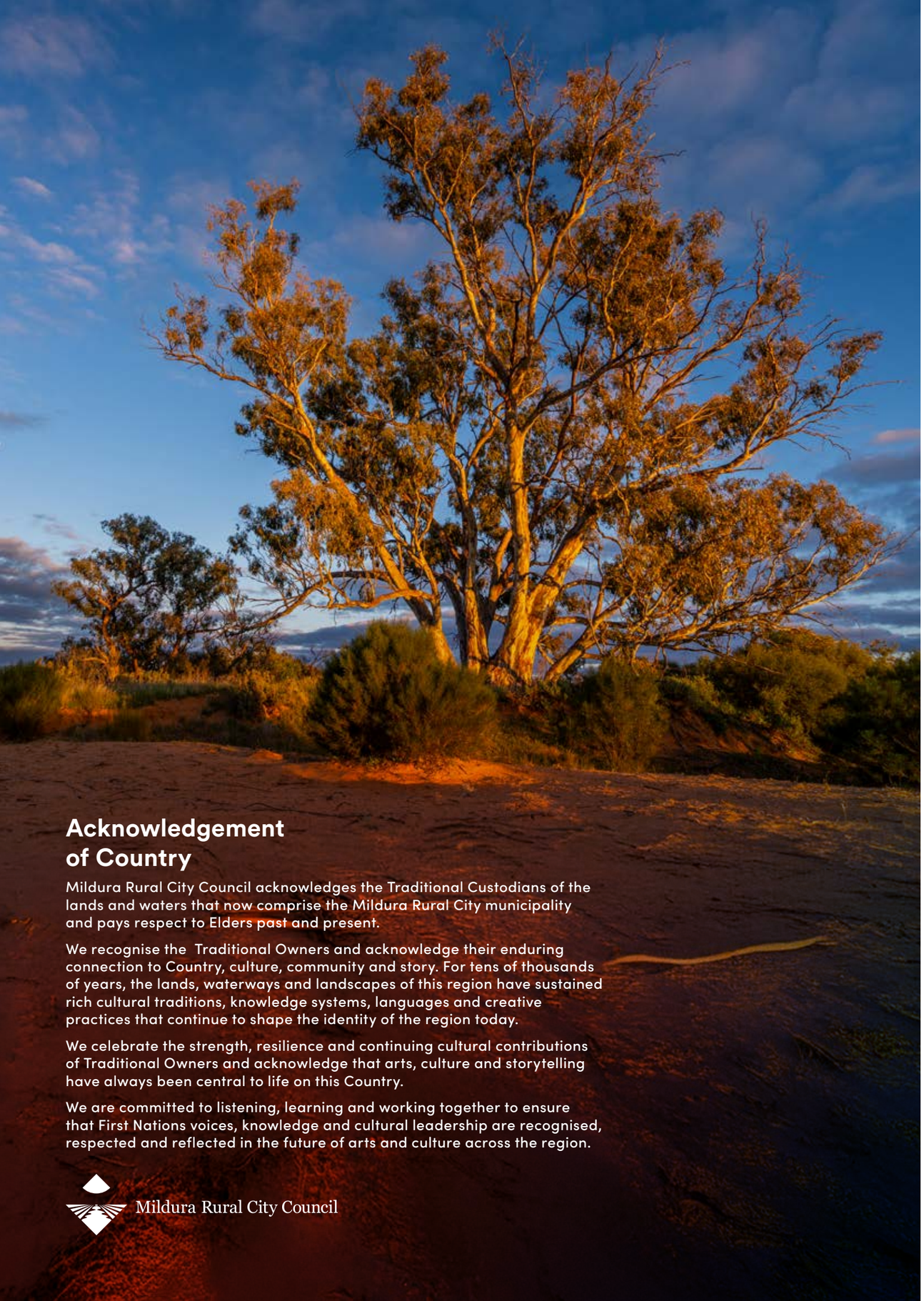
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Cultivating Vibrancy

Arts and Culture Strategy 2027–2032

Mildura Rural City Council



Acknowledgement of Country

Mildura Rural City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters that now comprise the Mildura Rural City municipality and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise the Traditional Owners and acknowledge their enduring connection to Country, culture, community and story. For tens of thousands of years, the lands, waterways and landscapes of this region have sustained rich cultural traditions, knowledge systems, languages and creative practices that continue to shape the identity of the region today.

We celebrate the strength, resilience and continuing cultural contributions of Traditional Owners and acknowledge that arts, culture and storytelling have always been central to life on this Country.

We are committed to listening, learning and working together to ensure that First Nations voices, knowledge and cultural leadership are recognised, respected and reflected in the future of arts and culture across the region.

Mildura Rural City Council

PLACEHOLDER

Message from the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee



Mildura has always been a place where creativity finds a way.

It can be found in the world's oldest continuing cultures and the enduring cultural knowledge and creative practices of the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee. It can be found in the stories and traditions brought by generations of people who have made this region home. And it can be found in our theatres, galleries, halls, festivals, studios, streets and public spaces – wherever people come together to make, perform, share and imagine.

We inherit an extraordinary cultural legacy.

For generations, people across our region have demonstrated remarkable ambition, creativity and determination to bring ideas to life, build cultural opportunities and enrich our communities. Community members formed bands, theatre companies, dance schools, festivals and historical societies. Artists and cultural leaders took risks. Volunteers gave countless hours. Bold ideas, such as the Mildura Sculpture Triennials, placed our region within national and international cultural conversations.

Much of what we value today exists because somebody before us believed it was worth creating.

Cultivating Vibrancy – Arts and Culture Strategy 2026–2031 asks what we will contribute to that continuing story. What opportunities will we create for the next generation? What spaces, organisations and ideas will we nurture? And what will people look back on in another fifty years and recognise as the legacy of our time?

As the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee, we believe our region should be ambitious about the role of culture in its future.

That means valuing creativity in all its forms and supporting the people already making extraordinary things happen, while creating space for new voices and ideas. It means strengthening cultural leadership, embracing the diversity of our community, investing in young people, supporting volunteers and organisations, and ensuring geography or circumstance is not a barrier to participating in cultural life.

It also means being prepared to think big.

Regional communities should not have to choose between celebrating what makes them distinctive and pursuing cultural ambition. Mildura has demonstrated throughout its history that we can do both.

The Advisory Committee is proud to champion this Strategy and work with Council and our community as it moves from aspiration to action. Our role is to listen, advocate, challenge when necessary, and keep asking what more is possible.

A strategy alone does not create a vibrant cultural community. People do.

We have inherited something remarkable. Now it is our turn to build upon it – and to leave something remarkable for those who come next.

Rohan Morris
Chair, Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
Mildura Rural City Council

Our Ambition

From First Nations culture and pioneering ideas to shared celebration and prosperity, our region's cultural story is one of vision, community and renewal.

Over the next five years, we will focus on the people and organisations that create our culture. Strengthen the connections that bring communities together. Continue nurturing the arts experiences that make this a great place to live. Unlock the economic potential of creativity to shape our future.

Together, we will cultivate vibrancy.



* ABS National Arts Participation Survey – Mallee electorate.
**Creative Victoria Audience Participation Survey (2023–24).

The Impact of Arts and Culture

Arts and culture are woven through everyday life. Culture tells the story of our region. Arts help us celebrate it, express it and imagine what comes next.

When we talk about arts and culture, we mean both the creative sector and the many ways people participate and engage in cultural life. This includes professional artists, creative businesses, community groups, students and volunteers.

