

Arts, Culture & Creative Industries Strategy

Strengthening and
connecting our community
through creativity

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

2022 - 2026



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This installation is the perfect showcase of skills and talents of the local community coming together to not only celebrate its environment but to approach it respectfully and share old knowledge in a new way.

– Beatrice Imbert describing artist, Amanda Diamond's work on the Great Southern Bail Trail

Artist Amanda Diamond in her studio
Photography by Karli Duckett

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Acronyms

AC&CI Arts, Culture & Creative Industries Strategy 2022-2026	DGL Destination Gippsland	LLEN Local Learning and Employment Network	RAV Regional Arts Victoria	PAC Performing Arts Centre
CDN Cultural Development Network	GSRT Great Southern Rail Trail	Myli My Community Library	SGSC South Gippsland Shire Council.	

Cover image

The Life Story of Anna Karenina
by Mandy Gunn
Encyclopaedia Britannica cut and woven pages on cotton warp and ribbon
Photography by Karli Duckett



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bunurong and Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of South Gippsland and pay respect to their Elders, past, present, and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

Thank you

Council would like to acknowledge and thank the arts, creative industries and community representatives involved in the development of this report. We thank them for meeting the project team, attending engagement sessions, and providing feedback throughout its development.



Cr Mohya Davis

Mayor – South Gippsland Shire Council

Message from the Mayor

Welcome to the South Gippsland Arts, Culture & Creative Industries Strategy 2022 - 26.

This Strategy forms part of a suite, alongside the Visitor Economy and Economic Development Strategies that were endorsed by Council in 2021. It has been designed to be a living document that sets priorities to enhance the arts within South Gippsland.

We are extremely lucky to live in South Gippsland – a place that is so diverse not only naturally, but amongst its people. In our community we have strong – and growing – creative groups comprised of people who enhance our region by capturing its beauty through art and performance and by thinking outside the box with new ideas to attract visitors and inspire residents. We are all touched by arts, culture and creative industries in some way and it interrelates with many other facets of our everyday lives without us even knowing.

This Strategy links directly to our Council Plan 2022 – 2026 and the key themes within it. This was done on purpose to ensure alignment and cohesion across all of Council's major Plans and Strategies.

I cannot wait to see our region's arts, culture and creative industries flourish under this Strategy.

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Time is needed for immersion in a space and for an exploratory process to unfold and take shape. You have to 'listen' to the process, pay attention to what it is telling you.

– Artist Kim McDonald

Installation by Kim McDonald,
performance artist Jasmine Sūsić
Photography by Karli Duckett

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Executive Summary

South Gippsland's Arts Culture and Creative Industries (AC&CI) Strategy 2022 – 26 builds on the success and achievements of the previous AC&CI Strategy 2017 – 2021. Designed to support and further encourage a thriving ecology of creativity and opportunity for the arts within our Shire, this new Strategy brings a new vision and direction.

South Gippsland is unique, as it boasts a decentralised and diverse range of arts offerings, events and practices throughout the Shire, taking place in various spaces and places, in small towns of distinctive character.

This Strategy affects the whole spectrum of the local arts sector, from arts-based businesses and organisations to practicing artists, performers, writers and musicians.

This Strategy is guided by the following goals;

- Attract creative industries to our region
- Support local creative practitioners
- Capitalise on our unique and authentic character
- Establish our Shire as a 'creative place of difference' to surrounding areas
- Work collaboratively with our neighbouring Shires
- Encourage employment and economic opportunity
- Deliver arts opportunities for young residents
- Support artists of all abilities
- Increase the visibility of First Nations culture in our community

The AC&CI Strategy 2022-26 has been developed through an extensive process of community consultation. Throughout this process there was a strong willingness to participate, which speaks to the value the community places on culture and creativity. There was a total of 92 engagements in the first stage of consultation, followed by 30 formal responses to the public exhibition of the Strategy's first draft.

This Strategy has adopted the six themes from the newly formed Council Plan as a framework. These include;

- Connecting our People and Places
- Economy and Industry
- Healthy and Engaged Communities
- Leading with Integrity
- Protecting and Enhancing our Environment
- Sustainable Growth

Each of these themes have a range of specific and measurable actions connected to them with estimated timeframes, making up an Action Plan 2022 – 2026. One of the first actions is to establish a South Gippsland Arts Advisory Network, who will collaborate with Council to develop more specific plan of action for each year.

In this way, the AC&CI 2022 – 26 is very much designed and driven by the community that it supports. We are proud of this new Strategy and the promise it holds, for a thriving arts sector over the next four years here in South Gippsland.

Creative industries are an evolving mix of sectors spanning arts, culture, screen, design, publishing, and advertising. They cover disciplines as diverse as game development and graphic design, fashion, and filmmaking, performing arts and publishing, architecture and advertising, media and music, comedy, and craft. They include activities that are commercially driven, and community based, experimental and export intense.

– Creative Victoria: Creative State 2025



The local farmer is on the Arts Council or small hall committee, takes the grandkids to dance class and is president of the local cricket club. There is no 'us vs the arts' in South Gippsland.

Community Stakeholder

Brian Strating, Invy Horn Jam play Tarwin Lower Mechanics Institute for the Big Sound, Small Hall project

Photography by Karli Duckert

Introduction

South Gippsland has a unique decentralised creative ecology, with diverse arts and culture activity spread across the Shire in small towns of distinctive character, in various spaces and places. The multi-disciplined creative sector is rich and naturally inclusive, collaborative, and inter-connected with economic development and the visitor economy.

There is even distribution of small close-knit populations through South Gippsland, and all are touched by cultural activity. This is an important distinction that differentiates the region from other rural and regional communities; creative talent is spread across the Shire and can attract new residents to the area.

In among the distinctive rolling green hills are numerous small halls, creating a lifeblood of the community - widely distributed hubs of creative and cultural activities and community events of all kinds. Each town has developed its own flavour to arts and cultural activities, creating cultural distinctions across the Shire which are a source of great local pride.

Arts, culture, and the creative industries are integral to the health, prosperity, and vitality of our communities. They help us to connect to each other, to appreciate our natural environment and unique heritage, and encourage personal growth. They foster creativity and innovation and provide employment.

Local governments in Australia complement the work of state and federal government arts agencies by investing in, supporting, and promoting creative and cultural activities and events.

Arts, culture, and creative industries are valued by local governments as an essential driver for visitor, regional and night-time economies, as well as community mental health and social cohesion. In 2019-20, local government investment across Australia was \$1.84 billion, or 16 per cent of the total national investment of \$11.6 billion by all governments¹.

Council recognises that the creative sector can enhance community identity, contribute to well-being, cultural tourism, and economic development.

Council recognises that the vibrancy of the creative sector is improved by its broad participation in arts and culture activities, and that there are significant opportunities for participation in collaborative partnerships across Council, in communities, and with the commercial sector.

South Gippsland has several historically significant sites that are currently in the spotlight for renewal, redevelopment and repurposing, and these considerations and their potential impact and opportunities for the creative sector are explored in detail in this Strategy.

South Gippsland currently has ongoing input and commitment to Creative Gippsland, a collaborative arts initiative comprising all six Gippsland Councils, working together to promote diverse talent, rich heritage, unique environment, and creative culture throughout Gippsland.

This Strategy has been developed in collaboration with industry specialists, the Cultural Development Network (CDN).

¹Australian Bureau of Statistics 2020

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Purpose of the Strategy

This Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy is a living document; a planning tool providing Council with a clear set of priorities for the enhancement of arts, culture and creative industries facilities and initiatives across the Shire over the next four years.

This new Strategy builds on the successes of Council's previous AC&CI Strategy 2021 – 2017, through which new collaborations, opportunities, ideas and programs, both locally and beyond, have been generated. This preceding document influenced an increase of artists and creative industries moving into the area, bringing new projects and initiatives, as well as an increase in local creative businesses, and with this, an array of associated economic and tourism opportunities and benefits.

