



Bass Coast Shire Council Arts and Culture Strategy 2019-2029

Executive Summary



Acknowledgement

Bass Coast Shire acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first Australians and recognises that they have a unique relationship with the land and water. Council recognises that we are situated on the traditional lands of the Bùnurong/Boonwurrung, members of the Kulin Nation who have lived here for thousands of years. We offer our respect to their elders past and present and through them, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Cover images clockwise from top left: Inverloch Jazz Festival, 2017, George Bass' Coast - Fairy Cove by Mandy Gunn, Young Survivors Hawkers S.A. by Adrian Johnson, Dancer: Annabelle Clarkson

This page: Boonurong People by Patrice 'Muthaymiles' Mahoney

Introduction

The Arts and Culture Strategy 2019-2029 sets out a road map for Council's aspirations for arts and culture for the next 10 years. It showcases what we value, who we are, and our unique natural environment. It will activate places, introduce new spaces and inspire people – our vibrant creative community, audiences and participants. It also must accommodate unprecedented and as yet unknown cultural changes.

In order to discover what is most important to the community for arts and culture now and into the future, we conducted extensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders and collected the broadest possible range of perspectives in January 2019. We had an excellent response:

- 770 direct engagements.
- 638 completed online surveys.
- 77 written responses at pop-up consultations in Wonthaggi, Rhyll and Pioneer Bay.
- 39 attendees to half day consultation workshops in Inverloch and Cowes.
- One on one discussions with key stakeholders.

The findings of the consultations have been used as part of our evidence base for the Strategy, incorporated into our objectives, and are recorded in an appendix to the Strategy.

The Bass Coast Arts and Culture Strategy 2019 – 2029 replaces the Arts and Culture Plan 2015-19.

In reviewing the Arts and Culture Plan 2015 – 19, one thing was extremely clear. Over the past four-year period Bass Coast Shire Council has significantly

increased its investment in Arts and Culture, evidenced through the refurbishment of the Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre, the commencement of architectural design for the Cowes Cultural Centre, the restructuring of the Arts and Culture Team within Council, and the acquisition of a significant art collection. Council has also maintained its commitment to public art, supported local visual arts through the Your Art Collection Awards, continued to foster annual activities through Come and Play-Month of May, facilitated community workshops and promoted local cultural activities through the provision of community grants and the publication of the Arts Round The Shire brochure.

Methodology

The Strategy has been devised and prepared by Bass Coast Shire Council and aligns with the objectives of the Council Plan 2017-2021, representing the values of the residents and rate-payers, and sitting within cultural, social, economic, environmental and governance policy domains.

The Strategy will assist Council to achieve its vision, that Bass Coast will be known as a region that supports a sustainable and healthy community, and values and protects its natural assets.

Page detail: Interception, Wave Series by Annette Spinks
Background: One Heart by Annette Spinks

There are six specific goals in the Council Plan 2017-2021. These are the desired futures that Council developed after hearing from the community, to achieve our shared vision. The Strategy aligns to all six of these goals.

Goals

1.

A prosperous local economy

2.

A valued, protected and well maintained environment

3.

A responsive open Council

4.

A liveable, enjoyable place to be

5.

A healthy, active community

6.

Our unique character and history celebrated

The Strategy's methodology follows the Cultural Development Network's planning framework, adopted by the National Local Government Cultural Forum, the Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria, the Australian Local Government Association and now used by many councils around Australia as best practice cultural development planning.

We use six planning principles focused on goals and outcomes and based on evidence, all underpinned by a theory of change to inform the selection of future activities.

Planning Principles

1.

Based on values

2.

Directed towards goals

3.

Focused on outcomes

4.

Informed by evidence

5.

Underpinned by a theory of change

6.

Respondent to evaluation

We use five measurable cultural outcomes for each goal, aspects of evaluation that have hitherto been considered intangible.

Measurable Cultural Outcomes

1.

Creativity stimulated

2.

Aesthetic enrichment experienced

3.

New knowledge and insight gained

4.

Cultural diversity appreciated

5.

Sense of belonging to shared heritage experienced

Using these outcomes helps us to assess what difference our work makes to those who receive it. We also use measurable outcomes across the environmental, social, governance and economic domains that relate to each Council goal.

The measurable outcomes will be evaluated and reported on periodically during the life of the plan using a range of methodologies to evaluate whether the intended outcomes were achieved and to provide an understanding of the impact of arts and culture programs during the 10 year life of the strategy.

Page detail top: Reflected Game by Frank Schooneveldt, Goat Island Gallery
Background: One Heart by Annette Spinks
Below (top): Interception by Annette Spinks
Below (lower): Color harmony by Susan A Hall

The Strategy

Goal 1: A prosperous local economy

Support the local economy through arts and culture events, programs and initiatives. Build professional capacity for local artists and organisations, enhance artistic and economic potential, facilitate, promote and encourage cultural tourism.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural

1. **Creativity stimulated**
2. **New knowledge, ideas and understanding gained**

Economic

1. **Practice capacity increased**
2. **Local economy supported**

Why?

