



City of
KINGSTON

Creative and Learning Strategy

2026 - 2030



Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Kingston proudly acknowledges the Bunurong Boonwurrung Peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land.

We pay our deepest respects to their Elders, past and present, and honour their unbroken connections to this Country.



Artwork: Nakia Cadd, *Bunjil Continues to Guide Us (detail)*, 2025

Contents

A message from the Mayor	4
Land, Location and Community Context	5
Cultural Value	6
Creative Activities and Lifelong Learning	6
Local Government's Role	6
Kingston's Investment	7
Participation and Wellbeing	7
Inclusion and Development	8
Community Experiences	8
The Council & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029	8
Our services	9
Kingston's Arts, Events and Libraries services	10
Economic and Social Impact	11
Community Engagement and Key Insights	11
What the community told us	12
Building on Community Insights	12
Our Commitment	13
Kingston's Creative & Learning Strategy 2026–2030	14
Policy and Legislative Context	17
Key Directions	18
Key Direction 1: Healthy And Connected	20
Key Direction 2: Vibrant And Prosperous	23
Key Direction 3: Liveability and Sustainability	26
Key Direction 4: Responsibly Governed	29
Evaluation	32
Appendix	34

A message from the Mayor



I am delighted to introduce Kingston's Creative and Learning Strategy, a roadmap shaped hand-in-hand with our community and designed to strengthen the cultural heart of our city over the next five years. Arts, events and libraries play an essential role in what makes Kingston such a vibrant, connected and welcoming place to live.

They are the spaces where we learn, create, celebrate and come together and the community has told us clearly how much these experiences matter.

More than 1,600 residents shared their ideas, hopes and lived experiences during the development of this strategy. Your input has guided every priority, ensuring the plan reflects the diversity, creativity and aspirations of the people it serves. It recognises that cultural life is about more than programs and venues, it's about belonging.

Our libraries continue to be trusted, inclusive places for learning and connection. Our arts and events bring joy, spark conversation and celebrate our identity. And together, these services strengthen wellbeing, support local talent and help create a thriving, future-focused city.

Over the coming years, Council will invest in modern, accessible facilities; diverse programming; and new opportunities for creativity, participation and partnership.

We will continue to celebrate our local stories, empower our creative communities and ensure everyone has opportunities to learn, engage and shine.

Thank you to everyone who contributed your voice. This strategy truly reflects our shared pride in Kingston; and our shared belief in the power of creativity and learning to enrich community life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georgina L. Oxley". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mayor Cr Georgina Oxley
Longbeach Ward Councillor



Land, Location and Community Context

The City of Kingston located 15–34 kilometres south-east of Melbourne’s CBD, spans approximately 91 square kilometres.

It stretches from the vibrant beachside communities along the Port Phillip Bay foreshore in the west to diverse residential suburbs and major industrial hubs in the east and south, including Moorabbin, Braeside, and Clayton South. This unique combination of coastal, urban, and industrial landscapes has created a diverse and interconnected community that values both its rich cultural heritage and opportunities for modern development.

As of 2024, Kingston is home to over 166,000 residents, with forecasts indicating growth to around 195,000 by 2041. The City’s population is diverse, encompassing a wide range of ages, cultures, and backgrounds. Kingston is notably multicultural, with many multi-generational households contributing to its inclusive and varied cultural fabric. Kingston is also known for its natural and recreational assets including 13 kilometres of beautiful foreshore, expansive parklands, and conservation areas such as Braeside Park and the Edithvale–Seaford Wetlands – which enhance community wellbeing and provide spaces for recreation and cultural activities.

Kingston is also one of Victoria’s major employment centres, hosting over 15,000 businesses. This strong local economy bolsters community initiatives in arts, libraries and events, providing a solid foundation for cultural development and creative industries. Kingston is a Creative City where great work happens outside of Council programs. This Strategy is focused on the services, activities and programs provided by Council.

Cultural Value

Culture is the way we live, share, and connect — through stories, traditions, food, language, art, and community life. It shapes our identity and brings meaning to our everyday experiences. Culture is both tangible (like libraries, public art, and venues) and intangible (like shared rituals, oral histories, and creative knowledge). Together, these elements make places feel alive and connected. When we invest in Arts, Events and Libraries, we are investing in the threads that hold communities together.

Creative Activities and Lifelong Learning

Local government is closest to community life. It creates the spaces and opportunities that bring people together — from festivals and events to libraries and public art. The Arts, Events and Libraries services are essential social infrastructure. They foster inclusion, wellbeing, innovation, and civic pride. Funding them is an investment in people, place, and purpose.

Local Government's Role

Across Australia, councils contribute more than \$1.5 billion each year to arts, culture, heritage, and libraries. This includes funding for libraries, festivals, public art, museums, galleries, and community programs. Libraries are more than cultural venues — they are a statutory public service that guarantees universal access to learning. Festivals and events animate public spaces, celebrate identity, and connect residents through shared experiences.



Artwork: Caroline Monnet, *Ikwewak (Women)*, 2022



Artwork: Aunty Kim Wandin & Christine Joy, *Banj Dayang (Rakali) Wilam*, 2024

Kingston's Investment

Kingston's investment in its Arts, Events and Libraries services delivers benefits across all areas of public policy.

It supports wellbeing, resilience, and economic vitality. Cultural activity creates local jobs, boosts tourism and retail, and fosters civic pride. Libraries are one of Council's largest knowledge assets, providing physical and digital resources that support literacy, wellbeing, and equitable access to information. Public art and place-making reflect shared histories and values, building trust in the systems that support our community.

Kingston is a creative city, shaped by the combined contributions of Council services, community organisations, individual creatives and private industry. Culture is created and sustained across many places and partnerships, both within and beyond Council.

This Strategy recognises that broader cultural ecosystem and provides a clear focus for the Arts, Events and Libraries services, while also guiding how the organisation as a whole works within and supports cultural activity city-wide. It sets out a shared framework for collaboration, investment and decision-making, ensuring Council plays a strong, connected role in enabling culture to thrive across Kingston.

Participation and Wellbeing

Taking part in Arts, Events, and Library programs reduces stress and loneliness by building social connections and belonging. Libraries act as inclusive “third spaces” — safe, welcoming places where people of all ages can learn, create, and connect. Regular engagement improves mental health and wellbeing, contributing to long-term healthcare savings.