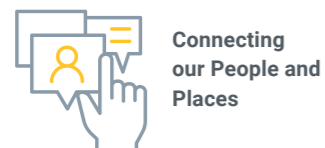
The development of a new AC&CI Strategy presents an exciting opportunity for South Gippsland Shire Council to guide the future selection and delivery of activities, to strengthen the connection with the creative community in the region, and encourage the arts sector to further thrive.

This new Strategy reflects the values of the community, as expressed in the Council Plan, the purpose of which is; "to serve in the best interests of the whole Shire, delivering quality services and advocating for community needs". Council has named six key themes in the Council Plan that work towards this purpose. These six themes have been adopted by this Strategy, providing the structural framework for the document, hereby guiding the next four years of work by the Arts Development Team.

In addition, the Strategy reflects the consultations with the community, which took place through to March 2022, together with gathered evidence to support each objective, external data, and practice knowledge of professional Council staff.

The Strategy is supported by an Action Plan that identifies strategic actions to be delivered for each of its key priorities. This Plan may also include the development of a planning framework with measurable outcomes.

The Strategy is linked directly to the proposed six Council Plan themes.



Connecting our People and Places



Economy and Industry



Healthy Communities



Leading with Integrity



Protecting and Enhancing Our Environment



Sustainable Growth

The Strategy

- 1 **Acknowledges that we have much to learn from the culture and storytelling practices of traditional owners, as we progress reconciliation and healing.**
- 2 **Illustrates how arts and culture can sit alongside and impact upon other public policy domains.**
- 3 **Is flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of initiatives that contribute to Council's vision.**
- 4 **Is based on community values and a diverse spread of community needs and aspirations.**
- 5 **Recognises our strengths in arts and culture and responds to changing needs in our community.**
- 6 **Tells the story of the potential, and contribution, of our creative community.**
- 7 **Highlights the value of arts and cultural activities and the role they play in contributing to a vibrant and rich culture in the region.**
- 8 **Supports and empowers our creative community.**
- 9 **Supports local artists of all abilities.**
- 10 **Enriches the development and growth of our region through cultural infrastructure and financial investment.**
- 11 **Responds to the damaging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the local arts sector.**

Methodology

To discover what is most important to the South Gippsland community for arts, culture and the creative industries now and in the future, our consultants conducted extensive engagement across the sector and collected the broadest possible range of perspectives.

The purpose of this was to:

- Understand the breadth of arts, culture, and creative industry practices in the Shire
- Ascertain the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and gaps that a new Strategy can address.

- Explore how Council and the creative sector can work together in delivering and supporting arts and culture engagement for the whole Shire.
- Understand community views about critical cultural infrastructure such as Leongatha Memorial Hall, Coal Creek Heritage Museum, the Great Southern Rail Trail and our Small Halls.

The findings of the consultations have been used a major part of our evidence base for the Strategy and incorporated into the objectives.

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Research

Several relevant Council documents which are strongly allied to arts and culture were reviewed, in particular Shaping South Gippsland Community Vision 2040, the South Gippsland Visitor Economy Strategy, the South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy, and other documents from peak bodies, external stakeholders, published research and literature.²

Consultation

Three distinct groups were involved in the initial engagement process

- Council internal stakeholders
- Arts and Culture peak bodies
- Arts, Culture and Creative Industries stakeholders and practitioners within South Gippsland Shire.

The internal group included Council employees from every area impacting on arts, culture and creative industries. Creative Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria, Regional Development Victoria represented peak bodies and the local member for Gippsland South, Mr Danny O'Brien MP, took part in an individual consultation. The practitioner and stakeholder group included: visual artists – painters, sculptors, muralists, photographers and gallerists;

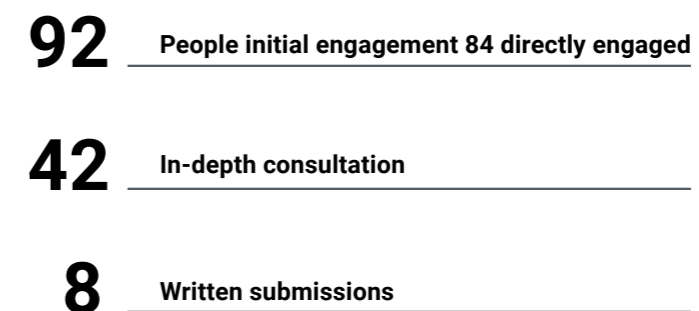
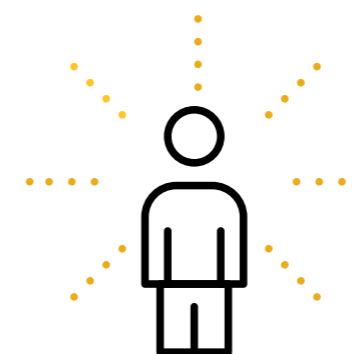
musicians and music promoters; performers and theatre practitioners; architects; filmmakers; graphic designers; printmakers; authors, local arts and culture councils and cultural heritage groups; festival and event promoters and organisers; arts and music educators in primary and secondary schools.

South Gippsland's more established community arts organisations, such as Leongatha Lyric Theatre, Foster Arts Music & Drama Assoc (FAMDA), (it's no) drama, Stockyard Gallery, Meeniyon Art Gallery, Art Connect, Loch Village Art Council and Mirboo North Art Council all provided valuable insight and information.

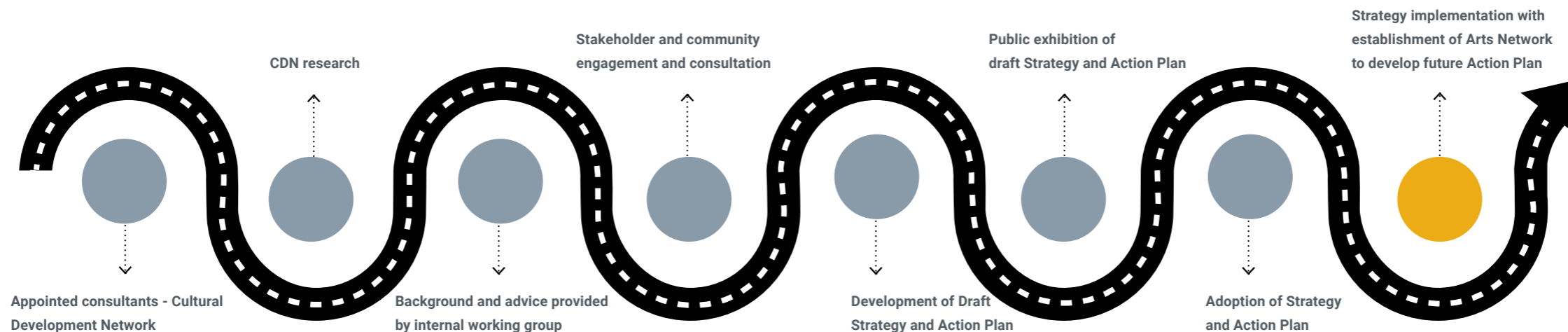
In all, 84 people were directly engaged and consulted across 42 in-depth consultations and one drop-in session with eight (8) written submissions, making a total of 92 engagements for the initial engagement process, a unique response when 20-30 is the norm, and 50 is rare. There was a strong willingness to participate, which speaks to the value the community places on culture and creativity.

The first draft of the Arts Culture and Creative industries Strategy invited public feedback – from which 30 written submissions were received, along with a significant number of verbal responses.

Community engagement



There was a strong willingness to participate, which speaks to the value the community places on culture and creativity.



² Appendix 3 Documents Reviewed.

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Arts in South Gippsland

Arts and the local Economy



\$32.9 million

Economic Output

Elevating the value and broader relevance of arts and creativity in Australian public life and policy making is critical to a creatively connected nation where creative enterprise is entrenched across society, industry and government as the fuel that ignites our social, cultural and economic success.

