



Maribyrnong City Council

Arts & Culture Strategy 2018-2023

A catalyst for a better community.



Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL



Throughout this document, you will see seven symbols. Each of them represents one of the themes of this Strategy.

You'll notice that they pop up more and more as time goes on. It's our way of keeping track of how we're going in implementing this Strategy.




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We acknowledge that we are on traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present.

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Vision

The arts are a source of delight, invention and provocation. They help define us as human beings and shape our view of the world.

At Maribyrnong City Council, we also strive to ensure art is a mechanism for place making, building social cohesion and a vehicle for social justice. Participation in the arts is a source of community wellbeing and a driver of economic vitality. Put simply, our investment in the arts is a catalyst for a better community.



Introduction

Purpose

The City of Maribyrnong has a vibrant arts and creative-industries sector. It is home to a significant artist population, and contains a broad array of arts organisations and creative sector businesses. It is also home to a culturally rich and diverse community that is eager to participate in and engage with the arts. This Strategy elaborates the role Maribyrnong City Council will play in supporting the progress and evolution of the arts in Maribyrnong.

Approach

For Maribyrnong City Council, it is essential that a complete, reflective and responsive cultural Strategy encourages participation, celebration and creative expression throughout the municipality. It would contribute significantly to the community's identity, its sense of place and its civic spirit. It would also greatly enhance the wellbeing and cohesion of the community, as well as economic development in the municipality.

The approach of this Strategy, therefore, is focussed on these essentials. It is driven by need, and addresses recognised gaps in community cultural activities. It is underpinned by principles of inclusiveness and participation; moreover, it encourages active engagement of the community in the planning, development and delivery of arts programs and projects.

Because of the natural vibrancy of the arts in Maribyrnong, the preference for Council has been to support the exciting programs that are already taking place through funding and brokering, and by commissioning only to fill gaps, rather than by developing a competing program. This approach is continued in this Strategy.

The arts and creative industries: a definition

The arts are modes of human expression that use skill, emotion, imagination and intellect in the creation of objects (usually aesthetic), environments, and experiences that can be shared. Traditionally they include literature (poetry, drama, prose, etc.); visual art (painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, etc.); performance; and music.

However, we now recognise that the breadth of creative endeavour goes beyond the traditional definition of the arts, and such examples are collectively known as the 'creative industries'. This is an acknowledgment of the scope of creative practices and the interrelationships between them, and also affirms these practices can be both creative and commercial in nature. To accommodate contemporary creative practice, we would therefore add the following to the list: architecture; crafts; fashion, graphic and product design; film, television, radio and photography; gaming and software design; publishing; and museums, galleries and libraries.

All these areas of creative practice can help build social capital, community wellbeing and economic vitality; therefore, they warrant consideration in a new arts and culture Strategy for Maribyrnong.

Linking with the Council Plan

The artistic and cultural activities of Council operate within the broader strategic framework of Maribyrnong City Council most clearly delineated in the Council Plan 2017-2021, and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan incorporated in the Council Plan. The artistic and cultural activities should also complement other relevant plans and strategies adopted by Council, such as activity centre and neighbourhood precinct plans.

The Council Plan 2017-2021 is committed to creating:

- healthy and inclusive communities; and
- quality places and spaces.

To foster healthy and inclusive communities through the plan, Council aims to:

Provide and advocate for services and facilities that support people's wellbeing and healthy living, connection to community, safety, cultural engagement and whole of life learning.

This includes action to:

Deliver and support arts and culture opportunities that enhance social connection, inclusion and the experience of living in Maribyrnong.

To provide quality places and spaces through the plan, Council will:

Lead the development of integrated and high quality environments that are well maintained, accessible and respectful of our community and neighbourhoods.

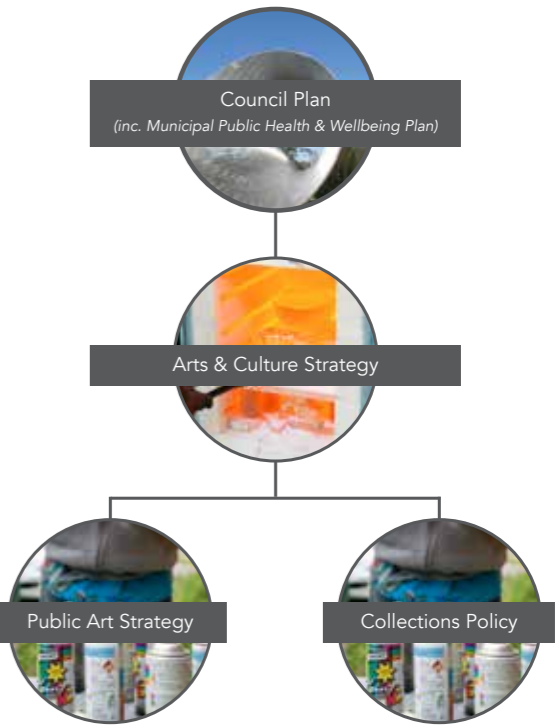
This includes action to:

Enhance public space and connection to place through visual and public arts.

