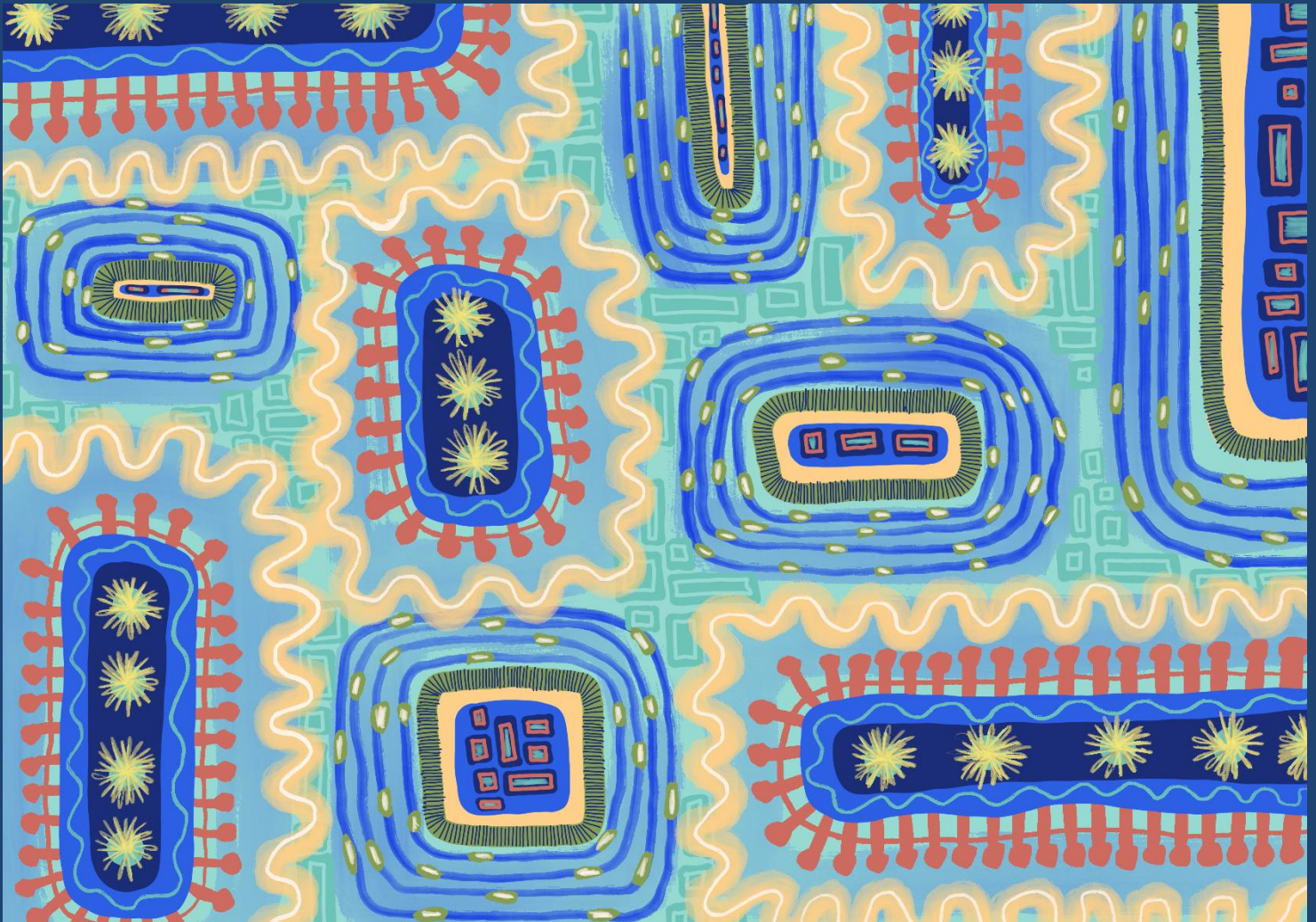


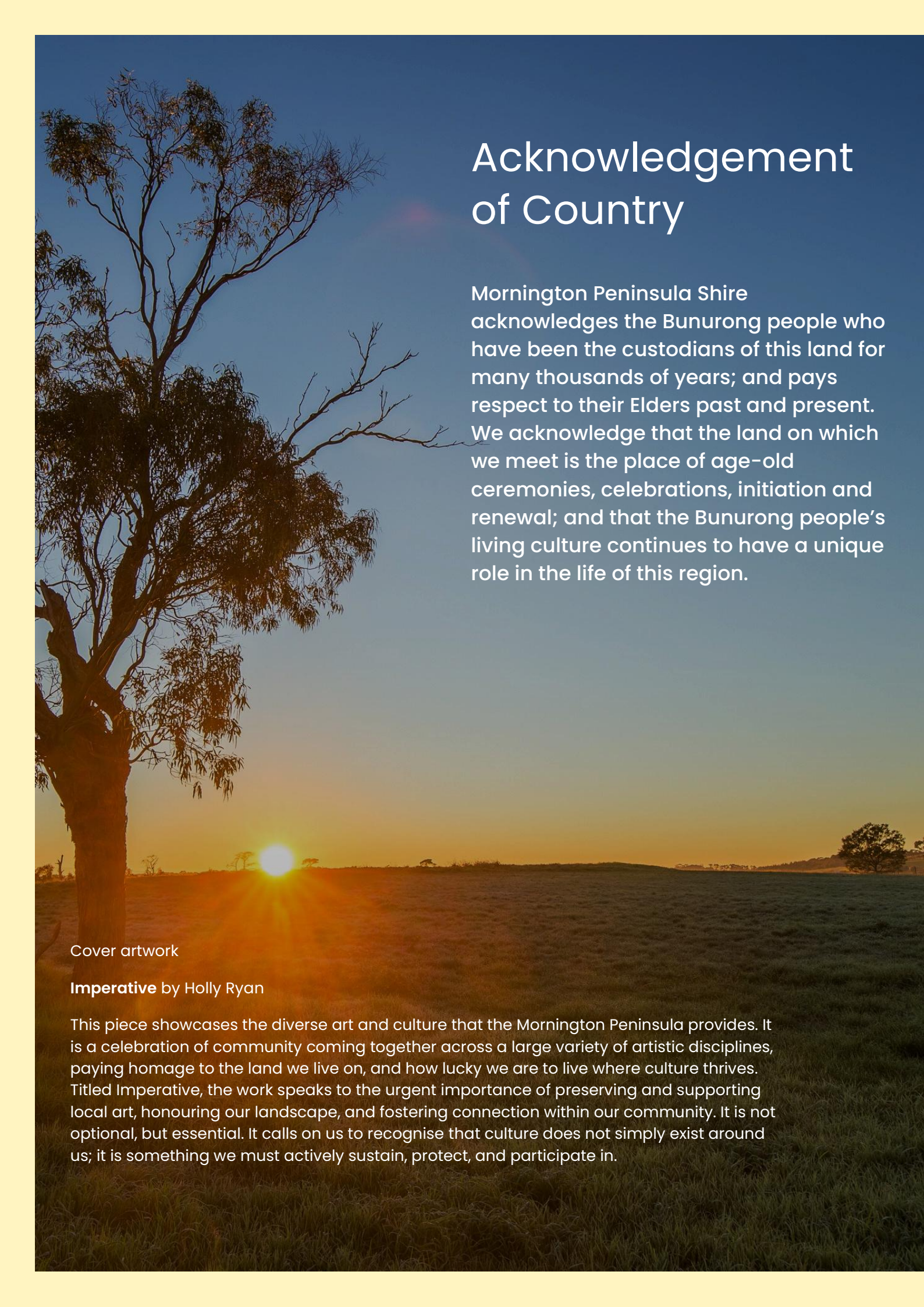
Arts, Culture and Events Plan



Mornington
Peninsula Shire

2027–2037





Acknowledgement of Country

Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges the Bunurong people who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years; and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong people's living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.