We find arts and culture in our festivals, galleries, historical displays, theatres, libraries, live music venues, parks and public spaces. It spans visual arts, music, theatre, dance, craft, design, film, literature, sculpture, murals, First Nations culture, heritage, digital creativity and the everyday creative experiences that bring people together.

Whether we create, perform, volunteer, learn, attend or simply enjoy the work of others, participation strengthens our region.

Arts and culture enrich us in many ways.

Identity

Telling our stories, celebrating our unique character and strengthening our sense of place

Connection

Bringing people together to celebrate, learn, reflect and share experiences across generations and cultures

Health and Wellbeing

Supporting health, wellbeing and belonging through creativity, participation, relaxation, self-expression and therapeutic experiences

Liveability

Activating streets, parks and public spaces, encouraging people to linger, connect and feel safe, while boosting our everyday life through creativity, entertainment and leisure

Prosperity

Creating jobs, attracting visitors and strengthening tourism, hospitality and vibrant night-time economies



Cultivating Vibrancy directly supports the Council Plan 2025–2029, recognising arts and culture as an essential contributor to its four themes: Community, Place, Economy and Leadership.

By investing in creativity, cultural participation, heritage, festivals and the creative industries, the Strategy advances Council's ambitions for a healthy, connected and prosperous community. It strengthens Mildura's unique identity and appeal as a vibrant place to live, work, visit and invest.

Council's Role in Cultivating Vibrancy

Culture is created by our community.
Arts help it flourish.
Council contributes to the conditions for arts and culture to thrive.

We understand the incredible opportunities that exist for arts, events, and cultural tourism to improve wellbeing, social connectedness and continue to enhance our local economy. Arts and Culture are a key element of Mildura's broader visitation, destination and place-branding story

We achieve this by embracing a range of roles.

Invest

Support creativity through funding, advocacy and partnerships

Enable

Reduce barriers and create opportunities for artists, organisations and communities to participate and create

Connect

Bring together people, ideas and partners to strengthen the creative sector and grow new opportunities

Celebrate

Champion local stories, creative achievement and the cultural identity of our region

Care

Protect and enhance the places, collections and heritage that tell our story

Create

Lead or commission cultural initiatives that enrich our region where they deliver lasting community, cultural or economic benefit

The Returns

The roles Council plays in arts and culture generate value well beyond cultural activity. Arts and culture provide practical ways to advance the outcomes of the Council Plan and contribute to the long-term vision of a Liveable, People-Friendly Community.

We are a healthy community

In close alignment with our Council Plan, arts and culture contributes to a healthy community by creating opportunities for everyone to participate, strengthening belonging and helping everyone reach their full potential. It delivers through:

- Creating opportunities for people to connect
- Valuing diversity
- Connecting young people
- Prioritising Aboriginal self-determination
- Enabling community volunteering

People love being here

Arts and culture help create a place where people love being, by contributing to a vibrant arts and culture community, fit-for-purpose Council assets, infrastructure that meets community needs and a well-planned community. It delivers through:

- Building community pride
- Valuing our history and heritage
- Providing access to fit-for-purpose facilities
- Offering diverse tourism services and experiences

The economy is thriving

Arts and culture contribute to a thriving economy by creating economic growth, a skilled workforce and a stronger visitor destination. It delivers through:

- Supporting creative industries
- Attracting and retaining skilled workers
- Providing education and employment pathways



The context

Building on our Legacy

Our region's cultural story stretches back more than 40,000 years. We acknowledge the enduring connection Traditional Owners have to Country and recognise that creativity, storytelling and cultural practice have always been central to life in this place.

For more than sixty years, our community has continued to invest in arts and culture. Visionary individuals, dedicated volunteers, artists, educators and community organisations have established galleries, festivals, performing arts organisations, public collections and creative spaces that have shaped the identity of our region. Each generation has added something new, creating the strong cultural foundations we enjoy today.

The timeline on the following page celebrates that remarkable journey. It reminds us that every generation has inherited a legacy, built upon it, and created new opportunities for those who follow.

Where are we now

Our arts and cultural landscape has changed significantly over the past decade. New organisations and creative initiatives have emerged while others have concluded. Our long-standing performing arts organisations, dance schools, community groups, artists and volunteers continue to provide the stability and leadership that underpin our cultural life.

But we have also seen disruption with significant changes in education providers, retraction in funding models, volunteer capacity becoming strained, greater competition for enticing investment in the arts and our region, and the expectations of artists, audiences and communities continue to shift with greater call for more connection.

This Strategy

The Cultivating Vibrancy Strategy is an important step, bridging us from where we have been and where we are now to the longer-term Community vision.

It looks to reset foundations, address emerging issues, make participation easier, reduce unnecessary barriers and create pathways that encourage innovation and experimentation. These next five years are designed to position us for a thriving future.

Beyond 2031

Beyond 2031, the benefits of investing in arts and culture will be evident across our region. Arts will contribute to a stronger economy, a more vibrant and welcoming community, and healthier, more connected people will together help create the liveable, people-friendly future our community aspires to. We will have an expanded arts centre and other places across the municipality activated as vibrant creative hubs and gathering places. Our creative attractions will have strong tourism appeal drawing on our unique points of difference. Artists will also be attracted to the region as a unique place to live and create work. Mildura will be on the map as a place for the arts.

Our Story

Key Moments



1945–1960s
Establishment of key community arts organisations



1961
Mildura Sculpture Triennial launched



1998
Mildura Palimpsest launched



2025–2026
New arts and cultural initiatives, events, attractions

1940s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s | 2000s | 2010s | 2020s | 2031



1956
Rio Vista established as an art gallery



1979
Mildura Eisteddfod established



2012
Mildura Arts Centre Theatre Redevelopment – Stage 1 creates a contemporary cultural precinct



2027–2032
New Arts & Culture Strategy

Strategic Focus

Foundations	Creative Leadership	Reinvention	Building Capacity	Cultivating Vibrancy
1940s–1960	1960s–1980s	1990s–2010s	2010s–2026	2027–2032
The beginnings of key ongoing cultural and community activities in the region	Mildura places itself on the national cultural map through bold, pioneering initiatives	Contemporary practice, festivals and new ideas connect art, place and community	Investing in infrastructure and new creative initiatives coming online to strengthen our cultural ecosystem	Working together to grow creativity, activate places and inspire prosperity across the region

Examples

- Continuing legacy of arts groups
- Mildura Brass Band (1891)
- Red Cliffs Musical Society (1938–2017), Musical Society Mildura (2017)
- Mildura Theatre Company (1945)
- Murrayville Dramatic Society (1956)
- Red Cliffs Players (1956)
- Mildura District Ballet & Dance Guild (1959)
- Establishment of Mildura Art Gallery (1956)

- Sculpture Triennials gain national recognition
- Public sculpture collection becomes a defining regional asset
- Mildura Eisteddfod strengthens opportunities for young performers
- Mildura Arts Centre Gallery and Theatre (1966)
- Mildura Riverfront Gallery (1966)
- Ouyen Art Show (1980s–1990)
- Electric Light Theatre (1984)
- Mildura Wentworth Country Music Festival (1987)

- Arts Mildura and the Mildura Wentworth Arts Festival broaden community participation (1994–2025)
- Mildura Writers Festival (1994–)
- Mildura Palimpsest (1998–2015)
- Sunrise21 (1998)
- Festivals expand across music, theatre, literature and food
- The Art Vault (2008–2021)

