City of Charles Sturt

MEANS THE WORLD



ARTS & CULTURE PLAN 2026 - 2031

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Charles Sturt acknowledges that the land on which we work and live is the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains.

We recognise and respect the Kaurna people's continuing cultural, spiritual and community connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Kaurna Elders past and present and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from other Nations who live, work and contribute to the life of our City.

STRATEGIC INTENT

Vision

A City where creativity is part of everyday life.

For the City of Charles Sturt, experiencing creativity is a part of everyday life. It is easy to access, visible in our places, helps people feel connected, curious, and proud of where they live.

Arts and culture sits alongside the services people expect from local government, like verge mowing, waste collection and libraries because it does measurable work: it keeps people connected, supports community wellbeing and returns real value to the local economy. It creates opportunities for people to share experiences, creates opportunities for social cohesion, to express identity, strengthen wellbeing, enhance liveability and connections with place and with one another. In doing so, it contributes to many of the outcomes local government exists to support in our neighbourhoods, suburbs and business community.

The people who make this work are part of our community too: our residents, neighbours and local small businesses. Supporting their creativity also supports local livelihoods and core council services because they do measurable community work by strengthening connection, supporting wellbeing, and contributing to the local economy. Artists are not abstract contributors; they are local workers and residents who shape how our community functions and feels.

We have a developing history, reflected in our Community Vision, where the City of Charles Sturt recognises creativity as part of what makes this 'a place to belong' and part of our core services, and how those outcomes are achieved.

Creative and cultural participation is tracked by the Australian Government *National Cultural Policy Framework (Revive)* as an indicator of national wellbeing, alongside health, employment and safety, recognising its role in connected and functioning communities. South Australia's cultural policy: *A Place to Create: South Australia's Cultural Policy 2025–2035* also recognises arts and culture as key contributors to economic, social and community outcomes, reinforcing that this is core public policy.

Local government is where these priorities become real in public spaces, libraries, community centres, local venues, clubs, galleries, venues and businesses. This is where, in the best communities, participation becomes possible.

Participation in creative life is shaped by cost, time, opportunity and proximity. As community connection and cohesion becomes increasingly important, access to

free and local creative experiences becomes more, not less important, centralising Council's role at a local and grassroots community level.

In this Plan, arts and culture are understood broadly - encompassing creative expression, shared experiences, stories, spaces and everyday participation. This includes the ways people create, share and experience creativity, from community participation through to professional practice.

Participation takes different forms. It includes creating or contributing to cultural activity, as well as attending, experiencing, discussing and appreciating creative work. The Plan supports both active creative participation and audience participation, recognising that each requires different opportunities and forms of support.

Executive Summary

This plan sets out how the City of Charles Sturt will support Arts and Culture to help deliver the Community Vision of being "a place to call home, a place where we belong".

Alongside engagement with local artists, community members, cultural organisations, and internal Council teams, this Plan has been shaped by research into leading practice in arts, culture, community wellbeing and placemaking. We reviewed current policies, evidence and emerging thinking about the role of culture in building connected, liveable and resilient communities, considering both the needs of Charles Sturt and the opportunities available to local government. This process informed the Plan's strategic intent and helped identify where Council can most effectively contribute to the outcomes described in the Community Vision.

The strategic directions and actions that follow are the practical steps the City of Charles Sturt will take to deliver on that intent. They focus on where we can have the greatest impact and include a set of high-impact initiatives that will test new ways of working and deliver visible change, including:

- identifying and accessing underused spaces for creative activity
- embedding artists in Council projects
- improving access to creative experiences
- linking cultural outcomes to infrastructure investment
- developing initiatives that position our city as a leader in specific areas of arts and culture.

This plan is designed to ensure creativity in Charles Sturt is visible, accessible, and part of everyday life - and that our local investment delivers cultural, social and place outcomes. Implementation will be staged over time, with priorities evolving based on capacity, partnerships, and opportunity.

Success means creativity is visible, accessible, and part of everyday life - not something people have to work hard to connect with or seek out.

Delivery of this plan will be led by the City of Charles Sturt, in partnership with creative practitioners, industry partners and the community. Achieving these outcomes will require shared commitment, resourcing, and cross-organisational support.

Our Guiding Principles

A connected, creative community does not happen by chance. These beliefs reflect the conditions we want to create in Charles Sturt and guide how we support participation, creativity, belonging and connection through arts and culture.