Theory of Change

We know there is a skilled creative sector in the Shire that has the potential to contribute to a prosperous economy. We know that cultural tourism is a driver for our economy. We are therefore aiming to support capacity building for arts and culture practitioners and organisations to participate in a range of business opportunities.

Potential Intentions and Activities

- Practitioners and community groups gain enhanced capacities.
- Well planned, managed and affordable facilities.
- More cultural tourism opportunities.
- Partnerships with the private sector.
- Creative sector has access to opportunities for networking and communication.
- Activate local spaces.
- Support the local economy through arts and culture events, programs and initiatives.
- Create frameworks for philanthropy and advocacy.

‘There is widespread international consensus that the future of work will be driven by creativity and innovation. As our workplaces undergo a rapid shift with the acceleration to AI, further automation and machine learning, creativity and a creative mindset is increasingly seen as the way to outsmart the robots ... how can regional communities respond to the challenges and disruption of our economy and society?’¹

Page detail top: Dance Design Mushu (Mulan’s guardian dragon) from Mulan
Middle: Sunrise at Wattle Bank, photography by Bob Tyler
Below: Summer in San Remo by Adrian Gemelli

¹ Quote from Tony Grybowski, CEO Ausco at the 2018 Regional Development Conference, Tweed Heads:

Goal 2: A valued protected and well maintained environment

Increase levels of enrichment, belonging, and connection to the natural world and increase understanding of ecological issues for all people in the community across all arts and cultural activities.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural

1. **Aesthetic enrichment experienced**
2. **Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage deepened**

Environmental

1. **Valued connection to natural world inspired**
2. **Understanding of ecological issues increased**

Why?

Theory of Change

Our environment is the reason many residents live here, and is the reason many non-residents visit. It is the backbone of our economy and the cornerstone of our character. It is unique, fragile and inspiring therefore we will program arts and cultural events to celebrate, protect and learn from it.

Potential Intentions and Activities

- Develop new partnerships.
- Develop and support out of season events to encourage winter visitation.
- Support environmental artist residency.
- Expand existing initiatives e.g. festivals.
- Investigate partnerships for events around environmental themes – e.g. photography/sound exhibition with Birdlife Australia, Parks and Foreshores.
- Support public art that has environmental themes.
- Consider ephemeral art exhibitions in non-traditional spaces.

*'I propose that arts in environment uses the visual arts, architecture, music, dance, creative writing, drama, culinary and other arts to call attention to environmental issues and promote the Earth's health, including the well-being of humans and other species.'*²

² Proposed Definition of Arts in Environment - Mary Sebold - Defining Where Health, Environment, and the Arts Meet

Top: Bronze Yarns Sculpture Trail by David Murphy, Coronet Bay
Middle: Sunrise at Wattle Bank, photography by Bob Tyler
Page detail below: examples of works from the Printmaking with Plastic workshop, with Susan A Hall

Goal 3: A responsive open Council

Arts and Culture policies contribute to open and responsive governance.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural

1. **Knowledge, ideas and insights gained**

Governance

1. **Sense of a positive future for community inspired**

Why?

Theory of Change

Council, as a producer, presenter, facilitator and promoter of arts and cultural events and activities, needs to have clear, transparent processes that are outcome focussed. We will therefore adopt the Cultural Development Network's six planning principles and measurable outcomes across all domains to deliver best practice planning and evaluation.

Potential Intentions and Activities

- Embed this Strategy as a whole of Council living document into Council planning for the future.
- Review and evaluate the Strategy throughout its 10-year life.
- Maintain a clear focus on measuring outcomes.
- Ensure that the cultural domain is recognised equally with the social, economic, environment and governance public policy domains within all Council plans.
- Develop new policies to cover cultural collections and public art schemes.
- Investigate the provision for developer contributions to art in the region, e.g. the 'Percent for Art' model.

'Without the law, you can't have society. But without the arts, you can't have civilisation'.³

³ Julian Burnside, QC.

'The highest purpose of art is to inspire. What else can you do? What else can you do for anyone but inspire them?' Bob Dylan

Goal 4: A liveable enjoyable place to be

Support and offer a diverse range of facilities and opportunities for participation in a vibrant and active cultural sector.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural

- 1. Creativity stimulated**
- 2. Aesthetic enrichment appreciated**
- 3. Diversity of cultural expression appreciated**

Social

- 1. Social connectedness enhanced**

Why?

Theory of Change

There is a positive correlation between arts and liveability. The arts are valued highly in Bass Coast, therefore we will stimulate creativity for artists, participants and audiences.

