, all those who are creative.

Moirā Shire Council also recognises the role the arts play in developing social wellbeing across all age levels and abilities and its essential role in promoting community resilience and recovery in times of crisis.

This strategy has been developed using surveys, cultural mapping, community engagement and consultation. We have relied on research conducted at state and federal levels to inform our goals, and to capitalise on funding opportunities as they arise, namely:

- A Culturally Ambitious Nation 2014-2019 Australia Council for the Arts (Federal);
- Creative State – Victoria's First Creative Industries Strategy 2016-2020;
- VicHealth Active Arts Strategy;
- Hume Regional Plan for Sustainable Communities 2010-2020;
- Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan 2017; and
- Youth Policy – Building Stronger Youth engagement in Victoria.

We have identified three strategies and six goals from the Moirā Shire Plan 2017-2021 and using the collective community feedback provided, we have developed an overarching Action Plan to meet these objectives.

Up to Four Arts Hubs will be funded across the Shire to deliver the Action Plan in a localised format to best meet the needs and values of their communities.

To maintain a Shire wide focus on artistic and cultural development, an Arts and Culture Advisory Committee comprising representation from each Hub will be established.

The five principles for evaluation of the Action Plan are those outlined in the Cultural Development Planning Framework (CDN) namely:

- Stimulation of creativity;
- Aesthetic enrichment;
- Generation of new knowledge and insight;
- Appreciation of cultural diversity; and
- Strengthening connections to shared heritage (CDN, 2017).

These principles sit alongside the Council's existing measures for liveability, economic, environmental and sustainable governance.

To measure achievement Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be established relevant to the activity under evaluation as the Action Plan is implemented.



Definitions

One person's understanding of the scope of arts and culture, including creative enterprise, may differ from another's. For the purposes of this Strategy the term "cultural" includes:

Arts

The arts represent an outlet of expression that is influenced by culture which in turn, helps to change culture.

The arts are an intellectual and physical manifestation of the internal creative impulse. Major branches of the arts include literature, music, dance, drama, and performing arts, visual arts, film and screen arts, design, architecture, media arts and digital forms of expression.

Culture

Culture is the manifestation of human intellectual knowledge and achievement of a particular group of people, defined by everything from ideas, customs and social behaviour including language, kinship, religion, cuisine, social habits and traditions through all the arts disciplines. It can be seen as the growth of group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group. Culture, therefore, also embraces heritage and heritage related assets and activity.



Creative Hub

A Creative Hub will provide professional development and economic opportunities for arts groups, emerging artists and established artists. The Hub will encourage the broader community and regional visitor's access to the arts in each local setting.

To realise this vision Creative Hubs may work to achieve:

- Exhibition, studio and intimate performance spaces that enable artists and creatives to exhibit and perform in an affordable space;
- Public spaces that engages visitors, especially visitors from the local community and tourists to encourage community connectedness;
- Professional development opportunities to encourage and support emerging and established artists and creatives;
- Provide opportunities for artists to strengthen their community engagement;
- Development of community programs to encourage community engagement and interaction;
- Provide sales outlets to support artistic economic opportunities; and
- Support Cultural Mapping, an Arts Atlas and an Arts and Cultural Register (the Register) to document Moira Shire's arts and cultural assets.

Arts Atlas

- We aim to establish a Moira Arts and Cultural Register. This online resource and information tool using Facebook as a social media platform will build a community of people who like to share what they do with others and who also like to know what's going on;
- The Register will provide a tool for sharing cultural resources amongst the entire community including businesses and organisations wishing to be included in artistic events;
- Develop an eNewsletter and a What's Happening calendar to which the community can submit information. Links to the arts atlas and arts register will be accessible from these publications; and
- Once developed there is opportunity to include and collaborate with neighbouring local government sectors to include their arts and cultural content, thereby extending the reach of the Arts Atlas and Register into regional areas.

Strategic Focus

The three strategies and six goals are as follows:





Council Plan Strategy: A great place to live

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

We will have a connected and welcoming Shire for all by providing well planned places and quality services.

GOAL 1

Recreation, sport, arts and cultural facilities and programs will respond to cultural diversity and community needs.