– Australia Council for the Arts

Employment



1.65%

Arts and Recreation Services makes up 1.65% of employment within South Gippsland



Walkerville House
Design by Isley Sutherland of IS Architecture
Photography by Susan Carmody

Income



\$7.2 million

Arts and Recreation Services generates \$7.2 million in wages and salaries

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Vision

This Strategy presents a vision for South Gippsland’s creative community that is vibrant, engaged, geographically diverse, and full of opportunity. With respect for the past and a passion for our future, our arts, culture, creative industries and heritage create a unique identity, for visitors and residents alike, generating economic benefit and community connection across the region.



Goals

Our creative place aims to:



Attract Creative Industries to our region



Support local creative practitioners



Capitalise on our unique and authentic character



Establish our Shire as a 'creative place of difference' to surrounding areas



Work collaboratively with our neighbouring Shires



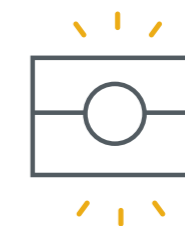
Encourage employment and economic opportunity



Deliver arts opportunities for young residents'



Support artists of all abilities



Increase the visibility of First Nations culture in our community

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Better integration of creative thinking and practice within Council.

Lucy Hersey creative workshop, as part of the Artists in Spaces program
Photography by Karli Duckett

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ARTS, CULTURE & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY 2022-2026

What we heard

The common key findings consistent across all three groups are:

- Strong support for a new Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy across all stakeholder groups.
- The need for visible recognition and engagement with local Aboriginal culture and knowledge. Support for a Council Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Celebration of South Gippsland's heritage to include cross cultural collaboration with Aboriginal and other artists to strengthen Aboriginal representation in the region.
- Recognition of the need to support local groups and initiatives that provide accessible services and spaces and opportunities for creatives of all abilities.
- Appreciation for Council's commitment to providing cultural programs during the pandemic.
- Appreciation that Cultural Industries are included in the Strategy, addressing a need to build creative capital.
- Recognition of under-used and under-performing cultural and tourism infrastructure and the need for review.
- Improved service delivery in arts and culture across the Shire, with support for natural environments, integration with local food production and disaster recovery.
- Closer collaboration between Council and the creative sector, to bring creative skills to the development of the region.
- Better integration of creative thinking and practice within Council.
- Council as an enabler and facilitator for creativity, not just as a grant provider and primary funding source.
- Exploration of possible developer contribution schemes towards the arts.
- Council leading on cultural tourism and involving the creative sector in developing tourism strategies that benefit the whole Shire.
- Cross-sector partnership to produce small and cost-effective wins, for example in marketing and tourism campaigns.
- Recognition that there are few creative opportunities for young people across Gippsland.
- Encouragement and support of contemporary practices such as fashion, gaming, design, digital media to engage younger and emerging artists, attract visitors and new people into the region.
- The need for multi-generational leadership.
- Exploration of opportunities for public art to enliven the region.
- Exploration of the creative potential of public space.
- Issues with decline in volunteers and over-reliance on volunteerism.
- Recognition that a vast majority of cultural institutions across the Shire are run by volunteers, bringing issues such as a decline in volunteers and over-reliance on volunteerism.
- Recognition of opportunities to share resources with other councils across Gippsland, possibly through Creative Gippsland.

Recognition of the need to support local groups and initiatives that provide accessible services and spaces and opportunities for creatives of all abilities.

ARTS, CULTURE & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY 2022-2026

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This is South Gippsland

South Gippsland Shire is located 90 minutes southeast of Melbourne on the edge of Melbourne's eastern growth corridor. It is best known for its rolling green hills, spectacular coastline, traditional country towns and villages, and the world-famous Wilsons Promontory National Park. Around 30,000 people call South Gippsland home, a figure that is fast growing, particularly post-pandemic as people search for a better life outside of the city.

According to the most recent census, arts and recreation services make up 1.65% of employment within South Gippsland, while generating 0.8% of income. This equates to a \$7 million contribution to our local economy.

South Gippsland's major towns include Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster. All three of these Shire centres proudly host a number of cultural institutions; Memorial Hall in Leongatha, Coal Creek Community Park and Museum in Korumburra, Baromi Park in Mirboo North (host to numerous community cultural events) and the Foster War Memorial Arts Centre. Unique to this Shire is also the prolific activation of arts and cultural events, galleries, businesses and festivals that takes place in the smaller towns. Fish Creek is famous for its festivals and gallery-lined streets, while Loch and Meeniyan are often teeming with visitors on a weekend, drawn to the authenticity of food, art and local produce on offer. The number of small-town community events in South Gippsland Shire are growing rapidly, as are our creative businesses and opportunities to experience live performances in remote places. New murals are appearing on the walls of highly visible public buildings and tucked away on private infrastructure.

South Gippsland Shire has always been a place for creativity in among a beautiful landscape, the result of endless partnerships and volunteer hours. This Strategy aims to support the collaborative nature of our arts sector, across all our townships and regional communities, recognising that in order for the arts to continue to prosper, we need a collective and inclusive vision.



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Learning new skills is a big part of (it's no) drama, educating people and raising awareness about who we are is very important.

– Emily Ardley, (it's no) drama founder and ensemble member

Stasis by (it's no) drama
Directed by Samara Cunningham

Photography by Lauren Murphy
Cast: Steve Canning, Emily Ardley, Murray Lyster and Iris Gaillard

Theme 1: Connecting our People and Places

Improving visitor and community experience – roads, transport, connectivity, and basic services.

For those living in rural and remote areas, and young people especially, the internet’s ‘information highway’ is a road out of isolation, a pathway to education, understanding, wider opportunities and a richer life. This enrichment is key to growing socially responsible communities and empowered individuals.

– EU Broadband Competence Office:
Rising to the Connectivity Challenge, July 2020.



We know that a major strength of South Gippsland’s cultural ecology, and a defining factor in the region’s appeal, is in the decentralisation of the creative sector and visitor economy spread across small towns. The community values and takes pride in the diversity of the small towns’ cultures and identity. We will therefore maximise opportunities for the local arts, culture and creative industries sector, as well as visitors, to contribute to cultural tourism through; ensuring that wi-fi connectivity is optimised for community, the sector, and visitors; and practitioners are involved in public art and signage to enhance local environments and streetscapes.

For all our key priorities, we are looking for cultural activities that spark imagination and creativity encouraging creative expression; stimulate special sensory experiences that are outside the everyday – joy, beauty, discomfort, wonder; encourage creative thinking and deeper understanding; promote the value of diverse cultural life experiences in our community and deepen the sense of belonging to a shared history and heritage.

We will also look for cultural activities that: increase knowledge and experience to inform creative practice leading to increased productivity and efficiency; develop skills to gain employment; increase economic wellbeing and resources to meet living costs; and support our local economy to gain direct and indirect benefit from cultural activities.

What we already know about connecting our people and places from consultations, evidence, research, and knowledge:

- Fast internet is essential for the attraction and growth of contemporary art practice; graphic design, architecture, animators, and game developers are just a few of the disciplines that depend on reliable connectivity.
- Better internet connections open doors to online business opportunities and connections to the global economy.
- Strong community support exists for public art along our Rail Trails which is aligned to the recommendations in the Great Southern Rail Trail Visitation and Marketing Plan.



Fast internet is essential for the attraction and growth of contemporary art practice; graphic design, architecture, animators, and game developers are just a few of the disciplines that depend on reliable connectivity

Theme 2: Economy and Industry

Growing the economy, welcoming innovation, and investment in key industries - agriculture, tourism, and the arts

Artists are small businesses; we're good at business and know how to make money work for us. A sustainable arts business and a sustainable community, it's the same thing, essentially'.

– Community stakeholder



Cultural industries are an essential part of a thriving economy and vibrant ecology of a region. We know that cultural activities and a skilled creative sector can contribute to the local economy and attract cultural tourism, therefore we will support capacity building for creative practitioners and businesses to participate in a range of opportunities to stimulate the sector. We also know that there are decisions to be made on heritage and cultural infrastructure that will materially affect the region's creative sector, so we will involve the sector in redevelopment and new infrastructure projects to maximise economic opportunities and growth for the future.