The Arts and Culture Strategy therefore supports Council in achieving these key components of its Council Plan. Council firmly acknowledges the role the arts play in community wellbeing, economic vitality and community connectedness.

Just as the Arts and Culture Strategy sits under the Council Plan, two arts focussed strategies flow on from the Arts and Culture Strategy. These are the Public Art Strategy and the Collections Policy.

POLICY HIERARCHY



Maribyrnong and the arts: context

Our community

Maribyrnong is growing rapidly. The residential population was 82,288 in 2016, up from 71,635 in 2011: this is a growth rate of nearly 3 per cent per annum, a much faster rate than the rest of Australia (1.5 per cent). By 2022, the population is expected to be 106,596, continuing the current strong rate of growth.

The demographic profile¹ of Maribyrnong also differs significantly from that of Australia as a whole. Specifically, Maribyrnong is far more culturally diverse, and younger.

Over 30 per cent of the population is aged between 20 and 35, which is significantly above the Australia-wide average of 21 per cent in this age range. This figure is conflated on any given day by a percentage of the 20,000 students who attend Victoria University. In generational terms, this means about one-third of Maribyrnong's population belong to Generation Y – the millennials.² To a large extent, the millennials shape the entertainment and nightlife offered in a municipality, particularly live music.

Cultural diversity is the wellspring of artistic diversity. In Maribyrnong about 48 per cent of the municipality's residents were born overseas. Vietnam, India and China are the most common countries of birth outside Australia (9.3 per cent, 4 per cent and 2.8 per cent of residents respectively). The percentage of residents from Vietnam is notably high, given that this group forms less than 1 per cent of the population of Australia.

Maribyrnong is gentrifying, and although there are significant pockets of disadvantage in areas such as the west of the municipality, nevertheless the average weekly income in Maribyrnong is now slightly higher than the Australian average.

Youth, diversity and gentrification are significant drivers of artistic vibrancy in Maribyrnong.

Participation in the arts

Australians are active participants in the arts. The Australian Bureau of Statistics, on behalf of Australia Council for the Arts, regularly conducts a survey of Australians' participation in selected cultural activities. 'Participation' means that in the twelve months prior to the survey, respondents undertook a selected visual arts activity, such as painting, drawing or a craft activity, or participated in a performing arts activity such as drama, music or dance. In 2013–14, more than a quarter (27 per cent, or 4.9 million people) of the 18.5 million Australian residents aged 15 years and over had participated in at least one selected cultural activity in the previous year.³

The survey does not distinguish results for specific municipalities. Therefore, the percentages for the City of Maribyrnong form part of the percentage for Melbourne West, which includes most of the municipalities in the west of Melbourne. The percentage of participants in selected cultural activities in the Melbourne West region was equal to the Australia-wide average. Had the analysis specified individual municipalities, we would probably find much of Maribyrnong, because of similar social signifiers, closer to the other inner metropolitan suburbs where participation was up to 37 per cent, significantly higher than the Australian average.

People aged 15–24 years reported the highest participation rate in cultural activities (35 per cent). Participation rates tended to decrease with age: people aged 25–34 had a participation rate of 28 per cent, and 23 per cent of those aged 65 years and over took part. Overall, women had a higher participation rate (30 per cent) than men (24 per cent).⁴

Maribyrnong's relatively youthful population also supports the assumption that the City's rate of participation in creative activities is higher than the national average.

Maribyrnong and the arts: building on a solid foundation

This Strategy builds on an already solid foundation, in terms of Maribyrnong City Council's commitment to the arts over many years.

Maribyrnong is home to several nationally recognised arts organisations, including the Footscray Community Arts Centre, Women's Circus and Snuff Puppets. These organisations, as well as others in the area that are focussed on young people, such as 100 Story Building, cohealth Arts Generator and Western Edge Youth Arts, are committed to furthering community-engaged arts practice, and provide an unequalled opportunity for the community of Maribyrnong to actively participate in the arts. In addition Maribyrnong is also home to Victoria University, which provides a range of short courses, undergraduate and postgraduate offerings that focus on the arts and creative industries.

Maribyrnong City Council provides, and will continue to provide, support for arts organisations, individual artists and our creative community through offering community grants, Festival City grants, Art Organisational grants, and subsidised leases on Council buildings for arts organisations and activities.

Maribyrnong also provides, and will continue to provide, a wealth of opportunities for artists and the community to present their work at festivals and events throughout the municipality, such as Due West Arts Festival, Fringe Westside, and Footscray Art Prize.

Maribyrnong has developed several innovative spaces for presentation of the arts, including the Bluestone Church Arts Space and Artsbox, an artist-in-residence space. The Bluestone Church Arts Space provides a small flexible venue for artistic developments and performance. It is regularly used by local artists, and is also a western hub for major Melbourne events such as the Comedy, Fringe, Jazz, Writers and Midsumma Festivals.

