



CREATE AND CONNECT

Arts and Cultural Heritage *Strategy*



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Mayor's Foreword



The City of Greater Dandenong is a place of great diversity, uniqueness and opportunity. The Greater Dandenong community is one of immense cultural richness, which respects and supports people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

Council's overarching vision for its community is that Greater Dandenong is a safe, vibrant city of opportunity for all – to visit, work, live and play.

Arts and cultural heritage play a central role in the achievement of this vision:

Arts inspire us, challenge us, give us a way to understand each other and give us the opportunity to express how we feel, even when we can't find the words.

Our **cultural heritage** invites us to reflect on where we came from and imagine how we would like things to be in the future.

Arts and cultural heritage give the city soul and are central to its definition, character, health and wellbeing.

Council acknowledges the value and importance of continuing to invest in arts and cultural heritage in recognition of their significant contribution to a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and sustainable community.

We know that arts and cultural heritage can be transformative for participants and play a key role in fostering greater understanding of others and harmony within the community.

The City of Greater Dandenong has a long record of supporting and investing in arts and cultural heritage, through its provision of facilities, programs and projects and partnerships with others.

It is our vision that the City of Greater Dandenong will be recognised as a creative vibrant city, rich in arts and cultural heritage.

The *Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy* has been developed to support this vision and provide a long-term strategic direction to guide Council's efforts to promote, support and grow arts and cultural heritage in the City of Greater Dandenong. The strategy will support and guide future Council decisions in relation to arts and cultural heritage programs, facilities and capital investments.

The *Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy* is framed around five themes:

1. **Community Connection**
2. **Cultural Destination**
3. **History and Heritage**
4. **Cultural Venues**
5. **Partnerships and Evaluation**

Under each theme, Council has identified a clear objective and multiple key directions.

The strategy will be implemented over time through a series of three-year action plans.

Wherever possible, Council will work in partnership with artists, arts organisations, education institutions, state and federal governments, other agencies, community groups, historical and heritage organisations and local residents to enhance arts and cultural heritage in Greater Dandenong.

Council is excited by our achievements to-date and by future opportunities to enhance the health and wellbeing of our community through arts and cultural heritage.



A handwritten signature in black ink, likely of Cr Heang Tak.

Cr Heang Tak
Mayor
February 2016

Introduction

I M A G N E

Dur Vision

The City of Greater Dandenong will be recognised as a creative and vibrant city, rich in arts and cultural heritage.

Arts and cultural heritage give the city soul and are central to its definition, character, health and wellbeing

Greater Dandenong will be recognised as one of Melbourne's unique destinations for cultural tourism and cultural experiences. It will be home to cultural venues of excellence that provide a platform for high quality arts participation in performances, programs, exhibitions, cultural celebrations, festivals and events.

Cultural diversity and the distinctive cultural heritage of our communities, including our Indigenous community, will continue to be celebrated and promoted.

Arts and cultural heritage initiatives will be inclusive and accessible, attracting high levels of engagement and participation by both local residents and visitors from across Greater Melbourne and beyond.

Arts and cultural heritage will continue to be core to the city's health and wellbeing.

Arts and Cultural Heritage Defined

ARTS

Arts encompass creative pursuits across all arts disciplines, in the creation and enjoyment of art.

Arts inspire us, challenge us, give us a way to understand each other and give us the opportunity to express how we feel, even when we can't find the words.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural Heritage refers to the legacy of a group or society that is inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. This includes the indigenous and multicultural heritage as well as physical objects and places that we inherit from the past and pass on to future generations to use, learn from and be inspired by.

Our cultural heritage invites us to reflect on where we came from and imagine how we would like things to be in the future.

Strategy Overview

Create and Connect, the Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy, has been developed to support this vision and provide a long-term strategic direction to guide Council's efforts to further enable a creative, vibrant city and celebrate cultural heritage.

The strategy aims to provide Council with future directions, to promote, support and grow arts and cultural heritage in the City of Greater Dandenong and to make decisions in relation to arts and cultural heritage programs, facilities and capital investments.

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy aligns closely with the themes and objectives of the City of Greater Dandenong Council Plan and Community Wellbeing Plan.

The strategy has been developed through an extensive process, including background research, consideration of industry best practice, an analysis of current trends and challenges and a wide reaching community engagement process.

Looking to the future, Council will continue to create efficiencies and innovation in the planning and delivery of its arts and cultural heritage agenda. This includes ongoing evaluation against community benefit outcomes and pursuit of funding partnerships with state and federal governments and other organisations.

Consultation

The City of Greater Dandenong is committed to thorough, consistent and genuine community engagement that will inform responsible decision making for the benefit of the community.

The Community Engagement Policy and Framework provided guidance for an extensive consultation process that informed the development of the strategy. Community engagement was undertaken in 2014 and 2015 involving direct contact with more than 1,000 residents, visitors, artists, community groups, arts and heritage organisations, Councillors, Council staff and partner agencies.

Engagement activities included:

- Council Website
- Facebook and Twitter
- Printed material
- E-news
- Meetings with members of local groups, networks and organisations and peak bodies
- Engagement with The Hive artists' network
- Councillor workshop
- Consultation with the general public through online surveys and post cards
- Direct engagement with the Greater Dandenong community at the 2015 Australia Day celebrations
- Key contacts across the City of Greater Dandenong organisation

The City of Greater Dandenong has also undertaken a wide range of background research to ensure that its future directions are consistent with leading practice in Victoria and Australia.

Strategy Structure

The City of Greater Dandenong Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy will be presented as two documents:

- **A Strategy** that outlines the longer term vision and strategic directions for arts and cultural heritage for the City of Greater Dandenong.
- **An Action Plan** with a set of specific, targeted and measurable initiatives that Council will implement over an initial three-year period 2016-2018.

This approach enables Council to retain flexibility and responsiveness to the changing environment and identify opportunities, funding and priorities each year to achieve the intent of the strategy.

The strategy will inform the annual budget, capital works plans and business plans for the City of Greater Dandenong. Implementation of the strategy will be reported through quarterly reporting and the Annual Report. A desktop review will be undertaken after three years. A new action plan will be developed after three years (2019).

Themes, Objectives and Key Directions

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy is framed around five themes. Each theme has a clear objective and multiple key directions. The themes, objectives and key directions have been established in response to needs and priorities identified through background research and the community engagement process.