Inclusion and Development

Arts, Events and Libraries services create shared experiences that bridge differences and promote inclusion. For young people, early engagement builds confidence, empathy, and academic skills. Bringing these services into Kingston's health and community development initiatives strengthens education, mental health, and social cohesion.

Like other Australian municipalities, one in five people in Kingston have some form of disability. It is estimated that 33,445 people in Kingston have some form of disability. The Arts, Events and Libraries services are committed to ensuring its sites and programs are accessible and attractive to people of all abilities.

Community Experiences

Our community experiences culture through:

- Exhibitions and performances
- Festivals and events for all ages
- Libraries
- Making, creating, and playing
- Public art and place activation
- Parks, hubs, and activity centres
- Support for the local creative sector

The Council & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029

The Kingston Council & Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029 recognises Arts, Events and Libraries as key drivers of community wellbeing, social inclusion, economic vibrancy, environmental care, and civic pride. This Strategy aligns with Council's strategic directions and highlights the whole-of-Council impact of the Arts, Events and Libraries department.

It builds on the commitments and KPIs already outlined in the Council and Wellbeing Plan, offering a snapshot of how these services contribute to Council's broader vision.



Our services



Kingston's Arts, Events and Libraries services

Kingston's Arts, Events and Libraries services deliver activities, programs and facilities that enrich community life. Together, they generate more than half a million visits each year, plus strong digital engagement through e-borrowing, websites, social media, and the presence of public art across the city.

Libraries are the foundation of Kingston's learning and cultural ecosystem. They provide free access to books, technology, information, and expert support. As trusted civic spaces, they foster literacy, creativity, digital inclusion, and citizenship. Libraries also safeguard Kingston's heritage and history.

Festivals and Events bring people together through a dynamic calendar of celebrations. They activate public spaces, support tourism and local businesses, and build civic pride. The service also enables community led markets and festivals and delivers Citizenship Ceremonies.

Arts and Culture programs include exhibitions, performances, and workshops. Public art beautifies open spaces and builds pride of place. Artist development programs support local creatives to grow and produce new work. Kingston Arts provides venues, technical support, and front of house and box office services, while also attracting commercial activity.

Together, these services are vital cultural infrastructure. They foster creativity, connection, and civic engagement, while contributing to economic growth, social inclusion, and lifelong learning.





Economic and Social Impact

The Arts, Events and Libraries services are a driver of Kingston's cultural identity and local economy. Festivals, events and public art attract visitors, boost foot traffic, and create jobs. Libraries improve digital literacy and workforce readiness through free access to technology and learning resources.

In summary, Kingston's Arts, Events and Libraries fuel economic vitality, support wellbeing, and strengthen the City's reputation as a vibrant cultural destination.

Community Engagement and Key Insights

This Strategy is shaped by extensive community consultation in 2024, involving 1,642 residents and stakeholders. Engagement methods included:

- **Surveys:** Online and hardcopy, capturing broad input on use, value, and improvements.
- **Workshops and Focus Groups:** With young people, seniors, First Nations, and culturally diverse groups, exploring accessibility and participation.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** With artists, organisers, and cultural leaders, providing expert perspectives.
- **Pop Up Engagements:** Interactive booths at local events, gathering spontaneous feedback in casual settings.

What the community told us

Through consultation with residents, community groups and industry stakeholders, clear themes emerged that guide this Strategy:

Access to cultural infrastructure

People want welcoming cultural hubs in central locations, with easy access to collections, rehearsal spaces and venues. Upgraded, fully accessible libraries and arts spaces are a priority.

Library Service Demand

Library services are highly valued. The community asked for longer opening hours, more digital and physical resources and modern technology. Better use of heritage collections was also suggested.

Arts Programming & Curation

Residents want stronger support for local creatives and a revitalised live performance scene. They called for diverse programming – from contemporary music and youth spaces to community arts participation.

Event Accessibility

There is strong interest in more free or low-cost, family-friendly events in local parks and public spaces. Festivals and concerts should be easy for everyone to attend.

Digital Services

People want more online and hybrid options, including workshops, virtual exhibitions, digital collections, and live streamed performances.

Belonging and Representation

Community members want programming and public art that reflect Kingston's diverse cultures, helping everyone feel represented and included.

Marketing and Awareness

Many residents were unaware of the full range of programs. Better communication and refreshed branding are needed to increase engagement.

Building on Community Insights

These findings highlight the need for:

- Accessible, adaptable facilities
- Diverse and relevant programming
- Expanded digital services
- Stronger promotion of Arts, Events, and Library programs

The Strategy responds directly to these priorities, aligning with the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029. It blends ambition with practical delivery, aiming to enrich cultural life through improved facilities, innovative practices, and strong partnerships.

Our Commitment

Council is committed to a cultural future that is dynamic, inclusive and responsive. Guided by community feedback and emerging trends, we will adapt and evolve, delivering cultural outcomes that align with Council priorities and shape Kingston's creative future.

Community insights sit at the heart of this Strategy. They highlight the need for flexible and accessible facilities, diverse and culturally relevant programming, stronger digital engagement, and clearer promotion of the rich offer across the Arts, Events and Libraries services. In response, this Strategy sets out clear evidence-based actions which, together with alignment to the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029, will help create a vibrant cultural landscape that reflects and resonates with all Kingston residents.

This Strategy provides a roadmap that balances creative ambition with practical delivery. It focuses on strengthening facilities, expanding and enriching programs, embracing innovation, and building

strong partnerships. Central to its success is collaboration across the Arts, Events, Libraries and wider Council services working as one to support a connected, creative and resilient community.

Beyond enriching cultural experiences, this Strategy recognises the wider social and economic value of a thriving cultural sector. As initiatives roll out, Council will remain agile - listening, learning and responding to ongoing feedback and change.

We are prioritising opportunities that support our people, the artists, creative thinkers, communities, volunteers, participants and audiences, to thrive, grow and innovate, ensuring culture remains a defining strength as the City evolves.