Cover artwork

Imperative by Holly Ryan

This piece showcases the diverse art and culture that the Mornington Peninsula provides. It is a celebration of community coming together across a large variety of artistic disciplines, paying homage to the land we live on, and how lucky we are to live where culture thrives. Titled *Imperative*, the work speaks to the urgent importance of preserving and supporting local art, honouring our landscape, and fostering connection within our community. It is not optional, but essential. It calls on us to recognise that culture does not simply exist around us; it is something we must actively sustain, protect, and participate in.

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Mayor's Message

MESSAGE TO BE INCLUDED IN
ADOPTED VERSION OF THE PLAN.

Mayor
Mornington Peninsula Shire

CEO's Message

MESSAGE TO BE INCLUDED IN
ADOPTED VERSION OF THE PLAN.

Mark Stoermer
Chief Executive Officer
Mornington Peninsula Shire



Credit: Being Sourced

Why arts, culture and events matters

Arts, culture and events are how we come together. They are where stories are shared, ideas are tested, friendships are formed, and pride in place is built. On the Mornington Peninsula, they are woven into everyday life — from local markets and music nights to major exhibitions, festivals and community celebrations.

The 2022 National Arts Participation Survey found that 97% of Victorians aged 15 and over engage in creative and artistic activities, with 84% reporting positive outcomes from participation. These strong results highlight the importance of the sector to community life. They also reflect the many ways arts, culture and events contribute to the wellbeing, identity and vitality of communities.

Key reasons arts, culture and events matter include:

Strengthening social cohesion and belonging

Arts, culture and events create shared experiences that build meaningful connections. By bringing together people from diverse backgrounds, they reduce isolation, promote understanding and strengthen community ties.

Celebrating and preserving identity

Through music, dance, art and food, these activities showcase local and diverse cultural traditions. They honour heritage while supporting contemporary expression and strengthening pride in place.

Promoting inclusion and diversity

By reflecting a wide range of cultures and perspectives, arts and events encourage respect, empathy and cross-cultural understanding. This supports a vibrant and harmonious multicultural community.

Supporting economic and social vitality

Arts, culture and events contribute to local economies by supporting creative thinking, practice and innovation in our business community. They also provide opportunities for learning, participation and broader community engagement.

Enhancing wellbeing

Participation in cultural activities fosters creativity, joy and connection. These experiences support mental wellbeing and help people feel valued and engaged.

Encouraging participation

Arts, culture and events promote involvement in community life, including volunteering for local initiatives. They strengthen collective pride and shared responsibility, in addition to reducing social isolation.

Arts, culture and events on the Peninsula

The Mornington Peninsula is home to one of Victoria's most diverse and dynamic creative communities. Spanning 720 square kilometres of spectacular coastline, hinterland, rural landscapes, the Peninsula has long inspired creative expression and engaging gatherings — from the ancient cultural practices of the Bunurong people through to the thriving contemporary creative sector and a wide of array of events that define and draw people to the region today.

This creativity is embedded in the spirit of place. It can be seen in the region's world-class galleries and sculpture parks, heard in the live music that spills from vineyard cellar doors and at events, felt in the community festivals that bring townships to life, and experienced in the heritage walks, open studios and cultural events that draw visitors from across Australia and beyond.

The region is home to artists, creatives, cultural organisations and volunteers working across visual arts, music, performance, festivals, heritage and community-led cultural activity. Creativity happens in many forms and settings – from galleries and theatres to halls, foreshore reserves, streetscapes, wineries and pop-up spaces.

Arts, culture and events are not separate activities, they are deeply interwoven. A festival brings

together musicians, visual artists and food producers. A gallery opening activates a town centre. A heritage walk tells stories that inspire new creative work. An event at a winery introduces visitors to local talent. These connections are what make the Peninsula's cultural landscape so distinctive.

As a nationally recognised visitor destination, exhibitions and festivals help activate places year-round, complementing the region's natural, well-being and food-based attractions. These strengths are a perfect complement to attract business and sporting events which can bring visitors and encourage them to spend in local townships in traditionally quieter periods.

Our Council Plan 2025–2029 recognises these opportunities through the following strategic approaches:

- **People**, Strategy 2.2.3: Encourage and support a rich, inclusive and vibrant arts and culture community
- **Prosperity**, Strategy 3.1.: Promote the Peninsula is a premier cultural and tourism destination, attracting local, national and global visitors and events

This Plan delivers on both commitments.



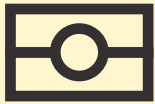
Population: **175,153**



Median age: **48**



Residents with a disability: **39,239**



1,720 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples



5.4% speak a language other than English at home



1,555 local jobs in arts and recreation



6.7 million visitors annually



\$1.5 billion total visitor spend annually



399,355 visitors participate in Arts and Heritage activities



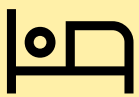
4.8 million day trip visitors annually



80% of visitors are from Melbourne



Over 55s make up **33%** of visitations



1.8 million overnight visitors annually



92% of overnight visitors are from Victoria



Autumn is the most popular season for visitation.



Credit: Mayors Short Story Awards

Our creative landscape

The Peninsula's creative landscape has been assessed and shaped into five pillars (which aligns to our service areas). These interconnected pillars overlap and reinforce one another, capturing the breadth and depth of arts, culture and events across the Mornington Peninsula.



Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery:

The Shire's flagship visual arts venue — a dedicated home for visual art, exhibitions and collections that showcase local and national stories, spark creative conversation and draw audiences to the Peninsula year-round.



Public Art:

Art in the everyday – in our streets, parks, town centres and community spaces – and the programs, networks and opportunities that support participation.



Creative Sector:

The artists, performers, musicians, writers and creative programs that give the Peninsula its distinctive creative energy and soundtrack.



Festivals and Events:

The festivals, markets, sporting events, cultural celebrations and community gatherings that bring people together, activate places and drive the visitor economy.



Cultural Heritage:

The heritage sites, historical societies, museums, cultural education programs and First Nations knowledge that connect us to the stories of this place



Credit: Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery
photo by Mick Russell

Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery

At the heart of the Peninsula's visual arts scene is the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (MPRG), one of Australia's leading regional galleries and the largest public gallery in Melbourne's south-east.

