

CREATIVE HORSHAM 2023-2026

HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL | CREATIVE STRATEGY

Date Adopted: xxxx 2023





Image: Horsham Regional Art Gallery. Photo: HRCC Archive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five traditional owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people.

We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

ACCESSIBILITY

To access the Strategy in other formats or request a copy, please email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au, or phone 03 5382 9777

THANK YOU

The development of Creative Horsham was supported by a range of community and cultural organisations in Horsham and beyond. Thank you to:

- Arena Theatre Company
- Arts Access Victoria
- Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council
- Creative Victoria
- Esther Anatolitis
- Goolum Goolum
- Multicultural Arts Victoria
- Music Victoria
- Rising Festival
- The Push
- Theatre Network Australia
- Wall-to-Wall Festival
- Writers Victoria

Creative Horsham was developed by Horsham Rural City Council with support from Regional Arts Victoria. Future Tense completed the Policy Scan and Sector Survey. A Community Reference Group provided input at key stages of the process.

Thank you to the community members and artists who contributed their time and energy to attending a consultation session; completing a survey; making a phone call; sending an email; and those who make, share, attend and support the Horsham Creative Community.



Image: Horsham Regional Art Gallery collection room. Photo: Jesse Marlow.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Creative Horsham (The Plan) is the creative strategy for Horsham Rural City for 2023-2026, and follows the previous Arts & Culture Strategy which ran from 2014-18.

The Strategy has five themes which guide activity:

- 1. Destination:** entice visitors to the region with a compelling offer of things to do and see in and around Horsham
- 2. Participation:** ensure that everyone can make, do or see art and culture in the Horsham region
- 3. Venues:** our places of Arts and Culture serve the Horsham community
- 4. Partnerships:** support the people and organisations we make Arts and Culture with
- 5. Communications:** celebrate and coordinate the way we tell our stories

Delivery of these five themes will contribute to the Vision for Creative Horsham which builds on the existing Community Vision: Arts & culture contributes to making the Horsham region a vibrant, liveable hub that thrives on strong economic growth and social connectedness.

In turn, successful delivery of Creative Horsham will result in a number of Outcomes:

- 1. Cultural:** Creativity is stimulated; Knowledge, ideals and insight are gained; Diversity of cultural expression is appreciated; Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage is deepened.
- 2. Social:** Physical and/or mental wellbeing is improved; Social connectedness is enhanced; Social differences are bridged; Feeling valued is experienced.
- 3. Economic:** Professional practice capability is enhanced; Employment enhancing skill development is facilitated; Individual economic wellbeing is increased; Local economy is supported.

This document comprises five Sections:

- **Section One** provides an Introduction to the Creative Horsham Plan;
- **Section Two** provides Background on the region and the Strategy development;
- **Section Three** outlines the Strategy, detailing the 5 themes and key projects;
- **Section Four** provides an overview of implementation; and,
- **Section Five** provides Appendices relevant to Creative Horsham.



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Image (Cover and back): Whoosh! By Sensorium Theatre.

Photo: Christophe Canato.

Whoosh! – an interactive sensory space adventure for young explorers with disabilities, was held at the Horsham Town Hall in 2022 and is an example of the inclusive offerings of the Venue.

Image (Left): Horsham Town Hall foyer. Photo: HRCC Archive.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Horsham Rural City has a rich cultural heritage and is home to a broad range of arts organisations and dynamic creatives showcasing a wealth of diverse arts, and cultural opportunities for the community to enjoy.

Creative Horsham (The Plan) seeks to further recognise and celebrate this richness and aims to outline the opportunities Council and community can play in supporting the progress of arts and culture in our region.

Arts and Culture is a fundamental element to providing a liveable region for our community and provides a pathway to realising the community vision of:

“In 2041, Horsham region is a vibrant, liveable hub that thrives on strong economic growth and social connectedness. Empowering people to live, work and access opportunities for recreation and culture, now and into the future”

Ambition

The ambition for this Plan is to ensure creativity and the creative sector play a role in delivering on this vision, and that the creative community benefit in turn. In the longer term, this means:

- The creative community is a vital contributor to the vibrancy and liveability of the region;
- The creative sector contributes to the economic growth of the region;
- Creative programs are recognised for their role in supporting social connections;
- Creative professionals and organisations are supported to work and maintain a practice in the region; and,
- Horsham attracts creative professionals from outside the region to live, work and create.

Purpose

Creative Horsham 2023 – 2026 is the council’s key document relating to development, delivery and growth of arts and culture in the municipality of Horsham. The plan highlights the priorities and strategic direction for cultural services for the next five years, including but not limited to council’s commitment to arts, programming and cultural initiatives across the shire.

The plan seeks to direct resource to enhance arts and cultural infrastructure, services and programs as well as define the council’s role in working with cultural organisations and groups to increase access to arts and cultural experiences for our community and visitors.

About the Plan

Intensive community engagement was undertaken to ensure this Plan was reflective and responsive to Community. It supports the understanding that arts and culture is a key element in establishing the community’s identity and connection to place, contributing to strong economic development and enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes particularly that of social connection.

Five consistent themes emerged through the extensive community engagement undertaken, capturing the needs and ambitions for the region. These themes are underpinned by the guiding principles of inclusion, innovation, collaboration and reconciliation.



Image: Jimmy DVATE, JIMMY JAMES and the THREATENED FLAMES 2022-23. Acrylic paint on brick. Produced by Juddy Roller. Photo: Jumpin Jac Flash Photography.

Theme 1: Destination

Entice visitors to the region with a compelling offer of things to do and see in and around Horsham

Theme 2: Participation

Ensure that everyone can make, do or see art and culture in the Horsham region

Theme 3: Venues

Our places of Arts and Culture serve the Horsham community

Theme 4: Partnerships

Support the people and organisations we make Arts and Culture with

Theme 5: Communications

Celebrate and coordinate the way we tell our stories

These themes will direct and guide council resources and drive targeted and more co-ordinated action in identifying and building the creative and cultural landscape of Horsham and surrounds.

The Strategy aims to chart this path. To match the ambitions with actions, and weave these themes into the fabric of the wider community vision for Horsham. With so much work already completed or underway, there is much to build upon, but the work must still be deliberate, active and considered.

STRATEGY SUMMARY

Table One provides a snapshot summary of the Creative Themes and Actions for Creative Horsham. More details on each is provided in Section Three.

VISION (what it will look like if we succeed)

Arts & culture contributes to making the Horsham region a vibrant, liveable hub that thrives on strong economic growth and social connectedness.

OUTCOMES (what it will lead to)

Cultural: Creativity is stimulated; Knowledge, ideals and insight are gained; Diversity of cultural expression is appreciated; Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage is deepened.

Social: Physical and/or mental wellbeing is improved; Social connectedness is enhanced; Social differences are bridged; Feeling valued is experienced.

Economic: Professional practice capability is enhanced; Employment enhancing skill development is facilitated; Individual economic wellbeing is increased; Local economy is supported.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES (how we will approach everything we do)

Inclusion: empowering access to opportunity, addressing structural equalities, tackling unconscious bias and developing inclusive organisations.

Innovation: promoting and encouraging new ways of thinking, new technologies or new approaches in the community.

Collaboration: fostering respectful relationships, trust and respect.

Reconciliation: creating an improved understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, hopes and future aspirations through fostering strong, respectful, inclusive and meaningful relationships within our communities.

Table One: Creative Horsham Strategy Summary

CREATIVE THEMES (the Themed goals we're trying to achieve)	ACTIONS (WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO)		
	Quick Wins (work that is underway or soon to commence)	Work-in-Progress (work building on existing programs, projects or events)	Emerging Opportunities (new initiatives that require further development)
Destination: entice visitors to the region with a compelling offer of things to do and see in and around Horsham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the range, quality and appropriateness of Visitor Services information and products Ensure Visitor Services successfully integrates into the Horsham Town Hall venue Work with local business to activate the Horsham town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the recommendations from the Wartook Valley Strategy Implement the recommendations from the Natimuk Social and Economic Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the timeline and offer or existing Arts and Culture events in the Horsham region, and investigate options for developing new events or offerings that fill gaps in the calendar or suite of offers Increase the presence of arts and culture activities that build on the natural assets in the region Build the capacity of local arts events and organisations to professionalise their communication activities

CREATIVE THEMES (the Themed goals we're trying to achieve)	ACTIONS (WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO)		
	Quick Wins (work that is underway or soon to commence)	Work-in-Progress (work building on existing programs, projects or events)	Emerging Opportunities (new initiatives that require further development)
Participation: ensure that everyone can make, do or see art and culture in the Horsham region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with BGLC, develop a partnership agreement Deliver on the Horsham Silo project with BGLC to promote, celebrate and share First Nation stories of significance Work with the local Traditional Owners to identify suitable Aboriginal language names for new streets and public places and facilitate applications through the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) Aboriginal Advisory Committee Encourage, promote and celebrate events enriching cultural diversity Design, promote, participate and support municipal activities and events as scheduled including NAIDOC, Volunteers, International Women's Day, Reconciliation Week Develop and implement Council wide guidelines for universal inclusion and access across all activities Prioritise and implement actions from the Open Space Strategy Deliver the Department of Education & Training funded Schools Education Program at the Horsham Town Hall Venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of all actions identified in the 2019-2022 Community Inclusion Plan Develop and implement the Horsham North Local Area Plan Identify and recognise areas and places of cultural and historical significance that maintain connection to places, land and culture and engage early 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise guidance on community cultural protocols with the BGLC Connect local Deaf and disability creatives with resources to showcase their work Invite culturally and linguistically diverse artists to share their creative practice with the wider community

