ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY 2018–2023
Framing our city’s future
Definitions

This section discusses the meaning of the terms ‘arts’ and ‘culture’ and defines the scope of this Strategy.

In this Strategy, ‘the arts’ refers to all physical results of our creative impulse. Our various ‘art forms’ represent an outlet for creative expression which is both influenced by our culture and, in turn, influences it. ‘The arts’ encompasses all branches, including performing arts, visual arts, screen and digital arts, literary arts and cultural heritage collections.

‘Culture’ is a broader term, and refers to the values, ideas, customs, attitudes and physical artefacts of a particular people or society. Our culture is how we express who we are, as a member of a group. Through arts activities, festivals and events, through food and traditions – our culture makes us feel connected and welcome, and proud of our home and city.

The term ‘artists’, ‘creatives’ or ‘creative practitioners’ are all used interchangeably to describe those engaged in arts and cultural activity.

Acknowledgement of Country

Ipswich City Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners as custodians of the land. The traditional owners whose earth, winds and waters we share, have had a deep spiritual and cultural connection to country for thousands of years. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, as the keepers of the traditions, cultures and stories of a proud people.
The development of a great city relies on a myriad of elements contributing to its productivity, vibrancy and sustainability. Arts and culture are transformative elements for modern cities. They help to position them as attractive places to live, work and invest.

Ipswich is entering an exciting new phase in its development. We are rapidly changing and evolving to become a cultural destination of choice. We will continue to be a connected and engaged community, one which celebrates emerging and creative talent.

Council recognises the importance of culture in building identity and fostering liveability. Recognition and pride in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage plays a critical role in how we feel about the place where we live and what we have collectively achieved.

The Arts and Cultural Strategy will guide our investment in building community cultural capacity. It responds to important messages we have heard from the community, builds upon our strengths, and cements our commitment to arts and culture for the future.

Acting Mayor, Wayne Wendt
This Strategy recognises Ipswich’s existing strengths and assets as opportunities for further development. In a rapidly growing city like Ipswich it is vital that we have a plan if we are to harness our arts and cultural assets and create a strong community.

Councillor Kylie Stoneman, Chair of the Arts and Community Development Committee

Introduction

Arts and culture are at the core of the distinctive identity of the world’s great cities. These are surprising, energising and memorable places. A culture of creativity contributes to quality of life by celebrating diversity, improving cross-cultural understanding and building social cohesion. These are vital elements in Ipswich’s next stage of development with so many new residents arriving from other areas within Australia and from many overseas locations.

The Arts and Cultural Strategy describes a commitment to realise not only the personal and intrinsic benefits of the arts but also the potential for arts and cultural activities to achieve wider impacts. Stronger neighbourhoods, sustainability of the built environment, public health and lifelong learning are all supported by a vibrant arts and cultural life.

The implementation of the Strategy, and its visible presence through programs and precincts, will assist in providing a shared vision and sense of identity for residents. It will support creative and innovative activity, entrepreneurial partnerships and new work.

The attractiveness and the human warmth of city streets and public places are much-affected by arts and cultural components. Creativity in the public realm, such as imaginative and stimulating urban design, public art and expressions of community identity through events and celebrations, support distinctive place-making.

Articulating this Strategy helps the city and our community partners to leverage their collective resources and perform more effectively around shared goals. It will enable us to achieve our arts and cultural vision in the years ahead and enhance the value of arts and culture to all sections of the community. It acknowledges that this is a journey, a work in progress, and focuses on actions which can be undertaken in the next five years to achieve our community’s vision, and to create a positive future for Ipswich.
Developments of the Arts and Cultural Strategy

Public Engagement

Public engagement on the Arts and Cultural Strategy was clearly showed that the Ipswich Community understands that arts and culture are fundamental to a vibrant and thriving society.

Early consultation occurred in October 2017, when focus group sessions were held with 59 people representing various sections of the community, including residents, the business sector, the voluntary sector, cultural and arts groups, and the City Council.