By 2030, the City of Kingston will be able to say:

- ✓ Libraries, arts venues and events are thriving, relevant and accessible to all.
- ✓ Communities feel heard, valued and represented in cultural programming.
- ✓ Local creatives are supported, empowered and celebrated.
- ✓ Kingston's identity is strengthened as a welcoming, culturally rich place to live, work and play.

Achieving this vision is a shared journey, one that relies on collaboration between Council, community and partners.

Guided by this Strategy, the Arts, Events and Libraries will remain the heart of civic connection, creativity, and lifelong enrichment.

Kingston's Creative & Learning Strategy 2026–2030

Kingston's Creative & Learning Strategy (The Strategy) has been developed to align with the **City of Kingston's broader vision and policy framework**. It supports each of the key directions of the **Council & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029**:

Healthy and Connected:

we are a healthy, inclusive and accessible community, where social connections thrive and everyone feels supported and safe.

Vibrant and Prosperous:

we are a welcoming, lively and creative city that celebrates our well-utilised community spaces and thriving local businesses.

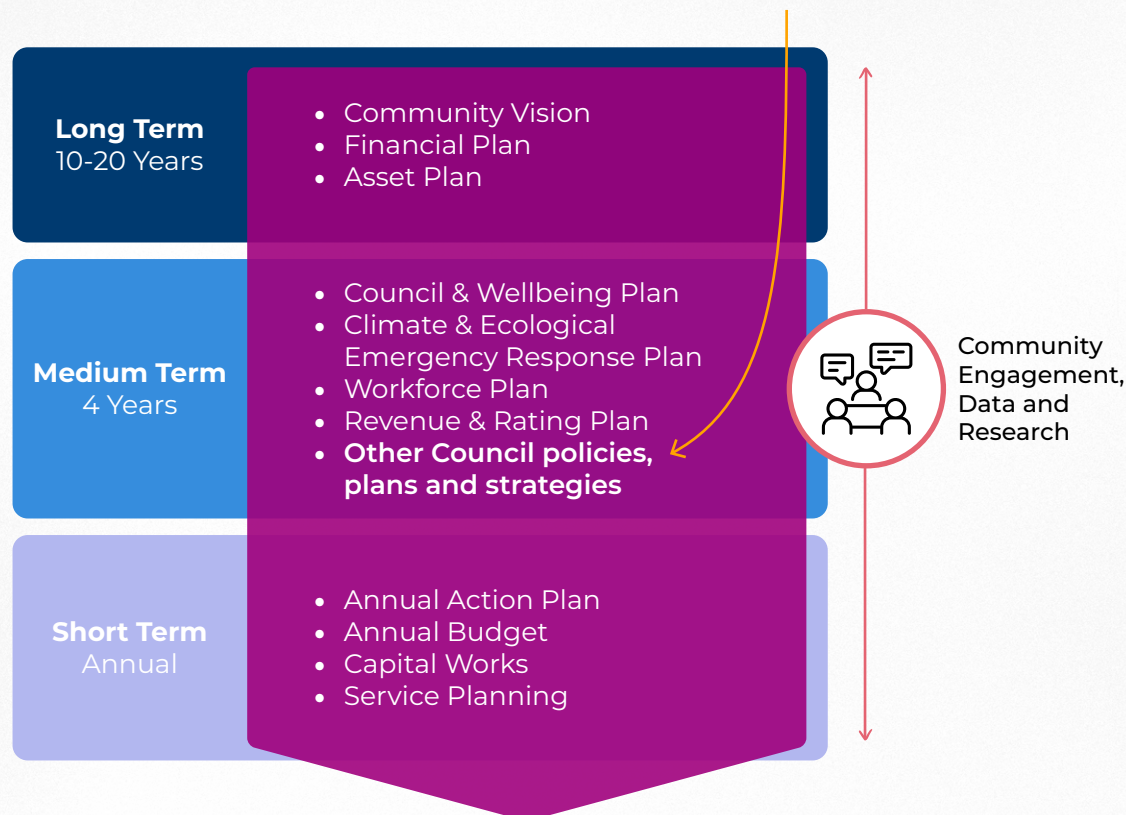
Liveable and Sustainable:

we live in a sustainable, well-planned and maintained city that preserves neighbourhood character, protects the environment and is future focused.

Responsibly Governed:

we are a transparent and efficient organisation that is accountable, responsive and cost-effective.

The Strategy aligns to the City of Kingston Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework, as a Medium Term strategy.



Kingston's Creative & Learning Strategy 2026–2030

The strategy is underpinned by six key planning principles.

01 /

Based on the values of the community

Understood by ongoing engagement and consultation, and Councillor representation.

02 /

Directed towards goals

Articulation of those values into the key directions, the desired future.

03 /

Focused on outcomes

Plan for measurable intended outcomes (objectives), that move us in the key directions.

04 /

Informed by evidence

Using our local knowledge, experience, and research, on what we know to achieve the outcomes.

05 /

Underpinned by a program logic

Address the key direction ..., and the related outcomes, ... and based on evidence..., we will (do activities).

06 /

Responsive to evaluation

Conduct evaluation that is consistent and impacts future decision-making, forming new evidence.

Kingston's Creative & Learning Strategy 2026–2030

To address the key directions of Council, the staff delivering Arts, Events and Library services prioritise measurable outcomes for each of our activities across all policy domains through the use of the nationally and internationally endorsed and published measurable *cultural* outcomes¹.

These are:

- Creativity is stimulated, sparking our imagination and leading to creative expression.
- Aesthetic enrichment is experienced, such as joy, beauty, awe, wonder, taking us outside of the everyday.
- Knowledge, ideas and insights are gained, providing a deeper personal understanding.
- Diversity of cultural expression is appreciated for the way it reflects different life experiences and values.
- Sense of belonging is deepened to a shared cultural heritage underpinning our identity.

Outcomes are what we achieve, not what we do.

When we deliver Arts, Events and Library activities, we are expecting to make a change. For example, our creative practitioners are stimulated, increasing their professional capability; our economy is diverse and dynamic; our communities and visitors are gaining new insights, connecting to our shared heritage or experiencing an art activity that moves them.

We know that the cultural outcomes of our activities have positive impacts in our economic, social, environment and civic life and are all interconnected, so we will monitor and evaluate outcomes in all these areas to guide our future events, local activities, larger programs and development of our cultural collections.

