

CITY OF WHYALLA

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

2020 – 2025



WHYALLA

First Nations Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Barngarla as the custodians of this ancient land and recognize that they have been living on these lands for many thousands of generations. We value their traditions and recognize that these traditions are as important to the living Barngarla today as they were in the past and that they make considerable contribution to the culture of our city. The Whyalla City Council is committed to utilizing the power of the arts in the process of reconciliation with our first nations citizens.

City of Whyalla Reconciliation Action Plan Can be found here:

https://www.whyalla.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0032/435587/RAP-Book-5.11.19.pdf



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1. MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



This plan is an important step in acknowledging the importance of arts and culture in creating a vibrant and livable city. It is pertinent that in these challenging times, when we are facing an invisible but very real threat to our way of life, that we recognize the important role the artistic and cultural life plays in our sense of self and community.

Facing a very uncertain future brings home the importance of creative thinking in our community, that we may adapt and create a new future for our regional city, new ways of learning, working and socializing whilst also celebrating our shared history.

Arts and culture are an important part of all of our lives as both participants and consumers from reading a novel, to enjoying film or television show, attending the theatre, seeing a band, selecting a well-designed object, interacting with the various creators and makers that live in our city, visiting a gallery or taking a photograph and make an important contribution to our local economy.

Arts and culture are not the domain of a single person or department within our Council but overlays all of our work – all council departments contribute to our culture. Many council projects have artistic outcomes or utilise various facets of the arts in their delivery. This plan seeks to strengthen these links within council and between council and the community.

It is also important for council to continue to strengthen the bond between our first nations communities especially the traditional owners of this land, the Barngarla, and ensure that their cultural traditions are not lost or ignored.

Whyalla also has a rich history of immigration from its founding to the present day, each new citizen contributes their unique story to the wider narrative of the city and this variety continues to make Whyalla special. I am very proud to be part of a council that has a sound vision to support a vibrant and culturally engaged community where creativity supports wellbeing, education and economic sustainability.

Mayor Clare McLaughlin

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The vision for the City of Whyalla is for it to be a vibrant, culturally engaged community where creativity supports wellbeing, education and economic sustainability.

This strategy provides a roadmap for Council and the community collaboratively realise that vision with goals, objectives and strategic actions included. It acknowledges the capacity of arts and culture to build a strong, sustainable and vibrant community – supporting health and wellbeing, the economy and education. It consists of three key areas which respond to the standard strategic questions of “Who”, “What” and “How”.

The plan starts with answering the “Who question” with the key elements of the region’s character outlined, offering insight into the values, heritage and physical characteristics of Whyalla and its people. These provide a thematic lens for arts and cultural development and include, Whyalla’s location between the desert and the sea and its heritage as a “company town” – growing from BHP’s investment in the location over 100 years ago. Articulating who the people of Whyalla are in the first instance provides a foundation for creative conversations that are relevant and authentic to local identity.

The Goals and anticipated outcomes respond to the challenge of “what we want to achieve” in the context of the strategic plan. There are three specific strategic areas included in the goals, which offer higher level aspirations for Council to focus on. These include, the creative economy, places and spaces and storytelling/creative expression. Anticipated outcomes for each of the goal offers further insight into what the goals mean in the long term with education pathways for artists, a distinctive urban landscape and engagement in art and creativity as part of everyday life included.

Providing a strong foundation for understanding the plan’s impact as it is implemented, 3 – 4 measurable objectives have been developed for each goal. These provide a clear and practical sense of change or growth and offer a more practical sense of what can be achieved. Objectives include increases in opportunities for visitors to engage with the region’s culture and heritage, growth in the live music industry, access to improved facilities for arts and culture, stronger cross-industry partnerships and improved visibility of Aboriginal culture within the Whyalla community

Linked to the objectives are the Strategic Actions – in many ways the most important part of the strategy, providing a clear direction of what needs to be done to achieve the Goals, Objectives and the overall Vision. The Strategic Actions offer a greater level of specificity and ultimately answer the “How” question, providing the Whyalla community with detailed approaches and activities that will ensure the community’s cultural and creative aspirations can be realised.

