

DRAFT ARTS & CULTURE PLAN 2026 - 2029



**MEANS
THE WORLD**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Charles Sturt acknowledges that the land on which we work and live is the traditional Country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains.

We recognise and respect the Kurna people's continuing cultural, spiritual and community connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Kurna Elders past and present and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from other Nations who live, work and contribute to the life of our City.

STRATEGIC INTENT

Vision

A City where creativity is part of everyday life.

For the City of Charles Sturt, experiencing creativity is a part of everyday life. It is easy to access, visible in our places, helps people feel connected, curious, and proud of where they live.

Arts and culture sits alongside the services people expect from local government, like verge mowing, waste collection and libraries because it does measurable work: it keeps people connected, supports community wellbeing and returns real value to the local economy. It creates opportunities for people to share experiences, creates opportunities for social cohesion, to express identity, strengthen wellbeing, enhance liveability and connections with place and with one another. In doing so, it contributes to many of the outcomes local government exists to support in our neighbourhoods, suburbs and business community.

The people who make this work are part of our community too: our residents, neighbours and local small businesses. Supporting their creativity also supports local livelihoods and core council services because they do measurable community work by strengthening connection, supporting wellbeing, and contributing to the local economy. Artists are not abstract contributors; they are local workers and residents who shape how our community functions and feels.

We have a developing history, reflected in our Community Vision, where the City of Charles Sturt recognises creativity as part of what makes this 'a place to belong' and part of our core services, and how those outcomes are achieved.

Creative and cultural participation is tracked by the Australian Government *National Cultural Policy Framework (Revive)* as an indicator of national wellbeing, alongside health, employment and safety, recognising its role in connected and functioning communities. South Australia's cultural policy: *A Place to Create: South Australia's Cultural Policy 2025–2035* also recognises arts and culture as key contributors to economic, social and community outcomes, reinforcing that this is core public policy.

Local government is where these priorities become real, in public spaces, libraries, community centres, local venues, clubs, galleries, venues and businesses. This is where, in the best communities, participation becomes possible.

Participation in creative life is shaped by cost, time, opportunity and proximity. As community connection and cohesion becomes increasingly important, access to

free and local creative experiences becomes more, not less important, centralising Council's role at a local and grass roots community level.

In this Plan, arts and culture are understood broadly - encompassing creative expression, shared experiences, stories, spaces and everyday participation. This includes the ways people create, share and experience creativity, from community participation through to professional practice.

Executive Summary

This plan sets out how the City of Charles Sturt will support Arts and Culture to help deliver the Community Vision of being “a place to call home, a place where we belong”.

Alongside engagement with local artists, community members, cultural organisations, and internal Council teams, this Plan has been shaped by research into leading practice in arts, culture, community wellbeing and placemaking. We reviewed current policies, evidence and emerging thinking about the role of culture in building connected, liveable and resilient communities, considering both the needs of Charles Sturt and the opportunities available to local government. This process informed the Plan's strategic intent and helped identify where Council can most effectively contribute to the outcomes described in the Community Vision.

The strategic directions and actions that follow are the practical steps the City of Charles Sturt will take to deliver on that intent. They focus on where we can have the greatest impact and include a set of high-impact initiatives that will test new ways of working and deliver visible change, including:

- identifying and accessing underused spaces for creative activity
- embedding artists in Council projects
- improving access to creative experiences
- linking cultural outcomes to infrastructure investment
- developing initiatives that position our city as a leader in specific areas of arts and culture.

This plan is designed to ensure creativity in Charles Sturt is visible, accessible, and part of everyday life - and that our local investment delivers cultural, social and place outcomes. Implementation will be staged over time, with priorities evolving based on capacity, partnerships, and opportunity.

Success means creativity is visible, accessible, and part of everyday life - not something people have to work hard to connect with or seek out.

Delivery of this plan will be led by the City of Charles Sturt, in partnership with creative practitioners, industry partners and the community. Achieving these

outcomes will require shared commitment, resourcing, and cross-organisational support.

Our Guiding Principles

A connected, creative community does not happen by chance. These beliefs reflect the conditions we want to create in Charles Sturt and guide how we support participation, creativity, belonging and connection through arts and culture.

1. Art is for everyone

Creative participation begins with access. Everyone should be able to take part in ways that are meaningful, welcoming and relevant. Participation is shaped by affordability, proximity, awareness and inclusion, and we will prioritise removing barriers wherever possible.

2. Arts and culture strengthens wellbeing and belonging

Arts and culture is part of the social and cultural infrastructure of our City. They help strengthen connection, identity, wellbeing and belonging.

3. Creativity happens everywhere

Creative life exists in libraries, parks, streets, community centres, schools, businesses and neighbourhood places, not only in dedicated cultural venues.

4. Diverse cultures shape this place

First Nations knowledge, multicultural communities and diverse lived experiences are fundamental to the identity and creative life of our City.