The link between creative opportunities, participation and social wellbeing is well documented.

Moira Shire is fortunate to have a dynamic artistic and cultural sector within the Shire; however, there is a need for more artistic and culturally creative opportunities to strengthen and improve connection and social wellbeing in our communities.

THE COMMUNITY HAS TOLD US

That the main arts and cultural priorities they would like identified in the strategy and implemented over the next six years are the following:

- Make improvements to performing and visual arts venues;
- Create a more diverse and inclusive range of arts and cultural activities including festivals;
- Foster and promote arts and culture through the development of greater planning and resource management; and

- Deliver targeted promotion to encourage community involvement including diverse cultures and youth initiatives.

CURRENTLY

There are established and emerging arts and cultural groups within Moira Shire focused in four major centres which deliver annual arts and cultural programs in these areas.

THROUGH THE ACTION PLAN WE AIM TO

Work with artists and cultural organisations to:

- Establish an inclusive and collaborative environment;
- Support the delivery of welcoming and well- planned programs;
- Support quality activities that increase creativity, and celebrate diversity; and
- Support educational opportunities to provide connections with shared cultural heritage.



GOAL 2

Our plans, strategies and services will match and evolve with the needs of our community.

It is well documented that community arts and cultural activities contribute much to the quality of life of participants.

In meeting the artistic and cultural needs of the community, a comprehensive understanding of our demographic region is critical. Of particular note with respect to this is the recognition in Moira Shire's Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021. Our community is ageing and the number of older people living in our community will increase rapidly in the next fifteen years.

THE COMMUNITY HAS TOLD US

They would like access to a greater variety of activities. This was a significant theme in the early consultation with eighty percent of surveyed residents reporting their engagement in artistic and cultural pursuits.

Common themes for additional artistic and cultural offerings included:

- Increasing the diversity and number of festivals and community events;
- Increasing the visibility of public art;
- Providing space for exhibitions and performances;
- Building and strengthening indigenous and youth programs and activities;

- Building cultural tourism by preserving and showcasing heritage sites;
- Promoting and marketing arts and cultural workshops and education;
- Recognising the role the arts play in health and wellbeing; and
- Recognising the role the Arts play in disaster recovery.

CURRENTLY

There are well-established and emerging arts and cultural organisations that deliver programs throughout Moira Shire and engage the community and visitors in our cultural life.

These include: Mac Inc., The Grain Store, Across the Arts, the Numurkah Singers, Barmah Forest Heritage and Education Centre and the Allegro Theatre Company, along with artists, artists' groups, libraries and historical societies.

THROUGH THE ACTION PLAN WE AIM TO

Promote ongoing development of a vibrant arts sector which will provide opportunities, activities and events that meet the respective needs of, and forge connections between, our artistic and broader communities.



GOAL 3

To value the culture and heritage of our traditional owners.

The Victorian State Government has identified that local government must “advance indigenous self-determination and reduce inequality”.

THE COMMUNITY HAS TOLD US

They recognise, celebrate and value local indigenous artists and culture.

