



arts and cultural strategy 2008-2013



Our Vision Our Arts & Culture

Vibrant local arts and cultural services and activities are important to us in Boroondara.

Our vision is for a city of harmony where citizens can celebrate, share, express and experience a rich arts and cultural life,

... where we can feel a sense of belonging and pride in our place,

... a place where arts and culture are placed firmly at the centre of the social, economic and cultural fabric of the City in a way that empowers and inspires those who live, work and visit.

*Front cover
'Reconciliation Week'*

Artwork by Dora Wilson

'Jazz at Canterbury Garden'

'Shake, Rattle'n'Soul'

'Sabrina Chou Dance Troupe'

*Hawthorn Town Hall Gallery'
Gollings Pigeon*

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'Boroondara Eisteddfod'



...We are proud of our vibrant culture that promotes an array of artistic, sporting, recreation and lifelong learning opportunities. Living in Boroondara means we have access to a variety of services, activities, clubs, cultural and recreational facilities. Our City is recognised as a leader in encouraging fresh ideas and innovation in technology, culture and education ...

*(an extract from **Our Boroondara - Our City, our Future**)*

Introduction

This is the City of Boroondara's Arts and Cultural Strategy.

Boroondara Council and its citizens recognise that arts and culture are a fundamental part of the social, economic and environmental fabric of Boroondara and the life of its residents.

Boroondara people have clearly expressed their desire for arts and culture to be a priority and for the Council to play a lead role in creating and sustaining conditions in which they can flourish.

This strategy is about maintaining the rich gifts of the past as well as continuing to grow the arts and cultural life of the City to meet the aspirations of future Boroondara.

The City of Boroondara has a proud and rich cultural heritage. Its original inhabitants were the Wurundjeri clan of the Woiwurrung people, and this land was part of their hunting grounds.

"Boroondara" is taken from the Woiwurrung dialect that refers to 'where the ground is thickly shaded' - a reference to the densely wooded and forested area that made this an ideal hunting area in centuries gone by.

These days, Boroondara is home to 160,000 people in Melbourne's inner and middle-eastern suburbs and it is known for beautiful tree-lined streets, parks and gardens, recreational facilities and cultural activities.

In keeping with the past, but looking to the future, the people of Boroondara have a vision for Boroondara to be a place in which residents and visitors can create and enjoy arts and cultural activity together in a local setting.

Context

In early 2008, Boroondara Council commissioned Geografia to undertake an arts and cultural research project.

It was commissioned to:

- provide a greater understanding of the nature and level of arts and cultural activity in the City of Boroondara
- identify the City's current and future role in the development and provision of arts and cultural programs and facilities within the municipal district of the Council.

To achieve its aims, the study evaluated existing provision (supply) and derived a measure of the current, future and unmet demand for arts and cultural activities in the City.

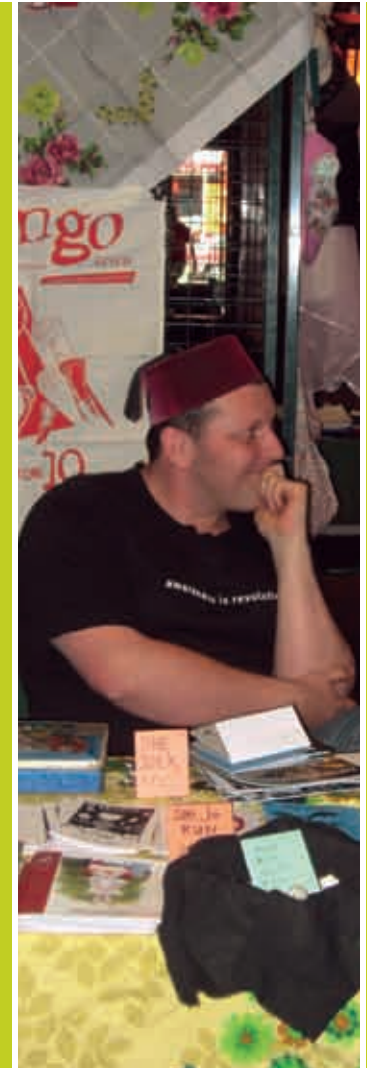
It reviewed the activities of both the producers and consumers of arts and culture in and around the municipality: that is, the practitioners, organisers and volunteers who produce arts and cultural activities and services for the final consumers of it, the audience members and visitors. Everything from plays, music events and

festivals, to book readings, lectures and public art installations were included in the analysis.