5. Artists are valued contributors

Artists and creative practitioners contribute to the cultural, social and economic life of Charles Sturt and should be supported through fair and professional opportunities.

6. Arts and Culture shape places

Arts and culture contribute to the character, identity and liveability of places and should be considered as part of how communities and places are planned and experienced.

7. Creativity should be part of everyday life

The City of Charles Sturt's role is to create the conditions that make creative participation visible, accessible and part of everyday community life. Through spaces, partnerships, investment and advocacy, we support the social and cultural infrastructure that enables creativity, participation and connection to flourish.

Equity and Cultural Leadership

Equity, inclusion, and cultural respect underpin the entire arts and culture ecosystem.

We recognise the ongoing cultural authority and knowledge of First Nations people and the importance of working in ways that are grounded in relationship, respect, learning, and long-term commitment.

Creative life should reflect the diversity of our community. This requires actively removing barriers and shaping more equitable conditions so that more people can take part, contribute and be represented in ways that are meaningful to them.

What We Are Working Towards

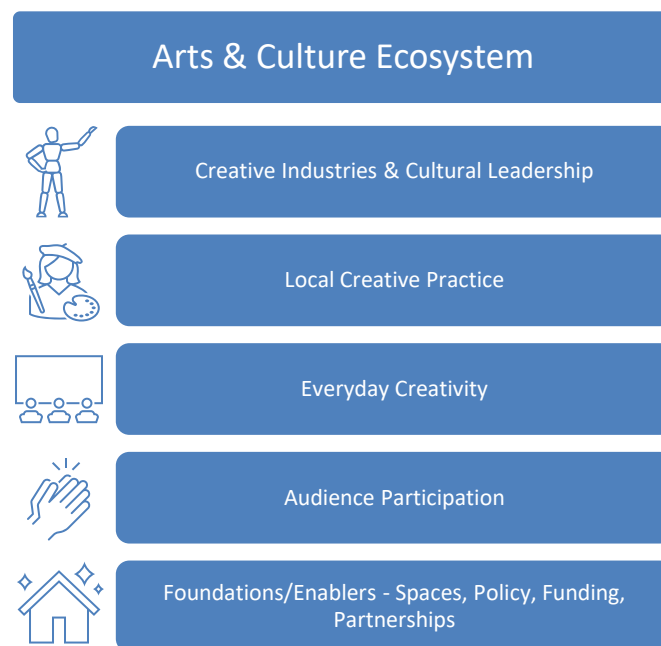
By strengthening all parts of the arts and culture ecosystem, we create:

- **Stronger community connection and belonging**
People connect with each other and with place through shared creative experiences.
- **More equitable participation**
More people take part across all layers of the ecosystem, with fewer barriers.
- **Improved wellbeing and quality of life**
Participation in creative activity supports mental health, joy, and everyday liveability.
- **A confident cultural identity**
Our City expresses a distinct identity through creative activity that is locally relevant, ambitious, and uniquely ours.
- **Creativity as part of everyday life**
Creative experiences are visible, accessible, and embedded in daily life

What Does a Connected Arts and Culture Ecosystem Look Like?

Arts and culture is understood broadly - encompassing creative expression, shared experiences, stories, spaces, and everyday participation. It operates as an ecosystem made up of interrelated activities - from everyday participation through to professional practice and the creative industries.

The purpose of this ecosystem is not simply to support artistic activity. It exists to create opportunities for participation, connection, expression and belonging across our community.



How the ecosystem works

- Everyday creativity and participation form the foundation - creative activity in libraries, parks, schools, and neighbourhood spaces.
- Creative practice and the local sector drive experimentation, identity, and new work.
- Creative industries and cultural leadership contribute visibility, economic value, and broader cultural impact.
- All layers are supported by enabling conditions - spaces, partnerships, investment, infrastructure, and systems.

Council's role is to create the conditions that support this movement and help the ecosystem thrive. Our strategic intent is to make creative participation visible, accessible and part of everyday life.

ACTION PLAN 2026-2029

How We Will Deliver

The following actions set out how the City of Charles Sturt will deliver on our key beliefs, translating our beliefs and principles into practical steps. These actions are organised across four focus areas that work together to support a strong and connected creative ecosystem through:

1. Artist Access – Making it simple for artists to find space, opportunities, and pathways to create.
2. Artist Practice – Supporting fair, sustainable and visible creative work.
3. Audience Participation & Development – Growing everyday participation in creative life.
4. Culture in Place – Embedding arts and culture in Council's processes, how places are planned, built, and experienced.

1. Artist Access

Make it easy for artists to do their work by providing opportunities, simplifying pathways, and removing unnecessary barriers.