Founded in 1971 by renowned art critic and historian Alan McCulloch, the gallery began with a strong focus on contemporary Australian art, including works by Arthur Boyd, Russel Drysdale and Fred Williams. That legacy continues today through a vibrant program that blends local, national and international perspectives from innovative curatorial projects and local artist showcases to major touring exhibitions like the Archibald Prize, which drew record audiences of 50,000 in 2023.

From innovative curatorial projects and local artist showcases to collection-based and touring exhibitions (including from National Gallery of Australia and Art Gallery of NSW, like the Archibald Prize in 2013 and 2023), MPRG remains a place for ideas, creativity and community connection. Its biennial National Works on Paper prize, running since 1991, now stands among Australia's most prestigious art awards.

Supporting local and young talent, MPRG has a local artist focus space and an annual exhibition of Peninsula-based VCE artists' work. A range of programs are offered to the community, including workshops, pre-primary and secondary level programs, as well as adult and later-years community focused activities.

Free entry to the gallery makes it an accessible cultural anchor for residents and visitors alike, that is highly valued by respondents to our community engagement and stakeholder consultation (*refer to Development of the Plan*).

Our current approach to supporting this pillar includes:

- **curating leading exhibitions** – from major touring shows like the Archibald Prize to self-generated curatorial projects and exhibitions that reflect the Peninsula's character
- **growing and caring for the collection** – more than 2,500 works, shared through exhibitions, publications and interpretive resources
- **opening art up to everyone** – through creative learning programs, workshops, guided tours, family activities and events for all ages
- **supporting local artists** – through exhibitions, commissions, the Police Point Artist-in-Residence program and the MPRG Shop, a curated retail space showcasing local makers
- **partnering broadly** – with the Friends of MPRG, schools, universities and national arts institutions to create opportunities and extend the gallery's reach
- **supporting artist development** – including the Police Point Artist-in-Residence program and professional development events "test"



The Archibald Prize at MPRG drew a record audience of **50,000** people in 2023.



Credit: *Painting our Future*, Julian Clavijo

Public Art

Art on the Peninsula is not confined to galleries. It spills into streets, parks, foreshore reserves, laneways and unexpected corners, shaping how people experience the region's towns and landscapes.

Public art is accessible to everyone. It animates town centres, adds character to civic spaces and invites visitors to explore. From large-scale sculptures set against coastal and rural backdrops to murals that bring main streets to life, these works respond to the Peninsula's natural environment and community stories. They acknowledge Bunurong cultural heritage, maritime and agricultural histories, and the region's unique sense of place.

Temporary installations and site-responsive commissions invite residents and visitors to encounter art as part of everyday life. In doing so, they strengthen connections between people and place and keep the creative landscape fresh and evolving.

Community engagement and stakeholder consultation identified strong support for more public art in town centres, touring exhibitions and opportunities for youth and emerging artists to develop their skills.

Our current approach to supporting this pillar includes:

- **embedding art in place** – delivering the Public Art Policy and Framework so artworks are well-curated, site-responsive and add to the character of public spaces
- **activating spaces with temporary works** – including murals, installations and projects like Peninsula LIVE: Music Stories, BrightWalls and Midsumma activations
- **integrating art into Shire projects** – partnering across Shire teams and with external stakeholders to weave creativity into infrastructure and placemaking, from waste trucks to community facilities
- **creating opportunities for local artists** – inviting expressions of interest for public art projects, prioritising Peninsula-based practitioners and supporting community-led outcomes
- **promoting what's already here** – sharing stories and locations through the Shire's communication channels

Council's BrightWalls Mural Program is bringing colour, creativity and local stories to visitor hubs across the Peninsula. Temporary public art project—such as Isabella Capezio's To build a Home, presented as part of Midsumma Festival on prominent Shire building facades—demonstrate the power of art to transform the everyday into the extraordinary.



Credit: Creators Network Event

Creative Sector

The creative sector is the Peninsula's engine room of cultural identity and enterprise, craftspeople and cultural workers who shape the region's creative life, along with the organisations that support them.

With 1,555 creative jobs across the Peninsula, it plays a significant economic role – generating employment, attracting visitors and enriching the region's distinctive lifestyle. The sector spans visual and performing arts, writing, music/songwriting design, film, digital media and craft, and is sustained by the galleries, studios, venues, festivals, markets and community programs that connect creative work with audiences and ensure participation is accessible to all.

The Peninsula is home to a remarkable depth and diversity of creative talent. Established professionals with national and international profiles work alongside mid-career practitioners, emerging artists and passionate community participants. Commercial galleries in Sorrento, Red Hill, Moorooduc and Flinders sit alongside artist-run spaces, open-studio networks and community art groups. Organisations such as the Mornington Peninsula Music Network, the Peninsula Chamber Musicians, MOTH (Music on the Hill) and Baluk Arts – one of only two nationally recognised Aboriginal arts centres in metropolitan Melbourne – anchor creative activity across the region and provide vital pathways for development, connection and cultural expression.

Yet like many regional creative communities, the sector faces challenges. Community engagement and stakeholder consultation identified the need for more affordable studios and exhibition spaces, better access to rehearsal and performance venues, stronger professional development pathways, and greater recognition of artists as essential contributors to the local economy.

Growing local talent and nurturing the next generation of creative practitioners is central to the sector's long-term sustainability. From school-based music and arts programs to emerging artist mentoring, youth recording initiatives such as the Capel Sound Studios program, and VCE artist exhibitions at MPRG, the Peninsula has the foundations to build a creative community where people can develop their practice, sustain a livelihood and contribute to the cultural and economic life of the region.

Our current approach to supporting this pillar includes:

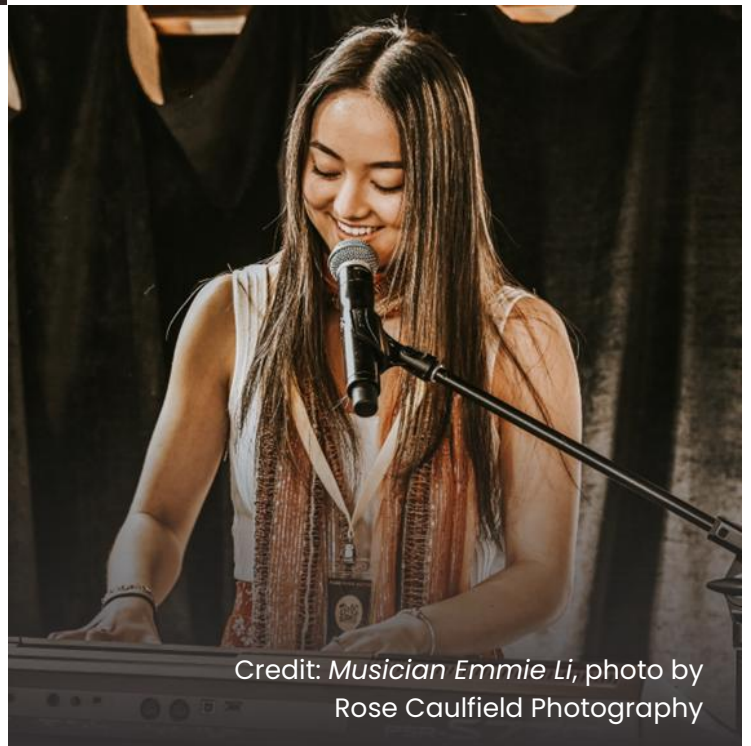
- **connecting creatives across disciplines** – through the Mornington Peninsula Creators Network and Mornington Peninsula Music Network, facilitating networking, professional development and collaboration
- **strengthening live music** – activating venues, supporting artists and streamline event processes
- **linking artists to opportunities** – through the Creative Register, connecting local creatives with employment and commissioning opportunities across Shire and community projects
- **delivering community arts programs** – in partnership with community houses, libraries and schools across the Peninsula
- **promoting arts and culture** – through the 'Our Arts and Culture' website, digital channels and partnerships with creative businesses and cultural organisations