A total of 298 people responded to the survey – with 80% confirming that the discussion in January 2018. A Draft of the Arts and Cultural Strategy was developed and provided to the community for feedback in April 2018; with 86% of respondents in February/March 2018 and feedback was sought from the community in April/May 2018.

Youth and Young People, Performing Arts, Community and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Visual Arts, Arts and Cultural Strategy 2018-2023 adopted.

What you told us

Public Engagement on the Arts and Cultural Strategy was developed.

As a warm and welcoming region in which to live, and that there are development and potential career pathways which encourage them to stay in life, and that there are development and potential career pathways which encourage them to stay in...
If we want vibrant hubs of culture and arts we need to ensure they are easy to access.

Amongst many useful perspectives then, a number of key themes have emerged as significant for the Arts and Cultural Strategy. They include the importance of:

- Community pride in our arts and cultural capabilities and achievements
- Being a welcoming region, proud of its Indigenous heritage and diversity
- Preservation of our built and natural heritage, and the use of story-telling and interpretation to bring our history and current stories to life
- Investing in our growing young population
- A strong, well-supported arts and creative community – including provision of space for making, presenting and performing
- Making art visible, through public art and in other ways
- Lowering the barriers for new talent and new activities, and encouraging collaborative working and marketing
- Ensuring Council listens, learns and acts to address our community’s arts and cultural aspirations

Opportunities for young people to participate in arts and cultural events as organisers, decision-makers, artists or performers.

“More workshop/rehearsal spaces so artists can develop their craft, and the quality of their work.”

Include cultural activities into existing festivals and events.

“More collaborative events.”

“Opportunities for young people to participate in arts and cultural events as organisers, decision-makers, artists or performers.”

“Ipswich needs more public art – be it urban art, art installations, sculpture... public art that celebrates who we are as a city, who we were and who we aspire to become.”

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There are significant opportunities to further foster, showcase and celebrate the arts and cultural contribution of our First Peoples.

Our population of 210,012 people is projected to reach 520,000 by the year 2041. This unprecedented pace of growth is also reflected in the age of Ipswich residents. Unlike the rest of Australia – which faces an ageing population – Ipswich is young. The median age of residents is 32 years, compared to 37 years for Queensland, and 38 years for Australia. It is estimated that by 2036, over a third of our population will be under 25 years of age. It will be a defining characteristic of our community.

Ipswich hosts a thriving diverse community of practising creatives. There is a lively community-based arts scene, and a number of high-profile, active music and theatre groups. With many talented artists settling in the region, our bonds as a community are strengthened both through small and large-scale arts and cultural activities, and traditional gatherings.

The city’s commitment to staying in the forefront of digital connectivity will be an important attractor for future creative businesses. Reflecting this, the 2016 launch of Fire Station 101 will assist digital start-ups and create a skills pipeline for local entrepreneurs.

Despite recent rapid population growth, Ipswich has maintained much of its architectural, natural and community charm and these heritage attractions play an essential role in attracting tourists and enhancing our urban environment.

Ipswich City Centre is home to the Library, Art Gallery, Community Gallery, Civic Centre, and Studio 188. The Workshops Rail Museum continues to be a significant attractor of visitors. As we grow further, arts and cultural facilities needs will increase both in Ipswich CBD, surrounding areas and in the new and emerging developments.

Arts and cultural activity thrives on open spaces as well as on the right built infrastructure. Our outdoor spaces, parklands, performance areas, and the defining Bremer River all form the canvas for our arts and cultural life. Arts and creative endeavours have played an important role in building a sense of shared excitement and optimism. With a burgeoning dance culture supported by regular Eisteddfods and independent dance studios operating across the city, a thriving local music scene and a dynamic visual arts ecosystem, Ipswich is a place where we embrace our past and imagine our future.

Ipswich already has many of the advantages and opportunities needed to become a city enriched by arts and culture; our people, our creativity, skills and entrepreneurship as well as our arts and cultural organisations and facilities.