The research included community consultation that was instrumental in defining the themes and issues for this strategy. Reference was made to broad arts and cultural trends and also to comparative information provided by neighbouring municipal councils. The results highlighted a core set of concerns and aspirations that were largely in line with the vision theme outcomes from *Our Boroondara – Our City, Our Future*, which expresses Council's overall vision for the future.

The research informs the directions set in this strategy which will guide planning and delivery for arts and cultural activities in the City over the next five to ten years.

Geografia's study report, *Arts and Culture in Boroondara*, is available for reference by contacting the City of Boroondara, Leisure and Cultural Services Department on 9278 4770.



'Zine Fair'

A Local Focus for Arts and Culture

The research identified that Boroondara is among a group of neighbouring councils that provide facilities and services with a primarily local focus. Boroondara is actively taking on this focus as a strategic approach for the future development of arts and culture. This is a conscious point of difference to some other Cities that choose a specialisation and development approach where arts and culture make them a metropolitan destination. Boroondara's Arts and Cultural Strategy aims to guide our priority and focus on provision of and access to local arts and cultural activity.

Arts and Culture in Boroondara

Boroondara has a strong heritage of community-led arts, particularly in music and visual arts. Research has shown that the majority of people who live in Boroondara are enthusiastic and active participants in a huge range of forms of arts and cultural practice, either as audience or direct practitioner.

Many residents are regular visitors to Melbourne's galleries, cinemas, theatres and parks and given the average socio-economic status of households and Boroondara's proximity to a range of services in the CBD and neighbouring municipalities, this is not surprising.

On the surface, arts and culture in Boroondara is thriving. However, we now know that by necessity much of the arts and cultural life of Boroondara residents currently occurs outside of the City's bounds, even though the demand for local activity is growing, and will continue to grow.

Boroondara is among a group of neighbouring councils that provide facilities and services primarily for local consumption. Boroondara

currently has only one small dedicated arts and cultural facility (Town Hall Gallery) so its focus is predominantly direct local program delivery.

The 2008 research relating to the provision of arts and culture in Boroondara identified gaps in the provision of a range of spaces for exhibitions, community meetings and rehearsals and performance space, as well as a need for improved communication, local promotion and some specialist funding. This highlighted the limited level of arts and cultural activity within Boroondara's borders.

Research shows that most of Boroondara's residents want vibrant local arts and culture. Boroondara recognises that social and demographic shifts will see a growing level of interest in participating in the local community. This creates both a need and opportunity to expand and enhance local arts and cultural spaces and events. The City of Boroondara has the primary role to facilitate these actions and meet the needs of current and future residents and visitors.

Arts, Culture and Wellbeing

The Australia Council's Art and Wellbeing study (2004) documents the outcomes of arts and culture-based community wellbeing programs around Australia. The study identifies the positive contribution of arts and culture to personal health; ecologically sustainable development; community building in public housing estates; rural revitalisation; community strengthening; active citizenship; and social inclusion.

The Importance of Arts and Culture

Arts and cultural activities are not peripheral or separate from other quality of life and social issues. Whatever form they take, arts and culture enrich the lives of participants and the community as a whole.

Whether it's music, literature, dance, theatre, festivals or visual arts, these activities allow people an outlet for their creativity and self-expression which they may not have through work or everyday life. They have a value beyond pure monetary and utilitarian measures.

The key components of arts and culture are crucial to the quality of life of people who live, work and study in Boroondara. The City's environment, its facilities, festivals and events, the opportunity it provides for children and adults to take up and learn new activities, its sense of history and heritage - all are part of the fabric of living, without which people's lives would be immeasurably poorer.

