

UNLOCKING MOORABOOL'S CREATIVE POTENTIAL



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which Moorabool Shire sits, the Wadawurrung, Wurundjeri, and the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples. On behalf of the municipality, Council pays respect to their Elders, past, present and future. Council commits to celebrate our region's rich First Nations history, the diversity of its people and their important ongoing connections to Country.

ABOUT THE COVER ARTWORK

The artwork on the cover of this document is *Ba-gurrk Guliwan Malka (Men and Women's shield of Protection)* by Dr Deanne Gilson.

Gilson is a proud Wadawurrung woman and a multimedia visual artist. Her artwork aims to restore her cultural knowledge and identity by reclaiming marks depicted on ancestral artefacts – like the wooden shield taken from a scar tree – re-shaping them into new contemporary artworks. The black and white diamond pattern is repeated over and over again. The grid repetition maps boundaries of Country, spelt with a capital 'C' for its importance and family interacting across Wadawurrung Country in a harmonious way. Including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people coming together in unity.

The shield stands today in Gilson's artwork as a symbol of protection, hope and survival of First Nations people. It reminds us that we all need to keep working together so that we get along for our future generations to heal and be one. The shield is a metaphor for Reconciliation, black and white identity and acceptance of all who walk on Wadawurrung Country past, present and future.

To learn more about Dr Deanne Gilson and her work, visit deannegilson.com.

THANKS

Moorabool Shire Council would like to thank all the community members, organisations, businesses and Traditional Owners who shared their insights and perspectives in the development of this Strategy. Your contributions have been invaluable to shaping the outcome.

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A MESSAGE FROM TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

'Moorabool' in Wadawurrung language refers to the sound of the Curlew, a ghostly sound that could be heard around the Moorabool River. Areas now covered by Moorabool Shire include places Wadawurrung People have lived and thrived on with oral stories of the landscape, hills, stony rises, freshwater, and places of falling, rushing waters, like Lal Lal Falls. All of Country is a connected story. Our connection to Culture and Country continues to provide us with the obligation, responsibilities, and strength to care, connect, practice and pass on tens of thousands of years of knowledge. As Wadawurrung People we are connected to our land, our skies, our seas and our waterways. Keeping them healthy keeps our People and Culture healthy.

Wadawurrung People are committed to working together with key stakeholders, like Moorabool Shire. We look forward to continuing our partnership and presenting a voice for our Traditional Owners.

Koling wada-ngal (Let us walk together).

The Wurundjeri Corporation

For First Nations people, arts and culture are a vital part of collective and individual wellbeing. It contributes to our education and understanding, to our health, and to our perception of self and community. Arts and culture give our lives greater meaning and cultivates meaningful connections with all Australians.

The Wurundjeri Corporation are very proud to have provided guidance and direction into Moorabool Council's first Arts and Culture Strategy.

The Moorabool Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Custodians of the north western region of the Shire. We recognise their continuing connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The Moorabool Shire community is extremely fortunate to be surrounded by beauty. Wherever you are in the Shire there are exceptional forests, rivers, waterfalls, gorges and historic buildings on our doorsteps. In part, I think that's why we're home to such a strong community of artists, writers, musicians and performers. Council's Arts and Culture Strategy is about harnessing these creative talents and our natural assets to transform our Shire.

This is the first time we've had a strategy like this. The path laid out here will open up new opportunities for us to maintain and build on our unique identities. It will create prosperity within the Shire and expand the breadth of possibilities available to our communities. It will enhance our reputation across the region and, most importantly, improve our quality of life.

Collaboration is at the heart of this approach. We need to work together to realise the ambitions laid out in these pages. Our aim as a Council is to create the environment that allows our artistic communities to thrive.

I'm looking forward to going on this journey with you.

Cr Tom Sullivan
Mayor

INTRODUCTION

This is Moorabool Shire Council's first Arts and Culture Strategy. It has been developed to guide how Council and the community can work together to develop a flourishing creative scene across the Shire.

This is a transformative undertaking. Building our creative communities will strengthen the Shire and create a link between Melbourne and the wider Western region.