Ipswich is an increasingly ethnically diverse city. The 2016 census shows that at least one in five (21.6%) residents was born overseas and there are 152 languages supported. 2016 also saw Ipswich become a Refugee Welcome Zone, and we celebrate the social and cultural benefits that flow from hearing the stories and lived experiences of our emerging refugee community.

Ipswich also has a larger proportion of people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander than Queensland in 2016. Despite the large growth in the city’s population over the last few years (16.1%), the proportion of residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander has increased from 4.2% of Ipswich residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander 2011 to 4.6% of residents in 2016. This is a higher growth than experienced in Queensland. We recognise the unique contribution of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to our cultural landscape and our cultural identity.

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Ipswich is enriched by our creative spirit and energised by our diverse community

The lives of all Ipswich residents are enhanced by the integration of arts and culture into our everyday experiences.

The region’s local arts and cultural activities are well attended by both participants and audiences, nurturing local pride and developing local identity. In Ipswich, creative disciplines are transforming into new forms, year-on-year, celebrating the diversity and innovation of talent within the community.

Our creative industry is thriving and our artistic organisations and institutions continue to flourish. As well as reaching new audiences, new career pathways and professional development opportunities are being made available, strengthening the current and next generation of arts workers.

We are proud of our local Indigenous heritage and collaborate with locals, coming to experience this and our unique cultural diversity.

Ipswich is renowned for creative innovation which drives economic growth. Arts and culture enrich the lives of all Ipswich residents and our diversity energises us.

Ipswich City Council, in collaboration with our local arts and cultural sector, will focus resources and actions to the following 5 goals and objectives:

**OUR OBJECTIVE:**

The cultures and histories of Ipswich will be a source of pride for our residents.

Cultural heritage is fundamental in creating a sense of place for our community. We are rich in cultural heritage – from the stories of our traditional owners, to the new cultures that the migrants of yesterday and today carry with them.

Embracing and celebrating our cultural heritage and diversity
Creative practice and creative thinking are not only at the heart of the arts, they are essential for business innovation, technological progress and a productive civic life. Our creatives are beacons of the kind of community we want to be.

Actively listening to the community will ensure programs and actions meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Enhancing city leadership will ensure that the full ambition of the Strategy is realised over the next five years.

Supporting and increasing engagement with our creative community

Our creative practitioners will choose Ipswich as a preferred location for their work.

Beyond enhancing our city’s cultural life, creative skills development will have social, civic and employment benefits, and strengthen opportunities for our young people.

Culturally activated cities bridge age and cultural barriers to create connected communities.

Building creative capacity amongst our young people

Our community’s creative skills and knowledge will be constantly improving.

Activating and engaging the whole of our city

Locally and nationally, Ipswich will have a reputation as a culturally vibrant destination. Arts and culture will be an integral part of our lives.

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**Making it Happen – Our Action Plan**

1. **Embracing and Celebrating our Cultural Heritage and Diversity**
   
   Cultural heritage is fundamental in creating a sense of place for our community. We are rich in cultural heritage – from the stories of our traditional owners, to the new cultures that the migrants of yesterday and today carry with them.

   **Our Objective:** The cultures and histories of Ipswich will be a source of pride for our residents

2. **Activating and Engaging the Whole of our City**
   
   Culturally activated cities bridge age and cultural barriers to create connected communities.

   **Our Objective:** Locally and nationally, Ipswich will have a reputation as a culturally vibrant destination. Arts and culture will be an integral part of our lives

3. **Supporting and Increasing Engagement with our Creative Community**
   
   Creative practice and creative thinking are not only at the heart of the arts – they are essential for business innovation, technological progress and a productive civic life. Our creatives are beacons of the kind of community we want to be.

   **Our Objective:** Creative practitioners will choose Ipswich as a preferred location for their work

4. **Building Creative Capacity amongst our Young People**
   
   Beyond enhancing our city’s cultural life, creative development will have social, civic and employment benefits, and strengthen opportunities for our young people.

   **Our Objective:** Our community’s creative abilities and skills will be constantly improving

5. **Listening, Communicating and Providing Leadership for our Community**
   
   Actively listening to the community will ensure programs and actions meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Enhancing city leadership will ensure that the full ambition of the Strategy is realised over the next five years.