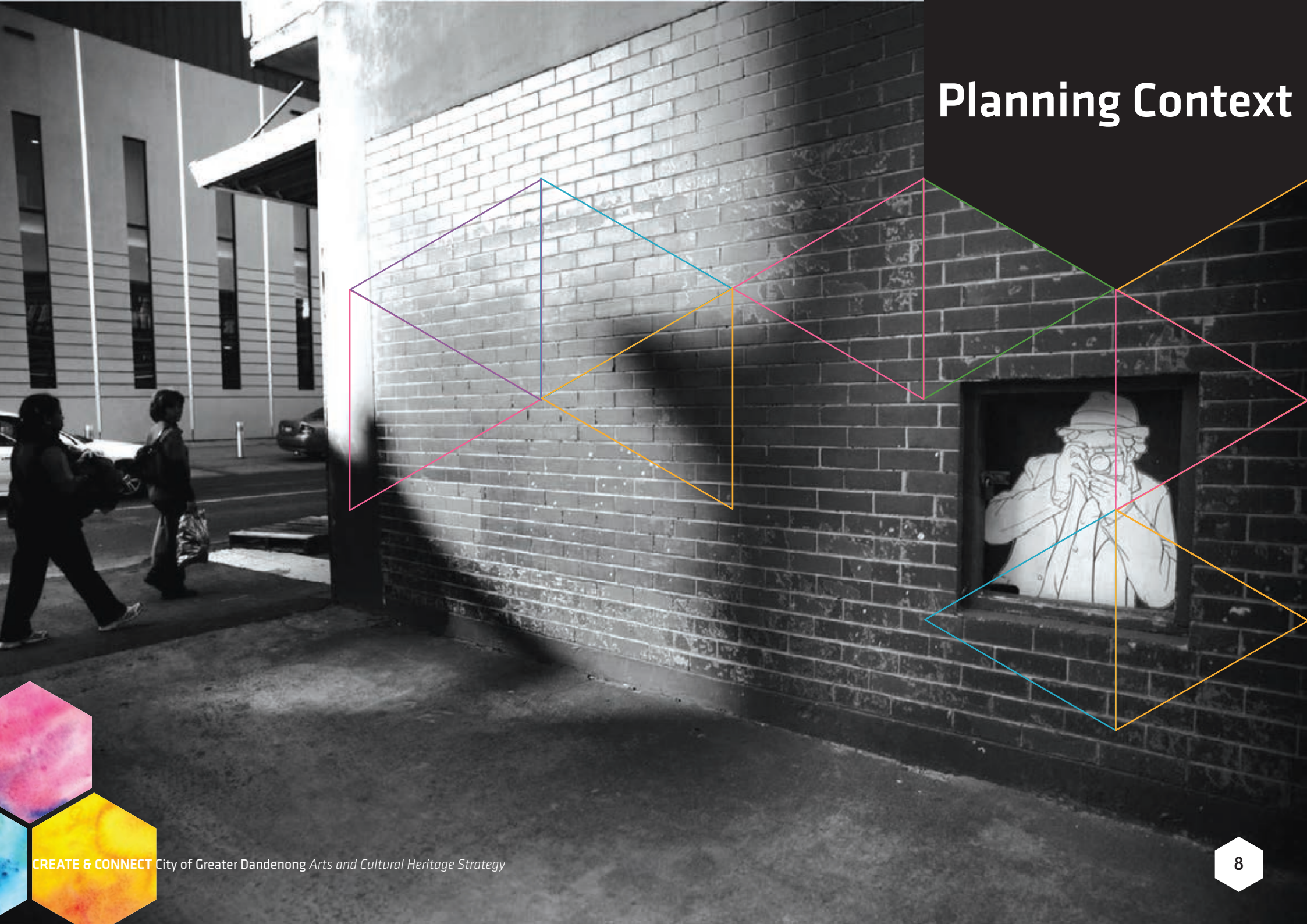


Themes, Objectives and Key Directions

THEME	1: COMMUNITY CONNECTION	2: CULTURAL DESTINATION	3: HISTORY AND HERITAGE	4: CULTURAL VENUES	5: PARTNERSHIPS & EVALUATION
OBJECTIVE	To build community connection and strength through arts and cultural heritage	To establish the City of Greater Dandenong as a cultural destination where people want to live, work and visit	To record and preserve history and heritage and increase community connection to it	To support arts and cultural heritage through a hierarchy of high quality and fit for purpose cultural venues	To strengthen arts and cultural heritage in Greater Dandenong through partnerships, collaboration and relevant measures of success
KEY DIRECTIONS	1.1 Festivals and events Deliver and support vibrant festivals and events	2.1 Public art and place activation Activate public places and spaces through public art and other arts and cultural initiatives	3.1 Recording history and heritage Capture and preserve local history and cultural heritage in a sustainable and accessible format	4.1 Community and artist development Utilise cultural venues as a platform for supporting artist development, enabling community arts and increasing community engagement and participation	5.1 Internal partnership and collaboration Strengthen internal partnerships and improve cross-departmental collaboration
	1.2 Opportunities through programming Maximise opportunities for the community to engage and participate in arts and cultural heritage through performances, exhibitions and other activities	2.2 Creative built environment Incorporate creative elements into future building and infrastructure projects	3.2 Community engagement Increase opportunities for the community to engage and connect with Greater Dandenong's history and cultural heritage	4.2 Opportunities for existing venues Enhance existing cultural venues and opportunities	5.2 External partnerships Establish meaningful partnerships with external stakeholders to support a vibrant, healthy arts and cultural heritage environment
	1.3 Community development through arts Implement community development initiatives using arts and cultural heritage as a tool for engagement	2.3 Cultural experience Strengthen the City of Greater Dandenong's offer as a cultural destination and increase visitation numbers and experience	3.3 Indigenous culture and heritage Respect and celebrate local Indigenous culture and heritage	4.3 Planning for future venues Plan for future cultural venue upgrades and developments	5.3 Sponsorship opportunities Explore and identify opportunities to attract sponsorship and philanthropic investment in the creative arts and cultural heritage of our city
	1.4 Diversity and participation Build community cohesion and community connectedness, celebrate diversity of people of all backgrounds and abilities and remove barriers to participation				5.4 Evaluation Develop and implement a program of relevant and meaningful measures of success for arts and cultural heritage initiatives

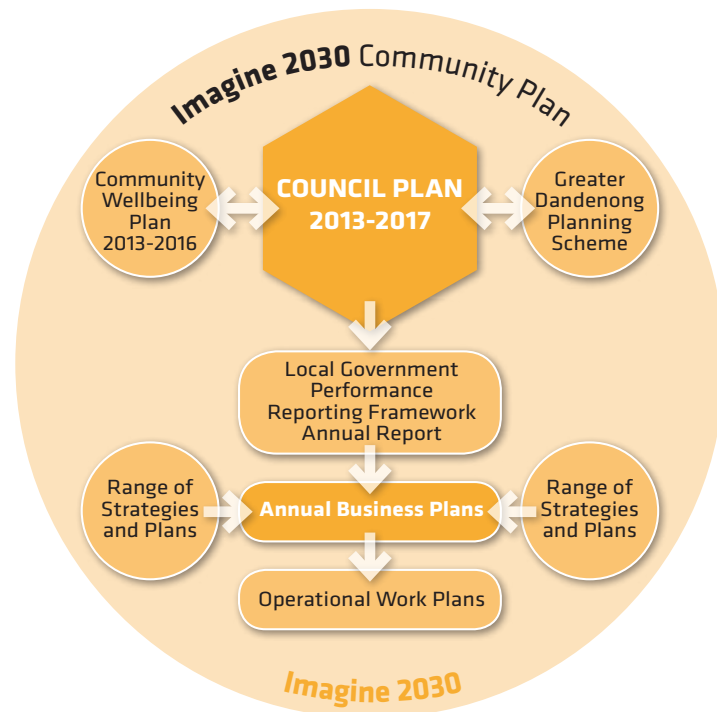


Planning Context



Strategic Framework

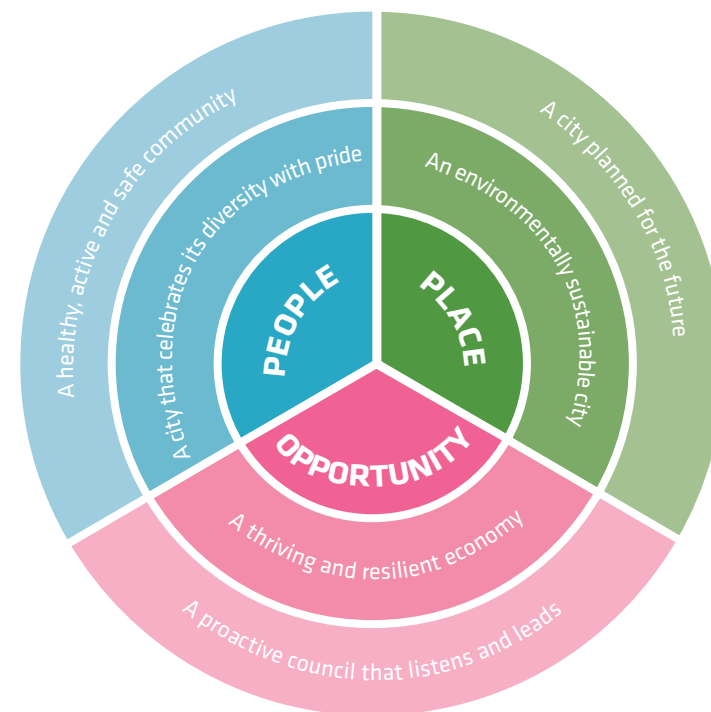
The City of Greater Dandenong has developed a strategic framework to inform how the Council's strategic plans and policies are created and implemented in an integrated way – with the Council Plan sitting at the centre.



The Imagine 2030 Community Plan guides the vision for the City of Greater Dandenong. It establishes the strategic framework and the key priority areas for the municipality – Opportunity, People and Place.

Council Plan

The Council Plan 2013-2017 identifies the vision and strategic direction for the City of Greater Dandenong. It outlines six strategic objectives that sit under the key priority area, as illustrated:



The Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy responds to many of the objectives of the Council Plan, including those relating to healthy and active communities, celebration of diversity, planning for future, urban and space activation, creation of liveable communities, and local economic development.

Community Wellbeing Plan

The Community Wellbeing Plan has been developed in parallel with the Council Plan and provides a long-term strategic direction for enhancing the health and wellbeing of the Greater Dandenong community.

The document is structured around sixteen objectives grouped under five key areas. These key areas include:

- Planning Safer Communities
- Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities
- Physical Activity, Leisure and Recreation
- Education, Employment and Lifelong Learning

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy responds to many of the objectives of the Community Wellbeing Plan, including those relating to participation in the arts, improved community safety, learning opportunities, healthy lifestyles, local employment, encouragement of participation in community activities and social inclusion.

Other Plans

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy links to a range of other City of Greater Dandenong strategies and plans, including:

- Council Plan 2013-2017
- Community Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- Children's Plan 2015-2019
- Libraries without Borders: Library Strategy 2012-2016
- Activate: Recreation Plan 2014
- Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2017
- Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Australians 1995
- Indigenous Policy 2012
- Community Development Framework 2015
- Green Wedge Management Plan 2014
- Disability Action Plan 2010-2014
- Community Engagement Framework
- Plaques, Memorials and Interpretive Signage Policy and Guidelines 2015
- Drum Theatre Strategic Plan 2012 and (draft) 2015
- Community Hub Framework 2015
- Diversity, Access and Equity Policy 2015

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy incorporates actions and directions that will supersede and replace Council plans in the following areas:

- Festivals and Events Plan 2012-2015
- Public Art Strategy and Framework 2010 – 2013
- Heritage Strategy 2002 – 2007



Policy Context

Federal Government

The Federal Government plays a key role in the funding, promotion and support of arts and culture. Some of the key functions of the Federal Government relating to arts and cultural heritage include:

- Supporting the performing arts, including dance, music and theatre, through funding and assistance for performing arts training organisations and institutions, Australia's major performing arts companies, performing arts grants and regional touring.
- Supporting the visual arts and craft sectors through funding and programs.
- Supporting regional arts and artist development and supporting performing arts, music, exhibition touring and arts events at festivals in regional and remote areas.
- Facilitating inter-governmental dialogue on issues of national significance, including the creative arts, performing arts, Indigenous culture, collections, film and digital media.
- Supporting and developing quality collections and ethical collecting across Australia at a national and regional level.
- Supporting the growth and development of creative industries through policies, programs and funding.
- Protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expression.
- Supporting the Australian film and television industry.
- Supporting Indigenous languages, visual arts and culture through funding programs.
- Promoting and supporting excellence in literature and the contribution Australian authors make to the nation's cultural and intellectual life.
- Regulating the movement of Australia's cultural property - moveable cultural heritage.

State Government

The Victorian Government also plays a key role in the funding, promotion and support of arts and culture. Some of the key functions of the Victorian Government relating to arts and cultural heritage include:

- Supporting, championing and growing the state's creative industries spanning arts, culture, screen, design and others.
- Supporting Victoria's arts sector through a range of funding programs, including for:
 - creative projects and programs
 - contemporary music
 - arts organisations
 - regional development and touring
 - Indigenous professional development
 - arts education
 - design, digital games, and film and television industries.
- Supporting marketing innovation in the arts industry.
- Undertaking research that supports creative development across the state.
- Strengthening Victoria's leadership across the creative industries, stimulating innovation, collaboration, investment and growth, and facilitating creative and cultural development.
- Supporting creative industries through the development of cultural and arts precincts and other cultural infrastructure.
- Supporting heritage protection.
- Enabling the capture, recording, preservation and sharing of heritage through museums, libraries and other collections.
- Promoting and supporting cultural diversity and the celebration of cultural heritage.