The scope, professionalism and interrelationship of the arts on offer in Maribyrnong is extensive. It is important to understand this ecology and for Council to nurture, and not direct, its evolution.

Why we need to invest in arts and culture: the social dividend

Maribyrnong City Council endorses the importance of investment in artistic and cultural programs and facilities, given the significant social dividends they provide:

- supporting a creative, adaptive and reflective community;
- enhancing community health and wellbeing;
- making a more competitive city, and increasing economic dynamism through creative industries;
- place-making, neighbourhood activation and creating spaces to celebrate local identity.
- This last item is particularly critical for the urban renewal areas within the City of Maribyrnong.

A creative, adaptive and reflective community

Creativity and cultural activity enriches our human condition. It defines who we are. It changes and reshapes our world. It inspires us, helps us build stronger, more cohesive communities. It increasingly drives new jobs and innovation. Creative and cultural industries can be life affirming, life changing and life-saving.

Martin Foley MP, Minister for Creative Industries⁵

Creativity is recognised as a fundamental skill; its impact extends far beyond the arts, and affects almost every discipline and industry. An often-quoted study by IBM, which surveyed 1,500 CEOs, nominated creativity as ‘the most crucial factor for future success’.⁶ The OECD regarded ‘creativity and innovation’ as such an important key competency that it probably warranted the restructuring of education systems.⁷

The essence of art is creativity, generating new and original ideas. It is the beginning of innovation and adaption. While arts practice promotes creativity, innovation and adaptation, it also enables reflection. It can change the way we view ourselves and the world around us. The arts help us to empathise and understand from another’s point of view. For example, some medical programs now use the arts to enable doctors to understand the patient’s perspective. A study conducted with medical students at the University of NSW used art, poetry, and contemporary and classical literature to evoke issues relevant to clinical encounters. The ‘positive student feedback [suggested] a successful transformative learning experience’.⁸

A healthy and cohesive community

The health benefits of participating in the arts are well documented – from supporting individual mental wellbeing by providing an opportunity for people to gain new skills, confidence and self-esteem, to building social connection and reducing isolation by participating in an activity with others while engaging in a creative process.

VicHealth⁹

Recent analysis by the Australia Council, *Arts Nation: An Overview of Australian Arts*, 2015, ‘found that engagement with the arts is associated with a significant positive increase in life satisfaction’. The Arts Nation overview included a Wellbeing Valuation approach, which is a method used by economists to estimate the relative worth of a non-monetary quality by calculating the amount of money required to produce the same increase in life satisfaction. According to this approach, ‘the identified wellbeing increase... is worth an equivalent of \$4,349 per person, per annum’. Applied to the proportion of those aged 15 years and above who engage in the arts, this equates to ‘an overall societal value of about \$66 billion per year’.¹⁰

In 2013, the federal and state ministers of health and the arts adopted the *National Arts and Health Framework*. This framework demonstrates the acceptance by federal and all state and territory governments that art enhances health outcomes both for individuals and the community.

Through [the] framework we: acknowledge the value and benefits of arts and health practice and outcomes [and] endorse collaborative relationships between arts and health sectors nationally...¹¹

Moreover, there is national acceptance of evidence that participation in the arts promotes health and wellbeing:

There is clear empirical evidence that arts and health activity is a health-promoting endeavour for all members of society.¹²

The arts can also play a major role in social cohesion. The Australia Council’s recent 2017 report, *Connecting Australians*,¹³ showed that 73 per cent of Australians believe that the arts are an important way to gain different perspectives on a topic; 64 per cent consider that the arts help us to understand other people; and 64 per cent think that the arts allow us to connect with others.

Economic vitality

Australian cultural industries generate over \$50 billion in economic activity or \$35 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA). This was higher than the GVA for agriculture, forestry and fishing (\$29 billion); electricity, gas, water and waste services (\$27 billion); and accommodation and food services (\$28 billion).

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014

Maribyrnong’s creative-industries sector comprises 1,451 jobs, amounting to 3.8 per cent of the City’s total workforce. The sector’s contribution to the Gross Regional Product (GRP) is \$297.9 million (5.4 per cent), and the Council accounts for 1 per cent of this (\$2.15m). The sector is Maribyrnong’s seventh largest by GRP.¹⁴

In a study of the economic impact of the creative industries, Geografia Pty Ltd noted:

There are also other economic benefits that are not easily monetised. They include: the impact on gentrification and urban revitalisation; retail strip renewal; improved brand value; health and wellbeing benefits which reduce public health expenditure; and the economic benefits of clustering.¹⁵

And of course, we cannot ignore the intangible benefits of the arts. For instance, the KPMG study, *Economic Impact of the Victorian Arts and Cultural Sector*, 2013, concluded that:

Even when we capture the opportunity costs of alternate uses of government funding, the economy is still better off with the funding allocated to arts and culture. It should also be noted that these estimated economic benefits are above and beyond other public benefits.¹⁶

Clearly, to realise such benefit, public investment is needed. As the Australia Council’s *Arts Nation* overview observes, ‘a robust network of infrastructure is needed to maintain thriving arts and culture sectors’.¹⁷

Place-making and civic character

Over the last decade, the idea of the ‘global city’ has emerged as the key descriptor of a high-functioning, economically secure and liveable metropolis. In defining a global city further, we observe a focus on culture:

With the cultural economy positioned not merely as an adjunct to larger more important sectors, but as a field that makes its own contribution to growth, development and vitality of the metropolis.