A range of further information has also been articulated within the document to add further insight into how the plan will be implemented. A series of principles that offer guidelines for decision making, resourcing strategies and how the plan aligns with Council and the broader region’s other strategies have been included. The role of Council as collaborator, supporter, advocate, place manager and service provider, which also features in the document, ensures the community understands the various parts that Council plays in building cultural vitality.

3. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Within a local government context arts and cultural development can achieve outcomes relevant to a range of areas. The following details where arts and culture can play a role in achieving the strategic objectives across a range of areas and how the strategic actions within this plan align.

Whyalla City Council Strategic Plan

Objective 1.2: To create a vibrant, diverse, actively engaged community with a sense of belonging.

Objective 1.3: To improve the safety, health and well-being of our community.

Objective 1.4: To provide initiatives for the community to connect and work together to improve the lives of all community members.

Objective 2.1: To create a city that is attractive and showcases our natural and built assets.

Objective 2.4: To ensure that infrastructure is maintained and managed to meet the community's economic, social and physical needs.

Objective 3.1: Our city will provide integrated education and training options for the community and region.

Objective 3.3: To connect and mobilise the community to work collectively to improve the lives of all community members.

Objective 4.1: Instil community pride.

Objective 4.2: To create an attractive city for the community, visitors and potential investors.

Whyalla Reconciliation Action Plan

Action 5: Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

Action 8: Visibly promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories within our area and services.

South Australian Tourism Plan

Action: Encourage a greater depth and breadth of clustered tourism experiences to provide a stronger reason for visitors to experience different parts of South Australia.

Transforming Upper Spencer Gulf

Priority Action 19: Develop tourism accommodation and commercial visitor experiences across the three cities.

Priority Action 24: Implement a "Renew the Upper Spencer Gulf" initiative across Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla to help activate business districts and foster creative enterprise.

4. INTRODUCTION + OVERVIEW

4.1 Document Purpose

The City of Whyalla Arts and Culture Strategy provides a framework for Council and the community to develop arts and cultural activities over the next five years. These activities contribute to the cultural, social and economic fabric of Whyalla and the strategy ensures Council's investment is informed by the community, focused and cohesive over time.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Present a vision for arts and culture in Whyalla that connects with the social, environmental and economic fabric of the region.
- Ensure the impact of Council and the community's decision making is considerate of the culture of the region.
- Encourage buy-in and better inform the community about the opportunities presented through arts and culture in Whyalla.
- Outline a range of arts and culture strategies which align closely with the goals of other sectors including education, health and wellbeing, tourism, environment and economic development.



4.2 What is Arts and Culture

Arts and Culture has been defined in lots of different ways over the years. For the purposes of this document the following definitions and examples are provided for clarity.

CULTURE

Culture is expressed and acknowledged in a variety of ways on a collective and individual level. It is closely related to art because we often experience and/or participate in culture through engagement with creativity, interacting with art and social exchanges. It evolves and changes and is shaped by local and global influences, our education, history and engagement with each other.

It includes customs, values, traditions and social norms and is often reflected in art as well as:

- Language
- Cuisine
- Architecture
- Fashion
- Urban design
- Ethnicity
- Stories
- Festivals
- Rituals
- Celebrations
- Social structures

ART / THE ARTS

Tangible and intangible products or expressions of creativity. A way of articulating imagined ideas both real and unreal using a variety of media to create something that can be experienced temporarily or in an ongoing or permanent way.

It includes but is not limited to:

- Film
- Drawing
- Painting
- Music
- Poetry
- Literature
- Theatre
- Comedy
- Circus
- Puppetry
- Storytelling
- Digital media
- Photography
- Sculpture
- Television production
- Architecture
- Fashion
- Design
- Crafts
- Textiles
- Dance

4.3 Value of Arts and Culture

Arts and culture provides value across a range of areas – on a creative level but also on an economic, social and health level. The following provides an overview of the impact of investment in arts and culture and its role in contemporary society.