Council's Role in Arts and Cultural Heritage



Council's Role in Arts and Cultural Heritage

The City of Greater Dandenong plays a key role in the planning, development and support of arts and cultural heritage throughout the city.

Council recognises the significant importance of investing in the arts and cultural heritage and the wide-ranging benefits that such an investment delivers across the community. In particular, Council acknowledges the significant contribution to a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and sustainable community that arts and cultural heritage initiatives provide.

The City of Greater Dandenong supports arts and cultural heritage both directly and in partnership with artists, arts organisations, education institutions, state and federal governments, other agencies, community groups, historical and heritage organisations and local residents.

Council supports arts and cultural heritage in a wide range of ways, including:

- **Providing cultural venues**
- **Programming, funding and delivering arts and cultural heritage programs and projects**
- **Delivering and supporting festivals and events**
- **Promoting and enabling public art**
- **Influencing creative aspects of the built environment**
- **Supporting artist development**
- **Supporting historical societies and heritage groups**

Council provides this support for the arts and celebrations of cultural heritage explicitly in recognition of the value they provide to the Greater Dandenong community. Benefits of arts and cultural heritage are detailed in other sections of this strategy.

Council also provides support for the arts and celebrations of cultural heritage as part of its broad mandate and responsibilities under the Local Government Act (1989). Under the Act, 'the primary objective of a Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions'.

In seeking to achieve this objective, Council must 'promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district' and 'improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community'. Part of the defined role of Council under the Act is to foster community cohesion and encourage active participation in civic life.

The evidence base confirms that arts and cultural heritage enhance the quality of life of those who creatively engage and participate. We also know that arts and cultural heritage play a key role in improving the overall quality of life of people in the local community.

Importance of Arts and Cultural Heritage

Importance of Arts and Cultural Heritage

CREATING A VIBRANT AND LIVEABLE CITY

Arts and cultural heritage raise the profile of the City of Greater Dandenong and play a key role in attracting people into the city. The provision of arts and cultural heritage opportunities positively influence the public image of the city, enhance perceptions of safety and contribute to a stimulating and exciting environment.

ENHANCING INDIVIDUAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Engagement and participation in the arts and celebrations of cultural heritage have shown to significantly enhance individual and community health and wellbeing.

At the individual level, arts and cultural heritage can provide a platform for individuals to engage with the community, particularly those who may otherwise experience barriers.

There is considerable evidence that involvement as participants in arts related activities reduces social isolation and improves mental health.

Research indicates that arts-based learning has a positive impact on the academic and social outcomes of school students and has been shown to enhance critical thinking skills and increase empathy among students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

With respect to health outcomes, engagement with the arts has been shown to reduce the incidence of illness and improve rehabilitation rates in hospital patients, enhance the social inclusion and economic opportunities of people with disabilities and empower and improve mentally ill patients' self-esteem.

STRENGTHENING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Participation in the arts and celebration of cultural heritage provide an important mechanism for people of diverse backgrounds to discover, express and feel pride in their individual and cultural identity.

ENHANCING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

At the community level, arts and cultural heritage play a key role in bringing people together.

They foster a socially inclusive community, transcending barriers of language, culture and socio-economic status. They provide a connection with our past, a platform for sharing different stories and promote participation and engagement.

STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Creative and cultural industries contribute significantly to Victoria's economy, contributing \$22.7 billion in 2013 and representing 8% of the State's total economy. This compares to manufacturing (\$26.3 billion), construction (\$19.8 billion), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (\$8.1 billion) and mining (\$6.5 billion). Creative and cultural industries generate approximately \$1.4 billion in exports and attract cultural tourism worth \$1 billion. Over 220,000 people are employed in Victoria's creative and cultural economy, representing almost 8% of total employment across the State. A further 70,000 volunteers contribute an estimated \$220m value to the Victorian economy.

Arts and cultural heritage play an increasingly important role in strengthening the local economy in the City of Greater Dandenong. One of the primary economic benefits is attracting visitors and spending to the city for arts and cultural heritage events, performances, festivals and exhibitions. An equally important role of arts and cultural heritage is making the city a more attractive place to live and work. This has flow on benefits by attracting a more diverse housing base and residents with higher levels of education and income.

Engagement with Arts and Cultural Heritage



Engagement with Arts and Cultural Heritage

NATIONAL RESEARCH

Research conducted by the Australia Council provides us with a clear insight to the extent of participation and perceived value of the arts. Arts Nation: An Overview of Australian Arts outlines the following findings:

Engagement

- Nearly all Australians (94%) attend live events, visit art galleries or read literature.
- Reading is the most popular way of consuming the arts, with 87% of Australians reading some form of literature.
- Many who do not physically attend arts events use the Internet to engage with the arts (66%), a figure which is rapidly rising.
- Over half (56%) of the population use the Internet to watch or download art such as music, visual art, performances or creative writing including e-books and audio books.

Personal value

- Most Australians (85%) agree that the arts enrich their lives and make them more meaningful.
- People participate in the arts for personal enjoyment, engagement with friends or family, self-expression, relaxation, skills development and income.
- Most Australians also believe that the arts have a large impact on how we express ourselves; they enable us to think creatively and develop new ideas, and help us deal with stress, anxiety or depression.
- People are more likely to enjoy the arts if they experience them personally.
- Women are more likely than men to enjoy the arts.

Creative participation

- Creating art is an important part of life for many Australians. Over a third of all Australians (38%) create art regularly - at least six times a year. This includes creative writing, playing music or singing, making visual arts or crafts and taking part in theatre or dance.
- An even larger number of Australians create art occasionally, with almost half (48%) creatively participating in the arts at least once a year.
- Key areas of growth in creative participation are music and visual arts.
- Younger Australians, aged 15-24 years, are the age cohort most likely to creatively participate in art.

Access to the arts and affordability

- Low incomes are a significant barrier to attending arts events, with only one in two Australians with an annual household income under \$20,000 likely to attend arts events, compared to nine in 10 of those earning over \$120,000.
- Low incomes do not have the same impact on creative participation, with low income earners just as likely to creatively participate in the arts as Australians overall.
- Australians with disability are less likely to attend arts events than all Australians (59% compared to 71%), though are now just as likely to creatively participate in the arts as Australians overall.
- Access to the arts for culturally and linguistically diverse people is also important. Australians born in non-English speaking countries are less likely to both attend arts events (63% compared to 71% for Australians overall) and creatively participate in the arts (38% compared to 48%).
- Education has a strong influence on arts attendance, with tertiary educated people more likely to attend arts events after taking into account other factors such as income.
- Affordability of access to participation in the arts is a key issue.
- Australians spend almost \$20 billion on cultural activities annually, which is 4% of their average weekly household expenditure.
- The average ticket price for a professional performing arts event in Australia costs between 10-12% of median household disposable income, whereas the cost of a book or gallery exhibition ticket is around 2%.

LOCAL PARTICIPATION

In the City of Greater Dandenong, we know that engagement by residents in arts and cultural activities is lower than Victorian averages.

The following table presents the key findings of a two local area surveys conducted in the City of Greater Dandenong relating to engagement in arts and cultural activities.

Based on the 2011 VicHealth Indicators Survey, Greater Dandenong had the 12th lowest percentage of adults who had attended arts activities in the previous three months compared to all Victorian municipalities and the lowest percentage of any metropolitan municipality.

These findings are broadly consistent with national trends and engagement patterns, when considering the demographic and socioeconomic profile of Greater Dandenong.

SURVEY	QUESTIONNAIRE	GREATER DANDENONG %	VICTORIA %	DIFFERENCE %
2012 Vic Health Indicators Survey	% Adults who are attended arts activities or events in the last 3 months	49.8	63.6	-21.7
2012 Vic Health Indicators Survey	% Adults who are made or created art or crafts in the last 3 months	20.4	34.9	-41.6
2007 Community Indicators Victoria Survey	% Adults who participated in arts and related activities in the last month	42.8	46.6	-8.2

LOCAL ARTS PARTICIPATION RESEARCH

Local market research conducted in 2015 regarding engagement with the arts and specifically with Drum Theatre supports the national research findings, indicating:

- Affordability is a key factor in determining arts attendance.
- Festivals and events are a highly valued way for residents to engage in cultural activities.
- The community wishes to participate in open days, comedy activities, family shows, multicultural events and popular music concerts.
- Drum Theatre has a good reputation for quality performances and a loyal following. Attendance levels are high for those who have previously visited Drum Theatre, particularly for Friends of Drum Theatre, indicating potential to grow repeat attendance.

Demographics and Implications

The demographic profile of Greater Dandenong has a number of implications for the provision of, and engagement and participation in, arts and cultural heritage.

POPULATION GROWTH

In the decade to 2025, the population of Greater Dandenong is forecast to grow by 24,000, or 16%. Forecast population growth will potentially place increasing pressure on arts and cultural heritage infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue to cater for the needs of people of all ages, with significant growth forecast for both younger and older residents.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Victoria and the second most diverse in Australia. Greater Dandenong residents come from more than 156 different countries and speak more than 69 different languages. More than six in ten residents speak a language other than English and more than 19,000 residents have limited fluency in English.