For all our key priorities, we are looking for cultural activities that spark imagination and creativity; encourage creative expression; stimulate special sensory experiences that are outside the everyday – joy, beauty, discomfort, wonder; encourage creative thinking and deeper understanding; promote the value of diverse cultural life experiences in our community and deepen the sense of belonging to a shared history and heritage.

We will also look for cultural activities that: increase knowledge and experience to inform creative practice leading to increased productivity and efficiency; develop skills to gain employment; support people of all abilities; increase economic wellbeing and resources to meet living costs; and support our local economy to gain direct and indirect benefit from cultural activities.

What we already know about economy and industry from consultations, evidence, research and knowledge:

- The creative sector would like greater collaboration with Council and vice versa.
- Council funding for a range of creative projects through the Community Support Package (CSP) during the pandemic has shown the possibilities for cultural activation when human and financial resources are available.
- There is support for a Council-led approach to cultural tourism and building the capacity of the sector.
- South Gippsland's creative sector contributes to local communities (in most part) at a grassroots level.
- Some local arts organisations risk closure as members and volunteers age and retire, threatened also by a lack of succession planning.
- Council is best placed to be an enabler rather than simply a funder.
- Council should involve the creative sector when planning for the redevelopment of existing infrastructure.
- The Blueprint for Community and Economic Infrastructure 2021-2036 Strategy and Audit identifies community facilities and open space sites throughout the Shire, including cultural infrastructure.
- The creative and tourism sector will benefit from the proposed new and redeveloped infrastructure at Korumburra and Leongatha Railway Station precincts.

We're ready, what can we do?

– Community Stakeholder

Theme 3: Healthy Communities

Building healthy communities with a strong sense of belonging and purpose, living physical, social, and cultural active lives, investing in people, partnering with community in planning.

Focus too much on traditional arts and Council will miss out on innovations, you know, new things that are happening here. That's where your marketing is, and more tourists come to see.

– Community Stakeholder



We know that cultural activity plays a vital role in healthy, inclusive, and connected communities, enhances the quality of life, contributes to health, well-being, and social cohesion. It encourages creativity and inclusivity and the expression of diversity, so we will offer a range of arts and cultural activities and opportunities throughout the Shire to support our community to live enriching creative lives.

We will also look for cultural activities that empower our community, form bonds between people who share common interests; strengthen understanding between people of different social identity; and encourage a sense of self-worth when an individual's achievements are recognised by family, friends and people who are important to them.

What we already know about healthy communities from consultations, evidence, research and knowledge:

- Council recognises that the creative sector can enhance community identity and contribute to well-being.
- There is opportunity for greater advocacy and shared leadership to support people of all abilities within the creative sector, including and artists and community participants. It is important that creative projects and venues are actively welcoming of artists and participants of all abilities.
- Existing and new local creative spaces need to be accessible for all - artists, performers, participants and audiences.
- There is a desire for more understanding and knowledge about traditional owners' cultural practice.

- Community stakeholders are less interested in direct funding than opportunities for income generation.
- In order to attract new creatives into the region, according to younger artists, there is a need to engage new forms of contemporary practice.
- Creativity is strong in the regions; residents of regional Australia are as likely to participate in the arts as residents of metropolitan Australia.ⁱ
- Four in five regional Australians agree that Indigenous arts are an important part of Australia's culture. (78 per cent); feel proud when Australian artists do well overseas (76 per cent); agree that artists make an important contribution to Australian society (76 per cent); agree that the arts in Australia reflect Australia's cultural diversity (74 per cent).ⁱⁱ
- Rural communities can be activated through arts projects.
- Libraries in regional areas are places of cultural meaning and significance, gathering places, important for social outcomes, as incubators of creativity and cultural connectors.
- Supporting people to come together and find a shared interest and purpose are key drivers of enhancing wellbeing.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Arts and cultural activity and engagement bring direct and sometimes immediate benefits to society, by creating conditions for change, spaces for experimentation, risk-taking, reflection about personal community and societal challenges.^{iv}

... it's great to see the Council prioritising a new arts and culture strategy. We do so much for South Gippsland that goes unrecognised

– Community Stakeholder

Theme 4: Leading with Integrity

Integrity, care, good governance, accountability, outward focus, building trust with community.

We all know that South Gippsland's a gem, they just have to start telling that story louder

– Peak body stakeholder



Strong leadership, effective service delivery, connection with and care for community are cornerstones of responsible Council governance.

We know that best planning practice and service delivery has community values at its heart, so we will ensure that this Arts, Culture, and Creative Industries Strategy represents community aspirations, puts culture on an equal footing with other policy domains, focuses on measurable outcomes and is regularly reviewed and evaluated.

We will look for cultural activities that promote beneficial linkages between the community and Council services; ensure that community opinions are welcomed, respected, and valued; encourage civic pride resulting from interaction between the community and Council, as well as civic trust by providing strong leadership, operating fairly, transparently and for the good of the community.

What we already know about leading with integrity from consultations, evidence, research, and practice knowledge:

- The development of this Strategy for the next four years is evidence of Council's recognition of the importance of appropriately resourcing art, culture and the creative industries for the benefit of community and visitors.
- Culture impacts on all other policy domains.
- Including measurable cultural outcomes in arts

The new Strategy has to break down walls and facilitate connections...

– Community stakeholder

and culture planning provides valuable insights into previously intangible and immeasurable aspects of cultural engagement.

- Consistent evaluation of the Strategy and data collection builds a strong knowledge base to guide future decisions.
- Stakeholders describe this new Strategy as timely; given a new Council and the need for post-pandemic regeneration and recovery.
- Stakeholders stressed the desire for creative collaboration with Council. The depth and breadth of community responses in recent engagement shows firm support for the new Council and this Strategy, and a strong desire to participate and work together.

Theme 5: Protecting and Enhancing our Environment

A healthier integrated environment for future generations, regeneration, and revegetation, expanding biodiversity, reducing emissions, encouraging community reduction, reuse, and recycling.

Climate change affects all of us and acting on it is fundamental to our future as a thriving, resilient and creative state. Our creative industries can help meet this challenge. As individuals, organisations, businesses, institutions and government, we need to rethink the way we make, share, present, tour and consume creative product ...

– Creative State 2025: Creative Victoria



South Gippsland is highly regarded as a unique region of striking natural beauty; its landscapes, coastlines and ecosystems are inherently valued by its residents and visitors. Its heritage, pre- and post-colonisation, is indelibly linked to the natural environment and agricultural practices and is a cornerstone of our character. Our inspiring environment is the reason many residents live here, and why non-residents visit.

We know that cultural activities can stimulate awareness and understanding of environmental issues, so we will support those projects that celebrate and care for our local environment.

We will also prioritise cultural activities that illuminate the value of our natural and built environments, that increase our understanding of sustainability and our sense of responsibility to care for the natural world.

What we already know about protecting and enhancing our environment from consultations, evidence, research, and practice knowledge:

- Environmental art can build understanding through
 - 1) exchanging ideas and providing dialogue
 - 2) building a sense of place
 - 3) clarifying and enhancing the understanding of information and issues
 - 4) generating concern.

- The community values our natural world and heritage.
- Stakeholders are keen for Aboriginal art and land practices to be more visible in the community.
- There are opportunities to grow cultural tourism with a focus on the environment.
- Environmental art across the Shire was part of the CSP during the pandemic.
- Stakeholders are keen to see a reimagining of current heritage infrastructure and its relationship to the environment
- Council acknowledges that public art plays a significant role in enhancing the built environment and acting as a visitor attraction.
- There is a strong desire for more public art in the Shire

I would like us to be well connected to Country. This includes understanding the uses of our local plants and correct original names where known for local landmarks

– Shaping Gippsland Community Vision 2040, young person participant

Theme 6: Sustainable Growth

Plan for sustainable growth, advocate for external funding, protect our small-town character, include community knowledge and experience in important change decisions and processes.

It is critical that arts and culture be seen as an essential component of placemaking development and initiatives. Placemaking and revitalising of public spaces is far more than just an engineering exercise.