Current research and thinking is that arts and culture benefits community wellbeing across the spectrum of the economy, society and environment.

In Boroondara and elsewhere the link between wellbeing and arts and cultural life is broadly acknowledged through existing programs such as the arts and craft courses run at the community and neighbourhood centres. These are well patronised activities that enjoy the full endorsement of the Council.

However, while the benefits of arts and culture are tacitly understood, they are often not consciously acknowledged or fully appreciated. As a consequence, there is room to improve.

Summer Music Series



Why do we need an Arts and Cultural Strategy?

The City of Boroondara has a strong vision for its future contained in its Vision Statement, *Our Boroondara – Our City, Our Future*.

While Boroondara is largely a prosperous, safe and beautiful city that is a very desirable place to live, its arts and cultural growth has been limited compared to other local authorities with similar demographic profiles.

Boroondara's community has identified that there are significant gaps and opportunities for development in its arts and culture that will be significant contributors to meeting its social, environmental and economic wellbeing.

The range of arts and cultural activities that people want to choose to spend their time on is increasing and people have higher expectations of arts and cultural provision. Boroondara people are particularly interested in a focus on local arts and cultural activity development. Awareness of the value of arts and cultural provision and the benefits it can bring to communities and individuals is also growing.

The aim of this Strategy is to maximise the opportunities that can result from developing arts and culture in Boroondara. How we can best work together to achieve this aim?

A co-ordinated approach, both within Council and the community, should ensure that the full potential for developing arts and culture in Boroondara is realised.

Arts and Culture

“... culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002)

“The arts are the field on which we place our own dreams, thoughts and desires alongside those of others, so that solitudes can meet, to their joy sometimes, or to their surprise, and sometimes to their disgust. When you boil it all down, that is the social purpose of art: the creation of mutuality, the passage from feeling into shared meaning.”

Robert Hughes (Australian-American) art critic, in an address at Skowhegen School of Art in 1996 (New Yorker).

Boroondara’s Definition of Arts and Culture

This document is about arts and culture in Boroondara so it’s important that we have a clear and common understanding of what is meant by “arts” and “culture”.

For the purpose of Boroondara’s Arts and Cultural strategy:

Arts is considered to be:

The pursuit of creative skill with a particular vision which communicates through the chosen medium. It includes performing arts (music, theatre, dance), visual arts and crafts, literature, new media and hybrid forms.

Culture is considered to be:

Those aspects of living which help to define the identity of a community, often expressed through particular art forms and celebrations unique to that community. For example, many Asian cultures celebrate the Moon Lantern Festival, which will include the making of beautiful lanterns (visual arts and crafts) and dance.

*‘The New Melbourne Jazz Band’
timothyburgess.net*



How The Strategy Fits In Council's Planning Framework

Our Boroondara, Council Plan and Budget

Other Strategies

Boroondara's Arts and Cultural Strategy

Other Strategies

Implementation Plan

Department Business Plans

Community Arts & Cultural Outcomes

The Strategic Framework

There are a large number of policies, strategies and plans produced by Council and other bodies that are relevant to this Strategy, and which need to be considered when setting out the future framework for arts and culture in Boroondara. Boroondara has a strong strategic framework that underpins its planning. The *Council Plan 2008 - 2013* along with *Our Boroondara - Our Vision, Our Future*, set out a clear vision for Boroondara and are the guiding documents for all Council activity over the next five years.

There is also a suite of key strategic documents which give more detailed voice to Council's vision including:

- *Boroondara Planning Scheme*
- *Municipal Public Health Plan (2003 - 2006)*
- *City of Boroondara Public Art Policy (2004-2009)*
- *City of Boroondara Festival Policy (2004)*
- *Town Hall Gallery Collection Acquisition Policy (2007)*
- *Town Hall Gallery Governance Document (2007)*

- *Cultural Hub Project: Management and Marketing Plan for Hawthorn Town Hall (1995)*
- *Cultural Facilities Discussion Paper (2007)*
- *Community Development Grants Program Policy (2008)*

Some of the issues and opportunities identified in this Arts and Cultural Strategy also appear in other strategic documents, highlighting their significance for the municipality and confirming the interrelationship of Council's key strategies and an integrated, across Council approach to provision of services.

