



# Arts & Cultural

Strategy

2008-2012

Adopted September 2008



## **ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Arts and cultural initiatives can play a vital role in supporting community cohesion and generating community pride, as well as fostering economic development and tourist visitation. Strong cultural programs enhance the 'liveability' of towns and rural areas and help build a positive image of Northern Grampians Shire in the eyes of residents and visitors alike. For those actively involved as participants, or engaged as audiences, the arts can offer an enriching experience that enhances individual quality of life and contributes to building a strong sense of community belonging and well-being.

Northern Grampians Shire Council has an important role in creating an environment where the arts and culture are nurtured, valued and supported across the entire community.

The Northern Grampians Shire is fortunate to have a growing arts sector that is diverse and vibrant. High quality events and programs organised by local artists and community groups have increased in recent years, providing Northern Grampians with a rich and varied program of cultural events, while also establishing a dialogue with the wider arts and cultural sector.

It is intended that the Northern Grampians Shire Council Arts and Cultural Strategy be action orientated to provide a tangible framework to support the development of the arts and culture in the Shire through a Council community partnership. It is fundamentally a guide for the delivery of Council services and Council support and to ensure that there is a whole of council response to community cultural development, in the Northern Grampians community.

### **VISION**

***"Our communities will be prosperous, inclusive and welcoming. We encourage a diverse and innovative economy, respecting our natural and built environment. A great place to live, work, visit and invest".***



Council encourages the growth of the arts and cultural initiatives as part of an integrated response to the ongoing development and promotion of the Northern Grampians Shire as a unique and thriving community that offers a wide range of benefits to current and intending residents and visitors. Cultural and artistic diversity is an important part of the Northern Grampians identity. Active community participation and engagement in the arts and cultural activities should be validated and encouraged. The importance of fostering innovation and excellence is also recognised.

### **COUNCIL'S ROLE**

Council encourages and supports community involvement in, and appreciation of, a wide range of arts and cultural activities at all levels. This is achieved through planning, projects, programs and infrastructure, and through its various staff, departments and services. Council facilities including Stawell Entertainment Centre, St Arnaud Town Hall, Kara Kara Hall, other local halls, Stawell and St Arnaud libraries, as well as other community facilities, provide spaces that support community access to, and participation in, arts and cultural programs and projects.

Council is committed to encouraging the development of the arts at all levels as it recognises the contribution that an active arts scene makes to the vibrancy of our community.

Council's intention is to create an environment where a wide range of individuals and community groups can prosper and develop their potential. Council aims to facilitate partnerships between community groups, government and other agencies, with a view to maximising available resources for the betterment of community life and for economic and tourism development. To achieve this Council provides advice, support, and encouragement to the community through its various officers and departments, in-kind support where practicable, and has funding mechanisms in place to ensure that worthy community projects and events across all fields, including in the arts and cultural areas, can be initiated and further developed.

## KEY THEMES AND STRATEGIES



### **The image of Northern Grampians**

Arts and cultural development plays an important role in the development of community cohesion, acceptance of social change, promotion of the shire as a vibrant community to live work and invest in as well as acknowledging the past. Opportunities for diverse cultural experiences are important for community cohesion.

### STRATEGY

- *Ensure a cross-Council and community engagement approach is pursued in the planning, management and delivery of services in the arts and cultural areas, consistent with Council's stated vision.*
- *Encourage the presentation of a wide range of high quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences across a range of public venues and presentation formats.*
- *Encourage opportunities for community appreciation of, and involvement in, a wide range of arts and cultural activities, both as engaged audiences and active participants.*
- *Provide opportunities to raise the profile of the arts and promote a strong positive cultural identity and arts industry in the shire. (i.e. Northern Grampians corporate gifts purchased from local artists.)*
- *Monitor and assess arts and cultural programs, facilities and initiatives in Northern Grampians to identify gaps in services to the community and take advantage of new opportunities where viable.*
- *Establish a Northern Grampians Arts Advisory committee. This committee would be appointed by council, having representation from professional artists, community organisations that conduct art/cultural events, indigenous community, youth, tourism and education organisations. This would be a council advisory committee whose role would be to assist council wide coordination of community arts and cultural sectors through:*
  - *management of public art and development,*
  - *develop new events and programs,*
  - *future review of the Council's Arts and Cultural strategy*
  - *investigate and promote opportunities for art/cultural funding*
  - *provide a reference body for the Regional Arts Development Officer*
  - *encourage cooperation of cultural organisations across the Shire*