- Patchewollock Music Festival (2012)
- Merbein Arts Group (2019)
- Workspace 3496 (2022)
- Gallery F Creative Arts Inc (2022)
- STAGE-Sunraysia Theatre and Arts Group Endeavour (2023)
- Mildura Fringe Festival (2025)
- Creative Sunraysia (2025)
- Mallee Arts coLab (2026)
- Trail of Lights (2025) and Fibre Optic Symphony Orchestra (2026)

- New Arts & Culture Strategy Cultivating Vibrancy
- Investing in creativity, participation, place and economic impact



Our strategy for Cultivating Vibrancy

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1. Empowering Ingenuity

Creating the right environment for the next generation of creative leaders, ideas and cultural innovation

Our focus

- Invest in the next generation of creative talent
- Create opportunities for artists to connect, collaborate and grow
- Support spaces where creativity can flourish
- Make it easier for artists and creatives to work with Council
- Champion and celebrate local creative achievement

By 2031 you will see

- Artists turning more ideas into reality
- Clearer creative pathways for young people
- A more connected and collaborative creative sector
- A stronger pipeline of local creative talent
- Greater investment and stronger partnerships
- Growing recognition as a home for artists and creativity

1. Empowering Ingenuity

“Mildura has no shortage of talented artists. We need more opportunities for local artists to contribute as professional peers and collaborators, not simply as participants.”

Community survey response 2026

Why Empowering Ingenuity matters

Our region has never waited for others to define our cultural future. Over decades, we have demonstrated an independent spirit, embracing bold ideas, backing creative people and proving that nationally significant arts and cultural activity can flourish far from metropolitan centres.

From the internationally recognised Sculpture Triennials and Palimpsest to whole-of-town arts takeovers, ingenuity has been one of our defining characteristics. That spirit has not disappeared. It continues to thrive in our artists, creative organisations and entrepreneurs. Every generation has its ingenuity heroes. Today’s creative innovators need to be backed with opportunities, connections and confidence to shape what comes next.

Our region is home to nationally recognised artists, internationally trained creative practitioners and one of Victoria’s leading community arts organisations. New festivals are emerging, young artists are developing their practice, and creative projects continue to bring communities together in innovative ways. Yet many of our creatives work in isolation, with few opportunities to connect, collaborate and develop new ideas together. At the same time, rising costs and financial uncertainty are making it increasingly difficult to sustain creative careers, organisations and initiatives. Our opportunity now is not to rediscover ingenuity, but to remove the barriers preventing it from flourishing.

Council has an important role to play in creating the right conditions for creativity. By making it easier to navigate Council processes, investing in people, connecting artists with opportunities, supporting creative spaces and encouraging bold new ideas, we can help the next generation of ingenuity heroes thrive and lead our region’s creative story.

Priority actions

Over the next five years we will work to:

1.1 Establish a Creative Sector Development focus

Create an environment to connect artists, performers, musicians, writers and creative organisations. The program will build creative capacity across the sector and activities may include hosting sector gatherings, brokering partnerships, identify state and national market development opportunities and strengthen Council’s advice on needs of the creative sector.

1.2 Launch a Creative Incubator Program

Develop a Creative Incubator Program that supports emerging artists, creative entrepreneurs and young people through mentoring, professional development, networking and industry connections. We will explore partnering with local arts organisations to design, deliver and grow a distributed incubator program across the region.

1.3 Prototype a Creative Hub

Activate underutilised spaces as temporary Creative Hubs, providing affordable studios, maker spaces, co-working facilities and opportunities for collaboration. Designed with informal, drop-in access and an emphasis on experimentation, the hubs will bring emerging artists together with experienced creatives to test ideas, share knowledge and build confidence. We will evaluate the model to inform the development of a permanent Creative Hub in the future.

1.4 Foster a ‘Can Do’ Approach

Review Council’s permits, policies and fee structures to create a simple, arts-friendly pathway for creative projects, installations, festivals and cultural events.

1.5 Invest in Creative Infrastructure

Partner with key arts organisations to strengthen the region’s creative infrastructure, including renewing priority facilities and expanding opportunities for artists to create, collaborate and develop their practice.

1.6 Grow Investment in the Creative Sector

Redesign Council’s funding and investment pathways for arts projects and programs to provide greater certainty and encourage innovation to help artists and organisations leverage additional public and private investment.



Spotlight on a Creative Incubator program (Action 1.2)

The launch of a Creative Incubator program responds to the reduction of creative tertiary opportunities in our region and hands back the learning and development of young and emerging arts and creative professionals to the participants themselves and the know-how of the local arts sector.

Our young community is highly engaged in the creation, participation and presentation of music, dance, literature, craft and design, and visual and performing arts. The rate of participation is well above the national average and is a time-honoured tradition in our region. What is needed now are pathways for our talented young people to see themselves after school finishes in creative careers, here, at home.

The Creative Incubator Program will see Council harness regional, state and national networks to engage local providers, visiting artists and external experts to provide tuition, master classes, coaching and an immersive learning program to support our next generation of art heroes.

We imagine this might work best as a distributed model. A program that can be shared in delivery, with support from Council, across the innovative local organisations that already have a development mindset such as artists, creatives, musicians, performers and makers. A program that helps strengthen the visibility of a sector and promotes intergenerational skills exchange.

Overall, we know if we focus on our next generation of creative makers, we set ourselves up for long-term success. Having home-grown local artists and creatives supports our capacity to activate spaces, generate locally inspired connection and well-being, foster civic pride, and offer truly distinctive attractions that reflect our region.

Beyond 2031

The foundations laid by Empowering Ingenuity will continue to shape our region long after the five years covered in this Strategy. By investing in people, partnerships and creative opportunity today, we are building a future where creativity is recognised as one of our region's defining strengths.

Over time, artists and cultural organisations will see Council as a trusted partner that helps ideas become reality. New collaborations will emerge that strengthen our arts and culture sector.

As creative careers become more achievable, more young people will choose to build their futures here, while established practitioners continue to invest in the region because it offers opportunities to create, collaborate and grow. A stronger arts ecosystem will attract new ideas, new talent and new investment.

Most importantly, our region will continue to build on its proud history of cultural leadership. We will be recognised for both our remarkable cultural heritage and for our willingness to innovate, experiment and create. Local creativity will continue to shape our identity and enrich community life for generations to come.

"Having a future in music and the arts feels more possible when people share their skills, provide opportunities and support emerging creatives."

Community survey response 2026



2. Connecting Communities

Ensuring arts and culture strengthen belonging, celebrate diversity and connect every community across our region

Our focus

- Use technology to connect communities
- Take arts and culture across the region
- Establish a First Nations cultural leadership circle
- Build greater connection with multicultural communities
- Connect generations through creativity
- Amplify diverse voices in cultural decision making

By 2031 you will see

- Stronger connections across our communities
- More cultural activity reaching every corner of our municipality
- First Nations leadership shaping our cultural future
- Stronger engagement between generations
- More inclusive and representative cultural planning

2. Connecting Communities

“We are a melting pot of so many cultures. We have the oldest living culture alongside people from all over the world who now call this region home. We need to embrace and celebrate them all.”

Community survey response 2026

Why Connecting Communities Matters

Arts and culture are one of the most powerful ways people build connections with each other and with the places they call home. Across the region, creativity brings together people of different ages, cultures, experiences and backgrounds. It helps communities celebrate what they share while recognising what makes each community unique.

In a municipality covering more than 22,000 square kilometres, these connections are especially important. Arts and culture provide opportunities for people to participate, tell their stories and experience a sense of belonging regardless of where they live. They also help bridge the distances between communities, creating a stronger and more connected municipality.