'The Music Man'
timothyburgess.net



It has become clear from the research and consultation undertaken for this Strategy just how important arts and cultural services and activity are for life in Boroondara.

They are not just important for their own sake, but as an integral part of dealing with broader issues of health, well being, social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and community development.

It is also clear that arts and culture are central to the quality of life and identity of the City's residents and communities.

Its parks and open spaces, festivals, activities for young people, heritage and the design of its built environment, provide the stage on which the City's life is lived, and without which Boroondara would be immeasurably poorer.

Our Vision

Our Arts and Culture

Vibrant local arts and cultural services and activities are important to us in Boroondara.

Our vision is for a city of harmony where citizens can celebrate, share, express and experience a rich arts and cultural life,

... where we can feel a sense of belonging and pride in our place,

... a place where arts and culture are placed firmly at the centre of the social, economic and cultural fabric of the City in a way that empowers and inspires those who live, work and visit.

How to read our Arts and Cultural Strategy

Boroondara's Arts and Cultural Strategy is a key corporate document. The purpose of the Strategy is to communicate to the community and within Council the arts and cultural activities to be addressed by Council during the five years to 2013.

The diagram below details the structure of Boroondara's Arts and Cultural Strategy.

As an outcome of the research and consultation leading to the development of this Strategy, seven arts and cultural commitments were identified that are the key themes under which arts and cultural development will be pursued in Boroondara.

Each of the arts and cultural commitments includes an aim and a number of actions on which Council will focus its attention to achieve outcomes for the community.

'Craft Bonanza'
timothyburgess.net



how our strategy works =



Commitment 1

Identity and Connections

Research

- Arts and culture build community connectedness and wellbeing by contributing to social, economic and environmental development at a community level. This builds a shared sense of identity as part of a group, neighbourhood and/or City.
- Boroondara falls short of some neighbouring municipalities in providing adequate facilities for creation and presentation of arts and culture despite its demographic profile and socioeconomic status.
- A local service focus will meet the diverse community needs of Boroondara and deliver broad ranging benefits to residents.
- Arts and culture can attract visitors and new residents seeking dynamic and rich neighbourhoods - this is an option once the local service model is successfully implemented.

Commitment 1

Identity and Connections

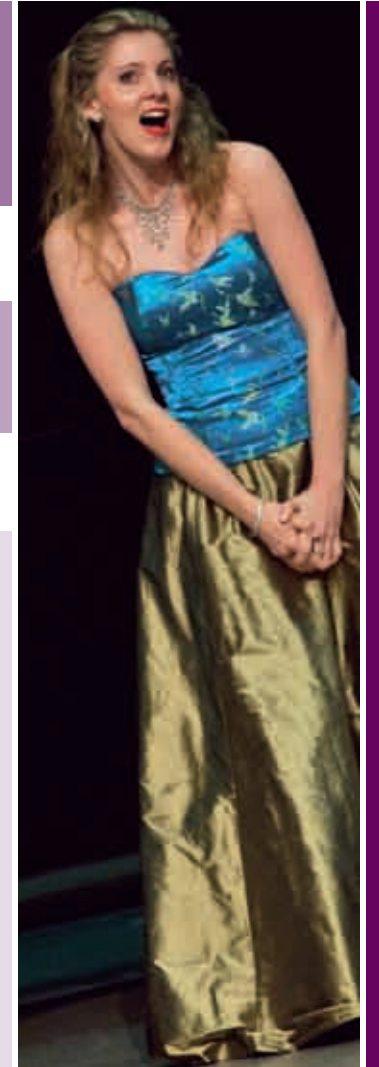
We will develop programs, projects, services and spaces that respond to the needs of groups and individuals in the City, recognising the distinctive communities and expectations in Boroondara and the different pathways to economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

Aim

To celebrate and support the Boroondara community through the provision of diverse arts and cultural programs, projects and services.