Actions

Make it easy for artists to find and use spaces

- Identify and facilitate access to Council, partner, private and community spaces suitable for creative activity.
- Publish a simple, publicly accessible register of available spaces, with clear information about their suitability, conditions of use and booking pathways.
- Enable short-term, temporary and pop-up use of spaces through proportionate and streamlined approval processes.

Remove barriers to creative activity

- Match approval processes to the scale and risk of activity.
- Introduce a Creative Use Guarantee, providing a simple pathway for low-risk creative activity through clear requirements and responsive approvals.
- Explore partnerships and models, such as Renew Adelaide, that support activation of underused spaces and reduce barriers to creative use.

Support the full creative process

- Facilitate access to spaces for making, rehearsal, experimentation, testing and work-in-progress activity, not only presentation and exhibition.
- Support creative development opportunities alongside public outcomes.

Make opportunities easy to find

- Use clear, accessible communications to promote spaces, opportunities and pathways for involvement.
- Create an artist and creative business register and use it to communicate paid opportunities, key information and relevant updates.

Strengthen connections and partnerships

- Act as a connector between artists, property owners, community organisations and businesses to expand access to creative spaces and opportunities.
- Facilitate awareness of philanthropic, sponsorship and private-sector opportunities that support creative activity.

What this means

- More spaces are actively used for creative outcomes, increasing visibility and opportunity across the city
- Faster and clearer access for artists to spaces
- Increased creative activity across the city
- Increased visibility of arts practice across the city
- Improved connections between artists and business

2. Artist Practice

Support local artists by creating fair, clear and consistent ways to work with Council.

Actions

Make Charles Sturt a great place to practice

- Provide clear pathways, contacts and information for artists engaging with Council.
- Promote support available through Council, including opportunities, spaces, connections and funding.
- Review existing grants and support programs to ensure they remain relevant, accessible and easy to use.
- Create a distinct communications approach that showcases opportunities for artists and creative practitioners.

Support fair and sustainable creative practice

- Introduce a Fair Practice Commitment informed by recognised industry standards, including NAVA.
- Improve Council commissioning and engagement processes for artists.
- Build fair and accessible paid opportunities for artists across Council programs and projects.

Embed artists in Council projects and places

- Introduce paid Artist in Residence opportunities within Council projects, teams and initiatives.
- Involve artists and creative practitioners in engagement, planning, design and place-based projects.
- Introduce Creative Micro-Missions that provide small, paid opportunities for artists to test ideas and respond to local places and communities.

Invest in the future of creative practice

- Pursue partnerships, external funding and investment opportunities that strengthen delivery and expand opportunities for artists.
- Investigate the feasibility of a Creative Contribution Model that returns value to local artists and creative communities in emerging digital and AI contexts.
- Create paid pathways for artists to contribute to community wellbeing, cultural participation and knowledge sharing.

Strengthen the local creative ecosystem

- Support collaboration, networking and knowledge-sharing across artists, organisations, businesses and education providers.
- Identify, promote and strengthen areas where creative activity is already occurring.
- Work alongside existing organisations and pathways to complement, rather than duplicate, sector activity.
- Actively support opportunities for First Nations artists and cultural knowledge sharing in ways that reflect appropriate cultural protocols.

Tell the stories

- Share stories about local artists, creative processes and the value of creative work.
- Develop a distinct creative voice for arts and culture communications that reflects the sector, tells stories effectively and feels less "Council-y" while remaining aligned with Council values.
- Use storytelling to explain opportunities, processes and pathways in clear, accessible language.
- Profile a diverse range of artists and creative practices to increase visibility, trust and participation.
- Demonstrate the social, cultural and community value of creative work through storytelling and communication.

What this means

- Stronger and more sustainable creative practice occurring in our city.
- Open and transparent connections between artists and Council.
- Clearer and more confident engagement with artists and the creative sector.

- Stronger connections between artists and Council, and between artists one another.
- Increased visibility of artistic practice.

3. Audience Participation & Development

Make it easy for more people to take part in creative life. Participation in creative life is shaped by cost, time, location and awareness. The City of Charles Sturt will focus on creating the conditions that make participation visible, accessible and part of everyday life.

Actions

Design for everyday participation

- Create experiences in places people already go.
- Deliver a Culture Everywhere approach through regular, low-barrier creative experiences in libraries, parks, centres and neighbourhood spaces.
- Focus on a consistent and visible presence of creative activity across the city.
- Ensure experiences are welcoming, accessible and affordable.

Make creative opportunities easy to find

- Communicate clearly and consistently about opportunities to participate.
- Create a distinct communications voice that promotes creative life and connects to the Vision of this Plan.
- Reach people where they already are by exploring new ways to increase awareness of local creative opportunities.
- Publish stories and case studies that demonstrate creativity's contribution to connection, wellbeing and pride in place.