T. A. Hutton, *Cities and the Cultural Economy*.¹⁸

Places have a significant influence on human wellbeing:

Quality places are central to community life. A successful place is accessible to all, and encourages people to connect with one another. The relationships which are built can create communities where there is a high level of positive activity and places which are safe, socially stable and resilient.

Creating Places, the Scottish Government, 2013¹⁹

Creative practitioners need an interconnected environment. This involves a space in which to produce work; places to share work and find a response to their work; and forums that allow them to share ideas, respond to the work of others, and form collaborations.

The creative field of the city can be seen, in short, as a system of cues and resources providing materials for imaginative appropriations by individuals and groups as they pursue the business of work and life in urban space.

Allen Scott, *Cultural Economy and the Creative Field of the City*, 2016²⁰

What gives Maribyrnong its distinctive character? Increasingly, its identity is being led by its cultural diversity, its residual industrial edginess, its growing creative-industries sector, and its dynamic arts scene.

As the *World Cities Cultural Report*, 2014, observes:

Even world cities – with their superficial resemblances – remain distinct. The reason why? Culture. What makes them different to one another is culture. While world cities are plugged into global circuits of ideas and knowledge, it is their local culture (and cultural producers) which transform external influences into something unique.²¹

Consultation

The themes and actions in this Strategy have been substantially and primarily informed by extensive consultation. This consultation involved a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the main arts organisations in the municipality that are supported by Council, as well as others independent of Council. The general community's opinion was sought through a public forum, online submissions, and target focus groups with school students and pre-schoolers. Furthermore, the local Aboriginal perspective was gained through discussion with traditional owners and interviews with Indigenous organisations. A separate stream of consultation looked particularly at gender and the relative lack of professional opportunities for female artists.

What was said: main themes of the consultation

There is a great deal happening in Maribyrnong, but there is still further opportunity for Council to improve the profile of arts and culture in the municipality. We need to celebrate the arts, give them a high profile, and thereby create more opportunities to bring art into people's lives.

We need to be aware if certain sections of the community, whether through gender, age, ethnicity or ability, were disadvantaged in terms of access and support. Maribyrnong should embrace a leadership role in ensuring access and inclusiveness in the arts.

In promoting Aboriginal arts and culture, the most important task is to engage effectively with the Traditional Owners, as it is vital to tell their stories. Working with the Traditional Owners on arts and cultural programming is essential.

Maribyrnong has gaps in the provision of facilities for arts programming. Major gaps include the lack of medium to large performance spaces and rehearsal spaces within the City and spaces for the development and presentation of new and innovative work. Smaller spaces are also valuable to facilitate artistic experimentation and opportunities for cross-arts collaborations. The absence of "wet spaces" available to the community is also notable. These themes emerged repeatedly throughout the consultation.

The main themes to emerge from the consultation indicated the need to:

- support artists and the positive things already happening in Maribyrnong
- ensure that the stories of the Traditional Owners are told
- encourage participation of the diverse cultures of Maribyrnong in the arts and culture program
- develop the facilities that ensure ready access to the arts by the whole community
- maintain the availability of affordable spaces for studios, workshops, rehearsal and presentation spaces, in this rapidly gentrifying municipality
- ensure that the creative industries thrive
- ensure that Council takes a holistic and cross-Council approach in creating a vibrant arts and creative-industries sector

Significant opportunities can be realised by highlighting the location and diversity of the municipality. The diversity of cultures in Maribyrnong means that a corresponding diversity of music, dance and visual arts traditions could be tapped. Support for new music venues could capitalise on this, as would a public gallery with a curated program supporting both contemporary and traditional art forms, supporting the work of all artists, but particularly those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Community-engaged creative practice is a strength of Maribyrnong. Emphasising and supporting participation and active engagement by the community would create a wealth of opportunities to feature and celebrate the arts.

Developing and promoting the arts precinct along the river is another major opportunity. This area is home to much of the creative-industries sector in Maribyrnong. By fostering connections between creative-sector organisations and individual artists, perhaps through a formal association of artists and arts organisations, Council could gain an effective vehicle for collectively promoting this sector.

Another major theme to emerge is the opportunity to make constructive use of under-used or unoccupied buildings, and re-purposing old factory and commercial premises.