CREATIVE THEMES (the Themed goals we're trying to achieve)	ACTIONS (WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO)		
	Quick Wins (work that is underway or soon to commence)	Work-in-Progress (work building on existing programs, projects or events)	Emerging Opportunities (new initiatives that require further development)
Venues: our places of Arts and Culture serve the Horsham Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise actions from Stage 1 Concept Plans for Riverfront Activation Project - including detailed design drawings Work with community to develop Concept Plans for Sawyer Park & City Oval and develop detailed designs and drawings Produce, publish and promote an annual program of Horsham Town Hall performances Produce, publish and promote an annual program of visual art Develop and deliver an annual program of Public art commissions, installations and promotion Build on the quality of the Gallery's Visual Art Collection Seek community input and feedback on services at Horsham Town Hall Explore a more efficient technology solution for brokering Accommodation Inquiries and vacancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Horsham Heritage Study to protect buildings and places of historic cultural heritage to reinforce 'sense of place' and celebrate Horsham's character and distinctiveness Prepare a conservation management plan for Horsham Botanical Gardens Prepare a conservation management plan for the Horsham Cinema 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Master Plan for key municipal level assets as listed in the Social Infrastructure Framework Support local artists, cultural communities and arts groups to showcase and develop their work Explore incentives for non-Council owned venues to host creatives beyond the CBD Investigate opportunities for arts and cultural programming in future developments, including the Riverfront development

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	Quick Wins (work that is underway or soon to commence)	Work-in-Progress (work building on existing programs, projects or events)	Emerging Opportunities (new initiatives that require further development)
Partnerships: support the people and organisations we make Arts and Culture with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased reach and diversity of allocation of Annual Community Grants program Provide support and educate community groups on (Arts & Cultural) grant applications to external funding bodies Partner with the WRLC to promote the library and related events through Council's public notice page Seek funding opportunities through Arts & Culture grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase activation and promotion of outdoor venues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wesley Committee to make the Wesley Performing Arts Centre operational Collaborate across Council to connect Council resources to needs identified by creative community
Communications: celebrate and coordinate the way we tell our stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote recreation (and cultural) activities in our natural environment to increase destination tourism and visitation Develop a calendar of planned community engagements and proposed dates publicly available on our website Promote grant funding options, resources and information available to community groups Installation of an External Weather Proof Digital Promotions Sign in Pynsent Street Upgrade and update Visit Horsham Website Upgrade and update Horsham Town Hall Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the delivery of tourism opportunities on the Wimmera River, Mt Arapiles and lakes in our region Profile Arts & Culture activity in Council communications activity Devise a communications plan for promoting the progress of the Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate mentoring support to enhance and coordinate the communications activities of existing community and Council activities

THE VALUE OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE

Cultural and art offerings provide avenues for people to express and exchange ideas and, in turn, build understanding of diverse concepts, foster an appreciation of shared and disparate beliefs and build connections in communities (4).

The 'Creating our Future', National Arts Participation Survey (2020) (5) explored the role of arts in Australia and highlighted the importance and value to communities.

Young Australians aged 15–24 years are highly engaged in arts and culture – four in five attend arts events (83%), including live music (66%) and festivals (61%).

84% of Australians acknowledged the positive impacts of arts and culture, up from 75% in 2016;

One in four prioritise investment in art that push boundaries and drives innovation;

One in three Australians were attending First Nations arts (32%, up from 26% in 2016) and four in ten were interested in First Nations arts (40%);

More than one in three Australians connect with, and share, their cultural background through arts and creativity (36%), including by attending arts events (31%);

More than half of Australians think funding should ensure art and creative experiences are available to support our health and wellbeing;

Two in three Australians use digital platforms to engage with the arts (64%), including Facebook (38%), YouTube (38%) and Instagram (25%);

Australians who creatively participate in the arts (45%) has increased by 13 percentage points since 2016. This includes increased participation in visual arts and craft, music, creative writing, dance and theatre;

Dealing with stress, anxiety or depression (56%)

Understanding other people and cultures (60%)

Our sense of wellbeing and happiness (56%)

To add to this, research shows that communities themselves believe art and cultural activities have a positive impact on:

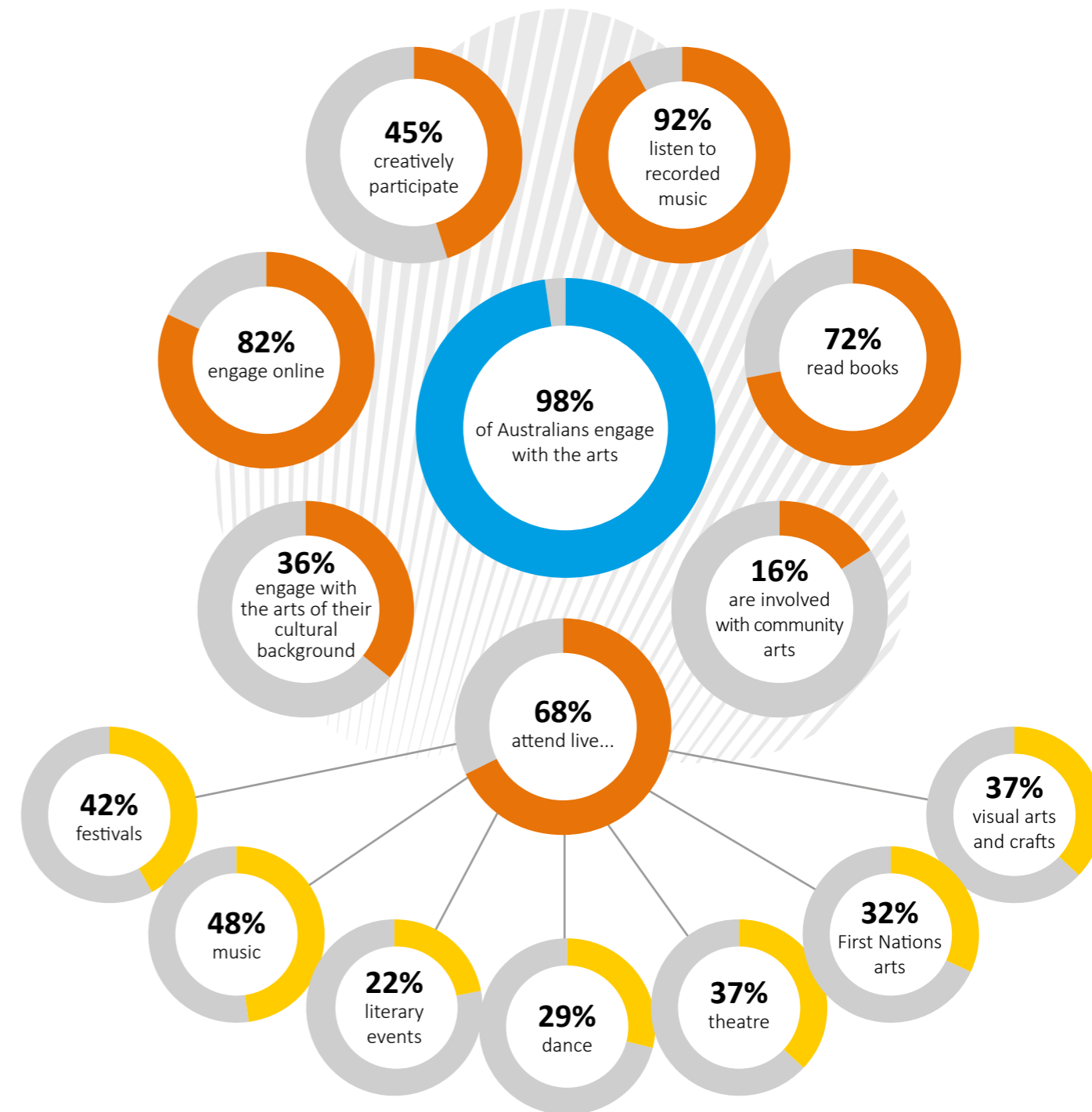
Child development (63%)

Bringing customers to local businesses (41%)

(6) Australia Council for the Arts, Creating our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey, 2020

What types of art and cultural activities are we participating in?

Australians' arts engagement 2019



Our people participate in and enjoy a broad range of arts and cultural activities.

The council's continued investment in cultural assets and opportunities will facilitate our people's access and participation in diverse art forms, genres and opportunity for expression.

SECTION TWO: BACKGROUND



2.1 WHERE IS HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL?

For millennia, five traditional owner groups have held custodianship over the land and waters in which Horsham Rural City is now based; namely, the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people.

Horsham Rural City is a vibrant, multi-cultural community situated in the heart of the Wimmera region of Victoria, approximately 300 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. The municipality has a population of 19,880, covering an area of 4,267 square kilometres, with approximately three quarters of residents living within the urban area of Horsham.

The municipality has a diverse array of natural assets including recreational lakes, wetlands, the Wimmera River, Mount Arapiles, the Wartook Valley, and the Grampians National Park is nearby.