CURRENTLY

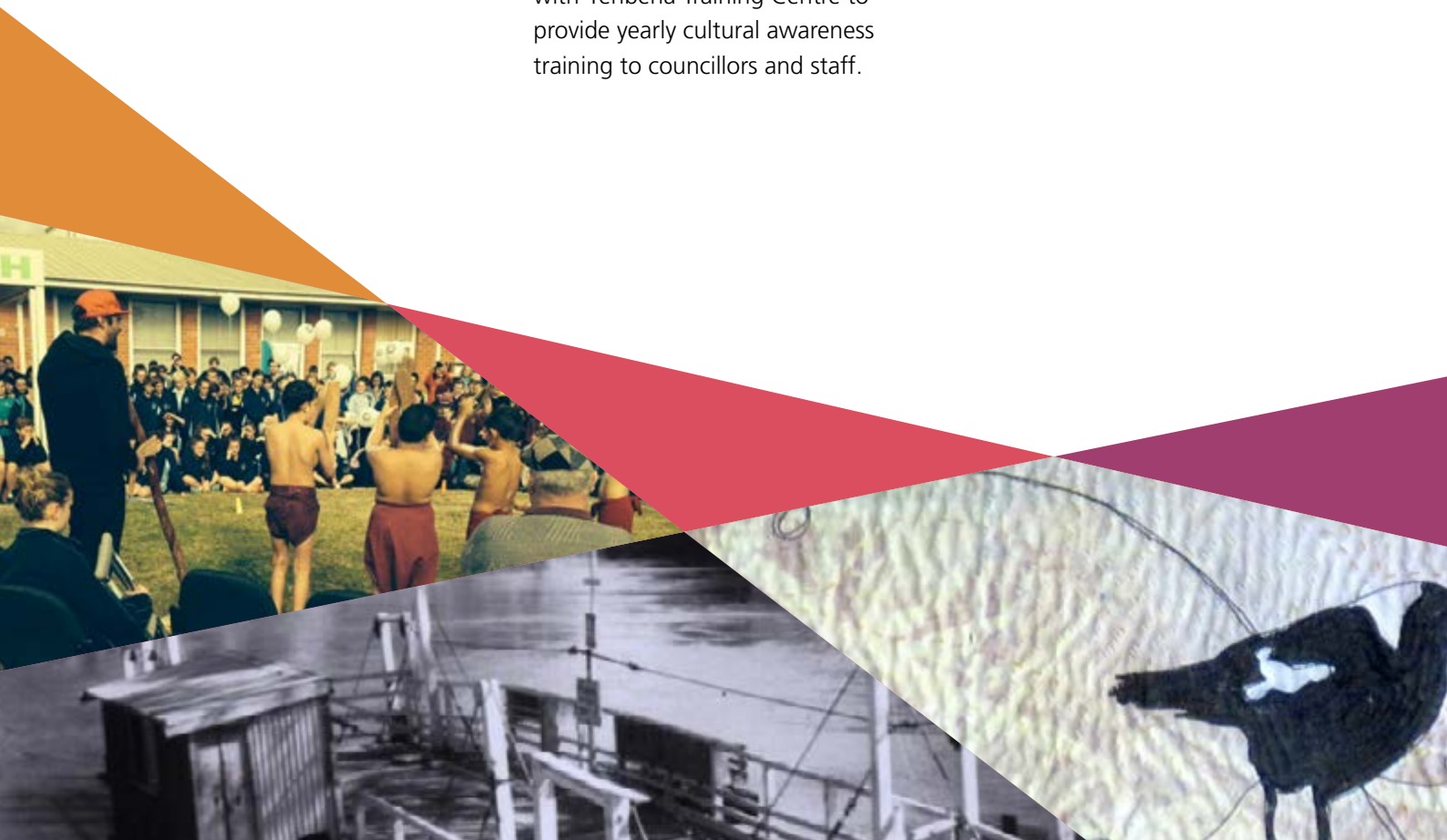
We acknowledge traditional owners at Council functions and invite local indigenous elders to conduct traditional welcome to country at events and festivals.

The council supports community and state activities and programs such as NAIDOC week, school’s arts programs, Reconciliation programs and exhibitions, the Kaiela writing competition through specific project funding such as the Community Strengthening grants program.

Council has a service agreement with Yenbena Training Centre to provide yearly cultural awareness training to councillors and staff.

THROUGH THE ACTION PLAN WE AIM TO

Partner with our First Nation’s People to identify and support opportunities to promote and develop artistic and cultural expression and industry.





Council Plan Strategy: A thriving local economy

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

We will support local businesses and attract new investment to generate employment opportunities.

GOAL 4

Our region will offer year-round tourism product, services and destinations.

“Victoria’s Creative Industries bring twenty-three billion dollars into the state’s economy” (Creative State-Creative Victoria Strategic Plan).

Strengthening local creative enterprises by creating new employment opportunities will bring economic, social and cultural benefits to Victoria.

CURRENTLY

We provide a variety of cultural tourism opportunities, including historical walks, interpretive displays and exhibitions, cultural signage and venues. We employ local artists for these activities and services.

We provide skill development opportunities to a range of community stakeholders.

GOAL 5

Accessible training and education opportunities will boost employment prospects and skills.

THE COMMUNITY HAS TOLD US

Connections must be facilitated between Moira’s business and creative industries and the wider community to generate investment and employment where possible.