Across Australia people born in non-English speaking countries are significantly less likely to creatively participate in the arts or attend arts events. Key considerations for Greater Dandenong include ensuring that promotion of arts and cultural heritage events recognise cultural and language backgrounds and use the most appropriate communication channels. It is also important to understand cultural influences on arts and cultural heritage preferences to support enhanced participation. Language and religious beliefs / customs need to be considered when promoting and programming arts and cultural heritage activities. There are also opportunities to engage newly-arrived migrants in arts activities to foster social connections.

EDUCATION

The level of educational attainment within the Greater Dandenong population is lower than across Victoria. The research suggests that relatively low levels of educational attainment also have implications for attendance at arts events, regardless of income. Programming and activities can recognise and cater for

this, for example by providing vibrant festivals with a variety of free activities to engage the whole family.

INCOME

The low level of incomes in Greater Dandenong has implications for the planning and provision of arts and cultural heritage venues, programs, events and activities. Low incomes are known to be a barrier to attendance at arts events, for example as an audience member at a performance. Evidence suggests that low incomes have a lesser impact on creation of art. Planning for arts activities will need to take into account sensitive pricing to ensure activities remain affordable.

DISABILITY

Greater Dandenong has a slightly higher proportion of residents with a severe or profound disability requiring daily assistance with mobility, communication or self-care than across metropolitan Melbourne. People with a disability are less likely to attend arts events than people without a disability, however they are just as likely to creatively participate in the arts. This highlights the importance of providing accessible and inclusive facilities, programs and services that cater for all abilities.

VOLUNTEERISM

The proportion of people from Greater Dandenong who engage in voluntary work on a regular basis is lower than the state average. There is growing evidence that many people contribute within their own cultural or religious community in a volunteer capacity although this may not be recognised by them as voluntary work.

Lower levels of volunteerism in Greater Dandenong may reflect these patterns and hold implications for the planning and provision for arts and cultural heritage venues, programs, events and activities. It further affirms the need to explore diverse volunteering opportunities with the wider community.

Strategy



Strategy Directions

OVERVIEW

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy is framed around five themes. Each theme has a clear objective and multiple key directions. The themes, objectives and key directions have been established in response to needs and priorities identified through background research and the community engagement process.

THEME 1: COMMUNITY CONNECTION

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS	Deliver and support vibrant festivals and events
OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH PROGRAMMING	Maximise opportunities for the community to engage and participate in arts and cultural heritage through performances, exhibitions and other activities
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ARTS	Implement community development initiatives using arts and cultural heritage as a tool for engagement
DIVERSITY AND PARTICIPATION	Build community cohesion and community connectedness, celebrate diversity of people of all backgrounds and abilities and remove barriers to participation

THEME 2: CULTURAL DESTINATION

PUBLIC ART AND PLACE ACTIVATION	Activate public places and spaces through public art and other arts and cultural initiatives
CREATIVE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Incorporate creative elements into future building and infrastructure projects
CULTURAL EXPERIENCE	Strengthen the City of Greater Dandenong's offer as a cultural destination and increase visitation numbers and experience

THEME 3: HISTORY AND HERITAGE

RECORDING HISTORY AND HERITAGE	Capture and preserve local history and cultural heritage in a sustainable and accessible format
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Increase opportunities for the community to engage and connect with Greater Dandenong's history and cultural heritage
INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND HERITAGE	Respect and celebrate local Indigenous culture and heritage

THEME 4: CULTURAL VENUES

COMMUNITY AND ARTIST DEVELOPMENT	Utilise cultural venues as a platform for supporting artist development, enabling community arts and increasing community engagement and participation
OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING VENUES	Enhance existing cultural venues and opportunities
PLANNING FOR FUTURE VENUES	Plan for future cultural venue upgrades and developments

THEME 5: PARTNERSHIPS AND EVALUATION

INTERNAL PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION	Strengthen internal partnerships and improve cross-departmental collaboration
EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS	Establish meaningful partnerships with external stakeholders to support a vibrant, healthy arts and cultural heritage environment
SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	Explore and identify opportunities to attract sponsorship and philanthropic investment in the creative arts and cultural heritage of our city
EVALUATION	Develop and implement a program of relevant and meaningful measures of success for arts and cultural heritage initiatives

Theme 1:

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Key Direction 1.1

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Deliver and support vibrant festivals and events

CONTEXT

The City of Greater Dandenong supports an annual program of dynamic community festivals and events. Events held in the city range from major sporting events to local cultural festivals and include a dynamic calendar of quality civic celebrations. Some events such as the Springvale Lunar New Year are major metropolitan drawcards while others such as the Dandenong Show are part of Dandenong's history. Council's own suite of festivals, such as the Australia Day Festival, has grown to be highly regarded as civic events that draw an audience from all cultural backgrounds.

Festivals and events provide an excellent opportunity for culturally specific and local communities to come together and celebrate. Festivals build a strong sense of community and showcase the municipality in a dynamic and positive way.

Council will continue to support festivals and events as a demonstration of the role they play in building tolerance and social cohesion, providing opportunities for expression and creating a sense of community.

Festivals and events also deliver important economic benefits to the city. Support for community groups to deliver well planned festivals is provided in helping groups to gain skills in effective event administration, marketing and risk management as well as through grant funding.

In 2014, 49,000 people attended five of Greater Dandenong's key festivals and events (Australia Day Festival, Autumn Fest, Springvale Snow Fest, Little Day Out and New Year's Eve). Satisfaction ratings of attendees averaged 82% across these significant occasions. Many events have experienced substantial growth in attendance numbers over recent years. The Australia Day Festival, for example, has increased number of attendees by 186% over the past four years, while the Springvale Snow Fest doubled over two years and the Little Day Out tripled its number of attendees over three years.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 1.1.1. Develop a program of festivals and events across the City that are accessible and inclusive, financially and environmentally sustainable and contribute to the creativity and vibrancy of Greater Dandenong.**
- 1.1.2. Provide support and guidance to community organised festivals and events, with additional support and service to high need groups, such as emerging communities.**
- 1.1.3. Support a range of significant community festivals and events through sponsorship and partnership.**
- 1.1.4. Identify opportunities for investment / enhancement in suitable venues to cater for major events and anticipated growth.**
- 1.1.5. Broaden promotion of festivals and events across metropolitan Melbourne to attract visitors.**

Case Study: Harmony Square

Local residents and visitors embrace Harmony Square as a place to gather with family, meet friends and celebrate occasions.

The 2014 inaugural New Year's Eve celebration saw Harmony Square filled and in 2015 in its second year, over 8000 people enjoyed the evening. With more than 70% of attendees from Greater Dandenong, Harmony Square continues to be a destination for locals to participate in cultural events. Community members noted that the family friendly atmosphere created a strong sense of feeling safe and secure, while the spectacular fireworks and free entertainment ensured the event's success and contributed to a high level of satisfaction.



Theme 1:

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Key Direction 1.2

OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH PROGRAMMING

Maximise opportunities for the community to engage and participate in arts and cultural heritage through performances, exhibitions and other activities

CONTEXT

Research consistently identifies that participation and engagement in arts and cultural heritage can result in significant improvements in personal, family and wider community health and wellbeing. We know that people engage in arts and cultural heritage in different ways and at different levels. For some, barriers exist that prevent or limit their engagement and participation in arts and cultural activities.

Some of the known barriers to engagement and participation in the arts and cultural heritage include:

- Low income
- Low educational attainment
- Language, literacy and cultural background
- Disability

Local experience demonstrates that once a member of the community engages with an arts and cultural venue or activity once, they are highly likely to continue to engage. Creating multiple opportunities for engagement is a key priority, as is ensuring that the experience is safe, affordable, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable.

"I created things I never dreamed I could make. I made friends with women that I would never have met. We meet every week now, and we keep on making new things and inviting new people to join us."

Participant, Cultural Threads 2014

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 1.2.1. **Develop a program of arts and cultural heritage events, performances, exhibitions and other activities across the City that are accessible and inclusive, offer opportunities to actively create art as well as view it, and contribute to the creativity and vibrancy of Greater Dandenong.**
- 1.2.2. **Direct resources into programming that is targeted at attracting new attendees and participants.**
- 1.2.3. **Promote complete experience packages with information about directions, parking, where to eat and drink and complementary activities.**
- 1.2.4. **Explore opportunities to build long-term engagement and loyalty.**
- 1.2.5. **Promote engagement in arts and cultural heritage through the popular and accessible mediums of literacy and online through Greater Dandenong Libraries, using online tools as well as programs and projects.**
- 1.2.6. **Recognise and support local community groups and organisations to continue to provide diverse opportunities to engage with and participate in the arts.**



(Image by Siri Hayes)

Case Study: **Cultural Threads**

Ambitious projects, such as **'Cultural Threads'**, can open unique opportunities for community to participate and interact across cultures, through the arts. Initiated in August 2014, this month-long celebration used the medium of textiles to encourage the community to connect, trade skills, share stories and interweave cultures. The inaugural **'Cultural Threads'** program consisted of workshops, exhibitions, public installations, artist residencies, open studios, film, fashion parade, and makers market. It engaged 608 active participants and an estimated 82,000 visitors across the month. The theme of 'textiles' was chosen as a common link across diverse cultures where the creation of textile-works transcends language.

One group of participants was inspired by the project and established a weekly 'Conversation Circle' where they come together to practise their newly learned English skills and knitting skills. The 'Conversation Circle' activity has been incorporated into Library Services programming and continues to run on a weekly basis.

Theme 1:

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Key Direction 1.3

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ARTS

Implement community development initiatives using arts and cultural heritage as a tool for engagement

CONTEXT

Arts and cultural heritage provide an important and accessible platform for engagement through a community cultural development framework.

Utilising arts and other creative processes as a basis for engaging and working with communities enables Council to connect with sectors of the community where there may be barriers or identified challenges through other processes. Arts and creative activities can facilitate communication and conversations and provide unique opportunities to build relationships and work towards common understanding.

The use of arts as an engagement tool is particularly valuable for culturally and linguistically diverse communities where language may present a barrier. Arts and cultural heritage provides an opportunity for members of the community to express themselves, understand each other and share stories, regardless of language and literacy.