Potential Intentions and Activities

- Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre continues to be the flagship Arts Centre in the Shire offering year round diverse programming that engages, inspires and connects the community.
- Capitalise on WUCAC's centrality to arts and culture in the region to develop and test programs that can be a model for new facilities in the Shire.
- With community input, plan for the redevelopment of the Cowes Cultural Precinct and the activation of the imminent decommissioning of the Wonthaggi Secondary College Senior Campus site.
- Establish regional art gallery.
- Whole Shire activities and touring opportunities will create greater connection with our townships.
- Activate existing venues, including halls and cultural venues.
- Change and enhance the ways we communicate with the community.

Top: Artwork, Inverloch Skate Park
Middle: Sunrise at Wattle Bank, photography by Bob Tyler
Page detail below: Chalk Art by Ulla Taylor and Cecilia Leys, Newhaven for Come and Play All of May

Goal 5: A healthy active community

Provide arts and cultural experiences which contribute to connected, healthy and active communities.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural

1. **Diversity of cultural expression appreciated**

Social

1. **Wellbeing improved**
2. **Feeling valued experienced**

Why?

Theory of Change

There is a lack of amenities, opportunities and pathways for young people. We also have a growing retiree population. We know that for arts and culture to make a vital contribution to community health and well-being, all demographics should benefit from participation in arts and cultural activities, therefore target activities that engage and foster participation from all sections of the community.

Potential Intentions and Activities

- Working with the Reconciliation Action Plan to build meaningful community interaction with indigenous art and culture.
- Continue to build on existing strengths.
- Capacity building programs for young people.
- Connect older adults at times that suit their lifestyles.
- Art trails, and walks are an untapped opportunity in Bass Coast.
- Partner with library and U3A for life-long learning activities. Encourage programs that generate links between older and younger people.
- Ensure venues and events are accessible to all.

*'Being involved in arts activities can improve people's mental and physical health and help build healthier communities, increase self-esteem, pride and cultural identity, sense of self-determination, control and belonging, academic outcomes, skill development and increased chances of employment.'*⁴

Page detail top: Reflected Game by Frank Schooneveldt, Goat Island Gallery
Middle: Homage to Morandi by Diana Bannister, Shearwater Studio
Below: Sunrise at Wattle Bank, photography by Bob Tyler

⁴ Vic Health Resource Centre https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/arts/VH_Promoting-Aboriginal-health-through-arts-VI.pdf?la=en&hash=3275AF42F36622D71AE23959B3847264E63F982E

Goal 6: Our unique character and history celebrated

Support programs and plans that connect with and celebrate local history and character.

Measurable Outcomes

Cultural

1. **Sense of belonging to shared cultural heritage experienced**

Social

1. **Social differences bridged**

Why?

Theory of Change

We know that there is a strong sense of pride in the history and character of our region, and there is a need to recognise our connection to country. We will therefore ensure that our programs and public artworks reflect our unique character and history for all to appreciate.

Potential Intentions and Activities

- Recognition of country and articulation of local narrative.
- Develop a new Sites and Themes Plan.
- Investigate a 'Percentage for Art Scheme' with local developer contributions.
- Commission public art that connects with local character.
- Investigate partnerships through the Reconciliation Action Plan to generate greater awareness about country.
- Develop programs that reflect local character with youth, for youth.
- Investigate opportunities to promote and enhance the pre-historic significance of the Shire

Page detail top: Page detail: George Bass' Coast - Waterloo Bay by Mandy Gunn

Middle: Excuse me Mr Seagull, San Remo 2017 by Paul Jesse

Below: Sunrise at Wattle Bank, photography by Bob Tyler

Arts and Culture Strategy 2019-2029 in brief:

Review Documents

- Council Plan 2017-2021
- Arts and Culture Plan 2015-19
- Bass Coast Cultural Precinct Plan 2011
- Bass Coast Towards 2030
- Youth Action Plan 2016-2020
- Active Bass Coast 2018
- Wonthaggi Activity Centre Plan (under development)
- Sites and Themes Plan 2014-2024
- Australia Council for the Arts Electorate Profiles
- Id.com.au regional profiles

Key Themes

- Review the work we do
- Articulate the role of Council in Arts and Culture
- Advocate for a cultural precinct in Wonthaggi
- Partner to deliver a redeveloped Cowes Cultural Centre
- Increase access to Council's Art Collection
- Create a link between artists

Thanks

“Bass Coast Shire Council would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of this Strategy. We would like to thank and recognise the individuals, organisations, community groups and service providers, the local residents who offered their thoughts and aspirations, the holiday makers who stumbled into a pop-up survey, the practicing artists and facilitators who brought their expertise and passion to the table. Special thanks to the Bass Coast Shire Council Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee for their time and knowledge invested to help guide and shape this process.”

Bass Coast Shire Council would like to acknowledge the passion and leadership provided by Julie Marlow of Deep Rock Consultancy and John Smithies from the Cultural Development Network.