– Community stakeholder



Our community is rightly proud of our small towns; places of unique character in among our rolling hills, where inclusive social and cultural life attracts visitors and new residents. Our many small halls are the lifeblood of cultural, civic, and social activity in the Shire. We will therefore ensure the vibrancy of our small-town life is enhanced through cultural activity that strengthens identity, reinforces local character, encourages enjoyable social connections and respects the environment.

We will look for cultural activities that empower our community, form bonds between people who share common interests; strengthen understanding between people of different social identity.

What we already know about sustainable growth from consultations, evidence, research, and practice knowledge:

- There is a unique decentralised creative sector in South Gippsland, deeply grounded in community.
- Our small-town communities carry a wealth of knowledge about the heritage and history of the region.
- Our small towns engender strong civic pride.
- The Council facilitated Small Hall Network is a great asset to the Shire, providing a supportive forum for skill share and information exchange.

- Council recognises the pivotal role of volunteers in arts and culture activities across the Shire, and the need for small organisations to attract participation from younger generations for the future.
- There is a diverse range of activity in our small towns; live music is strong.
- Stakeholders see Council as an enabler that can assist in sourcing external funding. They are keen to work with Council to develop structural support that enables creative activity, attracts visitors, and facilitates a strong creative network through the Shire.
- Creative place making and public art can encompass not only traditional methods of artmaking such as murals, music, sculpture, lighting, but also more general creative work, such as engaging stakeholders and residents by using space in novel ways. It can also improve community safety by promoting empathy and understanding, influencing policy, providing employment, supporting well-being and advancing the quality of built environments.

We would love to work more closely with artists in our planning. They get how to activate things, make them more lively.

– Council internal stakeholder

What delights me about the union (of water tank and oyster shells) is how the shell emits its own pearlescent effect be it during the day or in moon light whilst the tanks stand like large sundials shaping constantly moving shadows that speak to the sun.

– Artist, Anne Miller



Anne Miller, installation for the Great Southern Ball Trail
Photography by Karli Duckett

Theme 7: Cultural Heritage and Infrastructure

A key responsibility of Council is its investment in the development and maintenance of community-owned infrastructure. It is evident in the period to be covered by this Strategy that Council will need to make important decisions on the future of some of the cultural heritage facilities and sites within the Shire.

In the initial community engagement, there were many robust discussions, multiple views and positions on Council's significant sites including Coal Creek Community Park and Museum, Leongatha Memorial Hall, the Great Southern Rail Trail, Korumburra and Leongatha Railway Station precincts, and Small Halls. The notion of a Performing Arts Centre (PAC) for the region has been a subject of discussion in the community for many years.

In the period of this Strategy, Council will also need to consider an equitable framework for art gallery support. Currently there are two galleries that operate from Council-managed facilities; Stockyard Gallery and Leongatha Gallery, that sit alongside many other community-run and privately run galleries. An investigation and review of support mechanisms for galleries in the Shire is included as a strategic action in Economy and Industry.

Council recognises the value of the creative economy for the Shire, and infrastructure will be a key driver of that economy in the future.

Considerations of these infrastructure challenges are explored below, and potential cultural solutions are indicated in each of the relevant goals, considering this evidence and discussion.

- What value do different parts of the community put on the cultural asset? Divergent views are inevitable with this consideration. Community stakeholders often begin with meaning and value of an asset before considerations of function and cost.
- Managing facilities is costly and can absorb significant resources. Finding the appropriate balance to ensure

resources are not just focused around larger towns in the Shire and support towns and communities that may be more geographically and culturally isolated.

- Council will not be able to satisfy all stakeholders, but can consider the balance of function and cost, measuring expenditure and operational costs against the cultural, social and broader economic impacts that can influence meaning.³
- The Community and Economic Infrastructure Blueprint 2021-2036 has the following principles regarding Council investment in assets. Council will consider this for all its cultural infrastructure.

1. Community benefit is maximised

Maximise community benefit by promoting access, inclusion, economic contribution and by building social connection.

2. Alignment with strategic direction

Undergo strategic community planning to ensure the proposal aligns with Council's service and strategic direction.

3. Whole of Life Costs are clear

Demonstrate whole of life costs and adherence to asset management principles to ensure community facilities are multi-functional (where possible), well maintained, well managed, fit for purpose and in the best position for the municipality.

4. Service and use are appropriate

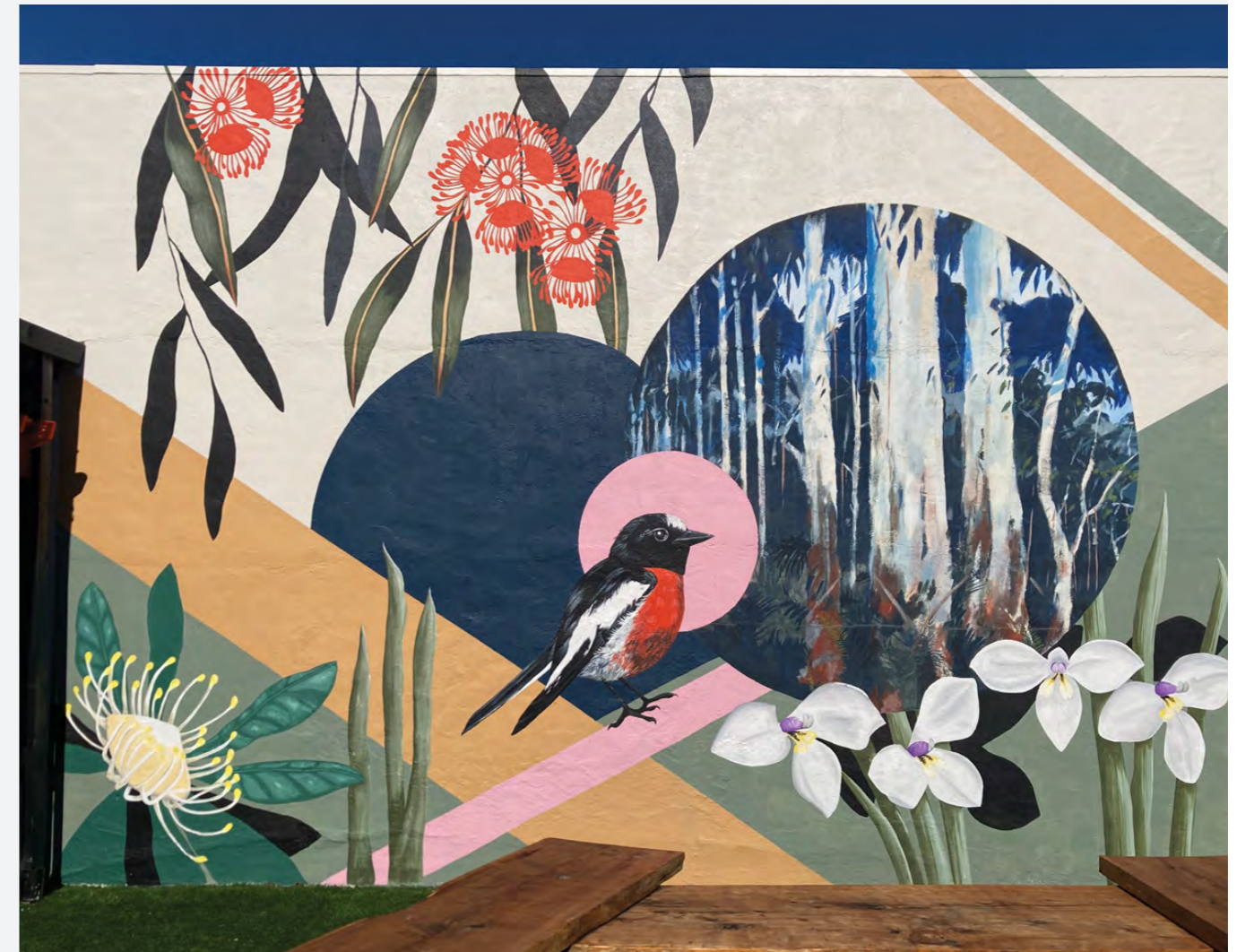
Ensure the proposal meets the level of service and appropriate use of the facility so that it will meet the community's needs now and into the future, accounting for contemporary regulations and standards.