People who participate in 2 or more hours of arts-based activities per week experience significantly better mental wellbeing.

*From Research undertaken by Dr Christina Davies 2016
University of Western Australia
<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-015-2672-7>*

Nationally, an estimated 65000 full and part-time jobs are created by monies spend on live music.

Music SA www.musicsa.com.au/about

The creative sector adds almost \$46 billion in GDP for the Australian economy.

*Valuing Creative Industries Final Report.
<https://www.sgsep.com.au/assets/Valuing-Australias-Creative-Industries-Final-Report.pdf>*

A UK study demonstrated that the social return on investment for creative craft making is 1 : 118, which means that for every £1 invested, a social value of £118 is generated, mainly in forgone treatment bills; reducing GP visits by 28% and attendance at emergency wards by 24%.

*Ways to Wellbeing. Social Prescribing Program. Wellbeing Enterprises UK (2017)
<http://www.wellbeingenterprises.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/206921-low-res.pdf>*

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that almost all of us (82.4%) are attending cultural venues and events, and households are spending more than \$25 billion on cultural goods and services.

A New Approach Insight Report 3: A View from Middle Australia 2020. <https://www.humanities.org.au/new-approach/report3/>

A study of 12 regional performing arts venues, public art galleries and museums indicate that collectively these facilities create an additional 8.5 jobs outside the cultural sector for every 10 full-time positions within the cultural sector and add over \$14 million in household income per annum.

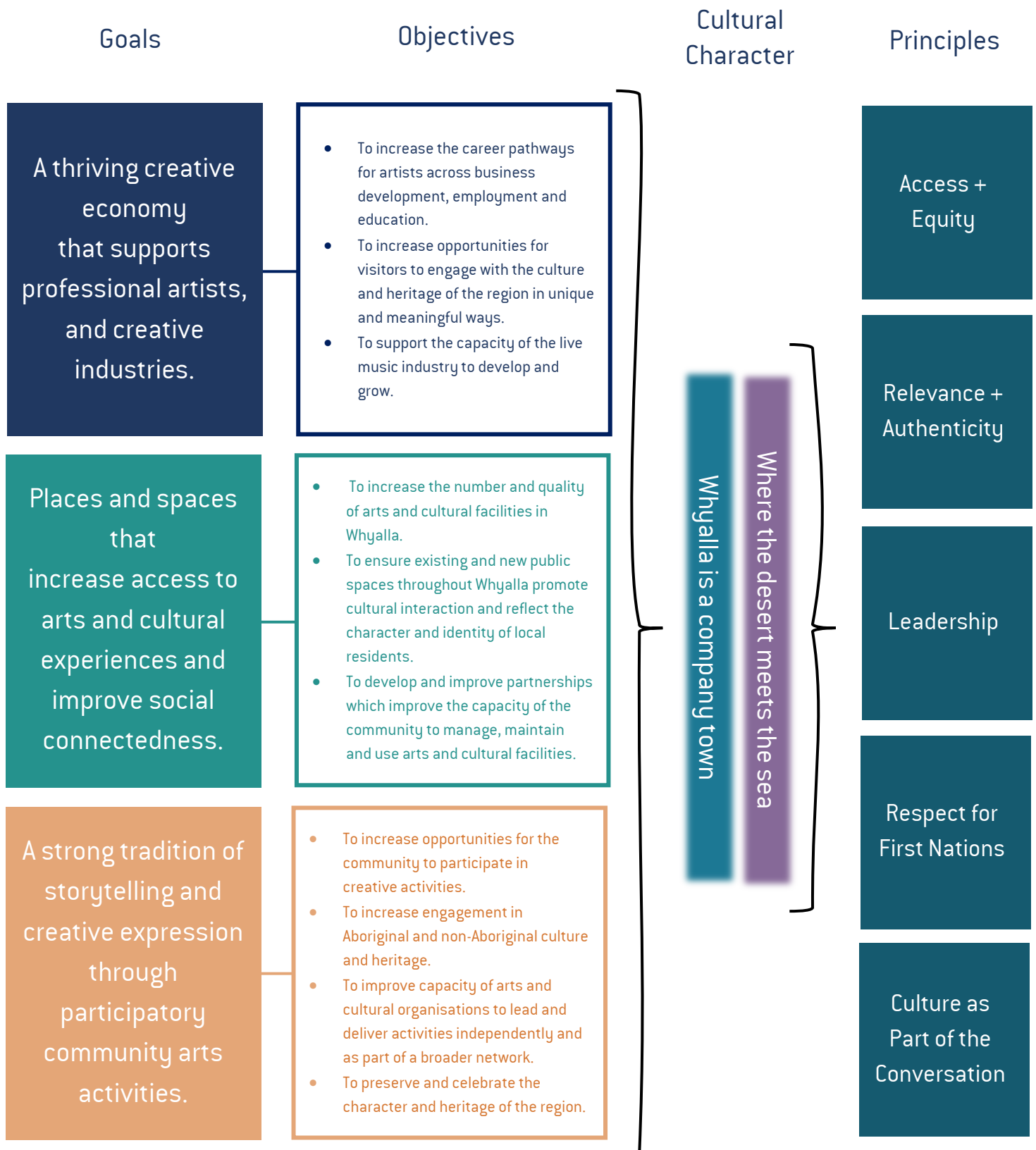
*Value Added – the economic and social contribution of cultural facilities and activities in Central NSW 2010
Museums and Galleries NSW*