Credit: James Tylor,
Turrangka...in the shadows
Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery Exhibition

61% of survey
respondents
participate in
visual arts

33% of survey
respondents
play music



Credit: Musician Emmie Li, photo by
Rose Caulfield Photography



Credit: Being sourced

There are 1,555
creative jobs
across the
peninsula



Credit: Being sourced

Festivals and Events

Events and festivals are at the heart of Peninsula life. From large-scale festivals and sporting competitions to local markets, live music nights and community gatherings, they bring people together, showcase local talent, attract visitors and boost the local economy.

But events do more than generate economic activity. They build community. They foster connection, celebrate identity, encourage physical activity and support mental wellbeing through shared experiences. They create opportunities for local businesses, tourism operators and creative industries to thrive.

Victoria is widely recognised as the events capital of Australia, and the Peninsula plays a vital role in that story. Each year, the region hosts hundreds of cultural, music, food and wine, ceremonial and sporting events, a strong mix of community-led and commercial activity.

The opportunity is significant. Visit Victoria research shows two in three Melburnians travelled to Victoria's tourism regions for an event in the past year, and 79% say a regional event would encourage them to extend their stay. With 6.7 million visitors annually and a \$1.5 billion visitor economy, the Peninsula is well-placed to increase visitor yield and dispersal. Converting just 5% of day-trippers to overnight stays could mean an additional 240,000 overnight stays and flow-on spending across hospitality, retail and attractions.

The challenge is seasonality. The Peninsula experiences pronounced peaks and troughs in visitation, and the current events calendar shows a clear gap during the winter months from June to October. Building a diverse, year-round calendar that drives visitation beyond the peak summer period is a core priority of this Plan.

Amongst respondents to the engagement for this Plan, and more broadly through the region's visitor economy, there is an appetite to attract more externally delivered events to diversify offerings, activate local venues and reduce reliance on Shire-led initiatives.

Our current approach to supporting this pillar includes:

- **streamlining event approvals** – simplifying the permitting process for events that activate public spaces and bring people together
- **supporting event organisers** – through in-kind support, Community Investment Funding grants and subsidies
- **promoting Shire spaces** – enhancing marketing of available venues, including capacity and permitted uses
- **providing event planning and permitting guidance** – offering resources and support to help event organisers navigate requirements
- **partnering and promoting** – supporting events and festivals through collaboration and shared promotion

Discover what's on all year round

January

- Peninsula Film Festival
- Australia Day events
- Two Bays Trail Run
- Peninsula Summer Music Festival
- Rye Gift
- Portsea Swim Classic
- Red Hot Summer
- Greek Epiphany festivals

February

- Portsea Polo
- Flinders Fringe Festival
- Pier to Perignon Swim

March

- Red Hill Show
- Piers and Pinots
- Tyabb Air Show
- Australian Heritage Festival

April

- Flinders Motoring Heritage Show
- Cerberus Open Day
- Mornington Cup
- Sorrento Writers Festival
- Red Hot Summer

May

- Mornington Running Festival
- Coastrek

June

- Taste Sorrento (inc Burning Man)
- Winter Wine Weekend
- Mornington Winter Music Festival

July

August

- Small Business Festival/
Business Awards (alt yrs)

September

- National Works on Paper

October

- Seniors Festival
- Mornington Main Street Festival
- Round the Bay in a Day

November

- Italian Festival
- Southern Peninsula Basketball Tournament
- VineHop
- Coolart Open Day
- Point Nepean Heritage Motor Show

December

- Christmas Carols events



Credit: Hill and Ridge Market



Credit: *The Briars*

Cultural Heritage

The Peninsula holds stories that stretch back tens of thousands of years. The Peninsula's landscapes, waterways and cultural places carry deep spiritual significance, and Bunurong connection to Country remains a living, evolving relationship that continues to shape the region's identity today. This enduring custodianship underpins every other chapter of the Peninsula's history.

European settlement from the early 1800s added new layers. Fishing villages, pastoral properties and later holiday retreats were established along the coastline and hinterland, gradually shaping the Peninsula into the destination it is today. Maritime industries, agriculture, defence, tourism and creative communities have all left their mark on local townships and landscapes.

This rich history is preserved and shared through a vibrant network of 28 historical societies, museums, heritage properties and community groups. They safeguard artefacts, photographs, documents and oral histories, and bring them to life through exhibitions, talks, publications and events. Places like McCrae Homestead, Beleura House and Garden, Watts Cottage and the Briars Homestead tell stories spanning Bunurong custodianship, early colonial settlement, maritime and military history, and the Peninsula's creative life.

Council's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–27 strengthens this work. It commits to celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, arts and cultures; supporting self-determination; and building meaningful partnerships with First Nations community groups and Traditional Owners. First Nations cultural knowledge is central to how heritage is interpreted, how stories are told and how future programs are designed.

Heritage is not static – it's a living influence that shapes contemporary creative practice, education and events. Programs like the Our Stories celebration at Mount Martha House, along with heritage walks, talks and festivals, bring history into the present. Murals, oral histories and podcast projects offer further ways to celebrate local stories, support cultural tourism and keep the Peninsula's unique histories alive for generations to come.