The Community Engagement Policy and Framework provide guidance for thorough, consistent and genuine community development through arts.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 1.3.1. Promote awareness and understanding across Council departments of the potential for the use of arts as an effective community engagement tool.
- 1.3.2. Provide and support arts and cultural experiences that build community cohesion and community connectedness, delivered both by Council and community partners.



Case Study:

'Racism. Get Up. Speak Out.'

'Racism. Get Up. Speak Out.' is a series of cultural community projects that invites local people to share stories that affirm and celebrate positive responses to acts against racism within the Greater Dandenong community.

Informed by the National Anti-Racism Strategy and developed in support of the Australian Human Rights Commission national anti-racism campaign, the project won the 2014 National Awards for Excellence in Local Government in the category of Multicultural Australia – Strength in Diversity. The award recognised the capacity to respond to challenges arising from cultural, religious and linguistic diversity; and acknowledged the potential of arts-based initiatives to use innovative approaches to bring people together to build local social cohesion and community harmony.

'Racism. Get Up. Speak Out.' plays a significant role in advancing Council's position - valuing the cultural diversity within the Greater Dandenong community and working to counter racism through the promotion and acknowledgement of positive community behaviour.

Theme 1:

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Key Direction 1.4

DIVERSITY AND PARTICIPATION

Build community cohesion and community connectedness, celebrate diversity of people of all backgrounds and abilities and remove barriers to participation

CONTEXT

In a community as diverse as Greater Dandenong, varied artistic and cultural community experiences add new meanings to civic life. They contribute to building respect, tolerance, dialogue, mutual trust and understanding.

Cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world, which increases our range of choices and nurtures human capacities and values. UNESCO notes that celebrating and affirming cultural diversity is a mainspring for sustainable development for communities, peoples and nations¹.

The arts have become a powerful way of celebrating our diversity and creating opportunities for inclusiveness and cultural exchange. The Victorian Government Cultural Diversity Action Plan 2012-2020 recognises the strategic importance of art as a universal language of engagement, providing new ways to share our stories with others. The Cultural Diversity Action Plan highlights the importance of investing in and celebrating our cultural diversity as a necessary part of creating social cohesion and democratic governance.

The City of Greater Dandenong will continue to provide innovative and responsive leadership and ongoing guidance to support communities to develop and grow.

Council will work closely with sector stakeholders such as the Disability Advisory Committee, Positive Ageing Committee and the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Advisory Committee to work towards removing barriers to participating in the arts, such as financial circumstance, disability, low levels of education, cultural, religious or language barriers.

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy aims to ensure affordable, accessible and all-abilities initiatives are available to the wider community to counter barriers to participating in the arts, such as financial circumstance, disability, low levels of education, cultural, religious or language barriers.

¹ UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNESCO (2005).

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 1.4.1. Increase awareness and understanding of diversity in the community through arts and cultural heritage initiatives.
- 1.4.2. Promote Council as a leader and advocate at Regional and State forums for inclusiveness and the benefits to cohesive communities.
- 1.4.3. Provide affordable and engaging activities for the community.



Case Study: **'Home and Art'**

'Home and Art' exhibition and art prize has been developed to provide an opportunity for asylum seeker and refugee artists to represent the dreams, memories and aspirations that make up the refugee experience. It presents works by refugee artists to recognise and celebrate the important contribution that refugees are making to the cultural and social fabric of Australia.

The exhibition directly supports artistic development through materials support, cash prizes, artist residencies and mentorship, while the initiative works to promote social inclusion and engage the community through the intrinsic value of diversity.



Theme 2: CULTURAL DESTINATION

Key Direction 2.1

PUBLIC ART AND PLACE ACTIVATION

Activate public places and spaces through public art and other arts and cultural initiatives

CONTEXT

Arts and cultural programming in public spaces, and public art in particular, create opportunities to enrich the experience of public spaces and provides a platform for local stories to be shared. Public art plays a valuable role in enhancing the pedestrian experience and adding elements of surprise into the environment. Art in public spaces positively influences how people feel about where they live.

The City of Greater Dandenong has a long-standing commitment to public art and has a diverse and dynamic collection with more than 60 public art installations across the municipality. The public art collection features permanent, temporary and ephemeral initiatives that invite locals and visitors to engage with and reinterpret their environment in new and challenging ways.

The public art program provides artists with the opportunity to professionally develop in their practice and creates pathways to further education and employment in the arts sector. These pathways are a valued outcome which has strengthened partnerships with the tertiary sector over a number of years.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 2.1.1. Support the role of multi-form public art in creating local identity and building a vibrant city.
- 2.1.2. Increase community awareness, knowledge and engagement with public art.
- 2.1.3. Develop a maintenance program for new and existing public art and other historical and heritage infrastructure such as plaques and monuments, covering maintenance, restoration and decommissioning.
- 2.1.4. Continue to celebrate local stories throughout the city.
- 2.1.5. Recognise and strengthen the role of Council's Public Art Advisory Committee to guide the processes for selection of public art.



Case Study: The Journey

Greater Dandenong recognises the significant role public art plays in enhancing the aesthetic value of a building and in creating an iconic focal point for the community. In 2014 Council commissioned a major artwork for the new civic complex, attracting interest from contemporary artists across Australia. Three designs were reviewed through community consultation and an Arts Advisory Panel.

'Journey' by artists Kris Coad and Julie Squires comprises three canoe-shaped sculptures associated with the role waterways have played, around and across the municipality. The waterways, which have existed from the earliest of times, were of great importance to the development of Dandenong. From the early history of the area to the current era of the city, Dandenong has had a vital role as a 'food bowl' for what became Greater Melbourne. The three sculptures made from bone china and wire, are suspended in the Dandenong Civic Centre central reception area as if floating on an unseen waterway, casting striking shadows on the adjacent walls.



Theme 2: CULTURAL DESTINATION

Key Direction 2.2

CREATIVE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Incorporate creative elements into future building and infrastructure projects

CONTEXT

Enriching the public domain with creative arts and elements celebrating cultural heritage builds a vibrant and interesting city. Integrating creative elements into the design and construction of public buildings and other infrastructure in the public domain ensures the distinctiveness of local places is reflected.

To ensure a high level of amenity to residents, the City of Greater Dandenong makes a significant investment each year on infrastructure improvements, including community facilities, sports facilities and pavilions. Council further invests in other forms of public infrastructure including roads, bridges, footpaths and bike paths, parks, open space landscaping and streetscapes, off-street car parks and other structures.

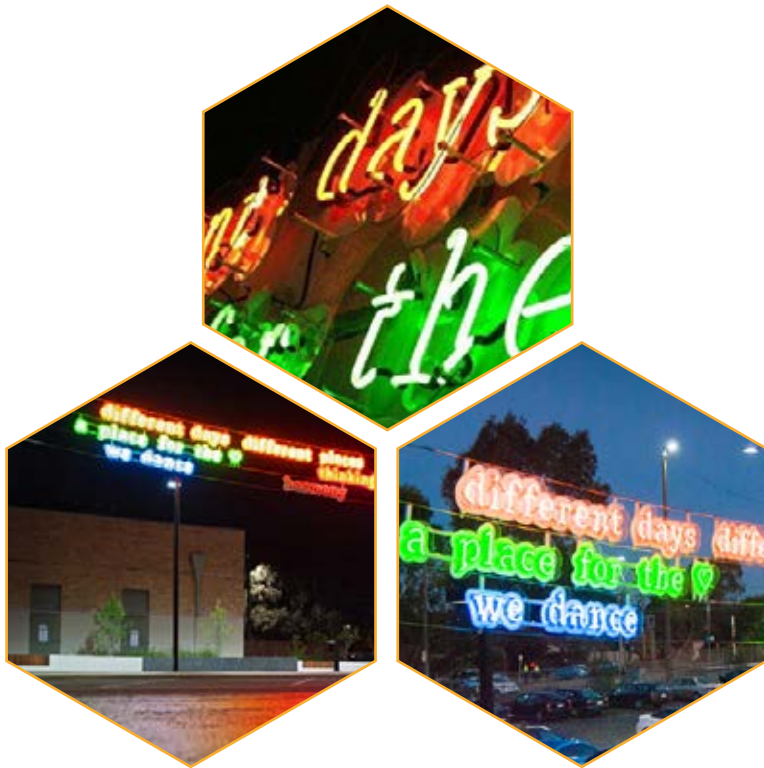
A significant opportunity exists to incorporate creative arts and cultural heritage elements into future building and infrastructure projects. This will develop a unique public domain and add value to the material and natural fabric of the city. It will contribute to community wellbeing by providing facilities and spaces the community can be proud of.

A key priority is to develop strong internal partnerships that will enable creative elements to be incorporated into building and infrastructure projects from the earliest stage of planning, with the aim to achieve enhanced outcomes within existing budgets and time parameters.

The elements will be life-cycle costed and maintained under allocated budgets.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 2.2.1. Identify opportunities to incorporate creative arts and cultural heritage elements into public buildings, master plans and infrastructure projects.
- 2.2.2. Proactively pursue opportunities for local artists to contribute to the design and development of minor works and capital improvement projects.
- 2.2.3. Advocate for the inclusion of creative elements in all major State and Federal Government funded capital projects in Greater Dandenong.



Case Study:

Noble Park Civic Square

In 2013 Council redeveloped an under-utilised piece of land into a welcoming and engaging community space. The redevelopment took place over five years with extensive community consultation and an innovative approach to community engagement centring on a series of creative conversations to co-create the space.

The whole-of-council project includes seating, lighting, toilet facilities and community stage with a focus on a public artwork that brings the community together. The captivating and festive artwork entitled “**...a place for gathering**” is the work of visual artists Fiona Hillary and Sarah Haq and musician Hugo Cran. Featuring large scale neon text and an integrated sound component, the artwork frames the entrance to the Noble Park Civic Space, Douglas Street. A selection of words and phrases captured as part of the community creative conversations feature in neon text and a range of community voices and environmental noises were used in the sound bites which accompany the artwork.

