



ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY 2018–2023

Framing our city's future



City of
Ipswich

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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.


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.

 **Image:** Dust Pans by Ipswich-based artist Debbie Scott.



Arts and culture are transformative elements for modern cities. They help to position them as attractive places to live, work and invest.”

Acting Mayor, Wayne Wendt

Foreword


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

 **Image:** 'Can you relate?' – acrylic powder-coated aluminium by Ipswich-based artist Lincoln Austin displayed at Redbank Plains Shopping Centre.

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.

Development of the Arts and Cultural Strategy

Public Engagement

Public engagement on the Arts and Cultural Strategy 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 six focus group sessions were held with 59 people representing various sectors across Ipswich: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Visual Arts, Youth and Young People, Performing Arts, Community Members and Ipswich City Council. These focus group sessions identified four key themes, which set the strategic direction that became the basis for ongoing consultation with stakeholders and the community:

- Sharing our heritage, and creating new cultural histories with the community
- Celebrating inclusivity, and connecting our people and communities
- A highly visible and valued creative community
- Incubating creativity and innovation, supporting collaboration and encouraging leadership and learning

A Discussion Document and Survey was then developed which was provided to the community for feedback in January 2018. A total of 298 people responded to the survey – with 80% confirming that the discussion document largely reflected their views on arts and cultural issues and opportunities for the city.

A Draft of the Arts and Cultural Strategy was developed in February/March 2018 and feedback was sought from the community in April 2018; with 86% of respondents confirming that they believed the implementation of the Arts and Cultural Strategy will have a positive or very positive impact for the broad community.

The below diagram gives a timeline overview of how the Arts and Cultural Strategy was developed.



What you told us

Expanding on the above four key themes, feedback received also identified a variety of further priorities and opportunities – from the importance of Council leadership and action, to the engagement of young people in the arts and cultural life of Ipswich:

- **A welcoming region proud of its Indigenous heritage and diversity** – We have heard that many in our community want to see a greater visibility of Indigenous culture in our streets, public buildings and elsewhere. You want to see our growing new and migrant communities accepted fully into our cultural life and you want Council to implement policy and education programs that will ensure Ipswich matures as a warm and welcoming region in which to live, work and play, celebrating diversity in many forms.
- **Story-telling and interpretation** – Our stories, past and present, are as much a part of our heritage and identity as our built infrastructure. You want us to provide platforms and channels to capture and communicate our stories and generate shared experiences amongst us.
- **Investing in youth** – You want to ensure that young people feel listened to, connected and engaged, that they have spaces and resources for an active cultural life, and that there are development and potential career pathways which encourage them to stay in the local area beyond their school years. While there are some high quality activities for children, there is little arts provision for teenagers. Young people want to see more action, not just talk.

- **A strong and supportive arts community** – Studio 188 is a great small venue for emerging bands, and their workshops and jazz program are a valued contributor to Ipswich’s well-connected and mutually supportive music ecosystem. The visual arts also benefit from robust community relationships. Supported by several dance studios, the community is showing an increasing interest in dance, particularly amongst young people. Poetry and literature and a strong Eisteddfod culture are also distinguishing features of the Ipswich arts ecology.
- **Support our local talent** – You mentioned the high proportion of talented artists living in Ipswich and the variety of skills and experience they bring with them. However, we heard concerns that a lack of exposure for arts and cultural practitioners has resulted in the departure of many talented artists from the area. Enhancing the visibility of our creative sector will support their sustainability, assisting their capacity to generate income and build a stronger future. The local creative sector is supported by passionate and committed volunteers who are willing to dedicate time and energy to growing and strengthening the creative community. The provision of funding based on talent and merit, including through bursaries, fellowships or awards, is also seen as an important part of how we should support our creative practitioners.
- **Increased availability of space** – Arts and cultural activity in Ipswich has outgrown its available venues and infrastructure. There is a wish to see the city’s buildings more readily available to local artists and

cultural organisations at affordable rates to support them as they develop and present their work. This may include collaborative workspaces as well as places to exhibit or perform their work.