To deliver the best value for Council when seeking these outcomes, this Strategy allows the staff delivering Arts, Events and Library services to select activities to fit the moment, match available resources to prioritise quality, and reach the intended outcome.

The Strategy is not a 'to-do' list. It delivers cultural outcomes that support Council's objectives and have a material impact on the creative future of the city as it evolves.

¹ Developed by the Cultural Development Network, www.culturaldevelopment.net.au

Policy and Legislative Context

This Strategy reflects state and national policies to ensure Kingston's approach meets broader standards for cultural development and inclusion.

It aligns with the Victorian Government's Creative State strategy and cultural heritage policies, which promote access to arts and culture, diversity, and environmental sustainability.

It is guided by the Local Government Act 2020 (Victoria), which requires councils to promote social equity, community wellbeing, and civic engagement.

The Libraries Act 1988 (Victoria) supports Kingston's commitment to free, accessible library services as hubs for lifelong learning and information access.

Best practice guidance from Public Libraries Victoria and Creative Victoria has shaped this Strategy's focus on digital transformation, community partnerships, and equitable access.

Together, these frameworks ensure the Strategy responds to local community needs while contributing to broader cultural goals for a vibrant, inclusive society.

In line with the Gender Equality Act 2020, a Gender Impact Assessment has been completed, with actions assigned and formally reported to the Gender Equality Commission.





Key Directions





Untitled mural by Smug,
Wall to Wall Mordí Village, 2024

Key Directions

The tables following each key direction encompass the next five years showing strategic intent and therefore do not detail specific activities, timing, or budget as these will be the tasks of the department's annual business and implementation plan.

This Strategy creates a framework to explore future opportunities that further support Council's objectives. Any new initiatives or capital projects arising from the Strategy will be subject to Council's standard decision-making processes. This includes assessment against organisational priorities and consideration of available resources.

Key Direction 1: Healthy And Connected

We are a healthy, inclusive and accessible community, where social connections thrive and everyone feels supported and safe.

Arts, Events and Library services contribute to the following Healthy and Connected Council objectives:

- Supporting our diverse and growing community to participate in community life and strengthen connections to foster a sense of belonging and address loneliness and isolation.
- Providing environments and services that promote and support mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Supporting our community to feel safe and be safe.



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We know that accessible and inclusive cultural and creative opportunities are central to health, wellbeing and safety in Kingston.

We will therefore support inclusive programming for all that is locally based; elevate multicultural and First Nations voices and histories; promote youth wellbeing; ensure digital inclusion and expand place-based creative activations and infrastructure that reflect Kingston's social and cultural diversity.

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Artwork: Maree Clarke,
The Long Journey Home, 2024

Key Direction 1: Healthy And Connected

We are a healthy, inclusive and accessible community, where social connections thrive and everyone feels supported and safe.

The “We will” strategies below signal strategic intent, that will be activated within the business planning process and able to respond to changing circumstances.

What we know	We will	Outcome Measures
We know that accessible and inclusive creative opportunities are central to health, wellbeing and safety in Kingston. Therefore: We will support inclusive programming for all that is locally based; elevate multicultural and First Nations voices and histories; promote youth wellbeing; ensure digital inclusion and expand place-based creative activations and infrastructure that reflect Kingston’s social and cultural diversity.	• Improve access to library services by aligning locations, hours and infrastructure with community needs. • Deliver programs and shared experiences that reflect Kingston’s cultural diversity, elevate under-represented voices, and build a more connected community. • Develop integrated programming / opportunities for families and young people, combining arts, literacy and community engagement. • Target under-served and disengaged communities in priority locations. • Explore opportunities to provide community events / activities that are free or low-cost and hosted in central, accessible locations. • Ensure all Arts, Events and Libraries venues /sites are physically accessible by incorporating universal digital technology in programs, events and libraries. • Develop targeted digital literacy programs. • Progress the development of a centralised digital hub that integrates Arts, Events and Library services. • Implement a refreshed digital engagement and branding strategy across all platforms. • Explore opportunities for increased technical capacity in venues to deliver virtual and augmented creative experiences. • Ensure that relevant staff are trained for hybrid delivery. • Pilot a small number of hybrid/online events. • Explore programs and activities that support wellbeing.	Cultural • 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 • Wellbeing has been improved. Social connectedness has been enhanced. • Social differences have been bridged. • Feeling valued has been experienced. • Sense of safety and security has been supported.

Further detail regarding community feedback, external evidence and practice knowledge for this Key Direction is provided in Appendix 2.

Key Direction 2: Vibrant And Prosperous

We are a welcoming, lively and creative city that celebrates our well-utilised community spaces and thriving local businesses.

Arts, Events and Library services contribute to the following Vibrant and Prosperous Council objectives:

- Supporting activity centres and shopping villages to be vibrant, unique and destination focused.
- Supporting local businesses to stay in Kingston and thrive.
- Exploring partnerships with local businesses and organisations to enhance leisure and entertainment opportunities for the community.
- Providing and promoting vibrant community spaces that support public art and are welcoming for all.
- Enhancing opportunities for everyone to participate in creative arts, learning, recreational activities and services.
- Transforming and maximising the use of community spaces and enhance libraries and hubs to meet the diverse and changing needs for the population.
- Maintaining arts facilities that provide opportunities for the community to come together to celebrate and participate in the arts.



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We know that supporting the creative community to grow, innovate and flourish can make positive contributions to the local economy and develop a strong cultural ecosystem for the future.

We will therefore prioritise activities that build professional capacity and beneficial networks for local artists and organisations; enhance creative careers, strengthen local identity, contribute to long-term economic and cultural vitality and position Kingston as a hub for cultural enterprise.

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Artwork: Hayden Dewar,
Work, Play, Connect, 2023

Key Direction 2: Vibrant and Prosperous

We are a welcoming, lively and creative city that celebrates our well-utilised community spaces and thriving local businesses.

The “We will” strategies below signal strategic intent, that will be activated within the business planning process and able to respond to changing circumstances.

