

Title:	Arts and Culture Policy
Type:	Council
Adopted:	27 September 2023
File No:	SF/103
Review Date:	September 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Murrindindi Shire Council is proud to acknowledge the Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the traditional owners of the land we now call Murrindindi Shire.

We pay our respects to First Nations leaders and elders, past, present and emerging, who are the keepers of history, traditions, knowledge and culture of this land.

We commit to working in collaboration with traditional owners of this land in a spirit of reconciliation and partnership.

1. Purpose

Creative expression is an essential element in communities. Engaging in art and cultural activities builds a sense of community pride and identity; inspires community and civic participation; creates a culture of inclusion; contributes to resilient local economies; promotes health and wellbeing and enhances the liveability of the Murrindindi Shire. This Arts and Culture Policy provides a framework for the support and delivery of arts and cultural services into the future and describes Council's supporting role in arts and culture activities and initiatives.

2. Rationale

Murrindindi Shire's 10 Year Community Vision captures the importance of arts and culture via the following statement:

“Through our combined efforts, our community is vibrant and resilient. We enjoy, participate in and promote culture and the arts, sport and recreation.”

In recognition of the importance held by community for arts and culture there is a strategy in the Murrindindi Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 under Resilient Communities to “Celebrate the communities vibrant, diverse and creative people”.

The commitment made via this Arts and Culture policy supports both the Community Vision and Council Plan and communicates Council's commitment to encouraging artistic and cultural activities and events into the future.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all staff, contractors and volunteers who work with us.

4. Policy

Murrindindi Shire Council understands the value of its arts and culture sectors in enhancing social, cultural, economic and other opportunities for our residents. Arts and cultural activities create a ripple effect of benefits across the community and make a vital contribution to community health and wellbeing. Council recognises that a range of art and cultural activities occur within communities due to dedicated volunteers.

Arts and Culture Policy

Our commitment

Council will:

- Work to further develop the arts, culture and heritage through effective partnership with the community and other key stakeholders.
- Play an enabling and supporting role in art and cultural activities, wherever possible.
- Proactively use its resources to link people together to explore, create and produce.
- Provide access to art and cultural opportunities through Council delivered services including Libraries, Youth Services, Children's Services, and other community building activities.
- Provide the Grants and Sponsorship program to support arts and cultural activities.

5. Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are designed to support Council and community in achieving the commitment made within this policy:

5.1 Encourage community participation and inclusion

Community arts and cultural initiatives are an important contributor to the health and wellbeing of Murrindindi communities. They provide an opportunity for creative expression and for the community to socialise and develop support networks. Like any essential service, these initiatives should be available to all residents regardless of income, age, physical ability, gender and race.

To encourage community and civic participation Council will:

- Encourage opportunities for all members of the community to participate in art and cultural activities.
- Foster and celebrate an understanding and appreciation of local Indigenous culture.
- Support artistic initiatives and cultural events that promote shire wide, community and individual involvement.
- Engage with the community in relevant activities and events, to ensure inclusion and access for all members of the community.

5.2 Creative partnerships and networks

Council recognises that key stakeholders, including government, business and the broader community can together play an important role in creating a strong and vibrant region.

To foster connections within and outside our Shire, Council will:

- Maintain and develop partnerships with state and federal governments and peak bodies including Regional Arts Victoria and Creative Victoria to enhance our capabilities and achieve our goals.
- Seek opportunities to forge links between the many cultural groups within our shire, and to help optimise the use of existing resources and skills.
- Where appropriate, facilitate and encourage cross departmental planning and partnerships to ensure an integrated approach to arts and culture.
- Emphasise the importance of networks and partnerships, not only between different parts of the arts, culture and heritage sectors, but in linking these sectors with the broader community.

5.3 Creative spaces and public places (Built and natural environment)

Council understands the importance of providing creative spaces and public places to encourage and develop art and cultural experiences across our area. Our built and natural environment plays an important role in bringing the community together to create and enjoy many and varied cultural activities.

Responsible Officer: Manager Community Wellbeing

Adopted: 27 September 2023.

Council will:

- Encourage the use of our existing Council-owned and managed infrastructure, such as our Libraries, Town halls, Visitor Information Centres, parks and gardens, to enable a diverse range of art and cultural activities to occur.
- Work with community and groups to ensure all arts and culture activities have appropriate permissions from Council where required.
- Consider and support the facilitation of art and cultural initiatives that support innovative and creative design when planning civic spaces and places, where appropriate.
- Encourage the protection and promotion of natural and cultural heritage places and culturally significant areas.
- Encourage the use arts, culture, and heritage initiatives to create destinations that attract and inspire both residents and locals.

5.4 Investing in local practices

Investing in local practices is important for the growth, longevity and vitality of our community.

Council will:

- Provide support to local artists, creative and cultural industries to encourage economic growth and cultural diversity, where possible.
- Partner with local artists, including Indigenous artists to produce promotional material for the shire, wherever possible.
- Provide support to local artists, arts organisations and community groups through an accessible grants and sponsorships program, in-kind support and physical resources.
- Encourage mentoring between established creative businesses and new entrants.
- Include art as an element with major projects where possible and practical.

5.5 Promotion, Communication and Cultural Tourism

With close proximity to Melbourne, and our strengths in tourism, Council understands the economic potential of promoting our area as an exciting cultural tourism destination.

To help raise our profile, Council will:

- Promote art and cultural activities and attractions in the Shire via multiple platforms including online.
- Encourage the development of place-based arts, culture and heritage projects to support the promotion of our region, including through our grants and sponsorships program.
- Council as a custodian of a large art collection, will consider access to this collection and ongoing maintenance requirements.

6. Related Policies, Strategies and Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Creative State 2021-2025
- Murrindindi Shire 10-year Community Vision
- Murrindindi Shire Council Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Murrindindi Shire Council Library Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2026

Arts and Culture Policy

- Murrindindi Shire Council Tourism and Events Strategy 2019-2025
- Murrindindi Shire Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2024
- Murrindindi Shire Council Grants and Sponsorship Policy

7. Council Plan

This policy is in accordance with the Council Plan 2021-2025 Strategic Objectives:

- Resilient Communities – To ensure we are welcoming, inclusive, caring and connected.
- Beautiful Townships and Rural Settings – To create a better place for our community and visitor to live in harmony with our rural character, natural beauty and heritage.
- Growth and Opportunity – To prioritise and promote a culture in which the economy, businesses and community can grow and thrive.

8. Management and Review

This Policy will be reviewed in August 2026 by Manager Community Wellbeing

9. Consultation

The cross functional nature of the 2023 policy review was supported across all Council Departments.

10. Human Rights Charter

This policy has been developed with consideration of the requirements under the [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities](#).

11. Gender Impact Assessment

This policy has been developed/reviewed with consideration of the criteria which inspires equality under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.