- **Public art** – You see public art as a valuable way of increasing the visibility of our local artists, as well as improving the warmth and interest of our streets and buildings – you would welcome more work in the public domain, including street art and murals.
- **Guiding the pace of change** – You want our region to be a welcoming and vibrant place. You want us to guide the pace of change in our fast-growing city and rural areas and make the most of the exciting opportunities available to us.
- **Community pride** – There is growing pride in place, particularly amongst the younger population. The growing exposure of the arts industry has created a sense of community optimism. Despite this, many believe Ipswich is not recognised or appreciated for its arts and cultural achievements. Sport has been a big part of the Ipswich identity. Increasingly, there is a recognition that an evolving and maturing city needs a vibrant, engaging arts and cultural life alongside sport and other elements of community life.
- **Preservation of our built and natural heritage** – You want us to acknowledge and preserve our built and natural heritage. We have some magnificent streets lined with architecturally significant buildings. There is strong support within the community to see innovative adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, particularly in the city centre. Community

suggestions also included clearer signage and education regarding historical significance. Built heritage is a defining characteristic of Ipswich. However, it could be further recognised and appreciated with clearer signage and education regarding its significance, particularly for the younger population.

- **Lowering barriers** – The diversity of performing arts, community cultural and visual arts groups is essential in maintaining long-term sustainability for our creative and cultural sector. Allowing equal opportunities for new groups to form and for new arrivals into our community to participate will maintain our energy and creativity. This includes making Council’s own application and approval processes as user-friendly as possible and being alert to new talents and energies in the community.
- **A collaborative city** – While there is pride in the abundance of arts and cultural entertainment offering in the region there is also a lack of effective marketing and communication – including a failure to harness the possibilities of social media and digital to connect with audiences. There is a desire for a more collaborative approach between organisations and events who currently compete for audiences and facilities, and a need for improving the skills devoted to marketing and audience development.
- **Communication** – You want the Arts and Cultural Strategy to result in practical action and change, and to know that Council is continuing to listen and respond to ideas and priorities from different sections of the community.



Development of the Arts and Cultural Strategy *(Continued)*

Key themes

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

Image: Ipswich Festival Parade.

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

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

**"...mentoring
introduction to
creative disciplines
and pathways in
the arts."**

**"Invite people to
tell their story."**

**"Include cultural
activities into
existing festivals
and events."**

**"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."**

**"More
collaborative
events."**

**"If we want vibrant
hubs of culture
and arts we need
to ensure they are
easy to access."**

Image: George Hogg Auditorium, Ipswich Civic Centre.

OUR STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES



■ **Image:** NFGphoto. Photo of Aliesha Hartley, Ambassador of Ipswich City Council Protégé Master Classes.

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 spoken. 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.¹

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 five years (16.1%), the proportion of residents identifying as Aboriginal and 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.² We recognise the unique contribution of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to our cultural landscape and our cultural identity.

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016*
2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016*

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

Our population of 210,012³ people is projected to reach 520,000 by the year 2041.⁴ 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.⁵ It is estimated that by 2036, over a third of our population will be under 25 years of age.⁶ 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.