Actions

- 1.1 Adopt and implement a local service model for the provision of arts and culture in Boroondara. Review current projects, programs and services against the local service model and identify any opportunities for change of focus.
- 1.2 Develop programs and services that reflect and showcase diverse identities and aspirations in Boroondara.
- 1.3 Support festivals and events that provide opportunities for local cultural expression.
- 1.4 Provide leadership, advocacy and support to the community for arts, culture and heritage.





Commitment 2 Spaces and Facilities

Research

- A need for additional space for rehearsing, exhibiting and performing is the single most pressing arts and cultural issue in Boroondara.
- There is a need to develop a network of spaces and facilities that meet the diversity of local needs under the Boroondara Local Service Model in collaboration with other locally based agencies.
- Existing public facilities are well placed to become points of delivery of arts and culture and, through partnerships and public art, to raise the profile of these spaces within the community and, over time, the metropolitan area.
- Existing public facilities lend themselves to specific roles and functions. The Kew Court House and Hawthorn Town Hall precinct present the primary opportunities.

Commitment 2

Spaces and Facilities

We will provide new, activate existing, and develop appropriate cultural environments in Boroondara. We will ensure that arts and cultural facilities in Boroondara are effectively managed.

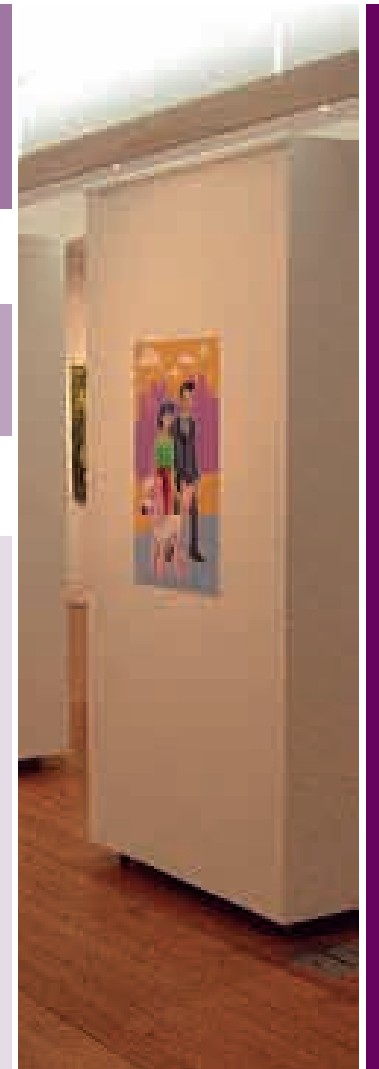
Aim

To create thriving cultural environments by providing new and reinvigorated (where appropriate) existing public spaces and facilities that are able to respond to the changing needs of Boroondara.

Actions

- 2.1 Develop a network of arts and cultural spaces to address identified community demand and to reinvigorate Council's heritage buildings.
- 2.2 Develop Hawthorn Town Hall as Boroondara's key community cultural space with an emphasis on the presentation of arts and cultural activities within a facility that retains its civic function and strengthens Council's programming capacity.
- 2.3 Support the restoration of the Kew Court House and Police Station as a cultural hub.
- 2.4 Determine an alternative use for The Camberwell Centre (development as an arts and cultural venue is not a high priority).
- 2.5 Investigate a range of multipurpose facilities across the municipality (including the Michael Tuck Stand) that could be used by bands and/or community music groups.
- 2.6 Explore partnership arrangements regarding community use of existing and/or new facilities in Boroondara schools and educational institutions.
- 2.7 Utilise public art to raise the identity of the Hawthorn Town Hall and Kew Court House sites as arts and cultural spaces.