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) now recognises creative industries as a new dynamic sector in world trade. While creative industries are often micro businesses or small to medium sized enterprises that focus on local markets, they can develop into powerful economic clusters, helping to drive economic growth.

*Valuing Creative Industries Final Report.
<https://www.sgsep.com.au/assets/Valuing-Australias-Creative-Industries-Final-Report.pdf>*

4.4 Strategic Framework

Vision: *“The City of Whyalla is a vibrant, culturally engaged community where creativity supports wellbeing, education and economic sustainability”*



5. CULTURAL CHARACTER

Best practice arts and cultural development in a Local Government environment relies on the capacity for activities and resources to reflect the community's social and cultural identity. With this in mind the physical and cultural characteristics of Whyalla have been captured here as a preface to the vision, goals and strategies detailed later in this document.

Understanding the character and nature of Whyalla, its people and the landscape provides a thematic lens for Council and the community to consider when planning and developing arts and cultural programs and resources.

This information provides context for engagement, can inform conversations and encourage buy-in from the community, local business and other partners in cultural development – from education, health, environment and government.





Where The Desert Meets the Sea

Key Themes: Big Sky, Contrasts, Vibrant Colours, Marine Life, Desert Expanses, Natural Resources, Ancient Geology, Aboriginal Heritage.

Whyalla is “big sky” country with over 300 days of abundant sunshine per year and desert sunsets to die for. It boasts the vastness of the Australian outback to the north west and the deep waters of the Spencer Gulf to the east. The red rocky outcrops and the blue of the sea is punctuated by Whyalla’s urban landscape and the contrast is as remarkable for visitors as it is ordinary for local residents.

The desert and the Middleback ranges offer stunning colours, unique habitats and an incredible sense of space and isolation. The gentle undulations, rock formations and red brown soil reflect a geological history and dreaming stories that are ancient and fascinating.

The white sand and sea provide welcome relief for the dryness of the nearby desert. A watery playground for locals and visitors alike, Whyalla’s coastal aspect is both expansive and pristine. On an historic level the sea is a great source of pride for the locals, linking people with its maritime past and offering a rich habitat for the enigmatic cuttlefish, an array of fish, crustaceans and the much beloved dolphins.