Horsham Rural City Council includes the major centres of Horsham and Natimuk, and the localities of: Arapiles, Blackheath, Brimpaen, Bungalally, Clear Lake, Dadswells Bridge, Dooen, Douglas, Drung, Duchembegarra, Grass Flat, Green Lake, Greenland Dam, Haven, Jilpanger, Jung, Kalkee, Kanagulk, Kewell, Laharum, Longerenong, Lower Norton, McKenzie Creek, Mitre, Mockinya, Mount Talbot, Murra Warra, Noradjuha, Nurrabel, Pimpinio, Quantong, Riverside, St Helen's Plains, Telangatuk East, Tooan, Toolondo, Vectis, Wail, Wartook and Wonwondah.¹

As a regional centre, many creative programs also benefit and impact on neighbouring municipalities. Throughout the Strategy, the term 'Horsham region' is used to capture this wider reach and acknowledge the relevance of local creative programs beyond both the municipality and immediate Horsham township.

2.2 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN THE HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL AREA

The Horsham Rural City community has a range of organisations supporting the creative sector, including Council. Council provides support through a Community Program which in 2019-20 provided financial and non-financial support in excess of \$60,000.

In addition, the Council run Town Hall and Art Gallery annually support attendance of over 100,000 people, alongside hundreds of exhibitions, workshops and events. 2,493 pieces are held in the Gallery permanent collection, and many volunteers support the work of the Town Hall.

Outside of Council run venues, a range of other existing cultural organisations and venues in the region support creative activity. These include, but are not limited to:

- Arapiles Committee Theatre (ACT Natimuk / Nati Frinj)
- Art Is... Festival Inc
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council
- Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-op
- Horsham Arts Council (HAC)
- Horsham Cinema (Heritage)
- Horsham Film Society (HFS)
- Horsham Historical Society, Arapiles Historical Society
- Horsham Regional Arts Association (HRAA)
- Oasis Wimmera
- Smart Artz
- The Makers' Gallery and Studio (Makers')
- The Station (formerly Nexus Youth Centre)
- Wimmera Library Services (including Horsham Library)
- Wimmera Pride
- Wesley Performing Arts Centre (WPAC)

Tens of thousands of attendees, volunteers and workshop participants contribute their time through these organisations, each of which run hundreds of events and sell thousands of tickets each year.

2.3 WHY DOES HORSHAM NEED A CREATIVE STRATEGY?

A Creative Strategy guides the ways Council can support and advocate for the creative sector in our region. It allows us to plan and allocate resources, as well as prepares us to seize new opportunities when they arise.

For community members, the Strategy also documents the ways they may interact with Council, and work together on achieving shared outcomes.

Though a Strategy will never capture all of the things the community or Council are delivering, it provides a framework we can use to guide decision-making, based on the priorities we have agreed upon together.



Image: Horsham Regional Art Gallery. Photo: HRCC Archive.

¹ <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Our-Council/About-Us/About-Council#section-2>

2.4 HOW DOES CREATIVE HORSHAM INTERACT WITH OTHER COUNCIL STRATEGIES?

A number of existing Council documents guide the implementation of this Strategy, including:

- The Horsham Community Vision;
- The 2021-2025 Council Plan;
- Health and Wellbeing Plan;
- Annual Action Plans developed by Council;
- Annual Budgets developed by Council;
- Horsham & Grampians Visitor Information Centre Business & Marketing Plan;
- Wartook Valley Strategy;
- Natimuk Social & Economic Plan;
- Destination Horsham Investment Attracting Strategy & Implementation Plan;
- Horsham North Local Area Plan;
- 2019-2022 Community Inclusion Plan;
- Open Space Strategy;
- Horsham Streetscape Plan;
- Riverfront Activation Project (various, including Stage 1 Concept Plans);
- Public Arts & Heritage Trail;
- Public Art Policy;
- Concept Plans for Sawyer Park and City Oval;
- Social Infrastructure Framework;
- Horsham Heritage Study;
- Annual Community Grants program guidelines; and,
- The Horsham Streetscape Plan.

Links to Council Plans and Policies in full are available at: <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Our-Council/About-Us>.

2.5 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'ARTS & CULTURE'?

As part of the development of 'Creative State', Victoria's first Creative Industries strategy, Creative Victoria noted:

*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.*²

Creative Horsham takes a similarly broad approach in considering the diverse fields that contribute to cultural, economic and social life in and around the Horsham Rural City Council area. Throughout the Strategy, unless otherwise specified, the phrases "arts & culture", "culture", "arts" and "creative" are used interchangeable, and intended to cover this broad reach of activity.



Image: Art Club. Photo: HRCC.

2.6 HOW WAS THIS STRATEGY DEVELOPED?

In 2019, Horsham Rural City Council began developing a new creative strategy to build on the legacy of the previous Arts & Culture Plan (2014-18) delivered by Council. Having reviewed and evaluated existing data, Council ran a public tender process and appointed Regional Arts Victoria and Future Tense to draft the new Creative Strategy in early 2021. The brief focused on taking learnings from the previous Arts & Culture Plan (2014-18) which contained a large number of stretch targets not aligned with resources and structures within HRCC. This resulted in a number of actions not being achieved. As such, the objective for this new Strategy was to be inspiring but also reflect that consolidation work on structures and processes is required to create the foundation for success.

Future Tense undertook a Policy Scan and review of existing documents in mid-2021 (see Background Paper). This assisted in determining some key gaps and opportunities not met by policies or strategies already in existence. Also in mid-2021, Council hosted the Horsham Talks Expo to collect opinions from local attendees.

Following this, in late 2021 Regional Arts Victoria co-hosted (with industry experts) a series of public consultation sessions with the community. Simultaneously, a survey was distributed to the local community to collect key data from creatives and creative organisations.

Throughout the process, a number of one-on-one interviews were conducted with individuals from across the community, which strengthened many of the concepts and contributions at the conception stages.

FIGURE ONE – WHAT WE DID



individual or group consultations



industry-expert led community events attended by 139 people



open survey completed by 66 people



existing policy or strategy documents reviewed

You can read more about our findings at <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Have-Your-Say/Creative-Horsham-Plan#:~:text=The%20four%20principles%20that%20will,Reconciliation%2C%20Innovation%2C%20and%20Partnership.&text=Council%20and%20RAV%20have%20extensively,through%20a%20variety%20of%20means>.

² [creative.vic.gov.au/creative-state/introduction/victorias-creative-industries](https://www.creative.vic.gov.au/creative-state/introduction/victorias-creative-industries)

2.7 WHAT WE HEARD

Table Two provides a summary of the community engagement analysis undertaken to inform Creative Horsham. More detailed information on outcomes from the investigation phase of the Strategy development is provided in Section Five.

TABLE TWO – WHAT WE HEARD	
CURRENT STRENGTHS	CURRENT CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active community of local artists (both practising professional and community artists and groups) • Key flagship cultural institutions, including Gallery and Town Hall • Long standing, successful festivals • The natural environment • Visual arts well established and regarded • Large scale, dynamic public art program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources – many groups and ageing volunteer base • Huge demand on Traditional Owner groups for support • Perceived lack of access to spaces to develop and present work • Lack of centralised communications platform for ‘what’s-on’ nor integration across Arts & Cultural, Festivals & Events and Tourism • Facilitating cross industry and departmental collaborations and partnerships to better integrate creativity and the creative sector
FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES	FUTURE IMPACTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realising ambitions of local First People’s communities • Profiling and supporting the work of artists with a disability • Supporting access to and use of smaller venues for local groups (eg: Wesley and Jubilee Halls) • Increased support for experimentation and innovation within existing creative offerings and those emerging / non-traditional • Greater facilitation of connections / networks between creative practitioners within the region and inter-regionally • Strengthened professional development opportunities for local artists • More events or experiences after dark, including those that feature activation, lighting and projection • Bringing a wider diversity of entertainment, touring and experimental arts opportunities into region, such as bespoke and large-scale festivals, events and attractions and tourism-based initiatives • Branding – pulling multiple smaller activities / events under one umbrella and branding it, like Bendigo and Ballarat have done (<i>Bendigo Ignite & MADE of Ballarat</i>) • Horsham Streetscape plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing support for some organisations and funding programs at State and Federal level • Declining and ageing membership of community organisations • Changing climate and impacts on natural attractions • Competition with other regional towns and communities to attract artists and visitors • Local creators uncertain about future • Widening divide between those who can and can’t afford access to cultural experiences • Young creatives leaving sector due to lack of opportunities imposed by Covid

2.8 THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

In the following pages, outline the approach taken to formalising the Strategy based on where we are; what we did; and what we heard, providing the relevant context to delve into more detail in following sections.

2.9 OUR APPROACH

The investigations and background information in previous sections reveal an already active and interested region, with underlying support for the creative sector both from community and Council. It is also an underlying assumption of this Creative Horsham Strategy that creativity can, and does, contribute to delivering on the broader goals of both the Council and local community – not just those identified as being specific to the creative sector.

For this reason, the Vision for Creative Horsham builds on the existing Community Vision: *Arts & culture contributes to making the Horsham region a vibrant, liveable hub that thrives on strong economic growth and social connectedness*. This will realise a number of Cultural, Social and Economic Outcomes.