## Indigenous Art and Culture.

Northern Grampians Shire Council is part of the broader Grampians region, which contains over 70% of Victoria's indigenous art sites. The Grampians therefore is a significant holder of the rich indigenous culture of southern Australia. The traditional owners of the area provide a strong identity with the district.



Council has the opportunity to ensure that indigenous heritage is acknowledged and celebrated; that the community understanding is promoted and that the development of contemporary indigenous cultural life is supported. Northern Grampians Shire can build and nurture relations with the indigenous community by:

- *Raising awareness, understanding and access to information in relation to the art and culture of the traditional owners within the Northern Grampians Shire.*

## Multiculturalism.

Australia is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse countries in the world with around 22% of the population born overseas. The Northern Grampians Shire in comparison has a relatively low ethnic background, around 6%. Despite this, Council recognises the importance of the art and culture of all people, regardless of their cultural and ethnic background.

## Built Environment and Public Art

The unique built attributes of the Northern Grampians Shire are an important acknowledgement of the Shires' past and should be conserved, exhibited and interpreted for future generations. Northern Grampians has a number of unique buildings from the 'gold era' that are acknowledged in heritage overlays. The management of these assets is important to help us understand the present, assisting communities to make creative and informed choices about shaping their future. Public Art and Urban Design can be utilised to acknowledge the past, identify the current themes of the community, and create an identity for the future. Public art initiatives are a key component in an ongoing image enhancement process with a strong urban design focus that enhances the built and natural heritage assets of the Shire.



*'The Borough Huts' by Will Rees, painted 1911*

## STRATEGY

- *Ensure that all sectors of council and the community have a good understanding of the heritage overlays/issues.*
- *Review and implement the plan for the management of Council's cultural and historic collection.*
- *Support museums and historical groups as important holders of the communities' history.*
- *Explore public art initiatives that celebrate a sense of space, place and pride through quality public art installations. The will include identifying potential sites, funding opportunities, maintenance of public art and commissioning.*



- *Develop a public art register, identifying artists, process and context of the development of work.*
- *Explore the opportunities for public art to be utilised to enhance the built environment*
- *Consideration of an allocation during the budget processes for public art.*

### **Events and Community Celebrations**

The quality of local events and cultural celebrations is important to residents and visitors alike. The Shire is the location for a number of specific and some long-standing community events and festivals including the Stawell Easter Gift, the Grampians Grape Escape and the Festival of St Arnaud. The building of community pride can be realised through an increase in the artistic and cultural components of these long-standing festivals and events, and in the development of new events, performances and exhibitions, such as the Grampians Arts Trail and Grampians TEXTURE, that increase community participation in arts and cultural programs. Partnerships with



professional artists can have significant input into the experience and outcomes of the community. This support also extends to the encouragement of local arts councils, writers groups, film societies, Stawell and St Arnaud Cinema volunteers, art/craft galleries and exhibitions, indigenous arts and cultural organisations, performing arts and visual arts groups.

### **STRATEGY**

- *Council to support community organisations wishing to present arts and cultural events by providing a whole of council coordinated approach to the provision of information and services.*
- *Council to support Stawell and St Arnaud Cinema Volunteer groups to be able to provide contemporary cinema offerings on a regular basis.*
- *Through Council's Hall Hire Policy, Council to support community organisations wishing to present arts and cultural events with the provision of venues and services as part of Council's in-kind contribution.*
- *Northern Grampians Shire to continue it's commitment to support the Regional Arts Development Officer position, and make available office space/support so that the officer has a work place within the shire.*
- *Council to support volunteers of community organisations who conduct arts and cultural events.*
- *Assist longstanding events such as the Stawell Easter Gift, Grampians Grape Escape and St Arnaud Festival to grow the arts and cultural components of their events.*

### **Artists' Skills Development as a sustainable industry**

The professional development of local artists, writers and performers as well as initiatives that foster the talents of young people, are an important stimulus to the continued development of a vibrant cultural community. Artists as well as community organizations that present and promote arts and cultural events need to be supported and stimulated. Arts and cultural industries offer new economic development opportunities that build on local strengths.