Promoting Maribyrnong and the opportunity it provides for small-scale arts fabrication and related industrial processes would bring artists and creative businesses to the area. Council could work with local businesses and housing developers to ensure that creative spaces, galleries and studios are included in their developments.

Finally, though the focus of the consultation was on Maribyrnong, a vision is also needed for the whole of the western region. The artists and communities of the west would be best served if we took a unified and regional perspective.

A more comprehensive review of the consultation is available in the background paper that unpins this Strategy and is available on the Council website.

Gender lens

*Council is committed to a community where opportunities for success are equally available to women and men; where our mothers, daughters and sisters live free from the cycle of violence; where their thoughts, ideas and opinions are heard and respected and their choices and goals in life celebrated and supported.*²²

Over the past 10 years, Council has developed a reputation as a leader in taking action and raising awareness to prevent violence against women and to create a fairer, more equitable community. As part of this Strategy, it is important to examine what part gender plays in the arts. Particularly, whether a person's gender is a factor in gaining professional opportunities and furthering their career development.

In various sectors, particularly in terms of programming, the general view from the literature reviewed was that women are disadvantaged. For example, in theatre female playwrights have experienced far greater difficulty in getting their work programmed. This situation now appears to be improving: the most recent Australian Writers' Guild report noted that programming seemed approximately equal between the genders. However, the report added that this had not been the case in previous years, and would not necessarily continue in future:²³

On the gender findings, it is disappointing to see that despite a great deal of attention being brought to the issue, in real terms we are in effect at a standstill. The Australian Writers' Guild unequivocally

*believes that gender parity is an achievable goal for the 10 companies surveyed – as it is for all Australian theatre companies. While we recognise that every company might not reach parity every year, we do expect that programming over a broader span of time should be roughly 50/50. When conflated, the statistics over the past three years show the actual ratio at 58.5/41.5.*²⁴

In the visual arts, the Countess Report²⁵ found that among those graduating with degrees in 2014, 73 per cent were female and 27 per cent male, and for post-graduate degrees, 75 per cent were female and 25 per cent male. However, according to an analysis of 923 exhibitions in commercial galleries in 2014, 40 per cent of the exhibitors were female artists, 55 per cent were male and 5 per cent were collaborations. Of artists listed as being represented by commercial galleries in the same period, 40 per cent were women, 58 per cent men and 2 per cent collaborations.

Similarly, with the visual arts, there is also a significant gender imbalance in music. A survey by Music Victoria, *Women In the Victorian Contemporary Music Industry*,²⁶ observed:

The music industry is based on personal and professional networks and it is these relationships that give rise to job, performance and other opportunities. The overrepresentation of men in decision making roles in the music industry means it can be difficult for women to develop the relationships they need to 'get a foot in the door' and 'take the next step' to establish and build their careers.

*Numerous survey respondents felt overlooked for opportunities because of the perception that they could not perform on stage or in a particular role as well as a male. The survey results provide plenty of examples of the 'just a girl' and 'boys club' mentality of many men (and some women) that impacts the experience of women working in the music industry by limiting their access to opportunities.*²⁷

There is overwhelming agreement that artistic practice and professional opportunities can be hindered by gender, and this is especially true for transgender and gender diverse people. Through this Strategy, Council has an opportunity to be proactive to ensure that participation in the arts and professional opportunities for artists are not hindered because of gender.



Themes: directions for a new strategy

As a mechanism for furthering community wellbeing, the arts present some unique and substantial opportunities.

The arts operate on a physical *and* emotional level. Participation can be individually transformative *and* collectively supportive. The arts can change how we think, as well as how we act. The arts enable individuals and communities to engage on multiple levels, with differing skill sets and experiences. The arts cater for all tastes – they thrive on diversity, encourage both traditional and experimental forms, and embrace technological and social change.

An individual can engage with the arts on many levels. This could be as an audience member; gaining a more enhanced engagement by following up on ideas presented, or being inspired by them; being a participant in the creative practice; or being a leader of the creative practice. Engagement with the arts could also be administrative, curatorial or educative.

Given this unique ability of the arts to drive community wellbeing, to be individually and collectively transformative, encouraging participation on many levels, and, following the extensive consultation, seven directions or themes have evolved to drive this Strategy.



Theme 1: First Peoples first

The City of Maribyrnong is located within the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. The Traditional Owners have a deep and profound connection with the land, and a vibrant and strong artistic heritage and contemporary culture. During the consultation, the Traditional Owners clearly explained that they believe their stories need to be told, and that an arts strategy must ensure that Aboriginal culture is celebrated through cultural programs, public art, and in cultural infrastructure.

The Traditional Owners also acknowledged that Maribyrnong was now home to Indigenous peoples from around Australia, as well as many immigrant communities, and that through the arts we should celebrate all cultures.