Similarly, the four Guiding Principles draw from existing Council documents which codify them, including the Community Inclusion Plan; Council Plan; and Reconciliation Action Plan.

As noted in the Introduction, the five Creative Themes established early in the Strategy development process remained remarkably resilient throughout the consultation and investigation stages. Creative Horsham maintains these Themes, and organised Actions to be delivered around them in support of delivering the Vision.

Finally, there are a number of existing programs, strategies and priorities already in place at the time Creative Horsham comes to life. The work of this Strategy does not exist in a vacuum, and the likelihood of success for any ambitions outlined here increases when it builds upon current strengths of the community and Council. The Strategy thus incorporates Actions already committed to or under way, in addition to those newly identified through Creative Horsham.

The result is a Strategy that cohesively brings together a series of existing, under development, and new Actions under five Creative Themes, each in support of a longer-term Vision. In turn, a series of Cultural, Social and Economic Outcomes will result.

The Strategy uses practical, action-orientated, evidence-based and clear language wherever possible. Section Three presents this information in further detail.



Image: Jack Rowland, RISE 2022-23. Acrylic paint on brick. Produced by Juddy Roller. Photo: Jumpin Jac Flash Photography.

2.10 THE STRUCTURE

In this section, we explore the Strategy in more detail. Some definitions of terminology used in this section are provided first.

VISION: WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

Arts & culture contributes to making the Horsham region a vibrant, liveable hub that thrives on strong economic growth and social connectedness.

OUTCOMES: WHAT IT WILL LEAD TO

Cultural: Creativity is stimulated; Knowledge, ideals and insight are gained; Diversity of cultural expression is appreciated;

Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage is deepened.

Social: Physical and/or mental wellbeing is improved; Social connectedness is enhanced; Social differences are bridged; Feeling valued is experienced.

Economic: Professional practice capability is enhanced; Employment enhancing skill development is facilitated; Individual economic wellbeing is increased; Local economy is supported.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: "HOW WE WILL APPROACH EVERYTHING WE DO"

Inclusion: empowering access to opportunity, addressing structural equalities, tackling unconscious bias and developing inclusive organisations.

Innovation: promoting and encouraging new ways of thinking, new technologies or new approaches in the community.

Collaboration: fostering respectful relationships, trust and respect.

Reconciliation: creating an improved understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, hopes and future aspirations through fostering strong, respectful, inclusive and meaningful relationships within our communities.

CREATIVE THEMES

Five themes emerged early, and remained consistent, throughout the development of the Strategy. These are:

- **Destination:** entice visitors to the region with a compelling offer of things to do and see in and around Horsham.
- **Participation:** ensure that everyone can make, do or see art and culture in the Horsham region.
- **Venues:** our places of Arts and Culture serve the Horsham Community.
- **Partnerships:** support the people and organisations we make Arts and Culture with.
- **Communications:** celebrate and coordinate the way we tell our stories.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THEMES

A brief summary of evidence collected to support each Creative Theme and the connected Actions is included in the relevant sections. Also included, where appropriate, are lists of other Council plans, projects or strategies that directly link with the Actions for the Theme.

ACTIONS

The list of Actions outline what will be delivered. For each Creative Theme, Actions are presented in three categories:

- **Quick Wins:** these Actions represent work that can be done now. It might include continuing existing projects; completing prior commitments; or making achievement adjustments in the next 12 months.
- **Work-in-Progress:** this work is underway or builds on previous reports, strategies or plans, but may not be actioned in the coming 12 months as further resourcing or investigation is required.
- **Emerging Opportunities:** arising from the multiple investigations and consultations informing Creative Horsham, Emerging Opportunity Actions are what we should do next; they will require further work and resourcing to commence but are priorities in the life of this Strategy.

Note: In the Summary Document, the Emerging Opportunities are presented under Project headings and stages to assist with ease of translation into implementation.

KEY PROJECT PER THEME:

The Creative Horsham Background Paper details all actions underneath each of the themes divided into quick wins, work in progress and emerging opportunities. The Creative Horsham Plan highlights a key priority project per theme and steps to achieve the Creative Horsham vision.



Image: Viewing in the gallery. Photo: Charee Smith.

SECTION THREE: STRATEGY IN DETAIL

CREATIVE THEME 1: DESTINATION

Entice visitors to the region with a compelling offer of things to do and see in and around Horsham.

ABOUT THIS CREATIVE THEME

The appeal of the Horsham region as a place to visit, work, play and live both influences, and is influenced by, opportunities to make and experience the arts, creativity and culture locally. Council and the community alike share a strong desire to showcase the region and see an obvious role for creative practice, both in terms of:

- highlighting the long-standing creative talent that exists and work already produced in the region; and,
- attracting high profile events and performers to the region and in turn drawing in audiences from Horsham and surrounds.

A focus of this Plan will be providing the support required to ensure a compelling, accessible and year-round calendar of creative offerings is available to attract visitors in Horsham and surrounds. Critical to this, is ensuring the support of key tourism and attraction infrastructure, including visitor services, and so early quick-wins and work-in-progress Actions focus on these key support structures. This will lay the foundations for bigger picture, longer-term Actions that further develop the events and attraction calendar in the region.

This Theme includes (but is not limited to) goals relating to festivals, events, public art, place making, activation, visitation and tourism.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS THEME

Compared to domestic tourists overall, arts tourists are more likely to stay longer and spend more in a region, and domestic arts tourists are willing to travel to regional centres. The Horsham & Grampians Visitor Information Centre Business & Marketing Plan highlights the impact of the tourism industry in Horsham region, an industry which:

- generates \$93.7m of economic output;
- supports 551 full time equivalent jobs; and,
- had 671,000 domestic day trip visitors in 2019

Visitors to the Grampians region like to go walking and sightseeing, including at national/state parks; visit family and friends; shop; visit wineries and dine out. The natural environment was a strong theme in the Creative Horsham community consultations too, whilst participants added that the capacity to deliver more events (in particular ‘after dark’-style projection and lighting events) would provide opportunities to reconnect after COVID and reach new audiences.

Complementing this, the Strategy and Policy Scan identified opportunities for bringing a wider diversity of entertainment, touring and experimental arts opportunities into the region. Local creatives want to expand their reach nationally and internationally; want more live music; and would like more display and performance opportunities, and saw Council as playing a critical role in brokering access to opportunities outside the region.

OTHER COUNCIL PLANS IMPACTING THIS THEME

Council strategies, plans and policies which are in effect or currently in development that may directly impact on or further the Actions in this Creative Theme include:

- Horsham & Grampians Visitor Information Centre Business & Marketing Plan;
- Wartook Valley Strategy;
- Natimuk Economic and Social Plan; and,
- Destination Horsham Investment Attracting Strategy & Implementation Plan.

ACTIONS, LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN AND EVALUATION

Work is already under way on a number of Actions relevant to this Theme, and a number of others can be actioned quickly. The integration of Visitor Services into the Horsham Town Hall is an opportunity for a number of goals relevant to Creative Horsham, but some initial groundwork needs to be completed first. Quick wins are shown in green, Work in progress blue and emerging opportunities in orange.

ACTIONS	LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN			EVALUATION MEASURES
	THEMES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES	
1.1 Increase the range, quality and appropriateness of Visitor Services information and products 1.2 Ensure Visitor Services successfully integrates into the Horsham Town Hall venue	Community	A community that encourages and celebrates all cultures, heritage and diversity	Promote and support the municipality’s key tourism, events and local and cultural offerings	Visitation and product sales reported monthly to Council
Increased visitation reported monthly to Council				
1.3 Work with local business to activate the Horsham town centre 1.4 Implement the recommendations from the Wartook Valley Strategy 1.5 Implement the recommendations from the Natimuk Social and Economic Plan	Sustainability	Achieve a sustainable and sound environmental future	Support business resilience and recovery from the impact of business interruption Plan for sustainable development which balances economic, environmental, and social considerations	Investment, Attraction & Growth monthly report
Progress Report to Council				
1.6 Review the timeline and offer for existing Arts and Culture events in the Horsham region, and investigate options for developing new events or offerings that fill gaps in the calendar or suite of offers 1.7 Increase the presence of arts and culture activities that build on the natural assets in the region 1.8 Build the capacity of local arts events and organisations to professionalise their communication activities	Community	A community that encourages and celebrates all cultures, heritage and diversity	Promote and support the municipality’s key tourism, events and local and cultural offerings	Calendar published
Incentives developed				
Development program launched				

KEY PROJECT FOR THEME 1: BUILDING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Entice visitors to the region with a compelling offer of things to do and see in and around Horsham

THEME: DESTINATION

Description:

This project recognises the opportunities to better show case Horsham as a destination to visit and explore. It will investigate areas including the planning and promoting of events, programming of events and spaces to attract visitors to stay longer, the investigation into new offerings and experience packages for visitors and increased marketing of the local produce and art for purchase in the Horsham Town Hall. This project recognises communication and marketing of these experiences is essential to building Horsham as a destination

Why are we doing it?

The HRCC Council Plan 2021-2025 highlights the importance of this project through the initiative and priority to “Promote and support the municipality’s key tourism, events and local and cultural offerings” under the Community theme and the strategy to build “a sustainable economy where local business, agriculture, tourism and other diverse industries thrive.” In focusing in this area the liveability and sustainability of our municipality is further developed not only attracting visitors but showcasing the offerings of Horsham and surrounds and promoting its liveability.