THROUGH THE ACTION PLAN WE AIM TO

Provide the mechanisms to ensure the economic benefit of cultural and artistic activity across the Shire is maximised.





Council Plan Strategy: A well run Council

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

We will implement a transparent, engaging and accountable governance structure for current and future generations.

GOAL 6

Our community and stakeholders will trust Council to act in their best interests.

Creative State Victoria's first Creative Industry Strategy formally acknowledges the role and contribution of local government in supporting Victoria's creative and cultural industries, and proposes that this be recognised through a local government partnership. The strategy states "Creative Victoria will establish and resource a formal partnership with Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to work with local councils across the state on the growth of creative industries and activities, ensuring that actions are aligned with local priorities and increase the impact of the creative industries at the local level."

THE COMMUNITY HAS TOLD US

That the role of the Council is to address the following community needs:

- Develop a cohesive arts and culture plan which encompasses the diverse wide ranging needs of the community;
- Create structures which provide support, guidance and mentorship for emerging creatives within the community;
- Embed culture as the fourth area (pillar) of community sustainability into the Moira Shire Council Plan;
- Recognise the role that the Arts play in health and wellbeing; and
- Financially invest in activities that promote artistic and cultural development.

CURRENTLY

Moirā Shire Council:

- Recognises the role that arts and culture play in the health, wellbeing and identity of the community (Moirā Shire Wellbeing for all Ages Strategy 2017-2021);
- Recognises the number of residents across the shire who are creatively participating in the arts, libraries, cultural development programs and the heritage of the region;
- Financially invests in arts and cultural development; and
- Supports inclusive connected communities which identify Moira Shire as a destination that recognises, values, and promotes the contribution that arts and culture play in the liveability, wellbeing and identity of its communities.

THROUGH THE ACTION PLAN WE AIM TO

Promote the intrinsic value of artistic and cultural endeavour through implementation of appropriate mechanisms to fund, evaluate and develop creative industries across the Shire.

Our Action Plan

Our Action Plan will respond over six years to deliver the identified Objectives and Actions in the strategy.



A great place to live

Celebration of our cultural heritage and diversity

OBJECTIVE

We will have a connected and welcoming Shire for all by providing well planned places and quality services.

ACTIONS

- Celebrate our First Nation People's culture and identity;
- Establish four Creative Hubs to build creative expertise in Yarrawonga, Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah;
- Support libraries and cultural precincts in their endeavours;
- Celebrate our living culture by collaborating with established cultural groups;
- Provide opportunities to promote cultural tourism by maintaining our creative development, civic architecture, public art and environmental treasures;
- Build knowledge and understanding of our culturally diverse Moira identity through story-telling, festivals, events, and media reviews;
- Welcome new migrants by inclusive practices through festivals and events such as Harmony Day;
- Support youth focused programs across the shire and within each of the four Creative Hubs;
- Use digital communication to connect with and interpret heritage assets;
- Embed creative recovery strategies into the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP);
- Maintain current activities and engage more fully with First Nations People and community;
- Support indigenous artists through engagement;
- Encourage cultural awareness training; and
- Foster networking opportunities with Indigenous organisations.





A thriving local community

Building our creative expertise

OBJECTIVE

We will support local businesses and attract new investment to generate employment opportunities.

ACTIONS

- Invest in our youth by initiating arts and culture mentoring programs;
- Provide access to activities which promote artists and creative groups;
- Develop a register of Moirā Shire artists and business people;
- Conduct an audit of venues and assets;
- Create an Arts Atlas and online register for community marketing and collaboration and the sharing of creative expertise with local business's, and regularly update these;
- Showcase creative skills in local industry to attract new professionals to the Shire;
- Encourage entrepreneurial skill and innovation to generate employment opportunities;
- Revamp existing art programs and introduce new activities with a sustainable economic focus;
- Provide focused knowledge based workshops and information sharing;
- Conduct an audit of local creative arts practitioners, bringing artists from all disciplines together to exchange ideas;
- Encourage the development of ethnic and cultural arts programming informed by collaborative partnerships with ethno-specific agencies;
- Promote cross-cultural arts exchange;
- Promote the positive health outcomes of creative engagement and strengthen partnerships with healthcare service providers and practitioners through the facilitation of community 'wellbeing days' or 'healthcare expos' that are inclusive of the arts;
- Deliver art-based mindfulness workshops;
- Actively seek sponsorship and grant funding;
- Embed creative recovery strategies into the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP); and
- Maintain existing cultural tourism initiatives.