Therefore, this theme requires Council to:

- A. Celebrate and ensure that the stories of the Traditional Owners continue to be told and promoted.**
- B. Encourage the development of unique and distinctive public spaces and places, including art spaces, which reflect, respond to and acknowledge that Maribyrnong is part of the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation.**

Actions

1. First Peoples first actions:
 - 1.1. Develop and support programs that profile and celebrate the arts and culture of the Aboriginal community.
 - 1.2. Ensure that all cultural programming and cultural infrastructure celebrating the Aboriginal heritage and community of Maribyrnong is undertaken in consultation and partnership with the Traditional Owners.
 - 1.3. Ensure that Indigenous artists are given the opportunity to lead in the creation and development of the cultural programming and cultural infrastructure that celebrates the Aboriginal heritage and community of Maribyrnong.
 - 1.4. For new cultural facilities developed by Council, acknowledge in a meaningful way that they are built on land whose Traditional Owners are part of the Kulin Nation.





Theme 2: Access all areas – access, inclusion and equity

The arts enable individuals and communities to engage on multiple levels, with differing skill sets and experiences. The arts cater for all tastes; they thrive on diversity, encourage both traditional and experimental forms, and embrace technological and social change. However, for a variety of reasons, many in the community find it difficult to engage because of cost, physical access, or a residual sense that the arts are elitist and/or only available to those in the know. Thus, Council's arts programs and facilities should actively remove physical and social barriers, and/or the perception of barriers.

The consultation established that for female artists, gender is an issue, and that their professional opportunities and development are hindered because of their gender.

Artists with disability have also encountered more barriers in accessing support, and have struggled to find opportunities to present their art.

Thus, Council's arts strategy must work actively to ensure that gender, sexual orientation and disability are not barriers to arts practice or participation.

Therefore, this theme requires Council to:

- A. Ensure that the community has easy access to all arts and cultural programs and facilities, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity or ability.**
- B. Ensure that all artists have ready access to support and assistance, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity or ability.**

Actions

- 2. Access all areas – access, inclusion and equity actions:
 - 2.1. Ensure that all arts and cultural programming encourages participation regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability or income.
 - 2.2. Develop a communications strategy for the dissemination of information on events and activities in Maribyrnong's creative sector.
 - 2.3. Ensure that criteria for Arts Organisational Funding and other arts funding programs are designed to improve gender equity outcomes.
 - 2.4. Undertake an annual gender audit of boards and the programming of funded organisations. Publicise significant achievements.
 - 2.5. Consider a mentorship program that allows female artists, artists from diverse backgrounds, and artists with disability, to enhance their skills and experience.
 - 2.6. Develop a disability action plan that ensures arts programs and facilities are readily accessible to people with disability, and that artists with disability have supported access to funded programs and grants.
 - 2.7. Develop a Young People and the Arts Engagement Plan that connects young people with the programs and initiatives articulated in this Strategy.





Theme 3: Celebrating diversity

Given that Maribyrnong is one of the most diverse communities in Melbourne, arts and cultural programming is thus an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to share and connect.

The arts enable individuals and communities to engage on multiple levels, with differing skill sets and experiences. The arts cater for all tastes – they thrive on diversity, encourage both traditional and experimental forms, and embrace technological and social change.

Therefore, this theme requires Council to:

- A. Ensure that the cultural diversity of Maribyrnong is celebrated and featured in arts and cultural programming.**
- B. Ensure that artists and art practitioners from diverse backgrounds, whether working in traditional or contemporary forms, have a multiplicity of opportunities to lead conversations and present their art.**

Actions

3. Celebrating diversity actions:

- 3.1. Encourage intercultural participation by artists and cultural groups from diverse backgrounds in all arts and cultural programming.
- 3.2. Encourage applications for Arts Organisational Funding and other arts funding programs by artists and groups from diverse backgrounds.
- 3.3. Investigate and consider the benefit of an increase to arts funding programs to address currently significant unmet demand.
- 3.4. Establish and curate an access gallery space in an existing or new cultural hub.
- 3.5. Develop a collections policy in line with the themes articulated in this Strategy.
- 3.6. Ensure that new creative places and spaces in Maribyrnong reflect in their design and programming the diversity of the community.





Theme 4: Factory for the arts

Maribyrnong has many highly-regarded arts organisations, small cultural-sector businesses and individual artists, and is home to Victoria University, which provides a multitude of opportunities for the next generation of creatives. Many of the artists and small businesses are attracted by the availability of light industrial space suitable for arts practices that may require the use of machinery. Hence, Maribyrnong is a centre for the fabrication of artwork that may be destined for anywhere in Melbourne, or indeed the country. Maribyrnong could therefore be seen as a 'factory for the arts', a creative workshop that services the rest of Melbourne.

Contributing to this theme is the growth in coworking spaces that house musical rehearsal spaces, small design studios, and other creative start-ups that service clients and audiences well beyond Maribyrnong. Also, many of the arts companies in the municipality develop their work locally and perform much further afield.