What we know	We will	Outcome Measures
We know that supporting the community to grow, innovate and flourish can make positive contributions to the local economy and develop a strong cultural ecosystem for the future. Therefore: We will prioritise activities that build professional capacity and beneficial networks for local artists and organisations; enhance creative careers, strengthen local identity, contribute to long-term economic and cultural vitality and position Kingston as a hub for cultural enterprise.	• In line with the Community Infrastructure Framework, continue to plan and to invest in our creative facilities to build fit for purpose spaces. • Position library spaces as accessible platforms for co-working, digital production, and creative entrepreneurship. • Manage and facilitate the use of affordable, fit-for-purpose creative spaces across arts facilities, including studios, rehearsal and performance spaces, and exhibition venues. • Ensure business systems are fit-for-purpose and are designed and utilised with a customer-centric focus • Maintain process and procedures for event and facility operations that have safety, security and customer service at their centre. • Lead professional development and industry engagement programs for emerging and established creatives. • Facilitate access to shared resources to support production and reduce cost barriers for local artists and groups. • Explore opportunities for local creatives to promote and sell their work while strengthening industry partnerships and sponsorship engagement – enhancing opportunities for creative business development. • Plan and deliver an integrated public art program that is site responsive and enhances the city's public realm and streetscapes. • Expand Kingston's residency model to embed artists in community spaces and create new, high-impact public works that foster cultural participation and legacy.	Cultural • 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 • Professional practice capability has been enhanced. • Individual economic wellbeing has been increased. • Local economy has been supported. • Employment enhancing skills development has been facilitated.

Further detail regarding community feedback, external evidence and practice knowledge for this Key Direction is provided in Appendix 3.

Key Direction 3: Liveability and Sustainability

We live in a sustainable, well-planned and maintained city that preserves neighbourhood character, protects the environment and is future-focused.

Arts, Events and Library services contribute to the following Liveability and Sustainability Council objectives:

- Providing infrastructure and public spaces that enhance liveability, accessibility and are well-maintained now and into the future.
- Protect, preserve and enhance our natural environment for current and future generations.
- Maintaining our neighbourhood character and preserving our heritage and cultural history.



Artwork: Julie Squires,
Horse, 2008

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We know that our community values our arts, learning and performance spaces. They are looking for amplified multi-use venues and creative spaces that support a wide range of activities. Place-based activations are well-known to be social connectors and can also highlight positive environmental messaging.

We will therefore prioritise advocacy for the renewal and upgrade of our venues to establish contemporary arts, cultural and learning facilities that meet evolving community needs. We will ensure that our public art, events and place-based activations contribute to the liveability of Kingston and care for its environment.

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Key Direction 3: Liveability and Sustainability

We live in a sustainable, well-planned and maintained city that preserves neighbourhood character, protects the environment and is future-focused.

The “We will” strategies below signal strategic intent, that will be activated within the business planning process and able to respond to changing circumstances.

What we know	We will	Outcome Measures
Our community values our arts, learning and performance spaces. They are looking for amplified multi-use venues and creative spaces that support a wide range of activities. Place-based activations are well-known to be social connectors and can also highlight positive environmental messaging. Therefore: We will prioritise the renewal and upgrade of our venues to establish contemporary arts, cultural and learning facilities that meet evolving community needs. We will ensure that our public art, events and place-based activations contribute to the liveability of Kingston and care for its environment.	• Lead the development of the Kingston Arts Precinct Masterplan. • Embed accessibility and environmental sustainability requirements into all upgrade projects. • Involve artists in environmental messaging and activation. • Investigate opportunities for public art commissions to be integrated in building/facility upgrades. • Undertake renewal and best practice conservation and preservation works to Council's Cultural Collections - Public Art, Monuments and Memorials, Visual Art and Heritage. • In line with the Community Infrastructure Framework, oversee upgrades to existing arts venues to ensure they are accessible, functional and equipped for high quality production. • Develop and deliver a Libraries Vision and in conjunction with the Community Infrastructure Framework implement a capital works program to modernise facilities. • Lead planning and delivery of versatile event spaces that support diverse programming across Kingston. • Audit library and arts facilities heritage storage and assets to assess condition and alignment with community needs. • Conduct a review of creative infrastructure development opportunities across selected Council-owned facilities.	Cultural • 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 • Wellbeing has been improved. • Social connectedness has been enhanced. • Social differences have been bridged. • Sense of safety and security has been supported. Environmental • Positive sense of place has been enhanced. • Understanding of ecological issues has been increased. • Natural world has been valued • Motivation for environmental stewardship increased.

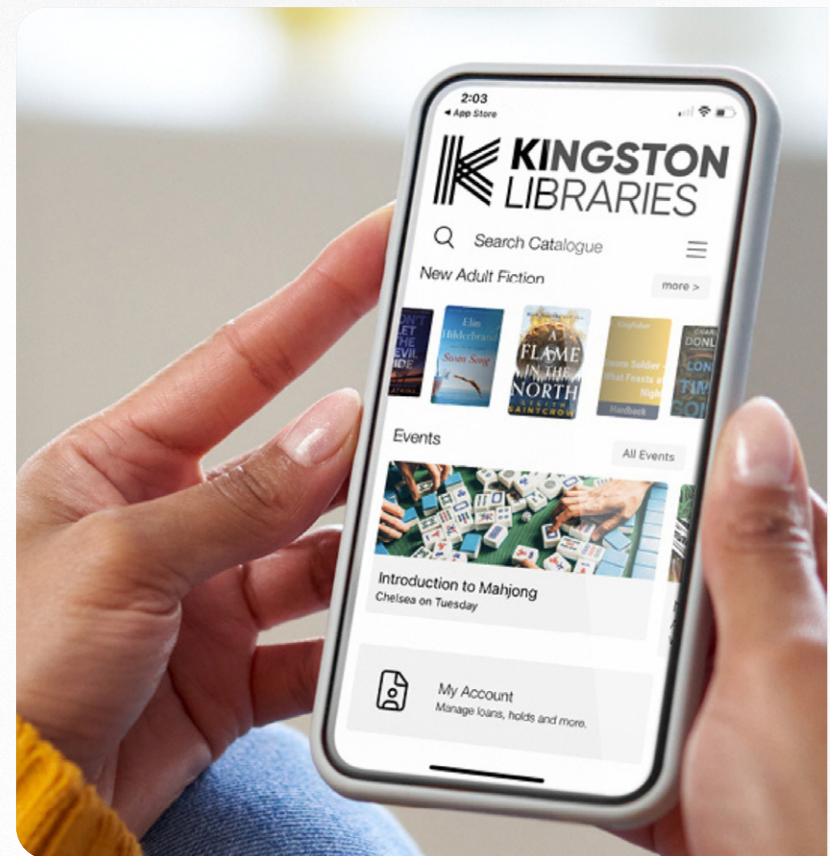
Further detail regarding community feedback, external evidence and practice knowledge for this Key Direction is provided in Appendix 4.