Our region’s cultural identity is built upon the enduring connection of First Nations peoples to Country, together with generations of migration that have shaped one of Australia’s most culturally diverse regional communities. More than seventy-nine nationalities now call the municipality home, contributing languages, traditions, stories and creative practices that enrich everyday life. This diversity is one of our greatest strengths and presents opportunities to celebrate many voices, encourage intercultural understanding and ensure that arts and culture reflect the full breadth of the community.

Connecting communities means ensuring everyone has opportunity to participate in cultural life. It means creating opportunities for people living in smaller townships to enjoy high-quality cultural experiences, strengthening First Nations leadership, celebrating multicultural communities, and encouraging intergenerational engagement. By bringing people together through creativity, our region will continue to build a welcoming, inclusive and connected community where culture belongs to everyone.

Priority actions

Over the next five years we will work to:

2.1 Investigate Live-stream Access

Undertake a feasibility study into live-streaming and creating arts and cultural live site experiences across the municipality. Work with venues, artists, technology providers and neighbouring councils to identify the infrastructure, partnerships and investment required to improve digital access and extend cultural experiences beyond traditional venues.

2.2 Facilitate Regional Music Touring

Partner with local organisations, artists and producers to encourage extended regional music touring, bringing more live music to smaller townships where intimate venues provide an accessible and unique local special event as highlighted during the community consultation.

2.3 Establish a First Nations Cultural Leadership Circle

Work with Traditional Owners and First Nations communities to establish a shared Cultural Leadership Circle that guides collaboration, actively works with cultural leadership, informs Council decision-making, and creates opportunities for cultural practice, storytelling, participation and truth-telling.

2.4 Launch Intergenerational Arts stimulus program

Launch one-off Intergenerational Arts Stimulus program for artists and community organisations to deliver creative projects that bring younger and older generations together to share stories, skills and traditions through the arts. Respond to our growing and ageing population by strengthening social connection, reducing isolation and encouraging the transfer of knowledge between generations.

2.5 Enable a Multicultural Arts and Culture Forum

Bring together multicultural community leaders, artists and organisations each year to strengthen relationships, share cultural priorities and inform future arts and cultural programming. Create opportunities to preview upcoming initiatives, identify partnership opportunities and support programming that better reflects the diversity of our community. The Forum will be an important, lively and inclusive exchange.

2.6 Increase Diversity on the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee

Review the membership of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee to increase representation from First Nations peoples, multicultural communities, young people and other underrepresented voices, ensuring Council’s cultural planning reflects the diversity of our region. We will consider observer roles and other transition opportunities to create inclusive pathways to representation.



Spotlight on a Multicultural Arts and Culture Forum (Action 2.5)

Cultural diversity is one of our region's greatest creative strengths. Seventy-nine nationalities are officially represented across the municipality, bringing a wealth of music, dance, storytelling, craft, customs and celebrations to our shared cultural life.

Yet this diversity is not always visible. Our consultation reinforced that Council cannot rely only on usual engagement channels to hear from every community. If we want our cultural life to reflect the people who live here, we need to be more intentional and consistent in building relationships.

The Annual Multicultural Arts Forum will bring together multicultural community leaders, creatives, organisations and Council staff. This will be a working forum where communities can share priorities, preview upcoming initiatives, identify local creative talent and explore opportunities for programming, commissioning and partnership.

Council will act as a convener, working through trusted community organisations and connectors to create an inclusive and welcoming format. This may mean rotating locations, addressing language and access needs, inviting a different community to 'host' and showcase their food and traditions, and making space for communities that may not readily participate in more formal Council processes. Most importantly, it means building relationships before asking communities to respond to a particular project or proposal.

Over time, the Forum will help more communities see their stories, traditions and creativity reflected in the cultural life of the region. It will strengthen relationships, uncover new artists and ideas, and help Council develop programs in collaboration with communities. When more people can help shape our cultural life, we strengthen belonging across the whole municipality.

Beyond 2031

Over the next five years, we will strengthen the relationships, networks and ways of working that can support deeper connection across communities.

Over time, there will be more opportunity to experience arts and culture across the whole municipality, not only within Mildura itself. Residents in smaller townships will participate in performances, exhibitions and cultural events through a combination of local programming, touring activity and digital technology. Geography will become less of a barrier to participation, and communities across the region will feel more connected to each other and to the cultural life of the municipality.

The cultural life of our region will increasingly reflect the people who live here. First Nations culture and cultural leadership will be visible, respected and celebrated. Multicultural communities will see their stories represented and valued. Young people will create alongside older generations, and people of all backgrounds and abilities will feel welcomed into cultural experiences. Over time, these shared experiences will build understanding, confidence and stronger relationships across communities.

Most importantly, the legacy of this work will be a deeper sense of belonging. Future generations will inherit a region where our cultural life is expected and valued; where communities are connected not only by geography, but by shared experiences, shared stories and shared pride in the place they call home. The work we begin now will help shape a more inclusive, resilient and connected region in which every community can participate, contribute and thrive.

"The arts bring the community together in unexpected and unique ways. They provide a place where people can find belonging, friendships and a way to express themselves."

Community survey response 2026

3. Amplifying Liveability

Placing arts and culture into everyday life to create a vibrant, welcoming and liveable region

Our focus

- Deliver inspiring arts and cultural experiences
- Invest in high-quality cultural facilities
- Leverage festivals and events to energise everyday life
- Make it easier to discover arts and culture
- Safeguard community cultural venues
- Activate public places through creativity
- Embrace the role of arts in health and wellbeing

By 2031 you will see

- A high-quality and diverse year-round arts and cultural program
- Cultural facilities ready to meet future community needs
- More inclusive and accessible community events
- Easier ways to discover what's happening across the region
- A clear plan for the future of community cultural venues
- More vibrant streets, parks and public spaces
- Greater recognition of creativity as a contributor to health and wellbeing

3. Amplifying Liveability

“Arts and culture create community connections, bring families and friends together and, most of all, bring happiness. Holistically, you could say they increase our wellbeing.”

Community survey response 2026

Why Amplifying Liveability Matters

Great places are not only shaped by the local geography, buildings and services alone, but by the experiences they create for the people who live there. Arts and culture bring colour, creativity and meaning to everyday life. They activate public spaces, encourage participation and contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities.

Mildura already enjoys a rich cultural life. Mildura Arts Centre has for decades been a focal point for arts and culture. Built on an expansive visual arts collection, the Centre has continued to grow and evolve with ongoing support through the Council and local community.

Our region boasts high levels of participation in arts and cultural activities with young people involvement higher than the national average. There is great enthusiasm across the community to maintain and continue offer this level of engagement and grow the opportunities for generations to come.

Libraries, festivals, heritage places, community venues and public art all contribute to making the municipality an attractive and vibrant place to live. The opportunity now is to maintain these assets while ensuring that cultural experiences remain accessible, affordable and welcoming to everyone. As the municipality grows and changes, continued investment in cultural infrastructure and programming will help ensure that arts and culture remain central to community life.

Amplifying liveability means recognising that arts and culture are not an optional extra and are essential to creating healthy and resilient lifestyles. By investing in cultural experiences, improving access to venues and public spaces, supporting community participation, Mildura will continue to strengthen its reputation as one of Australia’s most liveable regional cities. Affordability is not a barrier to access is a priority.

Priority actions

Over the next five years we will work to:

3.1 Continue presenting Mildura Arts Centre Program

Continue to deliver a diverse, high-quality year-round program through Mildura Arts Centre that balances local creativity with nationally recognised touring productions, exhibitions and community experiences. Build on the Centre’s reputation as the cultural heart of the region while continuing to evolve its program in response to changing community interests and needs.