Therefore, this theme requires Council to:

- A. Ensure that the creative industries thrive in Maribyrnong, and that Maribyrnong is seen as a centre for creative excellence.**
- B. Ensure that opportunities and affordable spaces are available to artists and other creative-industry workers, enabling them to pursue their creative practice.**

Actions

4. Factory for the Arts actions:

- 4.1. Investigate the establishment of an association, open to all creative-sector organisations and businesses that will promote Maribyrnong as a centre for creative excellence, and will work with Council to effectively ensure ongoing development of the local creative sector.
- 4.2. Develop a register of sites that would be suitable for studios, art fabrication, rehearsal and/or co-working spaces for the creative industries, and encourage landlords to consider applications by artists as individuals or groups.
- 4.3. Investigate approaches to subsidise spaces for artists and arts practice, including rate subsidies.
- 4.4. Investigate planning mechanisms to encourage property owners to contribute or provide space for the arts and creative activities within their developments (including live-work spaces for artists), and consider their applicability or adaptability to new developments in Maribyrnong.
- 4.5. Investigate best-practice funding models and consider the introduction of three-year funding agreements for the Arts Organisational Funding to optimise performance and enhance sector stability.





Theme 5: Participation

The National Arts and Health Framework, which has been adopted by federal and all state and territory governments, makes it clear that the arts provide significant community health benefits. To optimise these benefits in addressing the social determinants of individuals' health, the community must actively participate in the arts activity, and have real agency in its development. Thus, in order to deliver programs that best address the social determinants of health, artists need to develop skills in community-engaged arts practice.

Therefore, this theme requires Council to:

- A. Ensure that arts programming focuses on active engagement and creative agency by community participants.**
- B. Work with local organisations that have a strong record and profile in community-engaged arts practice, in order to develop the skills of artists wishing to work with the community in their creative practice.**

Actions

- 5. Participation actions:
 - 5.1. Ensure that support is available to artists skilled in community-engaged arts practice.
 - 5.2. Ensure that all arts and cultural programming encourages participation and active agency by participants in the development of the program.
 - 5.3. Develop an annual Arts Participation program to drive social connection and inclusion, and health and wellbeing outcomes, in any high need precincts of Maribyrnong.
 - 5.4. Consider development of an artist-in-residence program, with a focus on community participation at local community centres such as Braybrook Community Hub.





Theme 6: Places and spaces

The provision of state-of-the-art cultural facilities across Maribyrnong is essential to give artists the best forum to develop and present their work, and to encourage deeper community engagement with the arts. Maribyrnong is fortunate in having excellent transport links, and a plethora of amenities such as cafés, bars and restaurants, that will complement the development of new venues.

As an early priority in this Strategy, promoting the evolving arts precinct along the river provides a significant opportunity for Maribyrnong to highlight the vibrancy and diversity of its arts practice and the growing creative-industries sector that exists in Maribyrnong.

In the north, Pipemakers Park is a cultural asset that is relatively underutilised at present. Associated with Pipemakers Park is the neighbouring heritage site, Jack's Magazine, now under the management of Working Heritage, Victoria. The masterplan for Pipemakers Park includes improved links with Jack's Magazine and is an exciting opportunity for a significant cultural and tourist attraction in the north of the municipality.

Therefore, this theme requires Council to:

- A. Ensure that the community has a range of state-of-the-art places and spaces in which to enjoy and experience a diversity of arts and cultural programming.**
- B. Ensure that artists have ready access to the best spaces to create and present their work.**

Actions

6. Places and spaces actions:

- 6.1. Develop a business case for a large, flexible performance venue in the Footscray CBD.
- 6.2. Develop a strategy to recognise and promote the arts precinct along the river, including the Bunbury Street Art Walk.
- 6.3. Ensure that the EOI process for Pipemakers Park includes cultural uses as a part of the mix for the future use and development of the heritage buildings.
- 6.4. In association with Working Heritage link Pipemakers Park and Jack's Magazine, and improve the pedestrian links between Pipemakers Park and Highpoint Shopping Centre in line with the Council approved masterplan.
- 6.5. Develop a live-music action plan to support a thriving local music scene, and assist in promoting a vibrant night-time economy.
- 6.6. Develop a public art strategy alongside this Strategy, focussing on alignment with the themes articulated here.
- 6.7. Investigate and consider the creation of more performing arts and rehearsal spaces to support development of programming in the inner west.
- 6.8. Map and document arts facilities and organisations within the municipality and make widely available.





Theme 7: Culture across Council

The impact of a vibrant arts and cultural program is wide-ranging. Aside from its intrinsic value in promoting a creative, reflective and adaptive community, the arts also promote physical and mental wellbeing, stimulate economic growth, and foster creative and clever ways to design, enhance and build a better city. It is therefore increasingly evident that many areas of Council can improve their service by engaging with the arts.