'Artwork by Scott Fraser'





Commitment 3 Communications and Marketing

Research

- Alongside spaces and facilities, communication was the core concern of stakeholders and residents.
- Cultural Services has a key role to facilitate communication between all stakeholders.
- It is essential to promote the benefits accruing to the community from the participation in arts and cultural activities.
- Arts and cultural precincts require substantial branding and promotion to create a sense of place and Cultural Services has an important role in achieving this.
- Improved marketing and promotion are necessary to improve the impact of programs and hence community well-being. This must be underpinned by a clearly enunciated and understood set of departmental business plan objectives.

Commitment 3

Communication and Marketing

We will enhance communication within the arts and cultural sector and between the Council, the sector and the wider community.

Aim

To become a facilitator of better communication within Council and between Council, the arts and cultural sector and the wider community.

Actions

- 3.1 Address internal and external lines of communication to improve promotion of the benefits of arts and culture.
- 3.2 Address internal and external lines of communication to explore opportunities for joint promotion and marketing with other organisations including educational institutions.
- 3.3 Market programs and services to the community widely and regularly using all available means of communication and customer service provision.
- 3.4 Develop opportunities to cross-promote Council services through arts and cultural programs and services.
- 3.5 Commence discussions with schools and other educational institutions including Swinburne University regarding cross-promotion of arts and cultural programs, in order to broaden the choice available to the Boroondara community.





Commitment 4 Participation and Partnerships

Research

- The participation rates of Boroondara residents in arts and culture outside of the municipality are high. This contrasts with the survey findings revealing low participation levels within the municipality. At the same time there is a social trend towards a preference for local activities and events. To support this, provision must be made to produce and deliver arts and culture in local settings.
- Services should be provided to a diversity of residents, in such a way that they target the impediments to participation for each age group, eg 20 – 35 year olds or over 55s.
- Changing age and other demographic characteristics of Boroondara will require greater levels of local provision.
- It is essential to encourage partnerships between Cultural Services, other Council teams and other organisations to maximise participation and benefits to community wellbeing.
- There is a need to provide funding to support and sustain the use of new and existing spaces to ensure their functional viability
- *Our Boroondara - Our City Our Future* (Council's long-term visioning document) has noted the demand for diverse leisure and recreation activities in Boroondara.

Commitment 4

Participation and Partnerships

We will identify the critical points of investment that will stimulate higher levels of local arts and cultural output and participation rates. We will nurture and capitalise on partnerships within Council and between Council and other stakeholders.

Aim

To increase the level, scope and quality of experience of the participation of Boroondara residents in arts and cultural activities in Boroondara.

Actions

- 4.1 Develop a specific purpose sustainable cultural grants program, targeting objectives such as place activation, young people, new migrants/new cultures or new and emerging art forms in order to provide development opportunities for local artists.
- 4.2 Develop cross-organisational partnerships - with, for example, Community Planning, Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Environment and Sustainable Living - to advocate for and assist in providing arts and cultural content in their programs and services in order to enhance community wellbeing.
- 4.3 Develop an annual program that supports participation in arts and culture in Boroondara.
- 4.4 Encourage and support the pursuit of excellence in arts and culture.
- 4.5 Develop partnerships with relevant external businesses, education and community organisations to deliver arts and culture to specific demographic groups in the community (e.g., young people, families, CALD groups and older people).
- 4.6 Facilitate the engagement of the community with other arts and cultural organisations within and outside the City.





Commitment 5 New and emerging practices: artists, enterprises, projects, programs and services

Research

- Boroondara’s demographic profile includes a large number of young people and new residents, each of which represents a distinctive and growing market for arts and culture.
- It is important to acknowledge the strength of the local arts and cultural landscape that rests on past and present activities, while noting the report findings that support the encouragement of new and emerging arts and cultural practices.
- To develop the Local Service Model, the City must support contemporary development in arts and culture while continuing to respect heritage values. This should be underpinned with tailored funding support when necessary.
- The Kew Court House provides an opportunity as a facility that can provide an accessible, inexpensive “hothouse” for new and emerging artists, enterprises, projects, programs and services.
- Practitioner advice indicates that the Hawthorn Town Hall and Town Hall Gallery could provide a range of spaces that focus on showcasing the best of Boroondara’s artistic talent.
- A range of programs and projects are required in order to stimulate a thriving local arts and cultural sector. It is essential to provide the creative environment in which new endeavour can flourish.