“**...a place for gathering**” explores and celebrates what a gathering place means to the local community. The Noble Park Civic Space was recognised with an LGPro Award for Excellence in Community Assets and Infrastructure initiative \$1 million and under.

Theme 2:

CULTURAL DESTINATION

Key Direction 2.3

CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Strengthen the City of Greater Dandenong's offer as a cultural destination and increase visitation numbers and experience

CONTEXT

Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing areas of the visitation market. Destinations are increasingly using cultural and creative industries to enhance their competitiveness. By encouraging a strong creative and cultural offer through the celebration of what is distinct in Greater Dandenong, new visitors will be attracted to the growing number of local creative activities and businesses.

Council is committed to the vision of the City of Greater Dandenong as a visitor destination that makes the most of our vibrant, multicultural community and culinary reputation. Greater Dandenong will be known as a creative city, rich in arts and cultural heritage and recognised as one of Melbourne's distinctive destinations for cultural tourism.

The City of Greater Dandenong Tourism Strategy 2014-2018 acknowledges the strengths already present in the community, including the range of cultural venues of excellence, premium arts programs, diverse cultural celebrations and festivals. The Tourism Strategy acknowledges opportunities exist to build on existing strengths in food and cultural diversity, by supporting activities in cultural precincts, such as Little India, the Springvale Asian precinct and the Afghan Bazaar, identifying opportunities for the creative industries to grow. These will contribute to growing visitor numbers and increasing visitor expenditure in the municipality.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 2.3.1. Develop and deliver major arts and cultural events to attract visitors into the city and maximise the visitor experience.**
- 2.3.2. Support the further development and promotion of cultural precincts, such as Little India, the Springvale Asian precinct and the Afghan Bazaar, as key destinations for diverse cultural experiences.**
- 2.3.3. Value and encourage the development of creative businesses and social enterprises.**



Case Study:

Dandenong's Afghan Bazaar Cultural Precinct

Dandenong's Afghan Bazaar is an award winning cultural precinct in Thomas Street that integrates authentic cultural elements and an integrated artwork into the urban streetscape.

Council partnered with the community in 2011 to address local concerns including low amenity, outdated branding and social and physical disconnection. Local community were empowered to shape the vision for the precinct and to develop a unifying design framework. The innovative consultation method and collaborative, community driven design process saw solutions emerge that identified themes and uses, materials, colours and patterns that reference Arabic geometries. The Afghan Bazaar project is a source of community pride and renewed identity and is a place for the community to share its traditions and culture.

Theme 3:

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Key Direction 3.1

RECORDING HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Capture and preserve local history and cultural heritage in a sustainable and accessible format

CONTEXT

City of Greater Dandenong has a rich local history which has shaped the municipality over time from pre-European settlement, through a colonial and agrarian past and in to the modern day. Access to the history of a place helps residents, new migrants and others to learn about their new community. Links with our history and heritage help foster civic responsibility and citizenship and contribute to everyone's quality of life.

The City of Greater of Dandenong is committed to protecting, managing, promoting and celebrating local history and heritage, including the capture of local historical stories and the preservation of significant sites and artifacts.

The Greater Dandenong Green Wedge Management Plan (2014) identifies areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and a number of post-contact heritage sites. These aspects of the heritage of the area need to be respected and conserved. Additional interpretation and explanation will assist in making these aspects of the area better known and understood.

The community contributes to the capture and celebration of local

stories. The Springvale and District Historical Society and the Dandenong and District Historical Society, with their passionate and dedicated volunteers, value and celebrate history and cultural heritage, building collections of local and regional stories to share with the community.

Building partnerships with communities and ensuring meaningful participation in identifying and capturing significant historical memories with a diverse range of stakeholders will enable the city to protect these cultural assets and stories for the future.

Council believes effective conservation and management today will ensure that items of value, beauty and importance to the community are preserved for future generations to enjoy. The establishment of a shared historical archive is an important first step in preserving local heritage items and the development of a web based digital platform for accessing these items will enhance community understanding. City of Greater Dandenong will show leadership and, by working in

partnership with the community, enable a range of opportunities to record and preserve local history. Together these shared resources will be the driver to making the collections and programs more widely accessible

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 3.1.1. Proactively support the capture, preservation and presentation of local history and heritage in formats that are secure and protected.**
- 3.1.2. Ensure the efficient and effective storage of items relevant to the city's history in a shared archival facility in partnership with the Springvale and District Historical Society and the Dandenong and District Historical Society.**
- 3.1.3. Value, support and recognise the work of organisations, schools, historical societies, volunteers and individuals in their role of capturing, preserving and presenting local history and heritage and engaging with the public.**
- 3.1.4. Work with the local historical societies to plan for sustainability so that they remain strong, viable and relevant organisations within the community.**
- 3.1.5. Facilitate links between the historical societies and community groups of diverse cultural backgrounds to capture, preserve, share and celebrate their history and cultural heritage.**
- 3.1.6. Identify opportunities to expand, update and make accessible the city's history and heritage.**
- 3.1.7. Prioritise the development of policies and procedures to ensure digital capture of archival material is effectively supported and managed.**

Case Study:

ANZAC Centenary Historic Trail

The ANZAC Centenary Historic Trail commemorates Greater Dandenong's significant cultural connection to the First World War. Developed through close consultation and partnership with local Returned Services Leagues (RSLs) and historical societies, the interpretive trail uses contemporary technology to create a connected experience for pedestrians. The trail reveals the unique stories of the community and adds positive interruptions to our daily journeys. The ANZAC trail forms part of Greater Dandenong's interpretive history suite that preserves and acknowledges the local stories and heritage.

Theme 3:

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Key Direction 3.2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Increase opportunities for the community to engage and connect with Greater Dandenong's history and cultural heritage

CONTEXT

The celebration of significant dates, recording or documenting of moments in time and holding of keepsakes, reminders and souvenirs in a repository contribute to the community's sense of identity and wellbeing. Similarly, the sharing of cultural history, traditions and customs - including stories, artefacts, music, food, dance, art, crafts, dress, rituals and other practices - breaks down barriers, increases tolerance, understanding and respect for others, and builds stronger communities.

The City of Greater Dandenong provides opportunities for the wider community to engage with the past through a range of exhibitions, interpretive displays and participatory programs. Together these acknowledgements of place, culture and heritage enable each new generation to build connection and understanding of the past and the pride to carry these customs and traditions forward.

The Civic Collection's digitisation program will see the electronic data capture of local heritage collections, images and stories made easily available to the wider, even global, community. The creation of a shared archival facility offers new opportunities to build a dynamic program of storytelling and capture that will engage and inspire current and future generations in celebrating the history and heritage of the district.

As the local historical societies digitise their collections and move towards full utilisation of the shared archive, Council may need to consider further processes to accommodate their needs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 3.2.1. Support local and community initiatives to celebrate and commemorate significant historical events and their relationship to Greater Dandenong.
- 3.2.2. Support the community to practice, maintain and share their cultural heritage, traditions and languages.
- 3.2.3. Increase community engagement with Council's heritage and cultural collection (the Civic Collection).



Case Study: Poppies for Peace

As part of the Greater Dandenong Anzac Centenary commemorations, artists and local community collaborated to create more than 40 large-scaled poppies as a tribute to those who have died in war and as a symbol of hope for peace. Over 300 community members contributed to making the poppies including local schools, community groups and community members re-united from the 2014 Cultural Threads project.

The **'Poppies for Peace'** reinforced the strong community links to historical installations across the municipality and provided opportunities for the community to share stories. The poppies were produced in collaboration with local historical societies, and special poppies were presented to each of the local Returned Services Leagues, as a gift for inclusion in their own ANZAC Day commemorations.

The temporary installation of poppies was 'planted' on the grassed area of Harmony Square and proved to be a popular backdrop for community photos.

Theme 3:

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Key Direction 3.3

INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND HERITAGE

*Respect and celebrate local Indigenous culture and heritage***CONTEXT**

The City of Greater Dandenong has a rich Indigenous history and heritage, which should be understood, respected and celebrated.

The area in which Greater Dandenong is now located was the territory of the Wurundjeri and Boonerwung (or Bunurong) tribes of the Kulin Nation and language group. The City of Greater Dandenong lies across the boundary of two neighbouring Bunurong Clans. It takes in the south-eastern land of the Ngaruk Willam Bunurong and the north-west land of the Mayone Bulluk Bunurong. The traditional lands of the Bunurong people extend from the Werribee River in the north-west down to Wilson's Promontory in the south-east taking in the catchments of the old Carrum Swamp, Tarwin River and Westernport Bay and include the Mornington Peninsula and French and Phillip Islands. Indigenous land use patterns show concentrations of people around the former Carrum Swamp, the floodplain, wetlands and elevated areas along Dandenong Creek.

Aboriginal living patterns were severely disrupted when European settlers arrived in the Port Phillip region. The Aboriginal population declined by 80 per cent in the period from 1834 to 1850. When compounded by the loss of land and the disappearance of traditional ways of life, the adverse affects for local indigenous people were dramatic.

Cultural heritage assets, from both pre and post European settlement periods and including the remains of significant meeting and ceremonial sites for Aboriginal tribes, are identified in the Green Wedge Management Plan. These sites still have deep significance and meaning for contemporary Aboriginal residents. Included are areas of archeological and cultural significance such as the scarred trees and artifact scatters which are possibly the largest concentration of such sites in Victoria.

Aboriginal cultural heritage is an invaluable part of the history of Greater Dandenong and Council continues to seek ways to protect and preserve this heritage. Council supports the Bunurong People in continuing to practice their traditions and culture, to help preserve and protect the sites that remain of their pre-settlement history and to educate and inform the community of the value and richness of Indigenous culture and history.