5. Risk is managed

Demonstrate risk mitigation within a proposal to safeguard the future project for all concerned.

6. Financial commitment is understood

Justify all financial aspects of a proposal with consideration of Council's whole of life responsibilities by thorough planning and business case/feasibility studies where the need is identified



Mirboo North and District Community Foundation forecourt mural by Melanie Caple and Mirboo North Secondary College students

Photography Melanie Caple

Council recognises the value of the creative economy for the Shire, and infrastructure will be a key driver of that economy in the future.

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Coal Creek Community Park and Museum

Coal Creek opened in 1974 and has a long and respected history as a public and local community space in South Gippsland. The Park and its museum infrastructure came from a collaboration of local and state governments, and the Korumburra community.

Local community and volunteers have been the backbone of the park, donating their skills, trades, family collections, buildings and monies with the intention that Coal Creek generate income through tourism visitation. A series of reports with financial and operational recommendations for Coal Creek have been initiated with these largely relating to infrastructure maintenance and revenue raising.

Coal Creek is a significant cultural heritage asset that needs attention and to be brought into this Strategy for attention over the next four years.

Initial Stakeholder feedback and function

Coal Creek was discussed extensively in the community consultations, producing the most disparate views. It is evident that the asset has suffered under pandemic restrictions of 2020 and 2021, and many of the attractions were only starting to reopen at the start of 2022. Council currently requires a significant amount of investment on maintenance to

keep the venue in its current state, which is one of slow decline.

It is a large 27-hectare site with multiple assets including historical buildings and collections, open parks, mining structures, rail tracks, a locomotive and carriages, and a lake with a band rotunda.

At face value, the curatorial model is diffuse and unclear. Some of the buildings are clearly of significance, including the oldest lath and plaster building in Gippsland, and the first schoolhouse, to others sourced from outside South Gippsland with varied heritage significance or connection to the region.

Stakeholders who love Coal Creek frequently call it 'an important tourist attraction for the region', reflecting what it means to individuals rather than what its function is. For some stakeholders, it is a memorial to a former time.

If considered a tourist attraction, it must be able to be quantified in terms of daily, seasonal, and return visitations, hospitality turnover and gift shop sales. If these figures are sustainable or better, then the asset is functionally viable and can justify current and future investment.

Its value to the community is defined by geography. For many Korumburra locals, it is an asset that represents the history of South Gippsland; it is also 'part of the furniture'. To many people living further away in other areas within the Shire, the significance is not as fully appreciated.

There were numerous positions on Coal Creek that called for Council to dispose of the asset and transfer any saving to other viable assets and services.

There was also a middle ground, where stakeholders believed that the site had lost its meaning but could reinvent itself with Council investment.

Cost was the least understood part of the discussion. Most stakeholders are unaware that the Council spends significant amounts on current maintenance, let alone what an increased investment simply to stop deterioration might look like, or the sizeable sum required to make the venue a genuine tourism asset.

Future direction

The ongoing function of Coal Creek will be a focus for Council. The contribution and support of the local community also needs to be harnessed in determining its future with an achievable vision.

As it stands today, it is a historical museum that reflects an important period in the settlement of South Gippsland and its full potential as a regional and national significance is yet to be fully explored and developed.

Currently the items in the collection are static and represent different eras and require a more cohesive underpinning narrative to connect them. There needs to be a commitment to the collection changing over time or that new objects are displayed, so there is an increase in repeat visitation.

The community and Council recognise the requirement for increased maintenance and a future plan. This should be done with an eye to contemporary museum displays and attractions, which are generally about interaction, play and immersive engagement.

Accessibility is an issue with a priority to provide best practice for all visitors to navigate the steep unpaved pathways and access buildings and display opportunities.

The current reliance on volunteers has provided a valuable underpinning resource to the maintenance of Coal Creek, but is not sustainable for in future redevelopment. Ongoing operational costs, a permanent staffing plan, and marketing strategies will be required as a baseline for any redevelopment.



Leongatha Memorial Hall as a performance space

There is great interest in a performing space in South Gippsland. The Shire is surrounded by a variety of Performing Arts Centres (PACs) in Warragul, Traralgon, Sale, Wonthaggi and a Cultural Centre soon to be in Cowes, and stakeholders spoke of South Gippsland 'missing out' by not having a centralised PAC.

Leongatha Memorial Hall is recognised as the most appropriate site for development into a performance space, the only one of scale and functionality. Most of the discussions around a performance space focused on two functions, the role of a performance space and an arts or creative hub.

The most common view from community was for the development of Memorial Hall to include a professional, flexible 400 seat performance space with adequate dressing/green rooms and smaller rehearsal/studio spaces. The space must be multifunctional to meet community needs.

Local performing groups have recognised that the Memorial Hall is the most suitable site. While that has been recognised, it cannot overlook the anxiety from other townships that one large, centralised venue could over-shadow the investment in other suitable, albeit smaller, performance venues in the Shire.

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Any redevelopments of Memorial Hall should also take into consideration that activities and needs of the Foster War Memorial Arts Centre.

Other performing artists were most concerned with functionality beyond a performance space, to a complex of multi-functional practice, rehearsal, and performance space.

The Memorial Hall has a sizeable footprint with multiple spaces that could become viable rehearsal rooms and studio spaces. It already has meaning for the South Gippsland community, and many see it as an asset waiting to be reinvigorated.

Many local groups travel to the Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre (WUCAC) for rehearsal and performance, and this is seen as a negative economic and cultural impact on the South Gippsland community.

Being clear on construction and operational costs that Council can support unaided by other financing avenues is essential. There is no cost-neutral PAC or regional art gallery, so Council must be clear on its financial capability to create an active centre. The recent Gippsland PAC in Traralgon (approx. \$40 million) demonstrated that there is a significant investment in a standalone facility and the ongoing operational and renewal costs. These would need to be considered by Council or any entity in funding such a facility, currently well beyond the financial capabilities of South Gippsland Shire Council.

The peak bodies can point to numerous examples of regions with seemingly successful PACs, but that success has come at the expense of funding for other towns or an arts officer to work with the broader creative community.

Around 50 per cent of the 79 Victorian local government areas have PACs and fewer have centralised art galleries.

The key concern over the future development of the Memorial Hall as a performing arts space is related to cost. In consulting the peak bodies and agencies on the future of a performing arts space in South Gippsland is

the large capital cost of large-scale centralised infrastructure and that a rigorous business case establishes the benchmark for proceeding, considering the current and future market, the supply of product and the capacity for the venue to not only provide a cultural attraction, but to have a positive flow on to the network of additional venues in the Shire.



The Great Southern Rail Trail & Korumburra & Leongatha Railway precincts

The Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT) is a popular community asset and flagship tourist attraction. It is emerging as a future tourist link across the Shire. It offers opportunities for longer journeys and holidays through the Gippsland region. It has the potential to increase the tourist economy. It provides local communities with walking and bicycle tracks through parts of the Shire recognised for their natural beauty.

The Rail Trail adjacent to Korumburra and Leongatha Station precincts provides a natural delivery of visitors to the precinct as a destination, or significant stop over. Open space, a redevelopment of the railway station, surrounding community infrastructure and proximity to the town centres means there is strong potential for cultural activation all year round. There are excellent opportunities for multi-function spaces and open-air

events at the site, and great potential for local creative sector involvement.

There is broad consensus and robust support for the redevelopment of the Korumburra Station complex, and agreement that it has positive benefits and meaning for the whole Shire. There is also recognition and acceptance that this will require significant investment from Council. Existing funding allocated by VicTrack to the station provides an immediate investment and planning.

The GSRT has the potential to attract visitors to the region and by developing a public art presence that enhances the rail trail with stimulating, enriching sculpture, murals, and arts objects that can be unique and spread the art and the visitors through the rail trail pathway.