Commitment 5

New and emerging practices: artists, enterprises, projects, programs and services

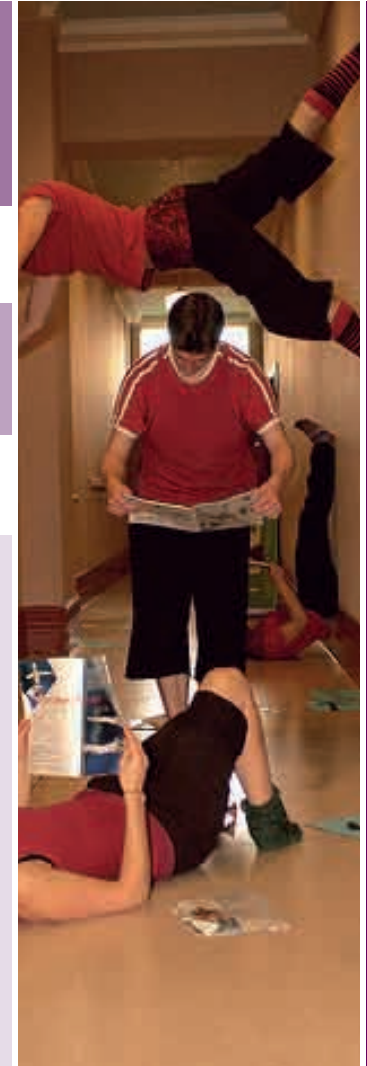
We will assist in providing opportunities for creative, independent expression and participation by all residents in Boroondara, stimulating and supporting new, innovative and emerging arts and cultural practices.

Aim

To encourage the participation of residents and develop a thriving, innovative and sustainable arts and cultural industry through diversity of opportunity and activity.

Actions

- 5.1 Ensure the proposed grant program (Action 4.1) incorporates a 'new and emerging' component.
- 5.2 Investigate the capacity to develop cultural industries in Boroondara, particularly through the use of the Kew Court House and in partnership with other Council units and external stakeholders.
- 5.3 Explore opportunities for cultural tourism to contribute to the creation of thriving cultural environments.





Commitment 6 Integrated Planning

Research

- Quantifying, enhancing and communicating the benefits of arts and culture is critical to better integration with other Council programs and services.
- It is essential to have an integrated, but independent, arts and culture strategy within Council against which other policies and programs can be measured.
- Integration with other Council efforts will ensure arts and cultural planning contributes to community well being.

Commitment 6

Integrated Planning

We will recognise arts and culture as an integral but independent component of Council's community wellbeing agenda. In particular there is an overlap with: health and wellbeing objectives; economic development objectives; and built environment objectives.

Aim

To raise the profile and level of connectedness of arts and culture within Council planning processes.

Actions

- 6.1 Ensure arts and cultural policies are aligned with the Council Vision and Plan and its strategic objectives.
- 6.2 Actively engage with corporate and directorate-level processes to ensure integration of arts and cultural strategic objectives within new Council plans, policies and strategies.





Commitment 7

Continuous Improvement

Research

- The changing social, economic and demographic environment make regular evaluation and review a necessary process.
- There is a changing supply and demand landscape in Boroondara, which requires Leisure and Cultural Services to continuously review and improve its responses to ensure relevant and effective programs and services are provided.

Commitment 7

Continuous Improvement

We will continue to investigate, adapt and improve policies, programs and services to achieve the objectives of the arts and cultural strategy.

Aim

To maintain the relevance and effectiveness of arts and cultural planning and service delivery and to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

Actions

- 7.1 Review and refine the Arts and Cultural Strategy Vision and Commitments on an annual basis.
- 7.2 Design and implement a strategy review process with specified timelines.
- 7.3 Work in partnership with other Council departments as necessary, to research and identify new cultural opportunities that achieve economic and community wellbeing outcomes.
- 7.4 Commit to a principle of renewal and reinvigoration of programs and events.



English

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Italian

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