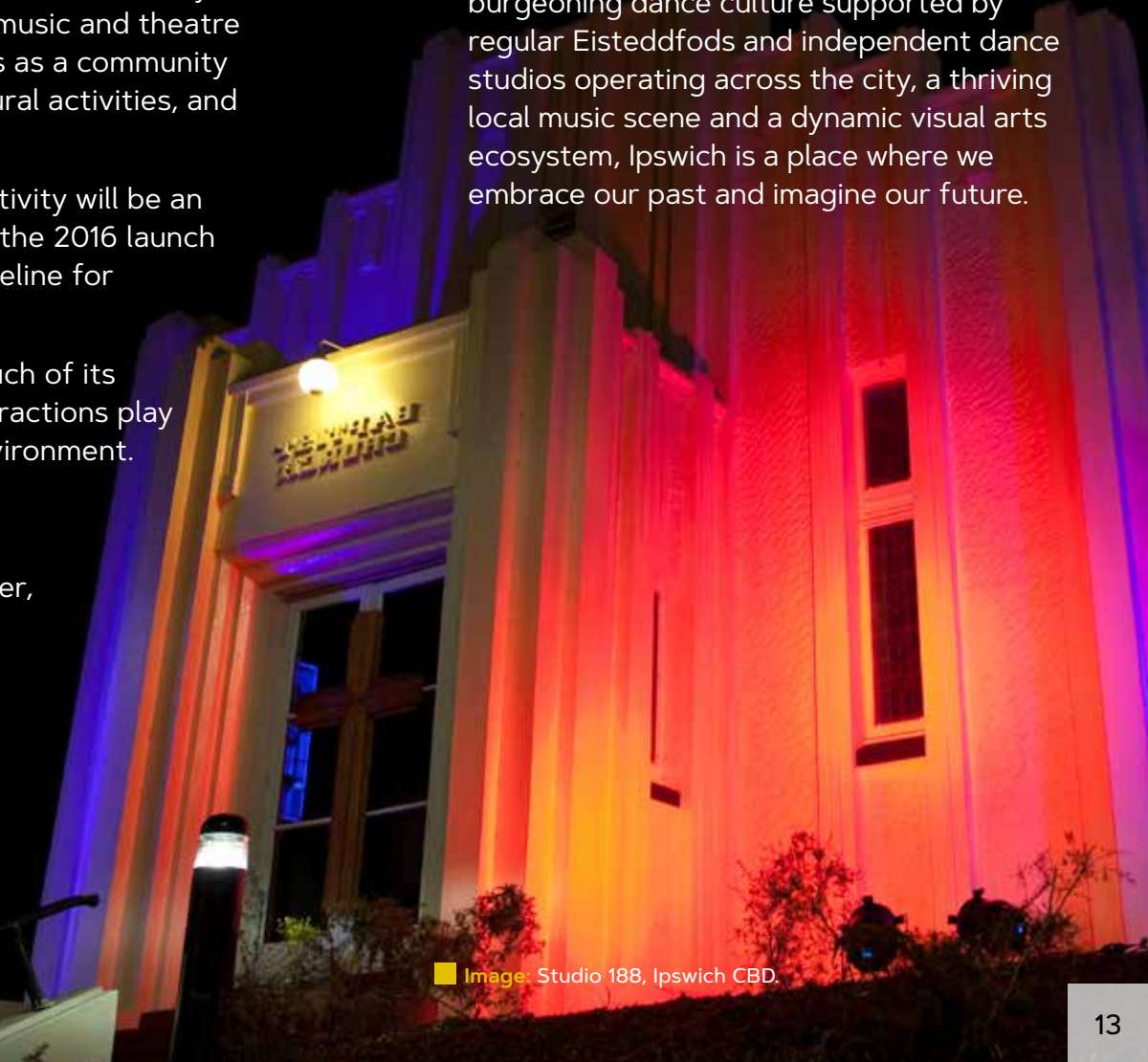
Despite recent rapid population growth, Ipswich has maintained much of its architectural, natural and community charm and these heritage attractions play an essential role in attracting tourists and enhancing our urban environment.

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.

3 As per Ipswich City Council's internal modelling undertaken in March 2018.
4 The State of Queensland, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (2017) *Shaping SEQ: South East Regional Queensland Regional Plan 2017*.
5 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016* for Ipswich, Queensland and Australia.
6 State of Queensland, Office of Economical and Statistical Research (2012), *Population and dwelling profile, Ipswich City Council*.

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.



■ **Image:** Studio 188, Ipswich CBD.



IPSWICH'S VISION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

Image: Mural by Mike Shankster, 2017
Fused Festival. Located on
Goleby's Building, Ipswich CBD.