Between the two is an urban streetscape that has evolved organically – from its work camp origins to 1950’s seaside village to the large contemporary housing estates that stretch inwards from the sea. There is a sense of both old and new in the town landscape, with wide streets reflecting a time of rapid growth, when Whyalla supported a much larger population. These contrasts and the geographic distance from one end of town to the other present some neighbourhood disconnect for residents.

People in Whyalla have a strong connection to the landscape – both its beauty and its severity are intrinsic to the region’s work life, recreation, social connections, sustainability, heritage and the resilient nature of the community. It is a place where the red dirt and the blue sea has provided a rich bounty for over 40000 years. Some relish in the expansive nature of the landscape – in awe of space and solitude that it provides.

A Company Town

Key Themes: Resilience, Hard Working, Industrial Heritage, Rapid Expansion, Regional Development, Environmental Sustainability, Maritime history.

The story Whyalla as a “company town” looms large in the cultural memory of Whyalla residents. Established initially as a work camp by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd (BHP) in 1901 to support the burgeoning iron ore industry. Expansion led to the declaration of Whyalla as a town in 1914 and further growth by BHP saw shipyards and a blast furnace constructed in 1940.

Whyalla’s housing development, retail and recreational pursuits were all built around the needs of BHP workers, which is still evident in the town’s layout, water supply and architecture. Further booms in the industry saw the opening of the steelworks in 1965. For decades, BHP’s industrious pursuits put Whyalla on the map, employing thousands over the years and the shipyards produced sixty-six ships, some of which played a significant role in World War II. But of course with every boom comes a “bust”, the shipyards closed in 1978 and the steelworks, under different ownership has faced several economic challenges.

Despite recent ups and downs and the increased environmental scrutiny facing these industries, Whyalla people are proud of their “company” past. The links with BHP and current steelworks owners, The Gupta Group run deep in the community. Families across several generations have not only benefitted from the industry’s education and employment opportunities, it has created a strong hard-working ethic in the community – a sense of “leaning in” of being pragmatic and resilient within a harsh but bountiful landscape.



6. OUR STRATEGY

6.1 Vision

“The City of Whyalla is a vibrant, culturally engaged community where creativity supports wellbeing, education and economic sustainability”



6.2 Our Goals

1.	A thriving creative economy that supports professional artists, and creative industries.	Outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment and education pathways for professional practicing and emerging artists.• The development of creative industries that contribute to the Whyalla economy.• Cultural tourism offerings that are captivating and unique.
2.	Places and spaces that increase access to arts and cultural experiences and improve social connectedness.	Outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A distinctive urban landscape for local residents and visitors to the region.• Diverse program and more sustainable arts organisations able to develop and present high quality arts and cultural experiences.• Engagement in cultural activities that connect people socially and improve health and wellbeing.
3.	A strong tradition of storytelling and creative expression through participatory community arts activities.	Outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A greater sense of belonging through a celebration of character and identity.• Investment in heritage preservation and promotion.• Engagement in art and creativity as part of everyday life.• Art making with purpose – to support education, health and wellbeing, social connectedness and a sustainable environment.

6.3 Objectives and Strategies

Goal 1: To develop a thriving creative economy that supports professional artists and creative industries.