3.2 Advance Stage Two Mildura Arts and Cultural Precinct Master Plan

We will advocate for investment and partnerships that strengthen the role of the Centre and Precinct as a leading regional cultural destination, creative space and ensure it continues to meet community needs into the future.

3.3 Enhance Council’s Funding Program

Review Council’s funding program, including undertaking a Gender Impact Assessment, to enhance funding opportunities and activities that maximise equitable community participation, accessibility and free public experiences. Strengthen funding criteria to support inclusive programming, innovative event formats, micro-programming and initiatives that deliver the greatest benefit to the community.

3.4 Improve Cultural Promotion

Make it easier for residents and visitors to discover arts and cultural experiences across the municipality. Strengthen coordinated marketing by partnering with local print media, digital, broadcast, streaming and non-arts distribution channels. ‘What’s On’ initiatives that improve the visibility of local events, activities, venues and creative opportunities.

3.5 Develop a Community Cultural Venues Renewal Plan

Undertake an audit of community cultural venues across the municipality to identify future investment priorities, improve accessibility and ensure facilities remain fit for purpose. Support the long-term sustainability of community arts organisations by improving access to affordable, secure and appropriate rehearsal, exhibition, performance and meeting spaces suitable for shared use by multiple groups and creatives.

3.6 Activate Places Through Creativity

Continue to integrate public art, creative placemaking and cultural experiences into streets, parks and public spaces across the municipality. Create vibrant places that encourage people to gather, linger and connect while celebrating the unique identity of the region. Invest and commission public art and place-based art that connects people to the environment, landscape and principles of sustainability.

3.7 Explore Arts, Health and Wellbeing Partnerships

Work with health, wellbeing and community organisations to explore opportunities for arts-based initiatives that support social connection, mental health and wellbeing. Identify partnership opportunities, emerging practice and funding that strengthen the role of creativity in improving individual and community wellbeing.



Spotlight on Stage Two Mildura Arts and Cultural Precinct Master Plan (Action 3.2)

Mildura Arts Centre exists because previous generations were prepared to think boldly and invest in the region's cultural future. From the gallery established at Rio Vista in 1956 and the dedicated gallery and theatre opened in 1966, to the major theatre redevelopment completed in 2012, each chapter has expanded the Centre's contribution to community life.

Stage Two provides the opportunity to continue this legacy. Earlier planning envisaged expanded gallery space, stronger connections and functionality across the precinct, and additional cultural facilities, including studios, rehearsal and workshop spaces. Properly realised, these improvements could increase capacity to showcase Mildura's significant permanent collection, attract major touring exhibitions and performances, and support more creative development, learning and community participation.

The opportunity is much greater than adding space to an existing facility. A fully realised precinct could bring together the galleries, theatre, Rio Vista Historic House, Sculpture Park, café and surrounding grounds as one connected cultural experience. Active throughout the day and evening, it could become a regional cultural anchor; expanding participation, supporting creative development and learning, celebrating Mildura's stories and identity, and strengthening the region's appeal as a place to live, visit and invest.

The original Master Plan dates to 2006, and community needs, creative practice, accessibility expectations and the way people experience cultural places have changed significantly since then. We will renew and strengthen the vision with the community, creative sector and specialist partners, creating a contemporary, costed and staged plan.

Realising a world-class regional cultural precinct will require sustained commitment and investment across government, philanthropy and the private sector. We will invite investment partners to share this ambition, supported by the Master Plan demonstrating the project's cultural, social and economic value. The return will be seen in visitation, creative opportunity, participation, education and civic pride. This is not simply an opportunity to build a bigger Arts Centre, but to create a cultural precinct worthy of Mildura's collection, communities and position as a leading regional cultural destination.

Beyond 2031

The goal to Amplify Liveability is about a commitment to long-term investment in the future of our region. Over the next five years, we will strengthen the cultural experiences, places, partnerships and patterns of participation that make arts and culture part of everyday life. The full impact of this work will emerge over time: as children grow up with creativity around them, as community organisations become stronger, as public spaces evolve, and as participation in cultural life becomes a habit carried across generations.

Over time, arts and culture will be at the heart of everyday life across the municipality. Residents will regularly participate in performances, exhibitions, festivals, workshops, public art and community events, while visitors experience a vibrant region that celebrates its unique stories, cultural identity and sense of place. Cultural participation will become a defining feature of what makes our region attractive, distinctive and liveable.

The municipality's cultural infrastructure will continue to evolve with the community it serves. Mildura Arts Centre will remain at the heart of the region's cultural life, supported by a network of welcoming, accessible and well-used community venues, creative spaces and public places. Community organisations will have the facilities and support they need to flourish, while streets, parks, neighbourhoods and townships increasingly reflect the creativity and identity of the people who live there.

Most importantly, future generations will experience arts and culture not as an occasional addition to community life, but as part of what it means to live here. Creativity will be visible in the places people gather and in the experiences that connect people to each other and to place. Over time, this will strengthen wellbeing, community pride and belonging, helping ensure our region remains a place where people choose to live, work, raise families and build their futures.

Commitment to Equity

Establish an Equity in Participation Initiative to identify and reduce barriers to arts and cultural participation for communities experiencing structural disadvantage, including different genders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, culturally diverse communities, LGBTQIA+ people, young people, older people and residents of rural townships. The initiative will inform programming, engagement, funding and partnership decisions to improve equitable participation across the municipality so that everyone can participate.

"Without art and the joy it can bring, life would be without colour, emotion, energy and fun. The arts are where many people in our community thrive and feel at home."

Community survey response 2026

4. Inspiring Prosperity

Harnessing the power of arts and culture to boost the economy, attract people and investment

Our focus

- Celebrate local stories, artists and creative identity
- Expand opportunities for live music
- Support business growth through creativity
- Capitalise on our vast landscape appeal to artists
- Leverage Council's influence to grow the creative economy
- Future-proof the volunteer workforce

By 2031 you will see

- Local stories and creativity increasingly defining part of the visitor experience
- Live music helping create an extended night-time economy
- More businesses benefiting from arts and creative activation
- More employment and project opportunities for local creatives
- Mildura and region recognised as a destination for artists
- An enduring volunteer-powered arts and cultural sector

4. Inspiring Prosperity

“Mildura’s location along the Murray River, combined with its food, wine and tourism industries, creates unique opportunities to integrate arts and culture into festivals, public spaces and visitor experiences.”

Community forum feedback 2026

Why Inspiring Prosperity matters

Arts and culture do more than enrich community life. They create jobs, attract visitors, support local businesses and help make places distinctive. Festivals fill accommodation and restaurants. Live music and performance bring people into town centres. Artists and creative businesses generate new ideas and opportunities. Cultural experiences give visitors another reason to come, stay longer and return.

Our region is well placed to build on these opportunities. Mildura is already known for its food, wine, river, landscapes and strong visitor economy. It also has a remarkable cultural story: enduring First Nations culture, generations of migration, a history of artistic innovation and a community that continues to create, perform and celebrate. Bringing these strengths together can help build a more diverse and resilient regional economy.

There is strong community support to realise more of this potential. People want to see more live music and creative activity, a stronger day and night-time economy, greater opportunities for local artists and creative businesses, and new ideas brought into the region through residencies and exchange. There is also an opportunity to build stronger partnerships between arts, tourism, hospitality, education and business so that cultural activity creates wider benefits.