Our current approach to supporting this pillar includes:

- **partnering with Traditional Owners** – to embed First Nations perspectives in public spaces and support truth-telling and connection to Country
- **installing interpretive signage** – at significant heritage sites across the Peninsula
- **delivering heritage programs** – including Our Stories events and guided bus tours
- **caring for collections** – preserving and curating the Mount Martha House Historical Collection
- **connecting heritage and creativity** – delivering exhibitions and programs at community art and gallery spaces that explore local stories
- **supporting heritage networks** – providing ongoing support to historical societies and community groups
- **supporting First Nations creative practice** – through partnerships with Traditional Owners and First Nations community organisations, aligned with Council's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–2027
- **First Peoples-led tourism** – supporting the Yannabil First Peoples' Tourism Council to celebrate and nurture First Peoples tourism experiences and businesses



31% of survey respondents
had attended cultural and
heritage events



Credit: Filming of music video *Everything is Green*,
Maxon & Like Bear, photo B Howell / @iambhove

Strategic overview

Under the *Local Government Act, 2020* councils are required to:

- Align all strategic planning with the Community Vision
- Use an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting

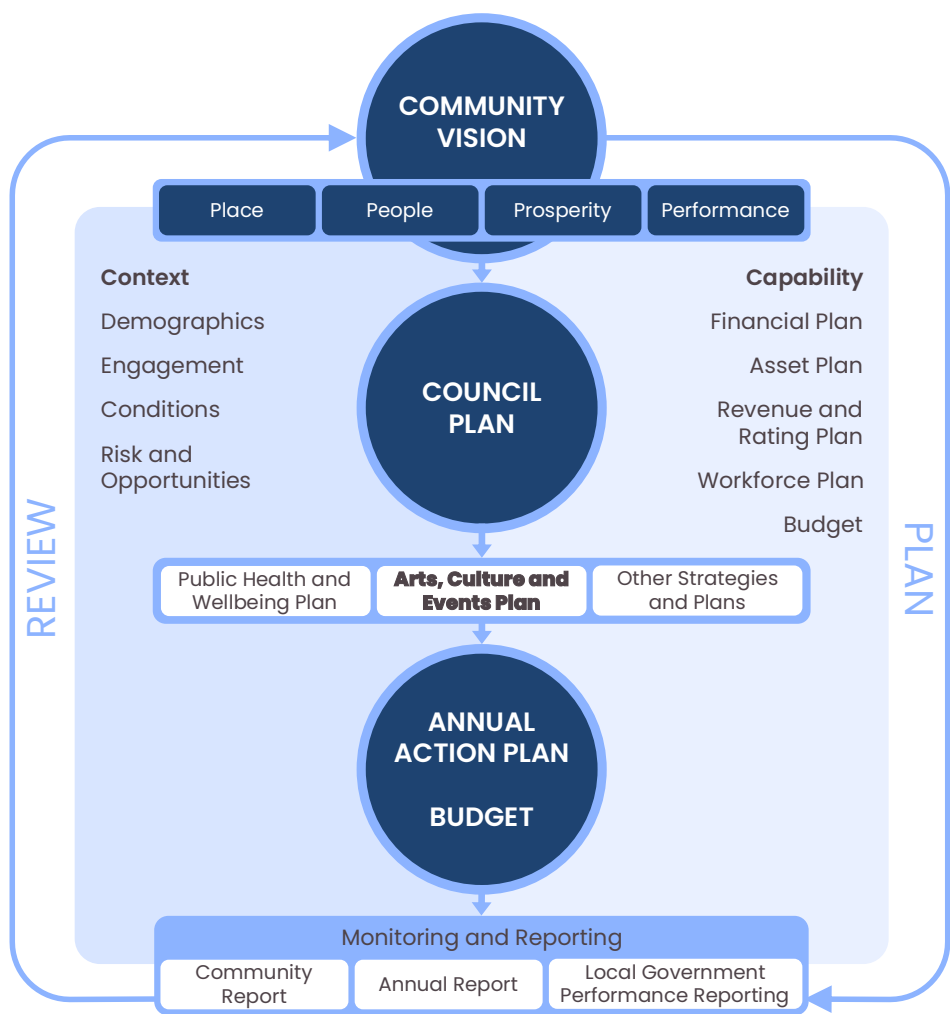
To meet these requirements, we use the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework.

This helps us to stay focused on achieving our Community Vision and ensures we regularly monitor our progress and report back to the community.

Within the community vision we have four strategic directions which outline the highest-level outcomes we want to see for the peninsula. Of these, the Arts, Culture and Events Plan can most strongly impact on:

- **Place**
- **People**
- **Prosperity**

The Arts, Culture and Events Plan outlines the actions and initiatives we plan to deliver in support of these strategic directions.



Supporting documents and plans

Other Shire strategies and plans that inform this Plan:

- A Thriving Peninsula 2023: Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
- Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–29
- We All Belong 2024–2029
- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–27
- Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2030
- Public Art Policy
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure Plan

There are also a range of infrastructure plans and strategies that support delivery of this Plan including the Civic Reserve Masterplan and The Briars Masterplan

Legislative and external policy context

Key regional, state and national policy that inform this Plan:

- **Mornington Peninsula Destination Management Plan:**
Events and attractions are a key product pillar motivating year-round visitation and contribute to the \$1.5 billion visitor economy.
- **Creative State 2025–2028 (Victoria):**
The Victorian Government's strategy for the creative industries, which invests in creative workers, organisations and communities. It recognises the role of local government in supporting creative ecosystems and cultural infrastructure.
- **Experience Victoria 2033:**
The statewide tourism strategy recognises arts, culture and First Peoples-led tourism experiences as strengths and opportunities to grow Victoria's visitor economy.
- **Visit Victoria Strategy 2030:**
Victoria is widely recognised as the events capital of Australia, and the strategy supports regional dispersal and year-round visitation — which is directly aligned with the Peninsula's regional event attraction goals.
- **Revive: National Cultural Policy (Australian Government):**
Australia's national cultural policy recognises First Nations stories and creativity as central to our national identity, supports a strong cultural infrastructure, and commits to growing the creative economy.

Development of the Plan

How we engaged with you

This Plan has been developed through extensive community and stakeholder engagement, review of existing research and strategic documents, and analysis of local data. Together, these inputs have guided the development of the Plan’s outcomes, priorities and actions.

Broad consultation was undertaken in late 2025 with individuals via surveys and through face-to-face engagement in popular locations throughout the Peninsula, including:

- Libraries – Mornington and Hastings
- Markets – Dromana, Mount Eliza, Mornington Main Street (two occasions), Bittern Community, Hill and Ridge – Red Hill, Briars Craft
- YAWA
- Coolart House
- Sorrento Visitor Information Centre
- Somerville Central

These locations and the engagement activities undertaken were chosen to enable connection with as broad cross-section of the community as possible. This approach was deemed a success, with a total of 4,356 engagements and surveys received.

We also heard from Shire’s Arts and Culture Advisory Panel (ACAP), a panel of practising artists, creative producers and community advocates provided sector insights to complement community engagement.