Reduce barriers to participation

- Explore a City Cultural Pass to improve access to local creative experiences.
- Collaborate with schools, community groups and partners to increase access to creative experiences.
- Build partnerships that support local access to arts, culture and wellbeing initiatives.

Support children and young people

- Deliver a First Creative Experience Guarantee, ensuring every young person has at least one quality creative experience close to home each year.
- Support youth and family-friendly arts and cultural activities.
- Create opportunities that encourage lifelong participation in creative life.

Create welcoming and culturally safe experiences

- Design and deliver activity that is welcoming and respectful for First Nations and multicultural communities.
- Embed cultural safety into program design, promotion and delivery.
- Work with First Nations artists and organisations to shape audience experiences and participation opportunities.

Work in partnership

- Co-design experiences with artists, creative organisations and community partners.
- Support arts and cultural experiences that reflect local stories, places and communities.
- Strengthen partnerships that connect arts and culture with wellbeing, community development and social outcomes.

What this means

- More people taking part in local cultural life
- Broader and more inclusive participation
- Creativity becoming part of everyday life

4. Culture in Place

Build culture into how the city is planned, built, and experienced. Arts and culture contribute to the identity, liveability and everyday experience of places. They should be considered alongside other elements of community infrastructure, helping create places where people feel connected, welcome and proud to belong.

Cultural outcomes are strongest when they are considered early and embedded in how places are planned, built, maintained and experienced. Council has an important role in ensuring arts and culture contribute to the identity, liveability and long-term success of our places.

Actions

Embed culture in planning and design

- Include creative thinking early in planning, design and engagement processes.
- Use culture to shape and reflect local identity, not simply decorate places.
- Involve artists and creative practitioners in place-based projects, planning and design.
- Build understanding across Council teams to support and advocate for cultural outcomes.

Strengthen creative places and precincts

- Identify areas where creative activity is growing or has potential.
- Develop a Creative Precinct approach to build visibility, identity and momentum.

- Support creative places through coordinated planning, activation and investment.
- Collaborate with artists, businesses and property owners to strengthen local creative presence.
- Create opportunities for collaboration through networks, directories and regular engagement.

Build cultural outcomes into infrastructure and development

- Ensure cultural outcomes are considered during planning, business case development and project design - not added later.
- Align cultural investment with identified creative precincts and priority places.
- Apply a flexible Arts and Culture investment approach that responds to project scale, context and opportunity.
- Scope and deliver cultural outcomes where they strengthen place identity, community connection and Plan objectives.
- Include expectations for cultural contributions in significant developments and major infrastructure projects.

Treat culture as part of community infrastructure

- Integrate cultural outcomes into asset planning and lifecycle management.
- Develop a Cultural Asset Management approach that supports long-term maintenance and quality.
- Include cultural investment within long-term asset management and financial planning.
- Advocate for cultural outcomes within State Government and partner-led infrastructure projects.

Use Council's influence to build cultural value

- Advocate for arts and culture outcomes and artist inclusion within development.
- Collaborate with developers to support creative and cultural opportunities where appropriate.
- Partner with arts, health and community organisations to strengthen wellbeing outcomes.
- Position creative activity as contributing to community wellbeing, identity and social connection.
- Advocate to State and Federal Government for investment in local arts and culture.

Make the value of culture visible

- Demonstrate how culture contributes to wellbeing, identity, connection and place.
- Share local stories that build understanding of arts and culture across Council and the community.

- Deliver a Charles Sturt Civic Commission each Council term, creating lasting records of the city's identity, values and stories while supporting artists through paid opportunities.

What this means

- Arts and culture outcomes are considered early in planning and development
- Stronger and more intentional arts and culture outcomes in projects
- Increased creative activity and visibility in key areas
- More effective use of Council's influence and investment
- More consistent and confident delivery of arts and culture outcomes

What Success Looks Like

- More people participating in creative life
- Stronger community connection and belonging
- Increased pride and connection to place
- More visible and accessible creative experiences
- Easier pathways for artists and communities to participate
- Arts and culture routinely considered in planning, projects and place-making

CLOSING STATEMENT

This Plan is about creating the conditions for a connected community. Through arts and culture, people can participate, contribute, share experiences and build meaningful connections with place and with one another. By making creativity visible, accessible and part of everyday life, this Plan helps deliver the Community Vision of Charles Sturt as "a place to call home, a place where we belong".

Together, these four areas:

- Artist Access
- Artist Practice
- Audience Participation & Development
- Culture in Place

Make it simpler for artists to access spaces and opportunities, support fair and sustainable creative practice, grow everyday participation in creative life, and embed culture in how places are shaped and experienced. This integrated approach ensures arts and culture are visible, valued and part of everyday life.

By opening up spaces, reducing barriers, and changing how council works, we can create the conditions for more people to take part - more often.

Success means creativity feels visible, local, and easy to be part of, not something people have to seek out, but something that naturally happens around them.

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