## STRATEGY

- *Develop an artist's register that details professional artists and venues suitable for cultural events.*
- *Foster development of a diverse, active and entrepreneurial local arts sector, through facilitating access to local networks, facilities and training.*
- *Ensure that professional development opportunities are supported in the shire to stimulate the sustainability of the arts and cultural sector.*
- *Support shire and regional opportunities to showcase local artists work*
- *Provide opportunities for local artists to present their work in surrounding towns.*
- *Support the promotion of artists as significant contributors to the economy of the region and explore the opportunity for a greater inclusion of the arts in the tourism industry.*
- *Encourage connection between artist and schools to enhance arts programs and develop pathways into the arts.*



*Stawell SC students working with Carmel Wallace to create a public arts sculpture*



*Concongella School students and teachers create a sculpture with renowned local artist Kevin Free.*



## Arts and Culture Strategy ACTION PLAN

### The Image of the Northern Grampians

Identified Strategy	Actions Required	Resources	Timeframe
<p>Ensure a cross-Council and community engagement approach is pursued in the planning, management and delivery of services in the arts and cultural areas, consistent with Council's stated vision.</p> <p>Establish a Northern Grampians Arts Advisory committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a Northern Grampians Arts Advisory committee</li> <li>- Council endorsement of Terms of Reference and membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council venue</li> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- administration support</li> </ul>	by Sept 2010
Encourage the presentation of a wide range of high quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences across a range of public venues and presentation formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council Officer to liaise with Regional Arts Victoria and networks on their activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Encourage opportunities for community appreciation of, and involvement in, a wide range of arts and cultural activities, both as engaged audiences and active participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council Officer to liaise with Regional Arts Victoria and networks on their activities and opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Council venues</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Provide opportunities to raise the profile of the arts and promote a strong positive cultural identity and arts industry in the shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council Officer to liaise with Regional Arts Victoria, Council Eco Dev team, and Communications Officer on promoting arts as an industry</li> <li>- For consideration within Councils business and marketing plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Responsible Manager,</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Monitor and assess arts and cultural programs, facilities and initiatives in Northern Grampians to identify gaps in services to the community and take advantage of new opportunities where viable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council Officer to liaise with Regional Arts Victoria on addressing opportunities to address gaps in arts and culture programs</li> <li>- Seek funding opportunities where gaps are identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Arts advisory Committee</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Raise awareness, understanding and access to information in relation to Northern Grampians shire traditional owners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing networks between Council and the Indigenous communities to gather information for promotion and marketing.</li> <li>- Take advice from the Indigenous community on appropriate forums for promotion and establishment of programs that promote the Indigenous culture in our Shire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Responsible Manager time,</li> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Responsible Manager,</li> </ul>	by Sept 2009

### Built Environment and Public Art

Issue	Proposed Action	Resources	timeframe
Ensure that all sectors of council and the community have a good understanding of the heritage overlays/issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluate sites and cross reference to Heritage Study/Overlays</li> <li>- Promote for consideration when amendments required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Council's Asset Management program</li> <li>- Planning Dept.</li> </ul>	by April 2010  Ongoing
Develop a plan for the management of Council's cultural and historic collection.  Support museums and historical groups as important holders of the communities' history.  Develop a public art register, identifying artists, process and context of the development of work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council Officer to document the collection and develop a management plan in consultation with historical groups</li> <li>- Develop a register of all museums and historical groups in the shire</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Council officer time</li> </ul>	by Dec 2010  June 2009
Explore public art initiatives that celebrate a sense of space, place and pride through quality public art installations.  Explore the opportunities for public art to be utilised to enhance the built environment  Consideration of an allocation during the budget processes for public art.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seek funding opportunities. identifying potential sites Plan for the maintenance of public art</li> <li>- Prepare for Council's consideration a five year commissioning plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Responsible Manager, time,</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	Ongoing