Each year, the Aboriginal community celebrates its survival and significant historical events. These celebrations centre around Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. Greater Dandenong continues to support these events and join with the Aboriginal community to celebrate.

A significant opportunity exists to support the community to better understand, respect and celebrate local Indigenous history and heritage

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 3.3.1. Strengthen community understanding and respect for Indigenous history and heritage.**
- 3.3.2. Improve community access to information about local and broader Indigenous history and heritage.**



Theme 4:

CULTURAL VENUES

Key Direction 4.1

COMMUNITY AND ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

Utilise cultural venues as a platform for supporting artist development, enabling community arts and increasing community engagement and participation

CONTEXT

Greater Dandenong has made a significant commitment to providing cultural venues for performance, exhibition and engagement over many years.

Cultural venues provide one of many important opportunities for Council to support artist development, enable community arts initiatives and support increased community engagement and participation.

The City of Greater Dandenong recognises the contribution from the creative community to the vibrancy and opportunity available in the city. Our diversity creates a distinctive environment for creative engagement and art-making. Council is committed to attracting, engaging and supporting artists and people involved in the creative industries. Where possible, Council will enable the development of pathways for artists to develop skills to aid their professional development and move toward a sustainable practice.

Opportunities for skills development, knowledge sharing, creative participation in professional outcomes as well as spaces to create,

perform and exhibit, all contribute to the establishment of a creative, dynamic community. Collaborations between artists, arts sector stakeholders, community groups and the public contribute to creative development.

Cultural venues provide an important platform in enabling and supporting community arts initiatives. This includes a variety of exhibition spaces across the municipality. The overarching goal or vision for the development of community arts is to provide low cost and accessible programs for all members of the community to engage in learning a skill, participating in activities and developing arts projects in a group context.

The City of Greater Dandenong believes engagement and participation in the arts inspire and challenge us with new ideas, giving us a fresh perspective on the way we view the world. Community cultural development is an effective force for social change and cultural renewal and is a powerful medium for the expression of people's journeys, discoveries and aspirations.

The city supports the provision of opportunities for the wider community to have access to creative projects as a way to build a strong and cohesive community. We know from community feedback that residents value these opportunities as important and relevant to their lives, with records confirming that creative engagement and arts participation increases every year.

Arts and cultural activities encourage participants to feel better as they provide opportunities to meet new people, make new friends, learn something new and explore new places. Cultural venues provide a key platform for individuals, families and communities come together to engage and participate in creative and cultural activities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.1.1. **Support local and emerging artists and groups through professional development pathways including mentoring, networking, work experience, exhibition, performance and residency opportunities.**
- 4.1.2. **Promote and support the Hive Creative Network as a tool for creative development and community engagement.**
- 4.1.3. **Provide opportunities for artists and creative workers from under-represented communities to be supported and engaged through the arts.**
- 4.1.4. **Identify ways to enable under-represented art-forms to grow.**
- 4.1.5. **Increase participation in arts based activities across the venues.**
- 4.1.6. **Ensure all activities are affordable and accessible to the community.**

Case Study: The Hive Creative Network

The Hive Creative Network was established in response to Greater Dandenong residents who indicated a desire to connect as a creative community. **The Hive** is a platform for artists to share ideas and aspirations about the creative future of the city through community collaborations and a program of professional development seminars, networking opportunities, exhibitions, artist residencies, and creative and commercial opportunities. **The Hive** is a forum for appreciators, creators and makers of all art forms – visual artists, filmmakers, writers, musicians, dancers, crafters, sculptors and more.

Launched in 2014 with an opening registration of over 100 artists, membership continues to thrive as local and regional artistes recognise **The Hive** as a valuable platform to explore creativity.



Theme 4:

CULTURAL VENUES

Key Direction 4.2

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING VENUES

Enhance existing cultural venues and opportunities

DRUM THEATRE

Greater Dandenong has made a significant commitment to ensuring the Drum Theatre is a premium regional performing arts venue, located in central Dandenong.

In Drum Theatre's ten year history, it has provided the local and regional community with range of arts experiences and access to world-class performances.

The venue is the centre point of a revitalised Dandenong, providing top quality facilities in a full-service theatre and well as meeting and function facilities. It also aims to support the development of innovative programs, activities and events which promote arts participation for all ages.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.2.1. Increase attendance rates for theatre and arts engagement activities through a diversity of programs and affordable opportunities to focus on enhanced community engagement.**
- 4.2.2. Increase community awareness of the theatre through improved signage, marketing and promotion.**
- 4.2.3. Increase active utilisation of spaces and facilities within the theatre.**



HERITAGE HILL

Heritage Hill is a unique historic precinct, located in the heart of Dandenong. The property is set on two acres of landscaped gardens and comprises three beautifully preserved buildings; Laurel Lodge (1869), Benga (1936) and St James Anglican Church (1864).

Since its acquisition by Council in the 1970's, the primary role of Heritage Hill has been to promote the history and heritage of the properties and the Dandenong area. In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on growing community usage of the buildings by developing arts participation activities such as classes, children's workshops and exhibitions. An artist in residence program supports the growing public program with a steady series of classes, courses and exhibitions. The buildings, gardens and programs attract visitors from across metropolitan Melbourne and beyond. Heritage Hill also offers facilities for hire.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.2.4. Strengthen Heritage Hill's role as a cultural heritage and community arts venue and grow its offer to visitors.**
- 4.2.5. Develop programs and grow engagement as a community arts venue to diversify and expand its visitor base.**
- 4.2.6. Increase community awareness and engagement with Heritage Hill through improved marketing and promotion.**



GALLERY

The City of Greater Dandenong is committed to the ongoing provision of a high quality gallery for visual art exhibitions in the city. Currently, Council's gallery is located in Walker Street, Dandenong, in the Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre.

The primary role of the gallery is to host an exciting range of curated high quality and diverse exhibitions from leading Australian artists. There is a monthly rotation of exhibitions, complemented by artist talks, music events, community workshops and activities.

The venue also consists of a small performing arts theatre which is home to Fusion Theatre, a performance group for adults with a disability, a room which is the current home of the Greater Dandenong Band and small meeting rooms, which can be hired by the public.

The current facility is limited in its ability to meet the future needs of a premium visual art exhibition space. As such, Council will, over the long term, explore options and the feasibility of relocating the gallery from the existing facility to another suitable location in Greater Dandenong. In the interim, Council remains committed to the ongoing provision of a high quality gallery for visual art exhibitions through the Walker Street facility.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.2.7. Develop programs and grow engagement as a quality arts venue to diversify and expand its visitor base.**



LIBRARIES

The Greater Dandenong Libraries are two of Council's critically important, cultural venues. Greater Dandenong Libraries provide a wide range of reading, educational and leisure experiences through branches in Springvale and Dandenong and a virtual online library. Residents and visitors utilise the libraries for a diverse range of purposes.

Greater Dandenong Libraries attract more than 1,000,000 visits per year – or 2,500 visitors per day. The Greater Dandenong Libraries present an enormous opportunity to engage the community, with 53% of all residents being members of the library.

Greater Dandenong Libraries offer a wide range of arts and cultural heritage opportunities, including reading, access to literature, free Internet access, workshops, exhibitions, performances and artists in residence.

Membership and attendance at the libraries is free, providing an affordable, accessible and welcoming environment to enable engagement in a wide range of activities. The Greater Dandenong Libraries experience a high level of community trust and perceived safety, and offer extended opening hours. Together, these support a high level of usage and ensure visitors feel safe and welcome.

According to Arts Nation research findings, reading is the most popular way of consuming the arts, with 87% of Australians reading some form of literature. We know that over half of the population use the Internet to watch or download art product, such as music, visual art, performances or creative writing. This is particularly relevant for people who do not physically attend arts events. The libraries present a major opportunity to further enable community access to and engagement with arts and culture.

Libraries are increasingly becoming places for cultural engagement. Emerging trends see libraries developing as 'maker spaces' where digital learning takes place in areas such as animation, digital art, recording music, 3D printing and electronic gaming. Access to free Internet at libraries provides a key opportunity for people who do not physically attend arts events to engage in the arts. Supporting efforts to improve literacy rates will increase opportunities for residents to engage in the arts through literature.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.2.8. Increase engagement in the Libraries with arts and cultural heritage.**
- 4.2.9. Strengthen opportunities for library users to engage in the practice of making digital art and skills development, particularly in such areas as computer gaming, animation, 3D printing, film making and other digital art forms.**
- 4.2.10. Expand artists and writers in residence opportunities to enable library users to engage with artists.**
- 4.2.11. Incorporate suitable spaces and facilities into the design and construction of the new Springvale Library for exhibition, performances and arts creation..**



HARMONY SQUARE AND SCREEN

Harmony Square and Screen is located in central Dandenong and forms part of the City of Greater Dandenong's Civic Centre precinct, together with the Council offices and library.

Harmony Square comprises a dynamic public open space and a generous and welcoming community square, an exceptional meeting place and focal point for community events and celebrations. Further use of the space will build greater opportunity for community members to linger and to experience Harmony Square as safe, welcoming and exciting.

A key element of the square is a large digital screen used to exhibit locally produced film content as well as shared content from further afield.

The screen provides a platform for the development and exhibition of digital art and is a key enabling tool for festivals, events and other community gatherings in the public square.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.2.12. Increase activation of Harmony Square by developing a program of innovative arts and cultural activities in conjunction with key community groups.**
- 4.2.13. Increase use of the screen as a tool to enable and support digital art development and promote arts and cultural heritage activities.**



THE CASTLE

The Castle is the City of Greater Dandenong's premier music venue, located in Hemmings Park, Dandenong. The venue features a main function room with a capacity of 350 people, performance stage, upstairs balcony room and outdoor space, kiosk, outdoor courtyard and catering space and kitchen.