Small Halls

There are over 50 small halls across the Shire, seen as the lifeblood of the local community, hosting a wide range of arts, culture, and community events. Collectively, this represents approximately 15 venues. Council has ownership of 13 halls and community venues across the entire network.

The Small Halls website is currently regarded as in need of urgent redevelopment and a small investment in the site to bring it up to current functionality could increase



Photography by Andrew Northover from The View From Here

promotion of events in the halls through the different social media platforms and by being an active current site.

Several halls need refurbishment, and others are close to needing replacement. Some stakeholders suggested that a part-time Halls coordinator could be supported to organise bookings support the marketing through Council communications channels and oversee the maintenance and development of the venues.

Halls in larger population areas are active all year round, e.g., Foster, Meeniyan and Venus Bay, smaller township halls are open infrequently according to need, and others are mostly closed. The active halls are community hubs and economic drivers for the town. Events at the halls draw visitors into towns, with flow-on effects to local businesses.

Many stakeholders have strong loyalty to the small halls, especially community artists. The halls are valued for low-cost hire rates, and accessibility. There is broad agreement that the small halls are a showcase for the decentralised arts and culture model in South Gippsland

Tour promoters see the small halls as vital infrastructure for smaller touring acts that would have trouble filling 400 seat venues. Several halls are in the 100-200 seat range, attracting full houses.

In the view of stakeholders, live music events have a strong following and better marketing in collaboration with promoters could lead to more events.

Visual artists use small halls as exhibition spaces, and spaces for workshops and engagement events that can generate income.

There are concerns about the impact of a centralised PAC, and that most of the available funding would be directed to it at the expense of small halls. Any strategy for small halls across the Shire needs to be done in concert with planning for a central performing arts space if it is to proceed in Leongatha.

Action Plan 2022 – 2026

An Action Plan for the duration of the Strategy has been developed, with priorities based on the Strategy Themes.

One of the first actions within this Plan is to establish a South Gippsland Advisory Network. This group will work with Council to help to guide the implementation of the Strategy, refine the Action Plan for each year of the Strategy, and confirm relevant stakeholders.

Annual Action Plans will be developed that reflect funding, current priorities, and objectives for the entirety of the sector. These Plans will be live documents, subject to ongoing review, monitoring, measurement and public reporting. It will also be adjusted in line with budgetary considerations.

THEME 1: Connecting our people and places

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
Improving visitor and community experiences, supporting the decentralisation and diversity of the creative sector, and maximising opportunities for the arts, culture and creative industry sectors.	1.1 Advocate for the cultural benefit of high-speed, reliable internet services and communication services Shire-wide.	Short	Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity has been stimulated. • Aesthetic enrichment has been experienced. • Knowledge, ideas and insights have been gained. • Diversity of cultural expression has been appreciated. • Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage has been deepened Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional practice capability has been increased. • Individual economic well-being has been increased. • Local economy has been supported. Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to beneficial networks and resources increased
	1.2 Establish and fund a recurrent Public Art Program within townships, along selected areas of the Great South Rail Trail (GSRT) and in the environment.	Medium	
	1.3 Develop and deliver the new portable and adaptive 'ArtCubes' program across the Shire.	Short	
	1.4 Investigate potential options for shared resources with Creative Gippsland.	Medium	
	1.5 Engage artists to help deliver signage across the Shire.	Medium	

THEME 2: Economy and Industry

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
Growing the economy, welcoming innovation and investment to redevelopment and new infrastructure projects, while supporting capacity building for creative practitioners and businesses.	2.1 Support youth focused programs that provide mentorship, training, skills development and opportunities to participate in the creative industries sector. Build on existing relationships with youth based organisations such as the South Gippsland Bass Coast Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN).	Medium	Creativity has been stimulated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetic enrichment has been experienced. • Knowledge, ideas and insights have been gained. • Diversity of cultural expression has been appreciated. • Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage has been deepened. Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional practice capability has been increased. • Employment-enhancing skills development have been increased • Individual economic well-being has been increased. • Local economy has been supported. Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to beneficial networks and resources increased
	2.2 Build on Council support of the FReeZA program.	Ongoing	
	2.3 Deliver regular communications between Council and the creative sector.	Ongoing	
	2.4 Promote South Gippsland as a creative Shire, promoting the depth and breadth of the creative sector and its unique character.	Medium	
	2.5 Investigate models of support for the creative industries and practicing artists, including creative hubs.	Short	
	2.6 Develop an equitable framework for art gallery support throughout the Shire.	Short	
	2.7 Engage the creative sector to market creativity in the region.	Ongoing	
	2.8 Continue to support local events, event attraction and cultural tourism development development. Strengthen our partnership with Destination Gippsland.	Long	
	2.9 Develop an Events Policy that supports the growth of cultural event tourism in the region.	Short	
	2.10 Advocate for State and Federal funding for local creative projects. Support the arts sector to access external funds while maintaining relationships with major State and National arts bodies.	Ongoing	
	2.11 All community proposals for upgraded and extended creative spaces investigated as part of the Community and Economic Infrastructure Blueprint 2021-2036. Proposals must be included in a reviewed Arts, Culture & Creative Industries Strategy in order to be considered by the Community Infrastructure Advisory Committee and Council.	Ongoing	

THEME 3: Healthy Communities

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
Building healthy communities with a strong sense of belonging and purpose. Offering a range of arts and cultural activities and opportunities throughout the Shire to support our community to live enriching creative lives.	3.1 Align with current and new iterations of Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and reduce barriers to participation in arts and cultural activities.	Ongoing	Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity has been stimulated. Aesthetic enrichment has been experienced. Knowledge, ideas and insights have been gained. Diversity of cultural expression has been appreciated. Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage has been deepened Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing has been improved. Social connectedness has been enhanced. Social differences have been bridged. Feeling valued has been experienced.
	3.2 Actively support local groups and initiatives to provide accessible services and opportunities for creatives of all abilities. Engage the disability sector in discussions and decisions around accessibility.	Ongoing	
	3.3 Recognise, respect, and celebrate our cultural heritage through stronger engagement with traditional owners, and contribute to the development of a Council Reconciliation Action Plan.	Short	
	3.4 Embed artists as key stakeholders into the early stages of development of Council cultural infrastructure projects for maximum impact.	Medium	
	3.5 Engage young and emerging artists, through a diverse range of creative activity encompassing contemporary practice.	Medium	
	3.6 Encourage and enable night time activation. Enable night-time activation of larger towns and community parks and attractions.	Long	
	3.7 Encourage and support local cultural activity in partnership with local organizations.	Medium	
	3.8 Encourage and include local providers and food producers into arts and culture festivals and events.	Medium	
	3.9 Develop a Public Art and Collection Management Policy to incorporate Council's existing arts-based policies	Short	
	3.10 Support and collaborate with local libraries (My Community Library, or Myli).	Ongoing	

THEME 4: Leading with Integrity

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
Supporting a healthier integrated environment for future generations and encouraging activities that celebrate and build a sense of awareness and care for our environment.	4.1 Engage with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and local Aboriginal artists to develop cultural and environmental events together with non-Aboriginal art community.	Medium	Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity has been stimulated. Aesthetic enrichment has been experienced. Knowledge, ideas and insights have been gained. Diversity of cultural expression has been appreciated. Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage has been deepened Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing has been improved. Social connectedness has been enhanced. Social differences have been bridged. Feeling valued has been experienced. Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of civic pride enhanced Civic trust inspired
	4.2 Deliver art activation in towns to highlight environmental issues.	Long	
	4.3 Work with local artists to assist Council with environmental messaging.	Medium	
	4.4 Encourage art and craft-making cultures and spaces that bring people together to create, encouraging a sense of belonging.	Ongoing	
	4.5 Encourage projects and events that educate and engage the community about environmental values.	Ongoing	