The Strategy will direct how Council invests its resources and energies. It outlines the role Council will play and the areas we will focus on over the four year cycle of the Strategy.

OUR GOAL

To be a regional home for thriving creative communities.

Achieving this will create:

- **A vibrant and connected Shire**
- **Healthy and inclusive communities, and**
- **A sustainable creative sector**

THE ROLE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Arts and culture have a significant role to play in how Council delivers its services. The diagram below outlines the connections to other Council strategies and the external policy environment in which we operate.



WHERE WE ARE NOW

There is strong support for arts and cultural activity amongst our community¹ :

94%

say local arts and cultural activities are important, and

89%

value having access to activities from a range of cultures



And Moorabool is fortunate to have communities of artists, musicians, writers and creative producers living here.

There are also:

39

arts and culture organisations and networks



46

current and potential venue spaces



13

creative education providers, and



2

major community festivals



This is a solid foundation to build on. However, there are some challenges² :

- 67% of artists want to be more connected to local creative networks
- 68% don't have access to local opportunities
- 77% listed access to space as critical to their work
- 87% stated experimentation was important, though only
- 25% felt they were in an environment that supported them to do so



The Strategy has been developed to address these needs and unlock the potential of our creative communities.

¹ Creative Ecology survey, March 2021

² Ibid

HOW WE'LL GET THERE

We have identified eight areas of focus for our first Arts and Culture Strategy. To achieve our ambitions Council will work in partnership with the Shire's creative communities – and be collectively courageous in our approaches.

- 1 INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY
- 2 REDUCE BARRIERS TO DELIVERING AND PARTICIPATING IN CREATIVE ACTIVITIES
- 3 CONNECT WITH OUR UNIQUE HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT
- 4 NURTURE THE GROWTH OF THE CREATIVE SECTOR
- 5 DEVELOP ACCESSIBLE CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE
- 6 CREATE MOMENTS OF JOY IN EVERYDAY LIFE
- 7 ESTABLISH A PRESENCE WITHIN REGIONAL TOURING NETWORKS
- 8 USE ARTS AND CULTURE TO DRIVE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY

1

INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY

The outcome we want to see

A vibrant Shire where there are plentiful opportunities to engage in arts and cultural activities and lead a rich creative life.

What Council will do

- Source opportunities for artists
- Support initiatives by creative producers
- Create opportunities for children and young people
- Support creative activities across the Shire
- Promote events and creative activities in a unified way

2

REDUCE BARRIERS TO DELIVERING AND PARTICIPATING IN CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

The outcome we want to see

The Shire is a place where creative possibilities can be tested and realised – and where creative practitioners and producers are supported to take risks.

What Council will do

- Make it easier to access Council owned spaces and funding
- Streamline permit and approval processes for creative activities
- Support programs to increase engagement with marginalised communities

3

CONNECT WITH OUR UNIQUE HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT

The outcome we want to see

The depth of the Shire's rich history is celebrated and built upon. Creative activities are used to drive further engagement with our natural assets.

What Council will do

- Acknowledge and promote the histories and culture of First Nations peoples
- Support the development of First Nations work
- Use arts and culture to provide deeper engagement with our heritage and environment
- Encourage a diversity of creative and cultural events and activities
- Link creative opportunities to the Shire's parks and natural environment

4

NURTURE THE GROWTH OF THE CREATIVE SECTOR

The outcome we want to see

The Shire is an attractive and supportive place for creative practitioners to live, work and engage with local communities. The creative industries grow to become a significant part of the Shire's economy.

What Council will do

- Source professional development opportunities for creative practitioners and producers
- Create development pathways for young creative practitioners
- Foster strong creative networks across the region
- Create links to the regional, metropolitan and national creative sectors
- Facilitate collaborations
- Celebrate local success stories
- Collect local data and benchmark the Shire against other municipalities
- Share knowledge and insights
- Promote the Shire's assets and opportunities to the wider creative sector

5

DEVELOP ACCESSIBLE CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The outcome we want to see

There are an array of spaces across the Shire for artists to present their work, stage events and develop their practice and encourage participation in the arts.