Steps for Implementation:

- 1. Finalise** the HRCC internal events review to outline gaps, methods to bridge the gaps and timeline on way forward.
- 2. Implement** the Plan stemming from the internal events review in collaboration with other departments with a focus to:
 - better support the community in delivering events
 - strategically plan for any HRCC initiated events
 - develop the process to coordinate long term larger scale events run by external promoters
- 3. Create** and develop new visitor experiences with new offerings
- 4. Communicate**, on programs and events/festivals effectively using a range of different avenues to reach audiences locally and further out.
- 5. Promote** local produce and artist wares in the region



Image: Festoon Family Festival. Photo: Charee Smith.

CREATIVE THEME 2: PARTICIPATION

Ensure that everyone can make, do or see art and culture in the Horsham region.

ABOUT THIS CREATIVE THEME

The Guiding Principle of “Inclusion” impacts across the entire Creative Horsham Strategy, but the Creative Theme of Participation is where this principle is most actively pursued with concrete Actions. A core commitment of Creative Horsham is that the benefits of making and participating in creative practice should be available to everyone, regardless of age, cultural background, location, or experiences of disability.

Participation as a Creative Theme is focused on ensuring:

- everyone can access arts and cultural experiences in the Horsham region; and,
- the full potential of the arts to celebrate the region’s diversity is realised.

Quick Wins for this Creative Theme embed some existing programs and projects across the life of Creative Horsham. Works-in-Progress allows for core inclusion goals from complimentary strategies delivered by Council, and Emerging Opportunities focus on showcasing local artist achievements in the region and reducing barriers for community organisations to do the same.

Actions are focused on (but not limited to) art making, arts experience, audiences, making art happen, and championing of artists.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE THEME

VicHealth has found multiple benefits for health and wellbeing through participating in the arts, including both strengthening community connection and providing platforms for less prominent voices.³ As was evident in the Creative Sector survey, with 95% of creative practitioners saying their work was important for their wellbeing.⁴ The Horsham Rural City Community Inclusion Plan also observed better access to recreation, sporting and cultural facilities as a common consultation theme.⁵

Access and equity was a topic of interest at almost every one of the community consultation sessions. Feedback from attendees ranged from more opportunities for participation and celebration of local artists with a disability and/or deaf through to event or project ideas to celebrate young people, First Peoples and elders. It was also noted in the consultation sessions that financial barriers currently prevent some people from fully participating in the arts; attendees felt free or public art programs were one way to address this barrier.⁶

Community feedback was endorsed through the Strategy and Policy Scan, which found a need for increased institutional, structural and communal supports to further reach currently disengaged communities. Opportunities the Scan highlighted included increasing supports to marginalised demographics and communities across the region and encouragement of investment in arts education.

OTHER COUNCIL PLANS IMPACTING THIS THEME

Council strategies, plans and policies which are in effect or currently in development that may directly impact on or further the Actions in this Creative Theme include:

- Horsham North Local Area Plan;
- 2019-2022 Community Inclusion Plan; and,
- Open Space Strategy.

³ <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/our-work/arts-and-social-connection#:~:text=Participating%20in%20arts%20and%20cultural,solutions%20to%20health%20promotion%20challenges.>

⁴ See Section 19.

⁵ <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/document-resources/our-council/publications/council-plans/community-inclusion-plan-2019-2022.pdf>

⁶ See Section 17.

⁷ See Section 18.

ACTIONS, LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN AND EVALUATION

A number of exciting project outcomes are nearing presentation stage as Creative Horsham goes live, whilst other programs are now a feature of ongoing Council work. These are all confirmed and included as Quick Wins here. Quick wins are shown in green.

ACTIONS	LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN			EVALUATION MEASURES	
	THEMES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES		
2.1 In consultation with BGLC, develop a partnership agreement	Community	A region that acknowledges and engages with First Nations people on place, connection and truth	Value and respect the culture of our traditional owners through strengthening relationships and partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Horsham	Partnership agreement developed and adopted by Council	
2.2 Deliver on the Horsham Silo project with BGLC to promote, celebrate and share First Nation stories of significance				Silo art complete	
2.3 Work with the local Traditional Owners to identify suitable Aboriginal language names for new streets and public places and facilitate applications through the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) Aboriginal Advisory Committee				Council's Street, Road, Places Naming Policy reviewed and adopted by Council. Process established.	
2.4 Encourage, promote and celebrate events enriching cultural diversity		A community that encourages and celebrates all cultures, heritage and diversity	Promote and support the municipality's key tourism, events and local and cultural offerings	Report on the number of cultural events at Horsham Town Hall	
2.5 Design, promote, participate and support municipal activities and events as scheduled including NAIDOC, Volunteers, International Women's Day, Reconciliation Week		Liveability	Quality opportunities and facilities that meet the health and wellbeing needs and interests of all ages, abilities and backgrounds	Promote opportunities for life long social interactions and enjoyment	Events reported in the Quarterly Report
2.6 Develop and implement Council wide guidelines for universal inclusion and access across all activities					Universal Access Guidelines adopted by Council

ACTIONS	LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN			EVALUATION MEASURES
	THEMES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES	
2.7 Prioritise and implement actions from the Open Space Strategy	Accessibility	Improved and connected transport services and networks in and around the region	Planning for places and spaces to provide connectedness and social inclusion	Progress Report to Council
2.8 Deliver the Department of Education & Training funded Schools Education Program at the Horsham Town Hall Venue.				Report to Council on participation at Horsham Town Hall
2.9 Implementation of all actions identified in the 2019-2022 Community Inclusion Plan	Community	An inclusive, accessible, connected and safe community	Enhance the inclusivity, accessibility and safety of our places and spaces	Annual progress report to Council
2.10 Develop and implement the Horsham North Local Area Plan				Horsham North Local Area Plan adopted by Council
2.11 Identify and recognise areas and places of cultural and historical significance that maintain connection to places, land and culture and engage early				Report presented to Council; Cultural Heritage Overlay completed
2.12 Formalise guidance on community cultural protocols with the BGLC				Protocols developed
2.13 Connect local Deaf and disability creatives with resources to showcase their work	Liveability	A destination to live, work, explore and invest	Advocate for educational opportunities, delivered locally, to support and encourage lifelong learning	Work is showcased
2.14 Invite culturally and linguistically diverse artists to share their creative practice with the wider community	Accessibility	Diverse services, programs and facilities that are accessible to all	Advocate for supporting infrastructure to ensure connections to key places and services	

KEY PROJECT FOCUS FOR THEME 2: ART FOR EVERYONE

Ensure that everyone can make, do or see art and culture in the Horsham region.

THEME: PARTICIPATION

Description:

A core commitment of Creative Horsham is that the benefits of making, experiencing and participating in creative practice should be available to everyone, regardless of age, cultural background, location, or experiences of disability.

Why are we doing it?

Access and equity was raised at many of the community consultation sessions. Feedback ranged from more opportunities for participation and celebration of local artists with a disability through to identification that barriers currently exist that prevent some people from fully participating in the arts – particularly those in marginalised demographics.



Image: *Something in the Dark*, Black Hole Theatre. Nati Frinj 2022.
Photo: Suzanne Phoenix.

Steps for Implementation:

1. **Align** deliverables from Creative Horsham to the HRCC Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to promote greater inclusion and access for all.
2. **Develop** and implement a Horsham Town Hall Equity Action Plan.
3. **Plan** at least one program annually across genres that focuses on diversity and inclusiveness.
4. **Investigate** barriers that exist that prevent community members (particularly those in under-represented groups) from accessing arts and culture programs and work towards a plan to address these barriers (e.g. access to info for visually impaired, easy English documents, audio described options for the Gallery, inclusive/accessible communications)
5. **Investigate** a process or system to connect local creatives to avenues to showcase their work promoting diversity and inclusion.
6. **Invite** culturally and linguistically diverse artists, those living with a disability or those from under-represented segments of the community to share their creative practice with the wider community
7. **Develop** a strategic programming plan to increase opportunities of under-represented groups in accessing the venue.
8. **Build** on current partnerships with industry professionals e.g. VAPAC to inform audience development and program planning.
9. **Partner** with creatives to make new work removing barriers to under-represented groups in accessing arts and culture opportunities.
10. **Promote** and celebrate events enriching cultural diversity and equity

CREATIVE THEME 3: VENUES

Our places of Arts and Culture serve the Horsham Community.

ABOUT THIS CREATIVE THEME

Horsham is fortunate to have access to significant infrastructure assets that range in scale and level of Council involvement. Whilst none of them are exclusively used for creative outcomes (and in some cases, not even primarily used as such), Council and the community have demonstrated experience in activating these spaces for a variety of creative outcomes. This Theme seeks to build on this track record.

Attached to this Theme are Actions relating to the ongoing running of Council assets, whilst simultaneously exploring ways to open them up for wider community use. Additionally, opportunities to engage with new developments such as the Riverfront Activation and Sawyer Park and City Oval projects. Conservation and heritage considerations also interact with this Theme, as do partnerships that may open up currently underutilised spaces for creative use.