A well run Council

Engaging our community

OBJECTIVE

We will implement a transparent, engaging and accountable governance structure for current and future generations.

ACTIONS

- Identify Moira Shire as a destination that recognises, values and promotes the contribution that Arts and Culture play in the liveability, wellbeing and identity of its communities (Fourth Pillar of Sustainability);
- Support inclusive and connected communities by actively listening to their needs to meet community expectations;
- Explore funding opportunities to support current and new opportunities;
- Establish equitable Moira Shire funding to each Creative Hub;
- Establish Moira Shire dedicated spaces;
- Develop a Public Art Policy which stimulates new work in public spaces;
- Support the establishment of Volunteer programs in each Creative Hub;
- Foster and reward creative excellence through the establishment of a Creative Award;
- Continue to employ a dedicated Arts and Cultural officer, and establish an Arts and Culture Advisory committee to support arts and cultural development across the Shire;
- Promote leadership of cultural development where evidence supports the claim;
- Embed culture as the fourth area (pillar) of community sustainability into the Moira Shire Plan;
- Continue to financially support the small grants program and delivery of arts and cultural activities across the Shire;
- Explore funding opportunities to support current and new initiatives which broaden our programs;
- Recognise the opportunities inherent in new digital technology;
- Foster and reward creative excellence;
- Promote participation in intergenerational and ethnic cultural programs;
- Support indigenous people in local arts and cultural pursuits that are unique to Moira Shire; and
- Work with the Economic Development and Tourism units to design arts and cultural activities.



Evaluation

The Action Plan will be evaluated utilising a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods structured to assess achievement against the five principles outlined in the Cultural Development Network - Cultural Development Planning Framework (as detailed on page 4) and Council's measures for liveability, economic, environmental and sustainable governance.

Methods of evaluation of KPI's established within the Action Plan will include but not limited to:

- Focus groups;
- Interviews with active and creative participants;
- Surveys and questionnaires' of local and visiting audience members;
- Arts based responses and participatory methods of storytelling; and
- Quantitative and financial data analysis.

Acknowledgements

This Strategic Arts and Culture Plan was prepared by Moira Shire Council in consultation with the community. We wish to acknowledge Ms Maz McGann, Dr Susan Paterson and Dr Julie Gross- McAdam, and all those who participated in the consultation process. Thank you for your interest and your invaluable contributions.

Ms Marilyn Gourley
Team Leader, Arts and Cultural and Events, Moira Shire

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ARTWORK CREDITS

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Sand Hills, Roxanne Atkinson

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Community Chalk Drawing at Multicultural and Youth Festival 2019

Katamatite Mosaic sentinels, Kerrie Murrell
Dhungala cool burn, Dr Treaahna Hamm
Doona, Battle of the Bands Event

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Untitled, Linden Lancaster
Saluting Their Service, Numurkah Mural
Katamatite Anglican Church
Tungamah Silo Art, Sobrane

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Totem, Dr Treaahna Hamm
3D Floor at the Barmah Forest Heritage and Education Centre, Ulla Taylor
Canoe Tree Barmah, Yorta Yorta Nation
Tungamah Silo Art, Sobrane

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Lomandra Breastplate, Treaahna Hamm,
Katamatite Eagle, Andrew Whitehead
Cod fish, Mark Rosenbrock
Untitled, Rochelle Paton

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NAIDOC Day celebration at Yarrawonga Health
The Barmah Punt
Magpies, Lyndon Lancaster
Cobram Library

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The Sleeper Cutter, Be'la (Bill) Angyal
Leather face, Jennifer Croft

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Canoe Tree Barmah, Yorta Yorta Nation
Under the Sea, The Workshop Yarrawonga P-12
Ceramic Long Neck Turtle, Anne Timm

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Murray the Pelican, Mark Rosenbrock

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