What Council will do

- Expand the number of Council halls and spaces suitable for creative activities and events
- Encourage the development of privately owned creative spaces
- Explore options for major infrastructure, such as a performing arts centre, gallery or creative hub

6

CREATE MOMENTS OF JOY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The outcome we want to see

Our public spaces are unique and engaging and offer immersive creative experiences for the entire community.

What Council will do

- Design public spaces and amenities that encourage creative play and investigation
- Develop public art that reflects the unique identities of our townships and their communities
- Ensure creative possibilities are integral to planning new developments, infrastructure and open spaces

7 ESTABLISH A PRESENCE WITHIN REGIONAL TOURING NETWORKS

The outcome we want to see

Townships in the Shire become regular destinations for a range of touring music, performance, exhibitions and festivals.

What Council will do

- Work with neighbouring councils and sector stakeholders to create a Western Victoria touring circuit
- Encourage existing and potential venues to participate
- Connect with promoters across music, visual arts, performing arts and festivals to promote opportunities across the Shire

8 USE ARTS AND CULTURE TO DRIVE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY

The outcome we want to see

Council takes a creative approach in delivering activities, services and community engagement.

What Council will do

- Consider creative possibilities in all areas of Council's operations
- Develop creative solutions to service delivery challenges
- Seek opportunities for arts and culture outcomes in major developments and projects
- Establish an internal collaboration mechanism within Council
- Use arts and cultural approaches in community engagement

HOW WE'LL WORK TOGETHER

The purpose of the Strategy is to unlock the creative potential of the Shire. These ambitions can only be achieved through the combined efforts of Council and the Shire's creative communities, organisations and businesses.

Council's role is to:

- Provide encouragement to those who want to make things happen
- Be open to new ideas and possibilities
- Create a supportive environment for arts and cultural activities
- Source opportunities for local creative practitioners
- Facilitate beneficial connections and collaborations
- Support development of the creative sectors' capabilities
- Listen to our community

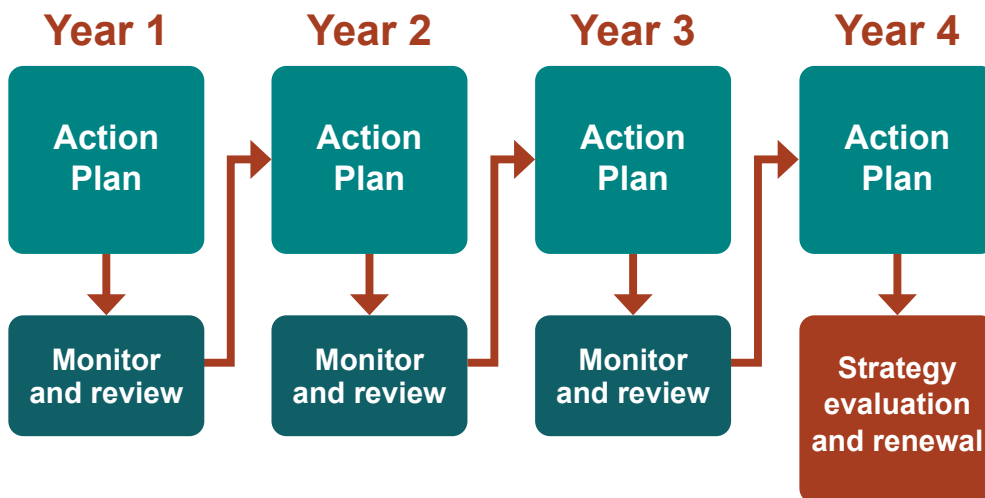
HOW WE'LL STAY ON TRACK

This Strategy provides the roadmap. As this is the first Arts and Culture Strategy it is essential to test ideas and try out new initiatives.

Success against our eight focus areas will be measured and reported on each year. This will be used to review and refine the annual action plan. The community will be able to feed back on our progress and suggest where improvements can be made over the four years of the Strategy.



ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY



STAY IN TOUCH

To stay in the loop about creative opportunities, events and activities across the Shire – or to talk about your ideas – email arts@moorabool.vic.gov.au.



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