Objectives		Strategic Actions	
1.1	To increase the career pathways for artists across business development, employment and education.	1.1.1	Development of an annual creative industries incubator program – delivered in collaboration with a range of partners.
		1.1.2	Work with schools to support students to access information and opportunities relating to arts education and careers pathways.
		1.1.3	Advocate for and support remote learning opportunities through for tertiary based arts programs.
		1.1.4	Develop and deliver an arts / business pilot project that includes collaborations with artists and local businesses. This could evolve into an annual residency.
		1.1.5	Ensure all projects that include visiting artists include a mentoring and local skills development component to ensure local growth and development.
1.2	To increase opportunities for visitors to engage with the culture and heritage of the region in unique and meaningful ways.	1.2.1	Continue to develop arts and cultural programming within existing and new festivals and events in Whyalla that is both authentic and captivating.
		1.2.2	Provide support to artists and organisations to develop new and improve the quality of existing arts experiences that could attract visitors or enhance their experience.
		1.2.3	Increase the capacity of tourism operators to understand cultural tourism and develop opportunities within their businesses.
		1.2.4	Scope the development of digital arts and heritage trail that builds on local storytelling, significant sites and arts experiences.
		1.2.5	Scope the development of a large scale biennial sculpture event/symposium that utilises industry strengths and the diversity and nature of the landscape.
1.3	To support the capacity of the live music industry to develop and grow.	1.3.1	Work with local schools, community and private providers to increase music education and mentoring opportunities within the City of Whyalla.
		1.3.2	Develop a live music plan in conjunction with the SA Music Development Office to nurture a local live music network and live music opportunities

Goal 2: Ensure we have places and spaces that increase access to arts and cultural experiences and improve social connectedness.

Objectives	Strategic Actions
2.1 To increase the number and quality of arts and cultural facilities in Whyalla.	2.1.1 Undertake and audit of current and potential commercial and community spaces and develop guidelines and resources that improve the capacity for them to be utilised for arts and cultural activities.
	2.1.2 Continue to work with Country Arts South Australia and provide support that sees the redevelopment and upgrade of the Middleback Theatre.
	2.1.3 Establish a flexible and accessible space designed to provide a base for the arts and cultural community to showcase creativity, learn skills and connect.
2.2 To ensure existing and new public spaces throughout Whyalla promote cultural interaction and reflect the character and identity of local residents.	2.2.1 Develop a public art strategy that sees the development of public art throughout Whyalla – including the inclusion of a “percentage for art scheme”.
	2.2.2 Incorporate best practice “place making” principles within Council’s planning and development practices.
	2.2.3 Develop and implement a main-street reinvigoration program which focuses on arts and cultural programming and placemaking.
	2.2.4 Establish Council policy which ensures arts and cultural development is considered within all Council infrastructure initiatives.
2.3 To develop and improve partnerships which increase the capacity of the community to manage and sustain arts and cultural facilities.	2.3.1 Provide support and funding to help organisations develop, manage and maintain arts and cultural facilities e.g. Whyalla Art Group.
	2.3.2 Work collaboratively with schools, recreational clubs and landlords to facilitate access to venues both indoor and outdoor, for arts and cultural activities.
	2.3.3 Work with organisations to support bringing content to Whyalla and align with larger cultural events such as SALA, Adelaide Film Festival and Fringe.



Goal 3: To foster a tradition of storytelling and creative expression through participatory community arts activities.

Objectives	Strategic Actions
3.1 To increase opportunities for the community to participate in creative activities as part of everyday life.	3.1.1 Provide support for arts organisations to deliver accessible arts and cultural programs across all ages and abilities.
	3.1.2 Collaborate across Council departments to utilise arts and culture to achieve broader outcomes across economic development, youth, tourism and environmental sustainability.
	3.1.3 Review Whyalla Art Prize and re-develop as a residency program that incorporates a strong community engagement component and storytelling.
	3.1.4 Develop seed funding program that encourages non-arts organisations to partner with arts organisations on accessible arts projects.
3.2 To increase engagement in Aboriginal culture and improve its visibility throughout the community.	3.2.1 Work with Aboriginal groups to develop annual festival which celebrates and promotes the Aboriginal heritage of the region.
	3.2.2 Include Aboriginal heritage activities within existing festival and events programming.
	3.2.3 Develop an Aboriginal heritage / storytelling trail utilising both tangible and digitally-based resources.
	3.2.4 Establish mentoring program for Aboriginal artists to support practice development, connect with Aboriginal Visual arts networks and foster digital and traditional retail pathways.
3.3 To improve the capacity of organisations to lead and deliver arts, culture and heritage activities independently and as part of a broader network.	3.3.1 Develop a professional development program to non-arts organisations to deliver arts and cultural activities across education, environmental sustainability and health and wellbeing.
	3.3.2 Establish an arts and cultural leadership program for young people in collaboration with schools and local youth based organisations.
	3.3.3 Foster an arts and cultural network to support project collaboration, resource sharing, marketing and professional development.
	3.3.4 Strengthen the capacity of arts organisations to secure funding and develop sponsorship relationships.
3.4 To preserve and celebrate the character and heritage of the region.	3.4.1 Develop contemporary heritage management strategy in collaboration with key heritage organisations that supports the development of their collections and programs to ensure organisational sustainability, community engagement and visitor attraction.
	3.4.2 Collaborate with heritage based organisations to develop projects that see artists working with heritage collections and sites in interesting ways.