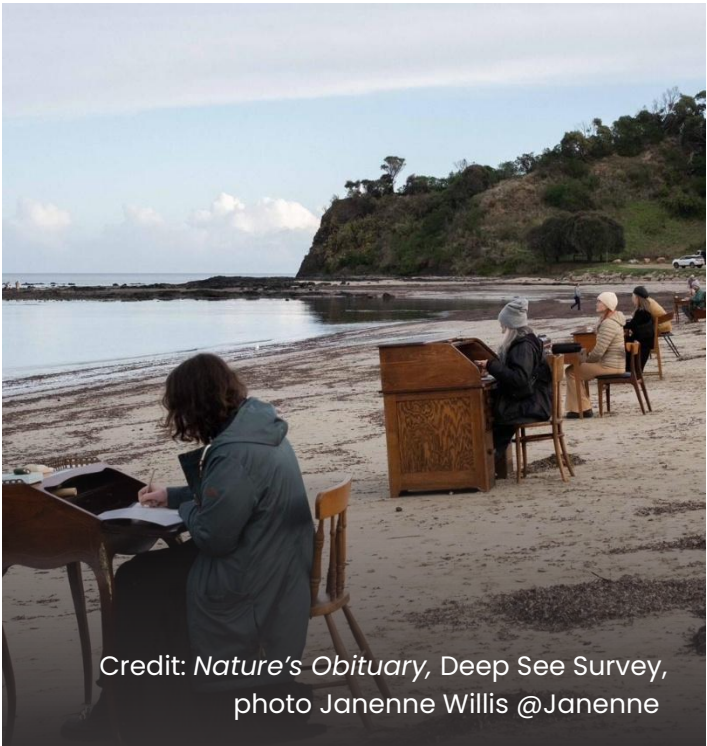
Survey responses



face-to-face engagement



Total community data points



Credit: *Nature’s Obituary*, Deep See Survey, photo Janenne Willis @Janenne



Survey respondents:



73% residents



10% business owners



9% visitors



8% other

What you told us

Responses were sought on what individuals value, what they want more of, and where they see the greatest opportunities for arts, culture and events on the Peninsula.

Questions asked across the different formats of consultation had two key themes:

- What do you enjoy watching and/or attending?
- What do you enjoy doing and/or participating in?

Noting that multiple responses were possible, the following summarises the responses to these two questions:

What types of arts and culture activities do you enjoy for learning, as a hobby or pastime? (watching/attending)

Activity	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Festivals / markets	808	17.5%
Live music / concerts	755	16.4%
Visual arts / exhibitions	666	14.4%
Theatre / performance	594	12.9%
Food and wine events	547	11.9%
Cultural / heritage events	495	10.7%
Family-friendly community events	418	9.1%
Sports	208	4.5%
Business events	58	1.3%
Other	57	1.3%
TOTAL	4,606	100%

What types of arts, culture and events do you enjoy as an experience? (doing/participating)

Activity	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Crafts (textiles, ceramics, jewellery making)	210	14.9%
Visual arts (painting, drawing, sculpture)	209	14.9%
Dance	178	12.6%
Music (playing an instrument, composing)	171	12.1%
Choir / singing	122	8.6%
Acting / theatre	122	8.6%
Creative writing (poetry, storytelling)	121	8.6%
Videography / film	107	7.6%
Digital arts (graphic design, animation)	97	6.9%
Sound production / audio editing	74	5.2%
TOTAL	1,411	100%

When asked about the benefits received, respondents highlighted the following benefits which reflect the broader societal benefits of arts, culture and events reference earlier in this Plan (noting that multiple responses could be selected):

- enjoyment and entertainment (90%)
- wellbeing and mental health benefits (78%)
- supporting local artists and makers (66%)
- spending time with family and friends (61%)
- learning new skills and knowledge (59%)
- meeting new people and building community connections (55%)
- connecting with local culture, history or heritage (51%)
- creative self-expression (51%)
- feeling a sense of belonging and local pride (50%)

These findings also demonstrate the alignment between this Plan and the Shire's broader strategic commitments under the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–29.

The results demonstrate that respondents view arts, culture and events as strongly contributing to community wellbeing, social connection and local identity.

They also reinforce why arts, culture and events matter and are a critical characteristic of the fabric of the Peninsula.



Credit: Darcy Nigro, photo by
Brook Taylor @brook_photofun

How this has influenced the development of this Plan

The following themes from the community engagement have directly shaped the priorities and actions in this plan.

Theme	Key Insights
More live music and events	▪ strong desire for more live music across the Peninsula, particularly original local artists ▪ support for opera, theatre, musicals and orchestral concerts ▪ interest in free and low-cost events in parks and public spaces, family-friendly programming, and seasonal festivals – especially a winter festival ▪ an opportunity for cross-disciplinary events and building up existing creative events ▪ need for a well communicated calendar of events
Investment in artists and the creative sector	▪ recognition that a lack of financial support for artists, arts organisations and creative practitioners is a key barrier to maintaining a vibrant creative community ▪ strong desire for the reinstatement of the Creative Fund and Performing Arts Development Fund grants ▪ a need for artists to be paid fairly for their work ▪ a need to highlight the economic and wellbeing value of the creative economy
Better venues and creative spaces	▪ strong support for: ▪ upgrading existing Council-owned halls, ▪ mid-size performance venues (150–300 seats), ▪ outdoor stages and sound shells, ▪ rehearsal spaces ▪ long-term advocacy for a dedicated performing arts centre ▪ investment in Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery the facility upgrades ▪ support for arts precincts in Rosebud and Hastings
First Nations culture and heritage	▪ A need to preserve and promote local heritage and history ▪ A need to amplify First Nations connections to place and the voices of original custodians ▪ Opportunity to support site-specific heritage programs for destination tourism experiences ▪ Interest in cultural heritage walks, talks, exhibitions and festivals
Public art and creative participation	▪ a desire for more visual arts, sculpture, murals and public art in town centres ▪ interest in pop-up exhibitions and artist-in-residence programs ▪ a need for accessible, inclusive, low-cost creative workshops and learning opportunities for all ▪ support for youth and emerging artists, in addition to professional development pathways ▪ interest in more touring exhibitions
Simpler processes and better promotion	▪ a need to simplify permits, licensing and event approvals ▪ an understanding that red tape discourages community-led events and that this should be reduced ▪ an opportunity to improve promotion and visibility of arts and cultural activities ▪ a desire for arts and culture to be treated equitably alongside sport and recreation

Plan overview

How to read the plan

This Plan outlines how the Shire will work towards three interconnected outcomes:

- **An energised and inspired community (People)**
- **Vibrant places and spaces (Place)**
- **A thriving visitor experience (Prosperity)**

Each outcome is supported by Priorities—the areas where the Shire will focus effort and resources. These priorities are delivered through activities and initiatives detailed in the accompanying four-year Action Plan.

While outcomes and priorities are presented separately for clarity, they are closely connected. Actions that advance one outcome will often support others. For example, a community festival can strengthen social connection, activate public spaces and generate visitation and economic activity.

Delivery of the Plan involves multiple roles across the organisation and community. The Shire works through its service areas to deliver, partner, advocate and regulate, supporting a strong community-led approach. This includes enabling creative communities and strengthening key townships and precincts where arts, culture and events activity is already thriving, supported by Shire assets.

As highlighted in the five Service Areas (pillars), the Shire is already undertaking a range of activities to deliver against the outcomes. Others are future initiatives to be implemented progressively over the 10-year life of the Plan, subject to available resources and Council priorities.