Prosperity also depends on people. Across festivals, historical societies, galleries, performing arts groups, markets and community events, volunteers contribute time, knowledge and energy that keep cultural life thriving. Many organisations now face the challenge of finding and supporting the next generation. Recognising experienced volunteers, passing on knowledge and creating new pathways for young people and new residents to become involved will be essential to sustaining our cultural life.

Inspiring Prosperity means recognising creativity as one of our region’s strengths. By connecting culture with tourism, business and local opportunity, attracting new ideas and investing in the people who make things happen, we can create lasting economic and social value for the whole region.

Priority actions

Over the next five years we will work to:

4.1 Commission Authentic Cultural Experiences

As we look to program wrap-around events to enhance our current major attractions, we will commission authentic arts and cultural experiences that celebrate Mildura’s distinctive identity through local artists, First Nations stories and creative practitioners. We will prioritise projects that create lasting cultural assets, strengthen the visitor experience and showcase home-grown creativity that makes our region unique.

4.2 Grow Live Music and the Night-Time Economy

Work with venues, businesses and the live music sector to increase opportunities for local musicians and performers while strengthening Mildura’s night-time economy. Explore incentives and pilot initiatives that encourage a greater diversity of venues, family-friendly and alcohol-free experiences, and more opportunities for live music across the region.

4.3 Activate the CBD and Riverfront Precinct through Creativity

Partner with City Heart, local businesses and creative practitioners to encourage creative activations that increase visitation, dwell time and economic activity. Support initiatives such as public art, busking, pop-up performances, exhibitions and creative experiences that bring new energy to the CBD and surrounding precincts throughout the day.

4.4 Grow the Artist Visitor Market

Position Mildura as a destination where artists, writers, photographers, musicians and other creative practitioners come to create, not just visit. Develop residencies, education partnerships and creative exchanges that encourage longer stays, strengthen local collaboration and establish Mildura as a nationally recognised destination for creative practice.

4.5 Expand Local Creative Employment Opportunities

Use Council procurement, capital works and creative placemaking initiatives to generate ongoing employment opportunities for local artists, designers and creative businesses. Encourage the integration of local creative outcomes into civic projects and, where appropriate, private developments to strengthen local identity while supporting the creative economy

4.6 Launch a Volunteer Workforce Renewal Initiative

Launch a Volunteer Workforce Renewal Initiative in alignment with Council’s Community Volunteering Action Plan, that provides tailored mentoring and organisational support to help arts, culture and heritage organisations rethink volunteer attraction, succession, marketing and community engagement. Bring volunteers together through regional networking, knowledge sharing and celebration to share successful practice, inspire new approaches and cultivate the next generation of volunteers.



Spotlight on Authentic Cultural Experiences (Action 4.1)

Lock Island has a proud history as a natural stage for significant cultural experiences, hosting major events and festivals including Opera by the Lock, Rock on the Lock, and numerous jazz, food and wine festivals. The site has also played an important role in the visual arts through the Sunrise 21 Artist in Industry program, which delivered enduring public artworks such as Chris Booth's Earth, Water, People and Ian Marr's Nilometer from Mildura Palimpsest #4, both of which remain today. This demonstrated how Mildura's landscape could become part of the artistic experience rather than simply its backdrop.

Trail of Lights has renewed this tradition on an ambitious scale. By transforming Lock Island after dark, it has brought national attention to the site, attracted new visitors and given residents a different way to experience a familiar place. It has confirmed the island's potential as one of Mildura's most distinctive cultural assets.

The opportunity now is to anchor this experience (and others) more strongly in Mildura and the distinctive offering of the region. Alongside the major attraction, Council will commission local artists, First Nations creatives and cultural organisations to develop work that responds specifically to the visitor experience, island, the river and the stories of our region. This might include performance, music, projection, temporary installations, satellite festival events, guided storytelling or a recurring program of locally created light-based work.

This local content will give residents more reasons to engage with and return to the island. It will create paid opportunities for local artists, strengthen community ownership of the experience and ensure that Mildura's own creative identity is visible within one of its highest-profile cultural destinations.

For visitors, these commissions will add depth to the experience and provide that 'can only be seen here' appeal. By connecting a major attraction with local stories, artists and cultural practice. It can become an evolving cultural destination that encourages visitors to stay longer, return and develop a stronger connection with Mildura.

Beyond 2031

Over the next five years, we will build stronger connections between arts, culture, tourism, business and community life. The full impact of this work will take time. As partnerships deepen, new ideas take hold and the next generation of artists, creative businesses and volunteers emerge, culture can play an increasingly important role in the long-term prosperity of our region.

Being recognised as a 'cultural destination' takes time. This also needs to be matched with transport access, accommodation and complimentary activities to offer. This won't just 'happen' and needs to be supported with a clear strategy and be informed from other jurisdictions residency models. Over time, more visitors will choose our region not only for its food, wine, river and landscapes, but for its distinctive cultural experiences. Festivals, galleries, performances, public art, First Nations culture and local stories will strengthen the region's identity and give people more reasons to visit, stay longer and return. Local artists and creative businesses will benefit from stronger connections, new markets and greater opportunities.

Mildura will enjoy a more vibrant cultural life throughout the day and into the evening. Live music, performance and creative activity will bring people into streets, venues and town centres, creating welcoming places where residents and visitors gather and local businesses benefit. Visiting artists and creative practitioners will bring new ideas, partnerships and connections, while local creatives build stronger networks beyond the region.

Experienced volunteers will be valued for their knowledge and contribution, while young people, new residents and emerging community leaders are encouraged to become involved.

The long-term legacy will be a region where creativity is understood as part of prosperity: generating opportunity, attracting people and investment, strengthening local identity and supporting a vibrant community.

"Creativity connects culture, food, science, education, business and tourism. By valuing what makes this region distinctive, Sunraysia can become a leading creative regional community."

Community survey response 2026

Implementation Guide

How our plans fit together

COMMUNITY VISION 2040
"We are a liveable, people-friendly community"

COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029
Our commitment across five strategic directions

ENVIRONMENT | COMMUNITY | PLACE | ECONOMY | LEADERSHIP

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES
Wellbeing
Inclusion
Connected Communities

PLACE OUTCOMES
Great Places
Infrastructure
Liveable destination

ECONOMY OUTCOMES
Economic growth
Skilled workforce
Visitor destination

TO HELP DELIVER OUTCOMES

CULTIVATING VIBRANCY
Arts & Culture Strategy 2027-2032

EMPOWERING INGENUITY
Creating the right environment for the next generation of creative leaders, ideas and cultural innovation

Themes: Artists, Creative Businesses, Skills, Innovation, Partnerships

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES
Ensuring arts and culture strengthen belonging, celebrate diversity and connect every community

Themes: Belonging, First Nations, Multicultural, Inclusion, Townships

AMPLIFYING LIVEABILITY
Placing arts and culture into everyday life to create a vibrant, welcoming and liveable community

Themes: Participations, Mildura Arts Centre, Public Places, Health & Wellbeing, Accessibility

INSPIRING PROSPERITY
Harnessing the power of arts and culture to strengthen the economy, attract people and investment

Themes: Creative Economy, Tourism, Night-time Economy, Investment, Volunteers

CREATING THE SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT, PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES

LEVERAGING
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

PACKAGING & PROMOTING
TOURISM STRATEGY

SHARED IMPACT AND BENEFITS
A vibrant cultural life enriches people, places and our economy

LIVEABILITY | WELLBEING | IDENTITY | VISITOR APPEAL | PROSPERITY

Action Horizons and Measures

Cultivating Vibrancy will require a staged approach over the next five years.

Some actions can begin immediately using existing resources and by changing the way Council works. Others will take time to develop through partnerships, detailed planning, community collaboration or future investment.