Key Direction 4: Responsibly Governed

We are a transparent and efficient organisation that is accountable, responsive and cost-effective.

Arts, Events and Library services contribute to the following Liveability and Sustainability Council objectives:

- Prioritise the current and future needs of the community through effective and sustainable long-term management and planning.
- Enhance promotion of our services and ensure communication with the community is proactive, clear and accessible.
- Advocate for more equitable and improved outcomes that respond to the diverse needs of the community.
- Ensure good governance through integrity, accountability, and continuous improvement.



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We know that an outcome focus on Arts, Events and Libraries service planning provides valuable insights into intangible aspects of cultural engagements and demonstrates the value of culture across the whole of Council. Best practice is a cornerstone of our commitment to community.

We will therefore ensure that this Strategy represents community aspirations, promotes beneficial linkages between the community and Council, fosters civic pride, focuses on measurable outcomes, and is regularly reviewed and evaluated through collection and collation of data.

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Key Direction 4: Responsibly Governed

We are a transparent and efficient organisation that is accountable, responsive and cost-effective.

The “We will” strategies below signal strategic intent, that will be activated within the business planning process and able to respond to changing circumstances.

What we know	We will	Outcome Measures
An outcome focus in planning provides valuable insights into intangible aspects of cultural engagements and demonstrates the value of culture across the whole of Council. Therefore: We will ensure that this Creative and Learning Strategy represents community aspirations, promotes beneficial linkages between the community and Council, fosters civic pride, focuses on measurable outcomes, and is regularly reviewed and evaluated through collection and collation of data.	• Evaluate the impact of the Strategy during its life using measurable outcomes to demonstrate the value of Arts, Events and Library services to the community. • Assess the evaluation results for their contribution to the impact and value of Arts, Events and Libraries. • Maintain the Annual Action Plan for Council and over time report on the outcomes achieved by the “actions”. • Embody values of equality, diversity, inclusion, health, safety and wellbeing • Review and refine policies to uphold best practice and community relevance. • Undertake an audience analysis to inform audience development plans and creative programs • Strengthen promotion and communication. • Celebrate the successes of Kingston’s creative sector to foster civic pride. • Respect and acknowledge First Nations people in line with Kingston’s Reconciliation Strategy.	Cultural • 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 • Access to beneficial networks and other resources has been increased. • Agency and voice have been enabled. • Sense of civic pride has been enhanced. • Civic trust has been inspired.

Further detail regarding community feedback, external evidence and practice knowledge for this Key Direction is provided in Appendix 5



Evaluation



Evaluation

This Strategy will guide the Arts, Events and Libraries teams in focusing on activities that deliver the greatest impact and measurable outcomes aligned with Kingston's key directions.

The Arts, Events and Libraries services will align with Council's Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework to support the development of Annual Actions Plans and Service Profiles directly guided by this Strategy.

Alongside the utilisation of traditional metrics like attendance and overall satisfaction, the Arts, Events and Libraries services will focus on the impact of participation on individuals and communities.

We measure the impact of participation using the Cultural Development Network's Measurable Outcome Schema. This approach recognises that people experience Arts, Events and Library services in different ways, and that value comes from how an experience affects

each individual. Rather than judging whether an artwork, activity or event is "high quality" or "excellent," we focus on what changed for the person who took part — such as learning something new, feeling connected, being inspired, or enjoying a sense of wellbeing.

Evaluation will be embedded in everyday work practices to assess the effectiveness of the Strategy and its contribution to Council priorities. Ongoing, consistent evaluation will support better decision making, build organisational capacity, improve productivity, and clearly demonstrate the value of Arts, Events and Libraries to Council.

Implementation will begin by integrating impact planning and evaluation into existing Kingston systems, with new tools introduced where needed to strengthen monitoring, learning and reporting.

Evaluation will consider outcomes for participants, the intent behind Council's actions, the resources invested, and the contribution to the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029. Over time, Annual Action Plans will include consistently measured outcomes, providing greater clarity and context for the activities and outputs reported to Council.

Appendix 1

Cultural Development Network Measurable Outcome Schema

Cultural

- Creativity stimulated
- Aesthetic enrichment
- Knowledge gained
- Cultural diversity appreciated
- Sense of belonging deepened

Social

- Wellbeing improved
- Safety and security increased
- Social connectedness enhanced
- Differences bridged
- Feeling valued

Economic

- Practice capability increased
- Employment skills developed
- Economic wellbeing improved
- Local economy supported

Governance

- Access to networks/resources
- Agency and voice enabled
- Civic pride enhanced
- Civic trust inspired

Environmental

- Sense of place enhanced
- Ecological understanding increased
- Natural world valued
- Stewardship motivation

Appendix 2 – Healthy and Connected

What we know about healthy and connected communities from community engagement, external evidence and practice knowledge.