Through this Plan, we aim to create an inclusive environment where:

- artists, creatives and event organisers can build sustainable practices and careers
- all community members can access and participate in arts, cultural and event experiences
- First Nations culture and heritage is visible, valued and celebrated
- unique places and spaces inspire creativity, connection and memorable experiences
- events and festivals enrich community life, attract visitors and showcase the Peninsula
- creative industries and the events sector contribute to economic vitality and local identity

The Shire's role

The Shire plays a vital role in supporting and developing a vibrant creative community and a dynamic events landscape on the Mornington Peninsula. We help our community have opportunities to participate in, create, experience and benefit from arts, culture and events that enrich everyday life and strengthen our local economy.

As the closest level of government to the community, The Shire is well-placed to understand and respond to the diverse creative and event-related needs and aspirations of residents, artists, event organisers, creative businesses and visitors. Our approach recognises that the Peninsula's creative vitality and event culture are community-led, and that the Shire's role is to create the conditions for creativity and events to thrive.

The Shire supports arts, culture and events through four key roles:

- D Deliver:** Plan and deliver evidence-based programs, services, and policies, undertake community and stakeholder engagement as well as provide and maintain facilities and infrastructure.
- P Partner:** Work collaboratively with and build the capability of key stakeholders, community groups and individuals to provide and support evidence-informed programs, services and policies.
- A Advocate:** Advocate for systemic change and increased resourcing to address challenges and improve the local service sector.
- R Regulate:** Fulfil legislative requirements and ensure effective use of public resources, such as compliance with health standards, enforcement of local laws and management of community infrastructure.



Credit *Limb*, Flinders Fringe, photo by Nod Wolf Smith Fletcher



Credit: Yannick Anderson,
Plein Air Painters Group

Our priorities

Outcome 1

An energised and inspired community

Strengthen community connections and the creative sector by enabling broad access to, and participation in, events, arts and creative experiences.

Priority 1.1: Share local stories

Focus on First Nations heritage. Curate and share local stories through exhibitions, events and community connections.

Priority 1.2: Expand local experiences

Deliver accessible creative and community activities for all ages and abilities. Partner with community to understand local needs and opportunities

Priority 1.3: Enable creative sector vitality

Strengthen and empower networks and professional development opportunities. Increase participation for creative practitioners from priority populations.

Outcome 2

Vibrant places and spaces

Environments that connect us to the spirit of place and each other, enriching our communities and sense of belonging.

Priority 2.1: Activate and enrich places with creativity

Make creativity and events visible across the Peninsula through public art, activations and connecting cultural assets in public spaces. Build on existing projects to elevate outcomes and facilitate creative placemaking.

Priority 2.2: Make room for creative expression

Find innovative ways of supporting artists to practice their craft. Consider the needs of performers and event organisers when delivering venue and community space renewals.

Priority 2.3: Unlock the potential of Shire spaces

Increase utilisation and activation of Shire venues and reserves by making them attractive for event organisers. Recognise Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery as an anchor asset for our region through promotion and renewal.

Outcome 3

A thriving experience economy

Arts, culture and events strengthen the local economy, foster creative industries, and attract and engage audiences throughout the year.

Priority 3.1: Create a better regulatory experience

Improve the Shire's processes and explore regulatory changes that will achieve better outcomes for events and creative enterprises.

Priority 3.2: Build our profile as a must-visit event destination

Build a pipeline of marquee events and raise the profile of home-grown talent to reach broader audiences. Support development of authentic, local experiences that achieve visitor dispersal, increased yield and overnight stays.

Priority 3.3: Investigate innovative solutions for financially viable creatives and local businesses

Investigate innovative solutions for driving investment into the arts in our region. Boost our local economy through visitor spending while attending events.

Our four-year Action Plan

Arts, Culture and Events

Outcome 1: An energised and inspired community

Priority 1.1: Share local stories

Acknowledge First Nations culture and connection to land and waters. Curate and share stories that celebrate traditional owners through to modern experiences on and with the Peninsula.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
Ongoing	Continue to partner to integrate First Nations stories, language and heritage into programs, exhibitions, events and public interpretation	▪ ALL	P	▪ First Nations people ▪ MPS
Ongoing	Curate and present exhibitions and programs that celebrates the Peninsula's stories, heritage and local artistic practice	▪ ALL	D	▪ MPS
FY2028 – FY2029	Increase public access to cultural collections through digital platforms and community-facing presentations	▪ MPRG ▪ CH	D R	▪ MPS
FY2030 onwards	Develop and implement a cultural heritage interpretation plan	▪ CH	P	▪ MPS ▪ Heritage organisations ▪ BLC

Priority 1.2: Expand local experiences

Deliver accessible and inclusive creative and community activities for all ages and abilities. Partner with community to understand local needs and opportunities.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
Ongoing	Present accessible and high calibre nationally recognised exhibitions and experiences, touring exhibitions, talks and year-round programming at MPRG	▪ MPRG		▪ MPS
Ongoing	Deliver inclusive, accessible and low-cost activations, events and exhibitions that support participation across all ages, abilities and backgrounds, including underrepresented communities	▪ ALL		▪ MPS ▪ Community ▪ Support organisations
Ongoing	Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and realise opportunities for young people in the creative and event delivery sectors	▪ ALL	 	▪ MPS ▪ Community ▪ Event organisers ▪ Creative sector
FY2027	Develop a comprehensive communications strategy to increase awareness and visibility of arts, culture and events across the Peninsula	▪ ALL	 	▪ MPS
FY2028 – FY2029	Extend participation beyond traditional venues through partnerships with community organisations to deliver place-based creative activity that responds to local needs and aspirations (e.g. via libraries, schools, galleries)	▪ MPRG ▪ CS ▪ PA	 	▪ MPS ▪ Community ▪ Education facilities

Priority 1.3: Enable creative sector vitality

Strengthen and empower networks and professional development opportunities. Increase participation for creative practitioners from priority populations.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
Ongoing	Connect local creatives with employment and commissioning opportunities using the creative register as a tool. Investigate boosting procurement policy to increase investment in local artists and creatives.	CS	D	- MPS - Community - Industry - Creative sector - Event organisers
Ongoing	Strengthen creative sector networks and professional development through the Creators Network and Mornington Peninsula Music Network	- CS - MPRG	D P	- MPS - Creators Network - MPMN
Ongoing	Support sustainable creative practice by engaging with and providing practical guidance, mentoring, role-modelling and capacity building for business and professional pathways – with a specific focus on priority communities and demographic cohorts	- CS - MPRG	D P	- MPS - Community - Creative sector