The following pages provide a practical roadmap for when implementation is expected to commence and the timeframe for delivery. This approach balances accountability with the flexibility to respond to new opportunities, funding and changing community priorities. The importance of establishing an appropriate evaluation framework at the outset will be integral to its success.

Measuring our progress

As we roll out implementation we will measure our progress, celebrate success and learn as we go. We will use a combination of existing Council Plan 2025-2029 indicators plus additional measures that reflect the ambitions of this Arts and Culture Strategy.

Integrated Delivery

Many of the actions in this Strategy can contribute to more than one goal.

By looking for opportunities to connect initiatives, we can extend reach, strengthen outcomes and create greater impact. We can achieve even more by delivering initiatives collaboratively across Council and with our community, artists, and partner organisations.

Before commencing major initiatives, we will ask: How could this initiative help deliver other goals of the Strategy, and who should we work with to increase its impact? By asking this question throughout implementation, we will encourage integrated planning, shared ownership and stronger outcomes.

For example, establishing artist residencies to encourage Artist Visitor Market (Action 4.4) could attract photographers, writers, musicians and visual artists seeking immersive creative experiences. By connecting these visits with schools, festivals, community workshops and the Creative Incubator Program (Action 1.2), we can strengthen our visitor economy while also advancing our goal of Empowering Ingenuity through mentoring, collaboration and new learning opportunities.

Equity and Gender Equality

We will apply an equity lens across the delivery of this Strategy, recognising that people experience arts and culture in different ways and that barriers to participation can differ based on gender, age, disability, cultural background, socioeconomic circumstance and location. We will consider factors like as affordability, accessibility, transport, representation and participation in decision-making to help ensure arts and cultural opportunities are inclusive and accessible for everyone in our community.

Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) on arts and cultural policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on our community will help us improve equitable access, participation and outcomes.

KEY

Investment

- • no to low cost, redirection of current budget
- **$** low to medium funds uplift up to $25k
- **$$** medium to major new investment - $25k to $100k
- **$$$** major one-off funding - $100k +

Timeframes

- **Short-term:** Can commence using existing resources, or through changes to Council processes, planning and ways of working.
- **Medium-term**: Requiring further planning, research, partnership development or detailed design before implementation.
- **Long-term**: Likely to require significant investment, external funding, major partnerships or broader community collaboration to deliver successfully.

	Costing	Short 1–2 yrs	Medium 3–4 yrs	Long 5+ yrs	Delivery approach
1. Empowering Ingenuity					
1.1 Establish a Creative Sector Development focus A program to build creative capacity and connect and strengthen the local creative sector, broker partnerships and improve access to development and market opportunities. Measure: *Creative Sector Development environment established, with annual reporting on sector engagement, connections and partnerships facilitated.*	$				Council-led Arts, Culture & Venues
1.2 Launch a Creative Incubator Program To support emerging artists, creative entrepreneurs and young people across the region to develop skills, networks and pathways to sustainable creative careers. Measure: *Number and diversity of emerging artists and creatives participating in professional development, mentoring and career development opportunities.*	$				Partnerships with local arts organisations
1.3 Prototype a Creative Hub To provide affordable, collaborative spaces where artists and creatives can connect, experiment, develop ideas and build their practice. Measure: *Creative Hub prototype established and evaluated, including participation and utilisation by local artists and creatives.*	$$				Partnerships with local arts organisations
1.4 Foster a 'Can Do' Approach To make it simpler and easier for artists and creative organisations to work with Council and bring creative projects to life. Measure: *Customer journey for Council-related permits, policies, venue services and fee structures reviewed, with processes streamlined for easier navigation, and increase in number of arts and creative organisations working with Council.*	•				Council-led Arts, Culture & Venues
1.5 Invest in Creative Infrastructure To strengthen the spaces and facilities artists and creative organisations need to create, collaborate and develop their practice. Measure: *Number and value of priority creative infrastructure improvements progressed or completed.*	$$				Council-led Arts, Culture & Venues
1.6 Grow Investment in the Creative Sector To provide greater certainty for creative projects while helping artists and organisations leverage additional public and private investment. Measure: *Growth in Council-supported arts investment and additional external funding leveraged by artists and cultural organisations.*	•				Council-led Arts, Culture & Venues

	Costing	Short 1–2yrs	Medium 3–4 yrs	Long 5+yrs	Delivery approach
2. Connecting Communities					
2.1 Investigate Live-stream Access To use digital technology to extend access to arts and cultural experiences across the municipality, particularly for geographically dispersed communities. Measure: *Live-stream feasibility study completed and priority opportunities for improving digital cultural access identified and piloted.*	•				Council-led (Arts, Culture & Venues)
2.2 Facilitate Regional Music Touring To bring more live music and cultural experiences to smaller townships and strengthen participation across the region. Measure: *Number of live music performances and participating audiences in smaller townships across the municipality.*	$				Council-led (Arts, Culture & Venues)
2.3 Establish a First Nations Cultural Leadership Circle To strengthen engagement with First Nations cultural leadership to ensure Traditional Owners and First Nations communities help shape Council's cultural decision-making. Measure: *First Nations Cultural Leadership Framework developed in partnership with Traditional Owners and First Nations communities and embraced by relevant Council cultural planning and activities.*	•				Partnerships with Ngiwa Yarna Committee & Traditional Owners.
2.4 Launch Intergenerational Arts Stimulus Program To bring generations together through creativity, strengthening social connection and enabling the sharing of stories, skills and traditions. Measure: *Number and diversity of intergenerational projects supported and participation by younger and older community members.*	$$				Council-led (Arts, Culture & Venues)
2.5 Enable a Multicultural Arts and Culture Forum To build stronger relationships with multicultural communities and ensure their priorities, stories and creativity are reflected in the region's cultural life. Measure: *Annual Multicultural Arts and Culture Forum delivered, with participation across the municipality's multicultural communities.*	$				Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Community Council, Community Leaders & Partners
2.6 Increase Diversity on the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee To ensure Council's cultural advice and decision-making better reflect the diversity of the community. Measure: *A gender balance, and increased representation of First Nations, multicultural, young and other underrepresented voices in Council cultural advisory processes.*	•				Arts & Culture Advisory Committee

	Costing	Short 1–2yrs	Medium 3–4 yrs	Long 5+yrs	Delivery approach
3. Amplifying Liveability					
3.1 Continue presenting Mildura Arts Centre Program To provide a diverse, high-quality year-round cultural program that responds to community interests while maintaining the Arts Centre as the cultural heart of the region. Measure: *Mildura Arts Centre visitation, theatre attendance and community satisfaction with the program.*	•				Council-led (Arts, Culture & Venues)
3.2 Advance Stage Two Mildura Arts and Cultural Precinct Master Plan To strengthen Mildura Arts Centre and precinct as a leading regional cultural destination and ensure it continues to meet future community needs. Measure: *Complete the Mildura Arts Centre Master Plan review and seek opportunities to deliver.*	$$$				Council-led (Arts, Culture & Venues)
3.3 Enhance Council's Funding Program To maximise community participation and benefit by supporting accessible, inclusive and innovative arts, events and cultural experiences. Measure: *Diversity of successful applicants, participation and return on investment from arts, events and culture initiatives financially supported by Council.*	•				Arts, Culture & Venues, Community Partnerships, Economic Development & Tourism, Parks & Recreation.
3.4 Improve Cultural Promotion To make it easier for residents and visitors to discover and participate in arts and cultural experiences across the municipality. Measure: *Increased community and visitor awareness of arts and cultural opportunities across the municipality.*	$				Partnership with local media
3.5 Develop a Community Cultural Venues Renewal Plan To ensure community cultural venues remain accessible, fit for purpose and able to support sustainable arts and cultural activity, in alignment with Asset Management Plan 2025–2034. Collaborate with community arts organisations and sector to progress venue planning that enables continued delivery of arts and cultural activities and strengthens community participation in the arts. Measure: *Community satisfaction with arts and cultural facilities. Completion of the Rio Vista Historic House Conservation Management Plan.*	• to $$$				Council-led (Arts, Culture & Venues, Facilities & Assets)
3.6 Activate Places Through Creativity To use public art, creative placemaking and cultural activity to create vibrant public places where people gather, connect and celebrate local identity. Measure: *Number and geographic spread of parks, streets and public spaces activated through arts, public art and creative placemaking.*	$$				Council-led (Arts, Culture & Venues), Partnerships with developers and local business.
3.7 Explore Arts, Health and Wellbeing Partnerships To harness creativity as a contributor to social connection, mental health and individual and community wellbeing. Measure: *Number of arts, health and wellbeing partnerships and initiatives developed or supported, aligned with the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan.*	•				Council-led (Arts, Culture & Venues, Community Partnerships)