Venues, as they are referred to in this Theme, include Horsham Town Hall Performing Arts Centre, Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Wesley Hall, Horsham Cinema, Jubilee Hall, The Station, and the Small Halls dotted through the Horsham region.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE THEME

Investment in arts infrastructure in regional communities can generate additional economic activity; employment; volunteering; and attendance at arts events.⁸ State and local-government funding is important in ensuring local audiences are able to access a greater quantity, quality and diversity of arts programs, in turn allowing venues to contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of a region.⁹

Community access to either existing or as yet untapped places to create and show local work was demanded at most community consultation sessions. Venues were seen as places that could perform this role, as well as facilitate experimentation and risk for emerging or smaller arts groups. The role of Council-run venues in presenting experiences for a wide audience to enjoy was understood.¹⁰

Access to space to develop and present work was the commonly cited need for local creatives in the Sector Survey, with display and performance opportunities for local artists ranking second as the thing respondents wanted to see more of. This Sector Survey also recommended Council take a role facilitating connections between creative practitioners.¹¹

The Strategy and Policy Scan found that current Council investment in arts and culture focuses mainly on Council-run institutions, such as the Horsham Town Hall. The Scan identified opportunities to support community-run arts and culture initiatives and institutions outside this more narrow focus, including through bringing a wider diversity of entertainment, touring and experimental arts opportunities into the region.¹²

OTHER COUNCIL PLANS IMPACTING THIS THEME

Council strategies, plans and policies which are in effect or currently in development that may directly impact on or further the Actions in this Creative Theme include:

- Horsham Streetscape Plan;
- Riverfront Activation Project (various, including Stage 1 Concept Plans);
- Public Arts & Heritage Trail;
- Public Art Policy;
- Concept Plans for Sawyer Park and City Oval;
- Social Infrastructure Framework; and,
- Horsham Heritage Study.

⁸ https://creative.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0020/56360/-THE_ARTS_RIPPLE_EFFECT_VALUING_THE_ARTS_IN_COMMUNITIES_accessible_version.docx

⁹ https://creative.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/56761/Creative_Victoria-Regional_Development_Evaluation-Jan2016-2.pdf

¹⁰ See Section 17.

¹¹ See Section 19.

¹² See Section 18.

ACTIONS, LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN AND EVALUATION

Actions which are part of ongoing work or can be begun quickly are listed below. Quick wins are shown in green, Work in progress blue and emerging opportunities in orange.

ACTIONS	LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN			EVALUATION MEASURES
	THEMES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES	
3.1 Finalise actions from Stage 1 Concept Plans for Riverfront Activation Project- including detailed design drawings	Liveability	Quality opportunities and facilities that meet the health and wellbeing needs and interests of all ages, abilities and backgrounds	Create engaging spaces and places for social connection and wellbeing to build community resilience	Stage 1 Actions finalised
3.2 Work with community to develop Concept Plans for Sawyer Park & City Oval and develop detailed designs and drawings				Concept plan endorsed by Council; works underway.
3.3 Produce, publish and promote an annual program of Horsham Town Hall performances				Report to Council on participation at Horsham Town Hall events
3.4 Produce, publish and promote an annual program of visual art		Diverse and connected open spaces	Encourage participation, diversity and growth in sports, events, arts and culture	Report to Council on Public art outcomes
3.5 Develop and deliver an annual program of Public art commissions, installations and promotion				Annual Report on the Art Gallery acquisitions
3.6 Build on the quality of the Gallery's Visual Art Collection				
3.7 Seek community input and feedback on services at Horsham Town Hall	Leadership	Good governance, through leadership and connection with community	Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision making	Horsham Town Hall Community Feedback Forum held annually
3.8 Explore a more efficient technology solution for brokering Accommodation Inquiries and vacancies				High organisational standards focussing on continuous improvement

ACTIONS	LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN			EVALUATION MEASURES
	THEMES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES	
3.9 Implement the Horsham Heritage Study to protect buildings and places of historic cultural heritage to reinforce 'sense of place' and celebrate Horsham's character and distinctiveness	Community	A community that encourages and celebrates all cultures, heritage and diversity	Promote and support the municipality's key tourism, events and local and cultural offering	Horsham Planning Scheme amended
3.10 Prepare a conservation management plan for Horsham Botanical Gardens				Horsham Botanical Gardens Conservation Management Plan is endorsed by Council
3.11 Prepare a conservation management plan for the Horsham Cinema				Horsham Cinema Conservation Management Plan endorsed by Council
3.12 Develop Master Plan for key municipal level assets as listed in the Social Infrastructure Framework	Accessibility	Improved and connected transport services and networks in and around the region	Planning for places and spaces to provide connectedness and social inclusion	One Plan per year developed and adopted by Executive Management Team
3.13 Support local artists, cultural communities and arts groups to showcase and develop their work	Liveability	A destination to live, work, explore and invest	Encourage participation, diversity and growth in sports, events, arts and culture	Showcase plan developed
3.14 Explore incentives for non Council owned venues to host creatives beyond the CBD				Incentives developed
3.15 Investigate opportunities for arts and cultural programming in future developments, including the Riverfront development				Diverse and connected open spaces

KEY PROJECT FOCUS FOR THEME 3: VENUES ENABLING COMMUNITY

Our places of Arts and Culture serve the Horsham Community.

THEME: VENUES

Description:

This project focuses on leveraging venues to promote arts and culture in the community and identifying new opportunities for growth.

Why are we doing it?

Council and the community have demonstrated experience in activating spaces for a variety of creative outcomes. This Theme seeks to close the gap around the range of creative spaces available for creatives to activate, create works and also showcase works.

Steps for Implementation:

- 1. Advocate** for The Wesley to come online in partnership with the Wesley committee as a compliment to the Horsham Town Hall venue offerings
- 2. Develop** a business model to program and resource the service delivery model of the venues offerings for arts and culture spaces. (This is in collaboration with HRCC venues)
- 3. Develop** the sustainable model to program and resource events at Sawyer park stage for activation
- 4. Develop** communications on available spaces to hire including conferences and community halls
- 5. Research** and develop framework to guide the balance between community and commercial use
- 6. Support** local artists, cultural communities and arts groups to showcase and develop their work through the HRAG Community Gallery.
- 7. Investigate** opportunities for arts and cultural programming in future developments and HRCC projects.



Image: HRAG Community Gallery NAIDOC Week Photo: HRCC Archive

CREATIVE THEME 4: PARTNERSHIPS

Support the people and organisations we make Arts and Culture with.

ABOUT THIS CREATIVE THEME

Council has a role in ensuring the success of Creative Horsham beyond just that as a delivery agent. There are many creative (and non-arts) organisations in the region that already work with Council in a variety of ways, but there are more still looking for ways to make this connection. Council can play an expertise, facilitation and advocacy role through the maintenance of strong partnerships with community, as well as other institutions.

Within this Theme, consideration is given to both providing funding through Council to community, and also attracting outside funds to the region (as well as helping community groups to do the same). Bringing the Wesley Performing Arts Centre online is an exciting partnerships project opportunity, and sharing Council promotional support for creative events (both community- and Council-driven) will be another vital cog in the Creative Horsham approach.

Partnerships that will be vital to the successful delivery of Creative Horsham include those with, Traditional Owners, arts organisations, libraries, historical societies, museums, health/wellbeing organisations, businesses, and parks.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE THEME

Arts partnerships are an established means of supporting a range of outcomes for governments, businesses, schools, and health bodies, amongst others. For example, partnering with arts organisations can improve efficiency, brand awareness, and employee engagement for business.¹³ Arts partnerships can also increase community engagement on health issues¹⁴, and provide a range of benefits for students and teachers alike when provided in an education setting.¹⁵

The Sector Survey found practitioners keen to improve their networks, financial growth and viability. They also sought support and encouragement to take risks and innovate with new ideas, a role they felt Council could play.¹⁶ This is reinforced by the findings of the Strategy and Policy Scan, which found a need for increased institutional, structural and communal supports to consolidate the strengths of the region.¹⁷

The Scan also observed an opportunity to expand the focus of Council beyond community arts to include established creative practitioners and the professional services component of the creative industries. Similarly, in the community consultations, there was a common desire for more organisations based locally to have opportunities to work with each other and with those from outside the region. The community consultation also revealed a desire to redefine the colonial historical narrative of the region and connect to the stories of local First Peoples.¹⁸

OTHER COUNCIL PLANS IMPACTING THIS THEME

Council strategies, plans and policies which are in effect or currently in development that may directly impact on or further the Actions in this Creative Theme include:

- Annual Community Grants program guidelines.

¹³ <https://ellisjones.com.au/strengthen-your-organisation-through-arts-partnerships/>

¹⁴ <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding/art-of-good-health-partnership-grant>

¹⁵ <https://www.artsedsearch.org/study/partnerships-between-schools-and-the-professional-arts-sector-evaluation-of-impact-on-student-outcomes/>

¹⁶ See Section 19.

¹⁷ See Section 18.

¹⁸ See Section 17.