Outcome 2: Vibrant places and spaces

Priority 2.1: Activate and enrich places with creativity

Make creativity and events visible across the Peninsula through public art, activations and connecting cultural assets in public spaces. Build on existing projects to elevate outcomes and facilitate creative placemaking.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
Ongoing	Deliver a dynamic program of public art commissions and temporary installations that reflect local stories, First Nations perspectives and township character	- PA - CS - CH	P D	- MPS - First Nations people - Creative sector - Business associations - Industry - Community
Ongoing	Develop township-specific creative activations and events that encourage community-led arts and music precincts	- CS - FE	P D R	- MPS - Creative sector - Business associations, - Industry - Community
FY2028 – FY2029	Partner to showcase live music by local artists and help retain talent on the Peninsula	- CS - FE	P A	- MPS - Creative sector - Business associations - Industry - Event organisers
FY2030 onwards	Enhance trails through nature and between townships that connect public art, galleries, heritage sites and creative spaces for residents and visitors, including interpretative signage	- PA - CH - CS	P D R	- MPS - Creative sector - BLC - Community - PV - MPRT

Priority 2.2: Make room for creative expression

Find innovative ways of supporting artists to practice their craft. Consider the needs of performers and event organisers when delivering venue and community space renewals.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
FY2028 – FY2029	Advocate to education facilities to provide community access to performing art spaces	▪ CS	A R	▪ MPS ▪ Education facilities
FY2030 onwards	Advocate to Government (specifically the Federal Government) for performing arts infrastructure investment for mid-scale creative spaces	▪ PA	A R	▪ MPS ▪ CV

Priority 2.3: Unlock the potential of Shire spaces

Increase utilisation and activation of Shire venues and reserves by making them attractive, appropriate and accessible for program and event organisers. Recognise Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery as an anchor asset for our region through promotion and renewal.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
Ongoing	Embed creative use considerations into the Shire's capital expenditure planning and facility renewal programs	▪ PA ▪ CS	A D	▪ MPS
Ongoing	Increase access to, and marketing of, Shire facilities and spaces, including adaptive reuse of underutilised buildings for creative programs, studios and co-working spaces	▪ ALL	P D	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector ▪ Community
Ongoing	Improve the year-round visitor experience and enable expansion of programming at MPRG	▪ MPRG	D	▪ MPS
FY2028 – FY2029	Work with the creative sector to identify opportunities for inclusion of technical requirements in Council facility upgrades that can deliver fit-for-purpose small-scale performance and rehearsal spaces	▪ ALL	D R	▪ MPS

Outcome 3: A thriving experience economy

Priority 3.1: Create a better regulatory experience

Improve the Shire's processes and explore regulatory changes that will achieve better outcomes for events and creative enterprises.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
Ongoing	Participate in the business permit support process internally to ensure creative and event applicants are supported through permitting and approvals processes	▪ All	D A R	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector ▪ Event organisers ▪ Industry
FY2028 – FY2029	Review and simplify permitting and approval processes to better support creativity and activities that connect and engage communities.	▪ PA ▪ CS ▪ FE ▪ CH	D A R	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector ▪ Event organisers
FY2028 – FY2029	Continue to advocate for the <i>Planning Framework for Live Music</i> (subject to details about implementation of proposed new provisions such as the Live Music Precinct Overlay – LMPO). Upon implementation of the framework by the State Government, review the eligibility and merits of applying the LMPO to areas on the Peninsula.	▪ CS	A R	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector ▪ DTP

Priority 3.2: Build our profile as a must-visit event destination

Build a pipeline of marquee events and raise the profile of home-grown talent to reach broader audiences. Support development of authentic, local experiences that achieve visitor dispersal, increased yield and overnight stays.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
Ongoing	Elevate the Peninsula’s profile as a premier destination for outstanding creative and event experiences through collaboration and compelling storytelling	▪ All	P A	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector ▪ Event organisers ▪ Industry
FY2027	Develop and promote a coordinated annual events calendar and gig guide to support planning and seasonal dispersal	▪ All	D	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector ▪ Event organisers
FY2028 – FY2029	Develop and implement a strategy to attract high-calibre touring exhibitions, festivals and signature events that position the Peninsula as a leading art, cultural and events destination and drives year-round visitation	▪ All	P	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector ▪ DTP

Priority 3.3: Identify and guide innovative solutions for financially viable creatives and local businesses

Identify and guide innovative solutions for driving investment into the arts in our region. Boost our local economy through visitor spending while attending events.

When	We will	Area	Our Role	Who
Ongoing	Recognise and actively engage with the private sector as key partners in the Peninsula's creative ecosystem to promote experiences including commercial galleries, sculpture parks, theatres and cinemas, and other creative offerings	▪ All	P	▪ MPS ▪ MPRT ▪ VV ▪ Industry ▪ Creative sector
FY2027–FY2028	Explore the viability of creating a community-led entity to attract philanthropic and private investment in local creative sector	▪ All	P	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector
FY2027	Build understanding of the economic impact and community benefit of creative sector and events to inform future investment and decision-making	▪ All	D	▪ MPS
FY2027	Review and simplify mechanisms (including Community Investment Funding and in-kind support) to better facilitate innovative needs of the sector and attract new events to the Peninsula	▪ All	D P	▪ MPS ▪ Community ▪ Industry
FY2027	Enhance the experience of attendees visiting the Peninsula through complementary marketing and packaging of other attractions, accommodation etc	▪ MPRG ▪ CS ▪ EF	P	▪ MPS ▪ Industry ▪ MPRT
FY2028 – FY2029	Raise creative sector profile through encouraging participation in award programs, celebrating local successes and directly connect creative practitioners with business opportunities	▪ All	D	▪ MPS ▪ Creative sector

How we Monitor Progress

A range of measures will be used to monitor implementation of the Plan. These measures span activities where the Shire has direct responsibility, through to broader indicators that reflect the health and vitality of the Peninsula's creative sector ecosystem, where the Shire may play an enabling or influencing role.

Qualitative indicators may include

- attendance at events
- number of public art installations delivered
- participation in cultural activities (ABS data)
- employment in creative industries
- visitors attending arts and cultural experiences
- visitor expenditure uplift associated with events

While quantitative data provides important measures of activity and growth, structured qualitative and sentiment-based indicators will also be used to better understand the outcomes and community impact of the Plan. These measures, captured through surveys, feedback mechanisms and stakeholder engagement, help assess lived experience, perceptions of value, and the broader social and cultural benefits of arts, culture and events.

These may include:

- community satisfaction with public space (which can include accessibility and inclusivity measures)
- national recognition through awards, media and sector profile
- percentage of participants satisfied with the quality of Shire-delivered programs
- percentage of visitors satisfied with the quality of arts, cultural and event experiences
- percentage of respondents who agree that arts and culture contribute positively to local identity and sense of place
- percentage of participants reporting programs met their expectations or needs

Glossary

CH	Cultural Heritage (Plan Pillar)
CS	Creative Sector (Plan Pillar)
CV	Creative Victoria (State Government)
BLC	Bunurong Land Council
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning (State Government)
FE	Festivals and Events (Plan Pillar)
MPS	Mornington Peninsula Shire
MPMN	Mornington Peninsula Music Network
MPRT	Mornington Peninsula Regional Tourism
MPRG	Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (Plan Pillar)
PA	Public Art (Plan Pillar)
PV	Parks Victoria (State Government)
VV	Visit Victoria (State Government)