THEME 5: Protecting and Enhancing Our Environment

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
Plan for sustainable growth, advocate for external funding, protect our small-town character through cultural activity, include community connection, knowledge and experience in important change decisions and processes.	5.1 Redevelop Small Hall event promotions including the South Gippsland Small Halls website and encourage more hall committees to participate in the Small Halls Network	Short	Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity has been stimulated. • Aesthetic enrichment has been experienced. • Knowledge, ideas and insights have been gained. Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of cultural expression has been appreciated. • Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage has been deepened Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing has been improved. • Social connectedness has been enhanced. • Social differences have been bridged. Environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive sense of place in the built and natural environment has been enhanced. • Understanding of ecological issues has been increased. • Motivation for environmental stewardship has been increased. • Natural world is valued.
	5.2 Develop Council's capacity to program live performance and cultural events in Small Halls throughout the Shire.	Short	
	5.3 Use local community intelligence to plan events and activities to improve community and visitor experiences.	Medium	
	5.4 Develop placemaking strategies and promotions involving local creatives to establish a 'vibrant village' network	Medium	
	5.5 Engage artists to collaborate with Council to deliver innovative messaging about sustainability	Medium	
	5.6 Partner with local businesses, community associations and promoters to support and market events in small towns.	Medium	
	5.7 Encourage pathways for emerging creative leaders to gain essential governance and organisational skills.	Medium	
	5.8 Support and promote our smaller, community run cultural institutions throughout the Shire.	Ongoing	
	5.9 Support small cultural organisations to attract new volunteers, including younger volunteers. Council recognises the critical role volunteers play in delivering arts and culture activities and organisations across the Shire.	Ongoing	

THEME 6: Sustainable Growth

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
Integrity, care, good governance, accountability, outward focus, building trust with community.	6.1 Establish an Arts Advisory Network to help develop and review the Strategic Actions.	Medium	Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity has been stimulated. • Aesthetic enrichment has been experienced. • Knowledge, ideas and insights have been gained. • Diversity of cultural expression has been appreciated. • Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage has been deepened Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to beneficial linkages between Council and community has been increased. • Agency and voice have been enabled. • Sense of civic pride has been enhanced. • Civic trust has been inspired.
	6.2 Maintain a clear focus on measuring outcomes and annually review the Strategic Actions from this Strategy.	Short	
	6.3 Foster civic pride through arts and cultural activities and the community.	Medium	
	6.4 Involve artists and creative businesses in Council planning.	Medium	
	6.5 Celebrate local successes.	Ongoing	
	6.6 Recognise, celebrate and support the work of local art sector volunteers	Ongoing	
	6.7 Maintain equitable support for cultural organisations, venues and projects across the Shire, in small and large townships. Encourage projects that bring creative experiences to more remote locations.	Ongoing	

54	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Thank you	Message from the Mayor	Executive Summary	Introduction	The Strategy	Methodology	Arts in South Gippsland	Vision	Goals	What we heard	This is South Gippsland	Theme 1: Connecting our People and Places	Theme 2: Economy and Industry	Theme 3: Healthy Communities	Theme 4: Leading with Integrity	Theme 5: Protecting and Enhancing our Environment	Theme 6: Sustainable Growth	Theme 7: Cultural Heritage and Infrastructure	Action plan 2022 – 2026	Appendix	55
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THEME 7: CULTURAL HERITAGE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
7.1 Coal Creek Community Park and Museum	7.1.1 The current function of Coal Creek can only be sustainable if there is new investment in the site to transition into a contemporary and significant cultural tourist attraction. This would involve:		The new business case for Coal Creek Community Park will include a cultural, economic, social and environmental impact assessment considering how the facility contributes to the following intended outcomes:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and development of technology for arts, culture, and creative industry engagement to reactivate the site long term to drive visitation and in particular return visitation. 	Medium	Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage has been deepened. Aesthetic enrichment is experienced
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-year increased financial commitment from Council. 	Medium	Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local economy is supported. Employment-enhancing skill development is facilitated.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A commitment to substantial upgrade and renovations. 	Long	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social connectedness is enhanced. Wellbeing (physical or mental) is improved. Environmental Positive sense of place enhanced.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear view on what the site represents and communicates a contemporary cultural tourism asset. 	Medium	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate rebranding and renaming in line with contemporary use and function. 	Medium	
	7.1.2 To assist Council in deciding on the future of Coal Creek, there needs to be a rigorous business case, community engagement and a cultural impact assessment carried out as soon as possible to enable the longer-term planning for a future use of the site to be determined.	Short	

THEME 7: CULTURAL HERITAGE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
7.2 Leongatha Memorial Hall as a performance space and community venue	7.2.1 Council will undertake a business case and feasibility study for the redevelopment of Memorial Hall that looks at current and future use, multi-use, demographics, population growth, service, service levels, heritage, redevelopment models, constraints, benchmarking with other population centres, demand, impact on small towns, accessibility, and whether operational costs can be supported and maintained.	Short	The new business case for redevelopment of Memorial Hall will include the following five key facility outcomes, whether new or refurbished. Amenity Aesthetic and material comfort and attractiveness improved. Accessibility Accessibility for all residents and visitors is maximised. Utility Usefulness as a cultural institution created or improved. Visibility Brand visibility and identity is increased. Functionality Operational requirements and systems are enhanced (functionality)
	The business case should also consider the relationship between other halls and venues both within and outside of the Shire, including the Foster War Memorial Arts Centre. A strong case for State Government and Commonwealth Government support and contribution towards capital works can only be made if underpinned by a solid business case that has a forward projection extending over 25 years.		
7.3 The Great Southern Rail Trail & Korumburra and Leongatha Railway precincts	7.3.1 The development of a Public Art and Collection Management Policy by Council to include the input and curation by the local communities that sit adjacent to the GSRT.	Short	The intended outcomes of the Public Art Policy will look to how it contributes to the following outcomes for residents and visitors, Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity is stimulated Aesthetic enrichment is experienced Diversity of cultural expression appreciated Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage deepened
	7.3.2 The current planning and redevelopment of the Korumburra Railway Station Building may benefit from a creative hub for a Shire-wide public art initiative. Using the existing spaces has the potential to become a creative industries precinct.	Short	Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional practice capability is enhanced. Local economy is supported.
	7.3.3 Investigate other national and international models of integrated arts and creative industries development that can inform an integrated approach to the redevelopment of the Railway precinct in Korumburra, and Leongatha, the GSRT and Coal Creek.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment-enhancing skill development is facilitated. Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing (physical and/or mental) improved. Sense of safety and security supported. Social connectedness is enhanced.
	7.3.4 Support South Gippsland's smaller cultural institutions, such as Port Welshpool Maritime Museum.	Medium	Environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive sense of place (built and/or natural environment) enhanced.
	7.3.5 Investigate the project elements of Aboriginal heritage interpretation and sites of significance, along the Rail Trail to highlight rare or special environmental features and flora. Consider the option to replenish the Coal Creek Community Park and Museum site with indigenous plantings and cultural content.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural world is valued. Motivation for environmental stewardship is increased. Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of civic pride is enhanced Access to beneficial networks and other resources increased.

THEME 7: CULTURAL HERITAGE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

	Strategic actions	Timeframe	Measuring our progress
7.4 Small Halls	7.4.1 Recognise the ongoing contribution by Council to the costs of all halls and acknowledge those halls that are not owned by Council. Council can play a significant role in partnership with local communities and halls management committees.	Medium	A successful small halls strategy will strengthen cultural outcomes. Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to beneficial networks and other resources increased. • Civic trust inspired
	7.4.2 Investigate possible flexible and adaptable models to support all halls in terms of technical requirements and programming needs.	Medium	
	7.4.3 Council to advocate to State Government for more support for Crown managed assets.	Medium	

Appendix – Evidence citations

ⁱThe Arts in Regional Australia: a research summary: November 2017

ⁱⁱIbid.

ⁱⁱⁱCreative and Cultural Activities and Wellbeing in Later Life Age UK 2018 https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/health-wellbeing/rb_apr18_creative_and_cultural_activities_wellbeing.pdf

^{iv}Understanding the value of arts and culture – The AHRC Cultural Value Project 2016 – Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kazynska

^vCreative Placemaking, Ann Markusen, Anne Gadwa