ACTIONS, LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN AND EVALUATION

Quick Wins for this Creative Theme involve increasing the reach of existing programs, as well as facilitating access to resources and funds outside of Council, especially partnerships that mutually and respectfully reinforce each other. Quick wins are shown in green, Work in progress blue and emerging opportunities in orange

ACTIONS	LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN			EVALUATION MEASURES
	THEMES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES	
4.1 Increased reach and diversity of allocation of Annual Community Grants program	Community	A community that encourages and celebrates all cultures, heritage and diversity	Support and empower localised community groups in their goals and plans	Report to Council on % increase of new successful applications
4.2 Provide support and educate community groups on (Arts & Cultural) grant applications to external funding bodies				Report to Council on applications and assistance provided
4.3 Partner with the WRLC to promote the library and related events through Council's public notice page	Liveability	Quality opportunities and facilities that meet the health and wellbeing needs and interests of all ages, abilities and backgrounds	Advocate for educational opportunities, delivered locally, to support and encourage lifelong learning	Report to Council via the Quarterly Report
4.4 Seek funding opportunities through Arts & Culture grants		Diverse and connected open spaces	Encourage participation, diversity and growth in sports, events, arts and culture	Monthly Finance Report - Grants
4.5 Increase activation and promotion of outdoor venues	Community	A community that encourages and celebrates all cultures, heritage and diversity	Support and empower localised community groups in their goals and plans	Report to EMT on usage of indoor and outdoor venues
4.6 Support Wesley Committee to make the Wesley Performing Arts Centre operational				Venue is operational
4.7 Collaborate across Council to connect Council resources to needs identified by creative community	Leadership	Good governance, through leadership and connection with community	Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision making	Needs Report complete

KEY PROJECT FOCUS FOR THEME 4: RECOGNISING OUR FIRST NATIONS

Support the people and organisations with whom we make Arts and Culture.

THEME: PARTNERSHIPS

Description:

This project recognises the ongoing commitment to partner with First Nations to celebrate arts and culture and share culture with the broader community.

Why are we doing it?

Reconciliation is one of the guiding principles of Creative Horsham- creating an improved understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, hopes and future aspirations through fostering strong, respectful, inclusive and meaningful relationships within our communities.

Steps for Implementation:

- 1. Continue** to embed partnership with BGLC and Goolum Goolum.
- 2. Build** relationships with First Nations artists and work together to build a platform to allow for sharing of their rich art and culture.
- 3. Support** First Nations events including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.
- 4. Work** in partnership with First Nations artists to identify opportunities to develop workshops to share their art and culture with students.



Image: On Wimmera land artwork, Painted with Light. Artist: Tanisha Lovett, Gunditjmara and Wotjobaluk artist. Photo: Mary French.

CREATIVE THEME 5: COMMUNICATIONS

Celebrate and coordinate the way we tell our stories.

ABOUT THIS CREATIVE THEME

As is often the case when bringing a community together to discuss a new Strategy, a common refrain amongst consulted participants was “if only more people knew all the wonderful things we are doing.” Simultaneously, many attending the group consultation sessions felt they learnt more about new projects and organisations in their own community that they had not previously engaged with.

This Theme is about attempting to reduce this gap, so that the great work happening in the Horsham region’s creative community is celebrated, coordinated, and supported by audiences. To do so requires some updates to promotional tools such as websites and signage, newsletters and information. The Actions in this Theme identify these activities, as well as open the possibility for community members to take ownership of better communicating their own work.

Communication as it is presented in this Theme refers to marketing, branding, newsletters, website information, evaluation, history and heritage.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE THEME

Competition for audiences and reach amongst arts organisations continues to increase, with a saturated market requiring more and more savvy approaches to communication.¹⁹ Challenges with the fragmentation of media markets, undermining of price, and changing demographics have all contributed to making arts marketing more difficult than in years passed.²⁰ These challenges can be even harder to navigate for smaller organisations or regional communities.

The role of Council as a facilitator and enabler was endorsed beyond just providing funds for projects in the community consultations. Participants saw Council as a critical organiser and navigator of communications internally, as well as providing a platform for celebrating the work of local creatives. There is an opportunity to provide further meetings or other networking tools to encourage this sharing amongst local arts groups.²¹

Maximising the impact of creative sector across all Council departments, including communications, was seen as an opportunity in the Strategy and Policy Scan. The Scan also found funding for community activities inconsistent and minimal, which only further reinforces the need for Council to take a whole-of-Council approach to supporting arts outcomes.²²

The Sector Survey found practitioners are keen to expand their networks and gain access to more professional development opportunities. Council can play a role in connecting local creatives to opportunities beyond just those provided locally, as well as identifying commissioning and engagement opportunities across Council activities.²³

OTHER COUNCIL PLANS IMPACTING THIS THEME

Council strategies, plans and policies which are in effect or currently in development that may directly impact on or further the Actions in this Creative Theme include:

- Horsham & Grampians Visitor Information Centre Business & Marketing Plan; and,
- Destination Horsham Investment Attracting Strategy & Implementation Plan.

¹⁹ https://www.deakin.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/299218/colbert-2009.pdf

²⁰ <http://nsfconsulting.com.au/arts-marketing-branding/>

²¹ See Section 17.

²² See Section 18.

²³ See Section 19.

ACTIONS, LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN AND EVALUATION

Actions which are underway or can begin quickly for the Communications theme relate to sharing of information through signage, websites and newsletters. Quick wins are shown in green, Work in progress blue and emerging opportunities in orange

ACTIONS	LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN			EVALUATION MEASURES
	THEMES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES	
5.1 Promote recreation (and cultural) activities in our natural environment to increase destination tourism and visitation	Liveability	Diverse and connected open spaces	Promote the municipality as a destination highlighting Horsham as a base in Western Victoria, halfway between Melbourne and Adelaide	Investment, Attraction & Growth monthly report
5.2 Develop a calendar of planned community engagements and proposed dates publicly available on our website	Leadership	Good governance, through leadership and connection with community	Engage with community early on in projects and throughout to promote efficiencies and awareness of external funding opportunities	List of planned community engagements accessible on Council’s website
5.3 Promote grant funding options, resources and information available to community groups				Enewsletter distributed to community and recreational groups
5.4 Installation of an External Weather Proof Digital Promotions Sign in Pynsent Street				Sign installed and operational
5.5 Upgrade and update Visit Horsham Website				Website is live
5.6 Upgrade and update Horsham Town Hall Website				
5.7 Support the delivery of tourism opportunities on the Wimmera River, Mt Arapiles and lakes in our region	Liveability	Diverse and connected open spaces	Promote recreational opportunities in our natural environment and recreational waterways to increase visitation	Investment, Attraction & Growth monthly report
5.8 Profile Arts & Culture activity in Council communications activity	Community	A community that encourages and celebrates all cultures, heritage and diversity	Promote and support the municipality’s key tourism, events and local and cultural offerings	Activity profiled in Council communications
5.9 Devise a communications plan for promoting the progress of the Strategy				Communications Plan developed
5.10 Investigate mentoring support to enhance and coordinate the communications activities of existing community and Council activities				Mentoring program launched

KEY PROJECT FOCUS FOR THEME 5: COMMUNICATING FOR SUCCESS

Celebrate and coordinate the way we tell our stories.

THEME: COMMUNICATIONS

Description:

This project focuses on effectively communicating the diverse range of arts and culture offerings. It will involve data analysis to investigate how best to reach a broader audience and to inform strategic marketing and communication decisions.

Why are we doing it?

This project addresses the comments in the community engagement of “if only more people knew all the wonderful things we are doing” and use data to better inform how to close this gap versus trial and error.

Steps for Implementation:

1. **Investigate** methods to gain data from audience, promoters and creatives to inform marketing strategy and allow for audience development
2. **Develop** marketing and communication plans that are strategic and proactive
3. **Review** current marketing and communication tools, such as websites, to ensure they are able to support communications and detail other options if gaps exist.
4. **Educate** community groups and event organisers on marketing available through Visitor Services.
5. **Build** the capacity of local arts events and organisations to professionalise their communication activities.



Image: Grist launch, Frinj Trim 2021. Photo: Jacqui Schulz.

SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUTATION

The Strategy will be delivered and implemented through the mechanism of five operational areas of the Arts and Culture Team. The operational areas include:

- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts, inclusive of Horsham Regional Art Gallery;
- Education services
- Visitor Services and
- Space Activation, inclusive of Public Arts and Arts Development

Creative Horsham also aligns with themes and priorities of the HRCC's Community Vision and Council Plan

Each Operational area delivers a range of services and functions. These are detailed in the internal Service Plan for Arts and Culture. Service plans reflect the distinct responsibilities of each function, including how and what is delivered, how this is measured, achieved and monitored,

Key and time defined projects detailed in Creative Horsham, as well as committed funding, annual capital projects, key organisational priorities, business as usual programming, provision of quality customer and responsive services inform service plans.

Service plans inform staff work plans which detail responsibility areas, resources, time commitments, budget, evaluation criteria and process. Service Plans are reviewed and updated annually, and aligned to Council's budget cycle and Council's Annual Action Plan.

4.1 WHO WILL DO THIS WORK?

The Arts, Culture & Recreation team at Horsham Rural City Council will be primarily responsible for ensuring the delivery of this Strategy, and/or convening the relevant partners to advancing it's progress. A number of key partners or supporters will work with the Council to support, including the potential to establish community advisory groups for project specific work or programs that require regular feedback loops.

An advisory group currently exists for the Horsham Regional Art Gallery, namely the Acquisition Committee. Additional committees maybe established to support, guide and inform elements of the Creative Horsham delivery.