Therefore, this theme requires Council to:

A. Ensure that all areas of Council look synergistically at engaging with the arts to enhance their service.

Actions

7. Culture across Council actions:

- 7.1. Continue to support local creative-industry start-ups and established businesses.
- 7.2. Compile a register of former industrial and commercial spaces suitable for creative-industry start-ups.
- 7.3. Ensure that cultural impact and cultural opportunities are considered in all municipal plans and strategies, including masterplans, building and public realm proposals, across Council and in Council reports where applicable.
- 7.4. Promote, support and protect the intellectual property, copyright and moral rights of artists, and ensure fair payment for their work.
- 7.5. Develop a new 'terms of reference' for the Maribyrnong Arts Committee in line with this arts and cultural strategy, with future membership to be proposed to Council.
- 7.6. Work with IMAP and neighbouring municipalities to promote and drive regional arts and cultural programming to encourage sector growth for Melbourne.
- 7.7. Investigate and consider the role the organisation plays in the management and protection of cultural and environmental heritage





Timeline for implementation and measures of success

1. First Peoples first

Year	1	2	3	4	5	
1.1						At least 3 programs initiated that profile and highlight and celebrate Aboriginal culture
1.2						Ongoing dialogue established with the local indigenous community and elders
1.3						Criteria established for Indigenous related projects formalising and preferencing application by Indigenous artists
1.4						Meaningful acknowledgement of Traditional Owners incorporated into new cultural facilities of significance

2. Access all areas – access, inclusion and equity

Year	1	2	3	4	5	
2.1						Annual review of programs demonstrates active participation regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity and income
2.2						Communication strategy completed
2.3						Gender criteria included in all arts funding programs
2.4						Results of gender audit published
2.5						Recommendation to Council, and decision achieved
2.6						Action plan developed and implemented
2.7						Young People and Arts Engagement Plan developed and implemented

3. Celebrating diversity

Year	1	2	3	4	5	
3.1						Annual review of programs demonstrates increased participation by cultural groups in arts and cultural programming
3.2						Annual audit of arts and cultural grants demonstrates increased engagement by artist and groups from diverse backgrounds
3.3						Recommendation to Council, and decision achieved
3.4						Access gallery established
3.5						Collections policy developed
3.6						All new Council cultural facilities respond to needs of diverse groups i.e. accommodate culturally specific need in design and programming

	Ongoing or continuing action
	Action developed or introduced by this time

4. Factory for the arts

Year	1	2	3	4	5	
4.1						Investigation of the viability of an association of creative sector organisations and businesses completed
4.2						Register sites completed
4.3						Investigation of national and international models for supporting affordable space for artists completed
4.4						Options and analysis will be reported
4.5						Recommendation to Council, and decision achieved

5. Participation

Year	1	2	3	4	5	
5.1						Review of programs demonstrates that artists and arts organisations focused on community engaged practice are supported
5.2						Annual review demonstrates programs encourage active participation
5.3						Arts Participation program established
5.4						Options and analysis will be reported

6. Places and spaces

Year	1	2	3	4	5	
6.1						Business case for performance space in Footscray CBD completed
6.2						Strategy to promote the arts precinct along the river completed
6.3						Cultural use proposal developed for the heritage buildings at Pipemakers Park
6.4						Pipemakers Park and Environs approved masterplan is progressed with cross-functional inputs
6.5						Live music action plan developed and implemented
6.6						Public art strategy developed and implemented
6.7						Investigation of the viability of additional spaces
6.8						GIS Map and database implemented and regularly updated, and made public

7. Culture across council

Year	1	2	3	4	5	
7.1						Council units collaborate and respond appropriately
7.2						Register of sites available
7.3						Council masterplans and strategies contain a section on cultural impacts and opportunities
7.4						Increase awareness of the intellectual property rights and moral rights of artists
7.5						New terms of reference developed for the Maribyrnong Arts Committee, committee established and a regular calendar of meetings instigated
7.6						Calendar of regular meetings with arts officers from neighbouring municipalities instigated
7.7						Recommendation to Council, and decision achieved

Endnotes

1

The demographic statistics in this profile are taken from the 2016 Census QuickStats: www.abs.gov.au

2

The generation born in the 1980s and early 90s. They are children of the baby boomer generation, and grew up with the internet, mobile phones and social media.

3

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Image credits

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Moving Marvels by Marc-O-Matic as part of Due West Festival, image by Anthony Strong

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SciencePlay Kids, image by Nico Photography

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Pipedreams (detail) by Matthew Harding, image by Nico Photography

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Old Tech New Decks, image by Nico Photography

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Tian You, image by Nico Photography

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City of Maribyrnong

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Waterside Metal Art Studio, image by Nico Photography

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Red Girl Mosaics, image by Nico Photography

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West Footscray Festival of Colour

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Big Fish, image by Nico Photography

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The Gaye Abandon School of Sewing and Upcycling, image by Nico Photography