	Costing	Short 1-2yrs	Medium 3-4 yrs	Long 5+yrs	Delivery approach
4. Inspiring Prosperity					
4.1 Commission Authentic Cultural Experiences To create distinctive cultural experiences that celebrate Mildura's identity, showcases creativity and strengthen the visitor experience. Build cultural tourism-focused arts projects, exhibitions and events that position the region as a destination, in alignment with the Tourism Strategy. Measure: *Growth and diversity in arts and cultural initiatives and projects commissioned or presented by or in partnerships with Council, including major exhibitions, events and performances at Mildura Arts Centre, and acquisitions or conservation works delivered for the Mildura Arts Centre Collection in line with the Collection Policy and strategic priorities.*	$$				Council-led: Arts, Culture, Events & Venues
4.2 Grow Live Music and the Night-Time Economy To create more opportunities for local musicians and performers while contributing to a more diverse and vibrant night-time economy. Measure: *Growth in live music activity supported across hospitality and night-time economy venues.*	$$				Partnerships with local hospitality owners
4.3 Activate the CBD and Riverfront Precinct through Creativity To use creative activity to increase visitation, dwell time and economic activity in the CBD, Riverfront and surrounding precincts in alignment with the Economic Development Strategy. Measure: *Number and frequency of creative activations delivered in the CBD and Riverfront Precinct, including participation, utilisation and visitation, aligned with Riverfront Activation Plan.*	$				Council-led: Arts, Culture and Venues, Events, and Economic Development & Tourism Partnerships with local business, events and festival organisations.
4.4 Grow the Artist Visitor Market To position Mildura as a destination where visiting artists and creatives come to create, learn, collaborate and stay for longer. Measure: *Number and diversity of visiting artists participating in residencies, programs or other artist visitor initiatives, including associated length of stay where measurable.*	$$				Council-led: (Arts, Culture & Venues, Economic Development & Tourism)
4.5 Expand Local Creative Employment Opportunities To use Council's investment and influence to generate employment and project opportunities for local artists, designers and creative businesses. Measure: *Number of diverse local artists and creative practitioners engaged through Council's exhibitions, performances, commissions, projects and funded initiatives.*	•				Council-led: (Arts, Culture & Venues, Economic Development & Tourism)
4.6 Launch a Volunteer Workforce Renewal Initiative To strengthen the sustainability of arts, culture and heritage organisations by attracting, supporting and developing the next generation of volunteers. Measure: *Arts and cultural volunteer participation, including recruitment and engagement of new and younger volunteers, aligned with Volunteering Action Plan.*	$				Council-led: (Arts, Culture & Venues, Community Partnerships)

Delivering on your ambition

Community Consultation

Shaped by our community

Cultivating Vibrancy has been developed through a comprehensive consultation process. We sought to understand not only what people value about the region's cultural life today, but also their aspirations for the future.

The consultation process invited artists, cultural organisations, volunteers, Traditional Owners, multicultural communities, young people, community groups, businesses and residents from across the municipality to contribute their ideas. We heard from people involved in every part of the creative ecosystem from professional artists and performers to local volunteers, teachers, musicians, heritage advocates, festival organisers and community leaders.

The consultation revealed a community that is passionate, proud and ambitious. Participants spoke about the unique identity of the Mildura region, the strength of its cultural heritage, the richness of its diversity and the opportunities that exist to further strengthen arts and culture across the municipality. While a wide range of views and ideas were expressed, a common theme emerged: a shared commitment to ensuring that arts and culture continue to contribute to community wellbeing, economic prosperity, social connection and a strong sense of place.

Consultation at a glance

117 community survey responses

10 detailed written submissions, 14,000 words

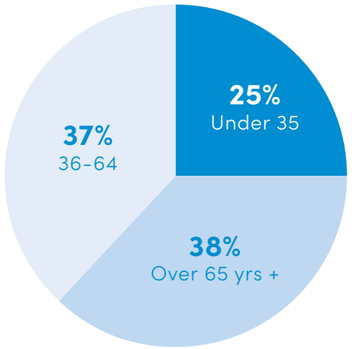
4 community forums held across the municipality; Mildura, Merbein, Red Cliffs, Ouyen

In addition, targeted meetings were held with stakeholders. Together these engagement activities were designed to ensure the Strategy reflected the diversity of our municipality, including perspectives from smaller townships, young people, people with disability, volunteers and the broader creative sector.

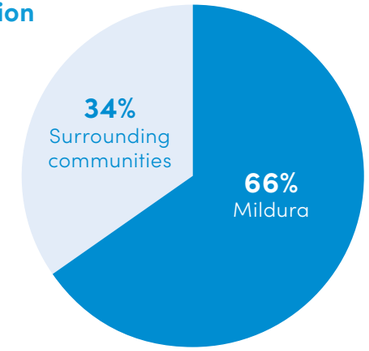
Who we heard from

Highlights of representation across the community survey:

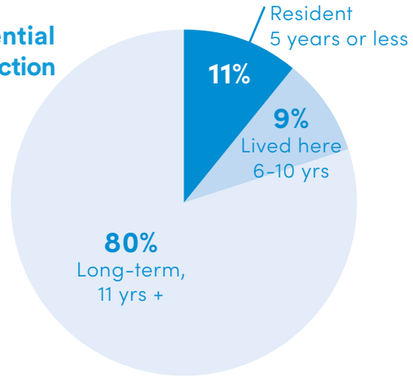
Age



Location



Residential Connection



This plan was developed for Mildura Rural City Council by the TGA consulting team of Tony Grybowski, Director, and Penny Miles, Senior Associate.

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TONY GRYBOWSKI & Associates

Council and the Consultants would like to sincerely thank the many individuals, organisations, artists, community groups, businesses, cultural leaders, volunteers and residents who contributed to the development of this Arts and Culture Strategy. Over a period of three months, people generously shared their experiences, aspirations, ideas and insights through workshops, meetings, interviews, surveys and conversations. The willingness of so many people to engage in the process reflects the deep value that the community places on arts, culture and creativity and their importance to the future of the region.

We acknowledge the work undertaken by Paul Carter, Melinda Hinkson, Neil Fettling and Mark Grist in preparing a Discussion Paper, *Into the Current,* April 2025. This document provided invaluable information contributing to this project.

August 2026

Mildura Rural City Council