- Strong community feedback for more inclusive programs and spaces. Residents want services that better meet the needs of people with disability, CALD communities, young people and older adults
- Events are successful from a community engagement and inclusion perspective.
- First Nations people are attending activities outside Kingston because of more relevant programming and access².
- There is awareness of the importance of arts in celebrating First Nations culture and engaging with young people, particularly those dealing with trauma and mental health issues³.
- There is a clear call from the community for removing physical, financial, geographic and cultural barriers, particularly in areas with limited access.
- The library service is well loved. Libraries provide safe, inclusive environments where people of all ages can access skilled support, trusted information and opportunities to learn and socialise. They help reduce isolation by offering culturally responsive spaces that are particularly valuable for young people, older adults, and those experiencing social disadvantage. Migrant women in particular have a great appreciation of libraries and its resources and would like to see more social activities to share and learn skills, e.g. language, cooking, arts and crafts.
- The community expressed a need to develop activities that celebrate heritage and support local groups. Representatives from the creative industries wanted to better understand how people wanted to engage with heritage in contemporary ways.
- The community values activities that bring people together and reflect shared stories, culture and creativity. Strong interest in programs that blend art, heritage, storytelling and performance to build bridges between generations, communities and local institutions.
- The community wants digital inclusion, online and hybrid programming, online workshops and tutorials, virtual exhibitions, digital collections and live streaming of events.
- Feedback from young people suggested that library programming and spaces could provide places for interaction and networking.
- The community is invested in place-based activities and local neighbourhood activations.
- Library facilities will require strategic infrastructure planning that modernises and expands facilities. There is a call for more flexible opening hours.

² City of Kingston Community Engagement 2024

³ City of Kingston Community Engagement First Nations Workshop 2024.

Appendix 2 – Healthy and Connected

What we know about healthy and connected communities from community engagement, external evidence and practice knowledge. continued...

- There is a large body of evidence to illustrate how arts and culture have positive benefits for health and wellbeing⁴.
- Community arts play a vital role towards a healthy society, helping to reduce social isolation, forming bonds between people that share common interests, strengthening under-represented cultures and giving a sense of safety and security⁵.
- Emerging technologies are transforming how communities' access and engage with library and arts services, making them more interactive, inclusive and accessible⁶.
- The National Library of Australia's digital strategy acknowledges a 'major digital transition' reshaping how collecting and memory institutions operate⁷.
- A 2024 systematic review published by Springer highlights how digital and multisensory technologies—like tactile exhibits, audio guides, and augmented reality—enhance understanding and enjoyment of cultural artefacts, particularly for visually impaired visitors. These tools bridge sensory gaps and deepen emotional and cognitive engagement⁸.
- Arts, Events and Libraries as a department will assist in enhancing opportunities for everyone to participate in creative arts, learning and recreational activities.

⁴ Future Reset: How Art Improves Health and Well-Being. VicHealth April 2025

⁵ Integrative Review on Arts, Social Cohesion and Wellbeing. Frontiers in Public Health, May 2025.

⁶ The Impact of Emerging Technologies on Libraries - collectionHQ

⁷ National Library of Australia Digital Strategy 2024-27

⁸ Hou, W. Riccò, D. (2025). Accessible Design for Museums: A Systematic Review on Multisensory Experience Based on Digital Technology. In: Martins, N., Brandão, D. (eds) Advances in Design and Digital Communication V. DIGICOM 2024. Springer Series in Design and Innovation, vol 51. Springer, Cham.

Appendix 3 – Vibrant and Prosperous

What we know about vibrant and prosperous communities from community engagement, external evidence and practice knowledge:

- Community and industry feedback highlighted the need for targeted investment in creative infrastructure, professional development, and opportunities for local talent to grow and be visible. Priorities included affordable spaces, support for emerging practitioners, and stronger pathways to showcase and promote creative work.
- Feedback from artists, creative industries, art & heritage groups, public workshops and internal consultations advocated for better arts marketing and communication, and support for improved networking for local artists and musicians. These groups would like to see the arts in Kingston be more visible with strong branding.
- We know that events are widely enjoyed in Kingston; there are opportunities for Council to develop economic outcomes through stronger relationships with external parties.
- Public library services are a measurable economic and digital inclusion engine across Victoria. Public Libraries Victoria's statewide benchmarking confirms that library indicators such as visits, borrowing, program attendance and technology access correlate with activation in activity centres and increased digital participation. National reporting shows sustained growth in both in-person and digital use since COVID, with collections used 174 million times, 88 million visits, and more than 7 million program attendances across Australia in 2023–24⁹.
- The Making Space for Culture in Sydney study underscores that cultural infrastructure contributes to social cohesion, civic identity, and economic vitality. It warns that without investment in accessible, modern spaces—such as rehearsal rooms, galleries, and performance venues—cities risk losing cultural vibrancy and community connection¹⁰.
- Victoria's creative economy contributes \$41.2 billion annually, representing 8.4% of the state's total economy. Investing in creative industries, skills, IP, and global reach directly supports economic growth, employment, and innovation¹¹.
- Recent Australian research confirms that future work increasingly depends on skills inherent in the creative industries – problem solving, collaboration, critical thinking, now in demand across broader sectors¹².
- There has been strong sectoral growth post-COVID; as of May 2025, there are 331,212 people in creative jobs in Victoria, and 48,197 businesses¹³.
- The economic pillars of Revive, the national cultural policy, support local investment, job creation and innovation and encourages future-focused, inclusive creative ecosystems¹⁴.

⁹ Public Libraries Victoria 2023-24 Benchmarking Report

¹⁰ Making Space for Culture in Sydney. City of Sydney Cultural Infrastructure Study 2020.

¹¹ Creative Victoria 2025

¹² *The Creative Workforce Scoping Study*. service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA) and Creative Australia March 2025.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*. 2023. Office for the Arts

Appendix 3 – Vibrant and Prosperous

What we know about vibrant and prosperous communities from community engagement, external evidence and practice knowledge: continued...