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 artists, 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 celebrate it. Visitors come 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.

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

**Embracing and
celebrating
our cultural
heritage and
diversity**

1

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




Image: 'Shout Africa' at Banjo Paterson Park at Collingwood Park.



**Activating
and engaging
the whole of
our city**

2

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

Image: Carlene Primmer and Janet Findlay at Ipswich Library, photo by Tangible Media.

4

**Building
creative
capacity
amongst our
young people**

Beyond enhancing our city's cultural life, creative skills 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

Image: Immaterial Labour by Pattie HOFFIE at Ipswich Art Gallery.

**Listening and
providing
leadership for
the cultural
development of
our community**

5

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

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

Actions	
1.1	Celebrate and highlight the culture and art of our First Peoples in civic buildings and public spaces
1.2	Welcome and support the cultures of our recent and new migrant communities
1.3	Support showcasing of our diverse cultures through facilitating access to spaces and places for presentation, and promotion through Council channels
1.4	Provide opportunities for story-telling and the sharing of our cultures and histories
1.5	Maintain our commitment to high quality heritage preservation and encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings
1.6	Feature and enhance knowledge of and engagement with our built heritage through effective signage and interpretation
1.7	Use Apps and digital communications to connect with and interpret our heritage assets

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

Actions	
2.1	Develop a coordinated strategy to generate a lively, activated streetscape both day and night, through outdoor performance and festival programming, street art and mural installations
2.2	Support the activation of our city through increasing density and supporting commercial activity after hours
2.3	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
2.4	Integrate creative lighting and public art to create safe and lively city spaces, parks and precincts
2.5	Develop a ‘welcome pack’ for new residents, featuring arts and cultural connections and opportunities
2.6	Develop a strategy to incentivise and encourage first-time arts attendance for Ipswich residents – introducing residents to our cultural offerings
2.7	Partner with local businesses and others to increase accessibility of arts and cultural activities to a diverse community

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

Actions	
3.1	Feature our local creatives on Council’s website and in our tourism, economic development and other communications
3.2	Foster and actively support the inclusion of local content in Festivals and facilities supported by Council
3.3	Facilitate networking activities between our creatives and our education and business communities to encourage partnerships and create opportunities for our creatives
3.4	Facilitate skills development programs for organisations, artists and cultural groups – to strengthen marketing, entrepreneurial and presentation capabilities
3.5	Complete planning and initiate development of the Ipswich Performing Arts Centre
3.6	Develop a strategy to provide increased access to Council properties for creatives
3.7	Provide merit-based funding to creative practitioners and leaders
3.8	Undertake a ‘cultural facilities’ mapping and integrate into broader facilities strategy

4 Building creative capacity amongst our young people

Beyond enhancing our city’s cultural life, creative skills 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

Actions	
4.1	Initiate arts and cultural mentoring programs for young people
4.2	Facilitate increased opportunities for creatives to connect with communities
4.3	Facilitate access to infrastructure to support cultural and artistic expression for youth
4.4	Support youth-focused programs at the Ipswich Art Gallery, Community Gallery and our performing arts facilities
4.5	Continue to listen to our young people, and adapt our arts and cultural initiatives to address their evolving needs
4.6	Foster engagement in creative diversity through funded access programs for young people

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

Actions	
5.1	Improve communication channels to inform residents and tourists of upcoming arts and cultural events and activities
5.2	Hold periodic forums to maintain close understanding of the evolving creative community
5.3	Survey creative practitioners and cultural groups periodically to learn more about their needs and aspirations
5.4	Provide adaptive leadership to ensure the planning and actioning of arts and cultural activities and programs are responsive to community feedback
5.5	Foster a collaborative governance model between Council and the cultural sector for relevant arts and cultural initiatives

** 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.



City of
Ipswich

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Image (Front & Back Cover): Interior artwork at Ipswich Old Woollen Mills by Gus Eagleton, photo by Rob Williams.

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