   **Our Objective:** Our cultural planning and action will be well-informed by the needs and perspectives of the community.

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**Actions**

1. Celebrate and highlight the culture and art of our First Peoples in civic buildings and public spaces.
2. Welcome and support the cultures of our recent and new migrant communities.
3. Support showcasing of our diverse cultures.
4. Support and interpret our heritage assets.
5. Maintain our commitment to high quality heritage preservation and encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings.
6. Feature and enhance knowledge of and engagement with our built heritage through outdoor performance and festival programming, street art and installations.
7. Develop a coordinated strategy to generate a lively, activated streetscape day and night, through outdoor performance and festival programming.
8. Support the activation of our city through increasing density and supporting commercial activity after hours.
9. Develop and adopt a Public Art Strategy which stimulates the generation of new work in public spaces, commercial buildings and civic buildings and spaces throughout our city.
10. Integrate creative lighting and public art to create safe and lively city spaces, parks and precincts.
11. Develop a website platform for new residents, featuring arts and cultural connections and opportunities.
12. Develop a strategy to incentivize and encourage first-time arts attendance for Ipswich residents.
13. Develop a welcome pack for new residents, featuring arts and cultural connections and opportunities.
14. Integrate creative lighting and public art to create safe and lively city spaces, parks and precincts.
15. Feature our local creatives on Council’s website.
16. Foster and actively support the inclusion of local content in Festivals and facilities supported by Council.
17. Facilitate networking activities between our creatives and our education and business communities to encourage partnerships and create opportunities.
18. Integrate creative lighting and public art to create safe and lively city spaces, parks and precincts.
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20. Ensure accessibility of arts and cultural activities to a diverse community.
21. Develop a strategy to provide increased access to creative facilities for young people.
22. Foster and actively support the inclusion of local content in Festivals and facilities supported by Council.
23. Develop and adopt a Public Art Strategy which stimulates the generation of new work in public spaces, commercial buildings and civic buildings and spaces throughout our city.
24. Facilitate skills development programs for our creative practitioners and cultural groups – strengthening marketing, entrepreneurial and presentation capabilities.
25. Complete planning and initiate development of the Ipswich Performing Arts Centre.
26. Develop a strategy to provide increased access to Council properties for our cultural offerings.
27. Build creative capacity amongst our young people.
28. Embrace a ‘cultural facilities’ mapping and funding program.
29. Develop and adopt a Public Art Strategy which stimulates the generation of new work in public spaces, commercial buildings and civic buildings and spaces throughout our city.
30. Facilitate networking activities between our creatives and our education and business communities to encourage partnerships and create opportunities.
31. Complete planning and initiate development of the Ipswich Performing Arts Centre.
32. Develop a strategy to provide increased access to Council properties for our cultural offerings.
33. Provide merit-based funding to creative practitioners and leaders.
34. Undertake a ‘cultural facilities’ mapping and integrate into broader facilities strategy.
35. Foster a collaborative governance model between Council and the cultural sector for relevant arts and cultural initiatives.
36. Develop and adopt a Public Art Strategy which stimulates the generation of new work in public spaces, commercial buildings and civic buildings and spaces throughout our city.
37. Integrate creative lighting and public art to create safe and lively city spaces, parks and precincts.
38. Foster engagement in creative diversity through funded access programs for young people.
39. Foster a collaborative governance model between Council and the cultural sector for relevant arts and cultural initiatives.
40. Foster engagement in creative diversity through funded access programs for young people.

*Items in bold indicate priority actions.
Acknowledgements

Ipswich City Council would like to express our thanks to all members of the community who have generously participated in focus group sessions and/or responded to the Discussion Document and Draft Strategy survey – your input is highly valuable, and we look forward to working alongside the community as we implement this exciting Arts and Cultural Strategy 2018-2023.

This Arts and Cultural Strategy has been prepared with the assistance of Positive Solutions and The Maytrix Group.