The Castle is primarily used as a venue for hire, with a strong reputation as an excellent location for community events and a focus on youth activity.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.2.14. Increase use of The Castle as a multi-purpose venue for the delivery of performance based arts and cultural activities.**



OTHER PUBLIC SPACES, INCLUDING PARKS AND GARDENS

The City of Greater Dandenong is fortunate to have a wide range public spaces, places and facilities that can enable and support arts and cultural heritage. These include outdoor urban spaces, parks, gardens, halls, reserves and other public buildings.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.2.15. Examine opportunities for arts and cultural heritage programming in diverse public spaces and venues throughout the city, including Council's Parks and Reserves.**

Theme 4: CULTURAL VENUES

Key Direction 4.3

PLANNING FOR FUTURE VENUES

Plan for future cultural venue upgrades and developments

CONTEXT

Cultural venues provide an important platform for the delivery of arts and cultural heritage and engagement with the community.

Significant opportunities exist to plan for upgrades to existing cultural venues, enhancement of other venues and facilities to accommodate cultural activities such as open spaces, and new developments.

Central to the future provision of high quality and fit for purpose cultural venues is sound planning well in advance of development and linking to other venue development opportunities, to deliver multipurpose and resource efficient outcomes.

The City of Greater Dandenong will proactively plan for future cultural venue upgrades and developments.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 4.3.1. Explore options and the feasibility of relocating the gallery and long term cultural tenants.
- 4.3.2. Identify opportunities to integrate space and facilities within new facilities for heritage exhibition, display and research and to accommodate creative arts performances, workshops, exhibitions and displays.
- 4.3.3. Explore the provision of cultural elements in the refurbishment and redevelopment of recreation centres with the aim of broadening opportunities for community engagement and participation in such venues.
- 4.3.4. Undertake a strategic review of The Castle to identify renovations and upgrades to enable increased usability and usage.
- 4.3.5. Explore opportunities and plan for the development of a future Dandenong Community Hub, including the provision of cultural elements and display spaces for arts and cultural heritage exhibitions.
- 4.3.6. Develop an outdoor events venue plan to ensure outdoor spaces are adequately designed and equipped to host events.

Case Study: **Dandenong Library**

Designed and developed as part of the Greater Dandenong Civic Building and Harmony Square complex, **Dandenong Library** offers a welcoming and intimate space to the diverse community. This pivotal cultural venue is infused with local symbolic cultural meaning and brings the community together in an engaging, creative, welcoming and inclusive space.

The **Library** has state-of-the-art technology and services where people of all ages and cultures come together to learn, engage and try new activities which may lead them on the path to further learning and new interests.

Program spaces are open and welcoming and invite people to watch or participate in programs and activities.

Theme 5:

PARTNERSHIPS AND EVALUATION

Key Direction 5.1

INTERNAL PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Strengthen internal partnerships and improve cross-departmental collaboration

CONTEXT

The successful planning and delivery of arts and cultural heritage throughout the City of Greater Dandenong relies on strong partnerships across Council departments and collaboration with available resources.

Arts and cultural heritage has an influence across all Council departments and sectors of the community. An opportunity exists to build on existing partnerships across Council and strengthen collaborative planning and delivery of arts and cultural events and initiatives.

Strong internal partnerships and a collaborative approach enable good planning, effective engagement with targeted communities and multiple Council objectives to be achieved through any given arts and cultural initiative.

As Council experiences increasing competition for limited resources, priority will need to be given to identifying further opportunities for efficiencies through partnering and resource sharing.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 5.1.1. Strengthen collaboration, skill sharing and resource efficiencies across Council departments, cultural programs and venues in the planning, programming and implementation of arts and cultural heritage initiatives.
- 5.1.2. Identify shared marketing opportunities across Council departments and cultural venues to better promote and cross promote arts and cultural heritage opportunities in Greater Dandenong and across the region.



Case Study: Dandenong Market

Founded in 1866, **Dandenong Market** is an iconic Melbourne destination. As a non-arts partner, the Market provides opportunities to connect and engage with the community across all parts of their business. Some successful arts and cultural collaborations include working with Healthy Together Greater Dandenong and the Dandenong Market on planning and implementation of **'The Kitchen'** and **'The Cubby Pear'** initiatives as well as the Market's 150th birthday celebrations. Another success was connecting local business Twitch with the Dandenong Market through the Greater Dandenong Social Enterprises Mentoring Program.

The **Dandenong Market** provides the opportunity for incidental community engagement with arts through comprehensive programming, displays and exhibitions.

Theme 5:

PARTNERSHIPS AND EVALUATION

Key Direction 5.2

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Establish meaningful partnerships with external stakeholders to support a vibrant, healthy arts and cultural heritage environment

CONTEXT

Effective and sustained partnerships are central to the future growth, development and success of arts and cultural heritage in the City of Greater Dandenong.

Council acknowledges that strong partnerships will be critical to the ongoing provision of high quality arts and cultural heritage venues and delivery of performances, exhibitions, events, workshops, programs and projects throughout Greater Dandenong.

A range of significant opportunities exist to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones where strategic interests and priorities align, to jointly plan and deliver successful arts and cultural heritage outcomes.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 5.2.1. Develop partnerships with young people to support and encourage active engagement and involvement in arts and cultural activities across the city.
- 5.2.2. Strengthen program and support for attraction and retention of volunteers.
- 5.2.3. Build partnerships with state and federal governments, peak bodies and other key external agencies to support projects that deliver on shared objectives.
- 5.2.4. Identify and pursue opportunities to form strategic partnerships with the private sector and non-government organisations to support delivery of arts and cultural heritage projects.
- 5.2.5. Identify opportunities to work with Dandenong Market to continue to bring performances and visual arts to the site.
- 5.2.6. Engage with community groups, neighbourhood houses, organisations and key agencies to plan and deliver on significant arts and cultural projects in Greater Dandenong.
- 5.2.7. Foster strong partnerships with leaders of diverse cultural groups across Greater Dandenong.

Case Study: **Fusion Theatre**

Fusion Theatre is a company of performers of different abilities and reflects the diversity of the Greater Dandenong community.

Since establishment in 1997, **Fusion** has partnered with Greater Dandenong as beneficiary of financial support through the Community Grants Program, with long-term in-kind support for performance and rehearsal space, through local residencies and through commissioned performances for community events.

Greater Dandenong and **Fusion Theatre** work together to raise awareness of issues and opportunities around disability and inclusivity in the arts and to promote an affirmative view of disability through the performing arts.

Theme 5:

PARTNERSHIPS AND EVALUATION

Key Direction 5.3

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

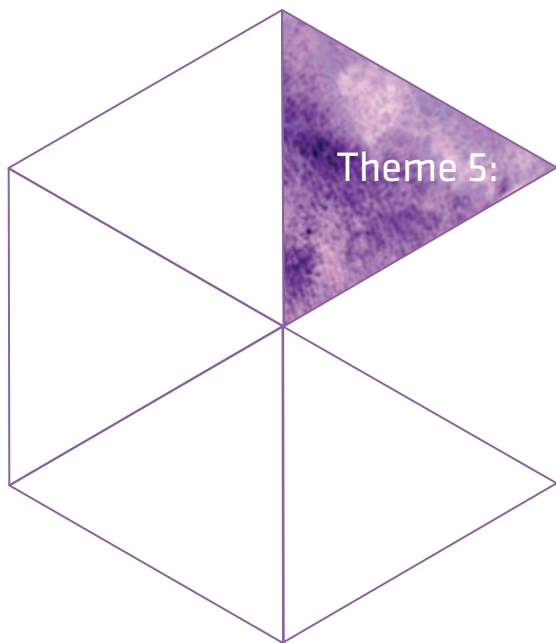
Explore and identify opportunities to attract sponsorship and philanthropic investment in the creative arts and cultural heritage of our city

CONTEXT

Looking to the future, Council acknowledges the increasing financial pressures facing local government and the ongoing competition for resourcing. Funding partnerships with state and federal governments and other agencies will be essential in meeting this challenge.

Significant opportunities also exist to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with business and philanthropic organisations to sponsor and invest in arts and cultural heritage initiatives in the City of Greater Dandenong.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**5.3.1. Implement processes to identify and attract key sponsors.**



Theme 5:

PARTNERSHIPS AND EVALUATION

Key Direction 5.4 EVALUATION

Develop and implement a program of relevant and meaningful measures of success for arts and cultural heritage initiatives

CONTEXT

Measuring outcomes and the success of arts and cultural heritage venues, performances, exhibitions, events, programs and projects is a high priority over coming years. Being able to assess the value of investments, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, enables Council to make informed decisions about the future planning and delivery of arts and cultural heritage. It also assists Council to ensure that effort and investment is directed to facilities and initiatives that deliver the most significant benefit and value to the Greater Dandenong community.

Traditionally, impact and success is measured in terms of participation rates and economic returns, such as ticket sales and local economic impact. While these numeric measures provide an important and informative insight to the success of a venue or activity, there is considerably more scope to evaluate the full impact and value of arts and cultural heritage, particularly measures related to health and wellbeing. The benefits of engaging in arts and cultural heritage provide significant and wide-ranging benefits to individuals, groups and communities, many

of which are intangible and long-term in nature. Qualifying the value of investment in arts and cultural heritage is an ongoing challenge to governments and organisations in the sector.

Looking to the future, a key priority will be to standardise the approach to evaluation and better incorporate qualitative measures of impact and success, which are critical to fully understanding the benefits of investment in arts and cultural heritage in the community. This is particularly relevant in the City of Greater Dandenong, where arts and cultural heritage play a key role in engaging disconnected communities, reducing social isolation, creating a sense of inclusion and fostering individual and community identities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- 5.4.1. Develop a standardised framework for the measurement and evaluation of all arts and cultural heritage programs, projects, events and venues.**