- Practitioners are not typically high earners, and many are sole traders; their presence and activities enliven places and communities and contribute to local economies. Employment conditions for artists have been changing, with a growing instability in contractual agreements and a gradual shift away from steady employment models towards a “portfolio career”, a multifaceted approach to work involving diverse job arrangements¹⁵.
- Economic modelling reveals that public library services are a high-leverage investment. Victorian analysis indicates that for every dollar allocated to library services, the community receives approximately \$4.30 in benefits¹⁶.
- Libraries play a critical role in digital inclusion, which is tightly linked to workforce readiness and economic participation. Australian research shows that reducing digital exclusion could yield almost \$467 million per year in economic benefit; libraries provide trusted, local hubs through which inclusion is enabled.
- Creative events and public art installations draw visitors and residents to Kingston's centres, boosting foot traffic for local businesses and creating jobs in the creative sector.
- A dynamic calendar of community events, festivals, and cultural pop-ups fosters collaboration with local vendors, artisans and performers, amplifying economic impact.
- Libraries strengthen Kingston's economic vitality by providing pathways into employment, enterprise and digital participation. They support job-seekers, students, sole traders and small businesses with access to technology, co-working capacity, meeting spaces and skills development. High digital engagement demonstrates the importance of libraries as launchpads for creative and knowledge-based work.
- Libraries are a proven mechanism for activating local economies, generating ongoing visitation within shopping centres and village activity centres, and increasing incidental spending in hospitality and retail. Their presence contributes to the vibrancy of Kingston's commercial hubs at all times of year
- Library programs focused on digital literacy, adult learning and job-seeker support have been shown to improve employment prospects and reduce social isolation.
- Libraries serve as anchors in local activity centres: they draw consistent foot traffic, support adjacent retail and hospitality businesses, and stimulate local commercial vitality by attracting users who also engage with nearby enterprises.
- Collections and trusted information services underpin lifelong learning, innovation and creative entrepreneurship. Public libraries support adult literacy, language learning and micro-business research in ways that align with the creative and knowledge economy shift. Community feedback highlights that library services are valued for providing safe, inclusive learning and work-ready spaces, particularly for young people and sole traders, offering access to technology, networks, knowledge and peer support.

¹⁵ *Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia* David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya, Department of Economics, Macquarie University, May 2024

¹⁶ Public Libraries Victoria “Learn More” advocacy page

Appendix 4 – Liveability and Sustainability

What we know about liveability and sustainability from community engagement, external evidence and practice knowledge:

- Community feedback highlights the need for contemporary, welcoming, and versatile venues that support a wide range of activities. Many existing spaces require upgrades, especially around accessibility, technology, and amenities.
- Community feedback indicated that current library facilities may not continue to meet community needs. There were hundreds of suggestions for programs with many relating to the development of more or new spaces including cafes, maker spaces, study and workspaces, meeting rooms and a greater delineation between quiet and noisy spaces.
- There is community expectation for environmentally sustainable and best-practice civic design.
- Modern, accessible infrastructure enhances cultural experiences by improving inclusion, engagement, and the quality of interaction with cultural content—especially for people with disabilities and from diverse communities¹⁷.
- Young, culturally diverse audiences are especially drawn to **place-based storytelling and visual arts**, reinforcing the value of public art as a connector¹⁸.
- *Revive: A Place for Every Story* explicitly supports localised cultural expression, encouraging councils to activate spaces through public art, community-led art and storytelling¹⁹.
- Libraries and cultural spaces remain trusted, inclusive spaces where diverse communities gather, learn, and connect. Interest-based and neighbourhood groups, often hosted in libraries, are key drivers of social capital. They act as “third places” that foster creativity, civic participation, and community wellbeing²⁰.
- Libraries require contemporary, flexible spaces that support collections management, digital technologies, quiet study, social collaboration and program delivery. The dispersed nature of Kingston’s current library network constrains floor space capacity and limits the ability to provide modern learning and creative environments for a growing population.
- Broad trends in built environments and planning intersect with cultural infrastructure and place activation in different ways. The use of adaptive multi-use venues allows for diverse programming; place-led activation strategies, moving from static infrastructure to experience driven place-making. These include festivals, public art and creative interventions encouraging community interaction and connection; and government interventions at national, regional and local level all contribute to deeper cultural and social community connections and support for local economies.
- Council has supported the progression of the Kingston Arts Precinct Masterplan, which would be a major cultural infrastructure project consolidating and upgrading key civic facilities into an integrated, contemporary cultural hub. The precinct will enable year-round exhibitions, performances, learning experiences and events, and reinforce Kingston’s identity as a leader in cultural engagement.

¹⁷ Creating Accessible Cultural Experiences - Monash Assistive Technology and Society

¹⁸ Audience Atlas 2024, Creative Victoria

¹⁹ Revive: A Place for Every Story, A Story for Every Place. Office of the Arts, 2023.

²⁰ Menzies Foundation, Civic Participation in Australia 2024.

Appendix 4 – Liveability and Sustainability

What we know about liveability and sustainability from community engagement, external evidence and practice knowledge: continued...

- Kingston libraries deliver safe places for independent learning, civic participation and digital access at scale. Modernising library infrastructure will directly enhance access to updated collections, technology and services that support reading, study, work readiness and lifelong learning.
- A program to modernise existing arts and library facilities across Kingston to ensure they are accessible, sustainable and fit for contemporary service delivery aligns with Council's infrastructure and capital works priorities.
- Using artists in environmental messaging can reinforce community care for the environment and promote environmental stewardship.

Appendix 5 – Responsibly Governed

What we know about responsible governance from practice knowledge, community engagement and external evidence:

- Community and the creative sector wanted improved communication and marketing from Council.
- Culture impacts on all policy domains²¹.
- The planning principles in this Strategy focus on the key directions of Council, underpinned by evidence, a theory of change, potential activities and measurable cultural outcomes across all domains²².
- Measurable cultural outcomes in Arts, Events and Libraries planning focuses on the impact of people's engagement with creative art and cultural activity and provides insight into the difference that we make through our work²³.
- Evaluation of the Strategy and continued improvement as a result is essential to building the capacity, productivity and value of Arts, Events and Library activities in the City.
- The development of the Creative and Learning Strategy is evidence of Council's recognition of the importance of resourcing creativity and learning for the benefit of community.
- The Arts, Events and Libraries department will cross-collaborate on programs, events and activations. This Strategy represents a road map for how this may be achieved.
- Library services lead in data quality through mandatory reporting to Public Libraries Victoria and the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework, providing a strong evidence base for ongoing improvement, financial stewardship and informed decision-making.
- There has not been a practice of consistent data collection on the impact of arts activities and events. Libraries conduct data collection regularly to feed into the Public Libraries Victoria's centralised database. Consistent data collection and evaluation is a priority need to understand the impact of Arts, Events and Library activities across the City.
- Arts, Events and Library activities build civic trust by fostering shared meaning, place identity and a sense of belonging in public life.
- Best practice planning and service delivery that has community values at its heart is central to good governance.

²¹ Cultural Development Network, www.culturaldevelopment.net.au

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid



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