7. OUR APPROACH

7.1 City of Whyalla's Role

Local Government's role in developing arts and cultural activity has grown and evolved over the last two decades. Of the three tiers of government Councils are the most closely connected to the community and able to support and influence arts and cultural development. A recent report by academic think tank "A New Approach" revealed that Local Government was responsible for 26% of expenditure on arts and culture and that its investment in culture per capita had increased by 11% (State government increase - 3.9% and federal government, 18.9% decrease).

Like most Councils, the City of Whyalla takes on a variety of roles within its investment for arts and cultural development including:





7.2 Principles

This strategy provides a roadmap for arts and cultural development over the next five years with the following principles identified to guide decision making.

- **Culture is Part of the Conversation**

The City of Whyalla will consider the impact of its decision making on the culture of the community.

- **Access and Equity**

The City of Whyalla will ensure the community fair and reasonable access to activities that allow creative expression, participation in arts activities and celebration of culture and identity.

- **Relevance and Authenticity**

The City of Whyalla will invest in arts and cultural development that is relevant to the values and expectations of the community and authentic to the heritage and character of people and place.

- **Leadership**

The City of Whyalla will provide cultural leadership and foster and encourage others to do develop practical and strategic leadership skills that support arts and cultural activities.

- **Respect for First Nations**

The City of Whyalla respects Aboriginal culture and considers the needs of First Nations people always.

7.3 Resourcing Strategies

The following resourcing strategies support the implementation of this strategy and ensures that Council can best leverage its investment in Arts and Culture.

Leveraging Funding

Council utilises its investment to secure funding and support. This includes resourcing the development of funding applications and sponsorship relationships and support other organisations in the region to do the same through training and support.

Continue to Employ an Arts and Cultural Facilitator

An Arts and Cultural Facilitator provides a central point for information sharing and support and acts as a key driver for arts and cultural development across the community. This is an essential resource to ensuring a vibrant and culturally active community.

Be Creative with Council Expenditure

Other areas of Council invest in arts and cultural development to achieve shared goals and objectives. For example, a project that promotes recycling or waste management could engage with artists to help promote core messaging and behavioural change.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Council seeks to work with others to achieve shared objectives across a range of areas including education, health, environment, regional development, tourism and social services.

Supporting others to Lead

Providing support through skills development and fostering leadership strengthens other organisations and improves their capacity to take the lead and drive development.




8. APPENDIX

8.1 Community Engagement

In developing this plan The City of Whyalla appointed an independent Consultant, Maz McGann to research, consult and ultimately devise the strategy. As part of this process, a series of one on one and group meetings were undertaken with the Council representatives and community members to ensure the plan reflected both the aspirations and the capacity of the Whyalla Community. An online survey was also distributed capturing the ideas, views and opportunities from across the region. Community engagement and research included:

- 8 Individual interviews with key stakeholders.
- 10 targeted and public group consultation workshops.
- An online survey completed by 127 respondents.
- A review of relevant council and regional documents providing insight into the heritage and strategic priorities of the region.
- Asset familiarisation – with a review of current cultural assets within the community.



This plan has been developed by Maz McGann, Principal Consultant from Play Your Part, in collaboration with the City of Whyalla staff and the broader community in 2020.