4.2 MONITOING OUR PROGRESS

A progress report updating the delivery of Creative Horsham will be produced annually as a report card on progress. This will reflect a compilation of quarterly reports produced for internal Council reporting purposes, as well as reporting outcomes to existing external funders.

This will allow for the progress of the Strategy to be tracked regularly and publicly.

Progress on the Strategy will be shared through the HRCC website at www.hrcc.vic.gov.au and opportunities to participate in programs, provide feedback or advice will be advertised through Horsham Town Hall's social channels.

SECTION 5: APPENDICES

Three Appendices are included, with each report informing the development of this Strategy.

They are:

- A Community Consultation Report;
- A Policy and Strategy Scan; and,
- Findings from the Creative Sector Survey
- Possibly include Data snapshot for HRCC Arts & Culture

Each is summarised below.

5.1 SUMMARY RESPONSE: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

To support the development of the Creative Horsham Strategy, Regional Arts Victoria co-hosted a series of targeted sessions with industry professionals in Horsham.

In addition, RAV attended a series of other existing events or workshops and conducted 23 one-on-one meetings. Rural City of Horsham staff attended further events, including hosting the 'Horsham Talks' Expo, and other interested parties submitted notes from their own consultations or individual follow-up throughout the process.

This document provides a summary of key themes and discussions emerging from these activities, and will be used alongside the other studies and work completed, including a community survey and policy scan, to inform the final Strategy.

RATIONALE: WHY WAS THIS WORK COMPLETED?

Community consultations provided an opportunity for group discussion between Council staff, arts industry bodies, and community members. As well as providing input into the final plan, the conversations were an opportunity to hear from industry experts and connect interested parties with one another.

THE STRATEGY: HOW DOES THIS WORK INFORM THE STRATEGY?

The 'Strategy: Detail' section of this Horsham Creative City Plan aligns the emergent themes from the community conversations with the actions in the Plan. It is evident through the Strategy how impactful these themes have been on final decisions taken. Each Theme also uses findings from the Community Consultations in their respective Evidence sections.

RESPONSE: HOW DO THESE FINDINGS COMPARE WITH OTHER WORK DONE?

Findings from the community consultations were consistent with those completed in other work.

SUMMARY: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Table Nine provides a summary of the Themes and concepts recurring throughout the community consultations.

TABLE NINE – RECURRING CONCEPTS	
THEME	RECURRING CONCEPTS LINKED TO THE THEME
Destination: things to do and see in Horsham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The natural environment featured heavily when talking about reasons to visit Horsham, with the Grampians and the river looming large in local imagination • There was a strong desire to use events to address issues across a range of topics, including reconnecting after COVID, celebrating diversity, platforming a particular art form, or reaching new audiences • Whilst a number of potential project ideas were put forward at consultations, and it is not the intent of this summary document to promote one or another, there is both local interest and existing capacity to deliver more events or experiences after dark, including those that feature lighting and projection
Participation: the way we make, do or see art and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and equity was a topic of interest at almost every session, from including artists and community members who are deaf and/or living with a disability through to providing more opportunities for both young people and elders • There are real financial barriers which prevent some groups from fully participating in the arts and cultural life of the region, and free/public art was often presented as a way to meet this demand
Venues: our places of Arts and Culture serving Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community access to either existing or as yet untapped places to create and show their work was demanded at most sessions • Venues were seen as places that could facilitate risk for emerging or small arts groups, in addition to their role as providing opportunities for audiences to enjoy work from outside the region
Partnerships: who we make Arts and Culture with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong desire to redefine the colonial historical narrative of the region and connect to the stories of local First Peoples; however, this needs to be focused on the development of culturally safe relationships with local custodians, not simply the delivery of project • A common desire was expressed for more organisations based locally to have opportunities to work with each other and with those from outside the region
Communications: how we tell our stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of Council as a facilitator and enabler was endorsed beyond just providing funds for projects. Participants saw Council as a critical organizer and navigator of communications internally to Council, as well as providing a platform for celebrating the work of local creatives • It was common for many participants to lament both their lack of knowledge of what else was going on in the region, and in turn the lack of knowledge others had for the work they were doing. There is an opportunity to provide further meetings or other networking tools to encourage this sharing amongst local arts groups.

5.2 SUMMARY RESPONSE: POLICY AND STRATEGY SCAN

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

To understand what existing policy and strategy documents were in place, Future Tense were engaged to provide a scan and summary of relevant existing plans and policies impacted the creator sector in the Horsham region.

RATIONALE: WHY WAS THIS WORK COMPLETED?

No Strategy exists in a vacuum. This work was completed in order to understand what some of the existing strengths and weaknesses were in terms of policy settings, so that the Creative Horsham could focus on enhancing existing strengths and addressing current challenges without replicating work already underway.

SUMMARY: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

A number of key findings were made by Future Tense:

- Council has embedded arts and culture as a tool to achieve its strategic objectives across multiple domains and is well positioned to grow the region's creative sector
- Clear policy objectives are needed to maximise the impact of Council and the creative sector's energies
- There is a need for increased institutional, structural and communal supports to consolidate the region's strengths and further reach currently disengaged communities
- Funding is inconsistent and minimal
- The creative sector is not consistently viewed as a driver of economic potential
- Investment in arts and cultural activity focuses mainly on Council-run institutions such as the Horsham Town Hall
- Mechanisms for supporting events, festivals and tourism need to be reconsidered in order to leverage the full potential of these activities

Further, a series of opportunities are identified:

- Maximising the impact of creative sector engagement across all HRCC departments, particularly through embedding creative activation in strategic planning, asset renewal, precinct design and infrastructure development
- Further expanding and elevating First Nations practices through meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal stakeholders

- Bringing a wider diversity of entertainment, touring and experimental arts opportunities into region, such as bespoke and large-scale festivals, events and attractions and tourism-based initiatives
- Expanding the Strategic Plan's focus beyond community arts to encompass the wider creative industries, including creative practitioners, event organisers, tourism and cultural service entities, and creative professional services and businesses
- Consideration of a dedicated and coordinated approach to supporting event initiation, activation and attraction
- Exploration of flexible models to increase investment in and provision of arts education opportunities
- Consideration of resourcing for increased support to marginalised demographics and communities across the region
- The potential for dedicated creative sector funding, such as through grants, partnerships and collaborations
- Development of mechanisms to assist local creatives access state, federal and non-Council funding
- Metrics and indicators across strategies to allow for a deeper understanding of what works and how effective refinements can be made over the life of the Strategic Plan
- Support to develop a flourishing creative sector outside the CAD

THE STRATEGY: HOW DOES THIS WORK INFORM THE STRATEGY?

The 'What we Heard' section is informed by the Policy Scan as a key measure of the environment we are operating in. Evidence sections for each Theme also draw out findings from the Policy Scan.

RESPONSE: HOW DO THESE FINDINGS COMPARE WITH OTHER WORK DONE?

Findings from the policy scan were generally consistent with community consultations and survey results. The theme of 'communication', which was heavily present in the community consultations, did not explicitly emerge in the policy scan, though the recognition of the need for multiple Council departments to support the sector may be interpreted as including the communications and marketing roles of Council.

5.3 SUMMARY RESPONSE: SECTOR SURVEY

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

A survey of the local creative sector was undertaken to understand the existing supports available, or not, to the creative community. Future Tense completed this work.

RATIONALE: WHY WAS THIS WORK COMPLETED?

Alongside the more open-ended and less formal communications activities completed through the community consultations, a formal survey provides data from a range of local creatives that can help capture statistics on what support may be needed.

SUMMARY: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Key findings include:

- Access to space to develop and present work was the most commonly cited need (69%) – interestingly 86% of creative practitioners who responded to the survey are currently working from home
- There is good connection among the local creative community (or at least the demographic that responded to the survey), with nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) collaborating with other local practitioners and most (61%) being satisfied with the level of local connection
- Despite 90% of respondents citing experimentation and innovation as critical to their practice, only 45% felt they were supported to do so
- Access to opportunities outside the region is limited, with over half of respondents reporting dissatisfaction about the reach of the practice nationally (55%) and internationally (56%)
- Creative practitioners get personal benefits from their work, with 95% of respondents stating it was important for their wellbeing
- Respondents were confident about their ability to continue their creative practices (78%) and mostly (59%) believe the region's creative community is thriving, however a third (32%) reported being unsure about its future
- The top three goals of practitioners over the next five years are development of their practices (53%), financial growth and viability (36%), and expansion of their networks (25%), and
- The top three things respondents want to see more of are professional development opportunities (40%), display and performance opportunities for local artists (38%), and more live music (24%).

THE STRATEGY: HOW DOES THIS WORK INFORM THE STRATEGY?

The 'What we Heard' section is informed by the Survey as a key measure of the environment we are operating in. The Survey is also frequently drawn upon in the Evidence section for each Theme.

RESPONSE: HOW DO THESE FINDINGS COMPARE WITH OTHER WORK DONE?

The survey results were highly encouraging in terms of local creative confidence in continuing their practice, which was not explicitly highlighted in the other consultations. Other findings were generally consistent with the community consultations and policy scans, with access to space and professional development common topics of conversation in other work.



Image: Creative Movement. Photo: HRCC.