### Events and Community Celebrations

Issue	Proposed Action	Resources	timeframe
Council to support community organisations wishing to present arts and cultural events by providing a whole of council coordinated approach to the provision of information and services.  Council to support community organisations wishing to present arts and cultural events with the provision of venues and services as part of Councils in-kind contribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of events through Council's resources.</li> <li>- Support provided through Council's Events and Tourism programs.</li> <li>- Determined as requested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Website,</li> <li>- Communications Officer</li> <li>- Council Officer</li> <li>- Events and Tourism Officers</li> <li>- Council's events budget allocation</li> <li>- Through Council's Hall Hire Policy, (subject to Council budget considerations and policy direction)</li> </ul>	Ongoing       Ongoing



Issue	Proposed Action	Resources	timeframe
Northern Grampians Shire to continue it's commitment to support the Regional Arts Victoria Officers.	- Contribute funding to engage support of a Regional Arts Development Officer, in conjunction with Regional Arts Victoria	- \$10,000 allocated in budget process - Council Officer time. - Casual Office space in Stawell & St Arnaud	Ongoing, reviewed annually during budget and policy reviews
Council to support volunteers of community organisations who conduct arts and cultural events that will enhance the delivery of a vibrant community arts sector in the Shire.	- Council Officer to liaise with Regional Arts Victoria to identify skill development opportunities for volunteers	- Council officer time, - Regional Arts Victoria	Ongoing
Assist longstanding events such as the Stawell Easter Gift, Grampians Grape Escape and St Arnaud festival to grow the arts and cultural components of their events.	- Council Officer to liaise with Regional Arts Victoria and networks on their activities and opportunities - Promotion of events through Council's resources.	- Support provided through Council's Events and Tourism programs - Council officer time, - Regional Arts Victoria	Ongoing
Council to support Stawell and St Arnaud Cinema Volunteer groups to be able to provide contemporary cinema offerings on a regular basis.	- Council Officer and Entertainment Centre Manager to liaise with Cinema volunteer networks on their activities and opportunities. - Council to facilitate the budget for the Cinema	- Council officer time, - Other Council officer time. - Allowance in Council budget for income and expenses.	Ongoing, reviewed annually during budget processes

#### Artist Skill Development as a sustainable Industry

Issue	Proposed Action	Resources	timeframe
Support the promotion of artists as significant contributors to the economy of the region and explore the opportunity for a greater inclusion of the arts in the tourism.  Support shire and regional opportunities to showcase local artists work i.e. (Grampians Arts Trail)  Provide opportunities for local artists to present their work in surrounding towns i.e. performance or visual mini tours within the shire.	- Support provided through Council's Events and Tourism programs - Council Officer to liaise with Regional Arts Victoria and Business and Tourism program on activities and opportunities. promotion through Council's Communications Officer and council publications	- Council officer time, - Regional Arts Victoria - Events and Tourism Officers time - Communication Officer's time - Council publications and website space	Ongoing

Issue	Proposed Action	Resources	timeframe
Develops an artist's register that details professional artists and venues suitable for cultural events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council Officer and Regional Arts Victoria to document the artist and venues.</li> <li>- Promotion of the availability of artist and venues through Council's website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Promotion of events through Council's resources.</li> </ul>	by June 2010
Foster development of a diverse, active and entrepreneurial local arts sector, through facilitating access to local networks, facilities and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seek funding opportunities to support the development of the local arts sector in conjunction with the already established networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Council officer time,</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Ensure that professional development opportunities are supported in the shire to stimulate the sustainability of the arts and cultural sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seek funding and maintain liaison with Regional Arts Victoria to support current events and the establishment of activities including arts workshops, business skills for artists, and artists in residence programs.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council officer time,</li> <li>- Regional Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Promotion of events through Council's resources.</li> </ul>	Ongoing