1. **Art is for everyone**
   Creative participation begins with access. Everyone should be able to take part in ways that are meaningful, welcoming and relevant. Participation is shaped by affordability, proximity, awareness and inclusion, and we will prioritise removing barriers wherever possible.
2. **Arts and culture strengthens wellbeing and belonging**
   Arts and culture is part of the social and cultural infrastructure of our City. They help strengthen connection, identity, wellbeing and belonging.
3. **Creativity happens everywhere**
   Creative life exists in libraries, parks, streets, community centres, schools, businesses and neighbourhood places, not only in dedicated cultural venues.
4. **Diverse cultures shape this place**
   First Nations knowledge, multicultural communities and diverse lived experiences are fundamental to the identity and creative life of our City.
5. **Artists are valued contributors**
   Artists and creative practitioners contribute to the cultural, social and economic life of Charles Sturt and should be supported through fair and professional opportunities.
6. **Arts and culture shape places**
   Arts and culture contribute to the character, identity and liveability of places and should be considered as part of how communities and places are planned and experienced.
7. **Creativity should be part of everyday life**
   The City of Charles Sturt's role is to create the conditions that make creative participation visible, accessible and part of everyday community life. Through spaces, partnerships, investment and advocacy, we support the social and cultural infrastructure that enables creativity, participation and connection to flourish.

Equity and Cultural Leadership

Equity, inclusion, and cultural respect underpin the entire arts and culture ecosystem.

We recognise the ongoing cultural authority and knowledge of First Nations people and the importance of working in ways that are grounded in relationship, respect, learning, and long-term commitment.

Creative life should reflect the diversity of our community. This requires actively removing barriers and shaping more equitable conditions so that more people can take part, contribute and be represented in ways that are meaningful to them.

What We Are Working Towards

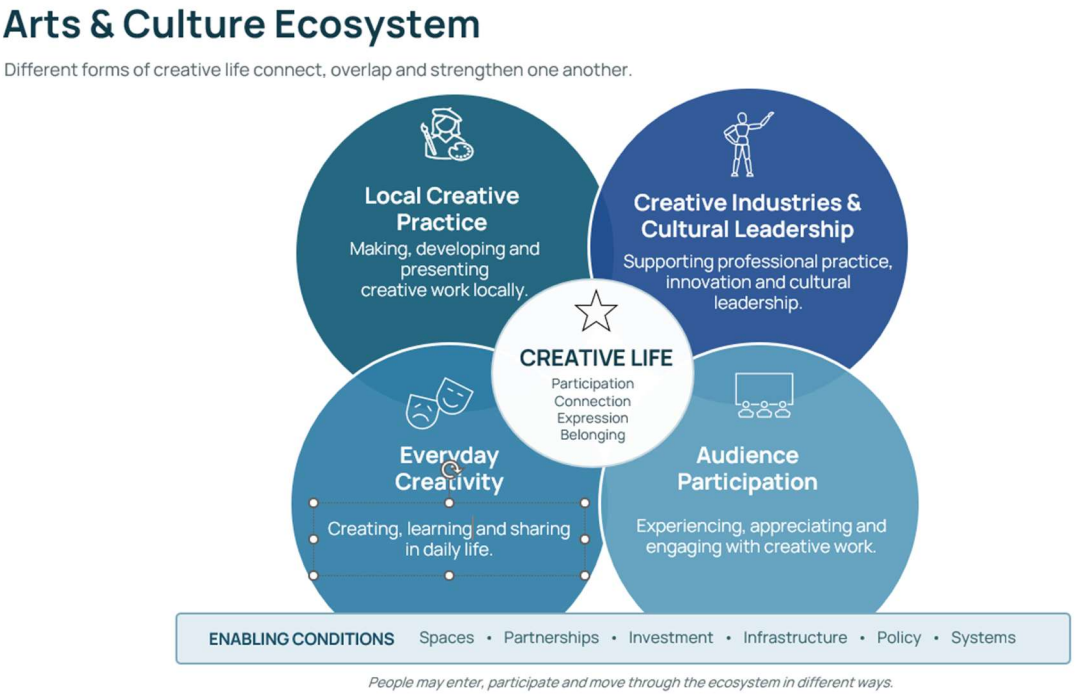
By strengthening all parts of the arts and culture ecosystem, we create:

- **Stronger community connection and belonging**
  People connect with each other and with place through shared creative experiences.
- **More equitable participation**
  More people take part across all layers of the ecosystem, with fewer barriers.
- **Improved wellbeing and quality of life**
  Participation in creative activity supports mental health, joy, and everyday liveability.
- **A confident cultural identity**
  Our City expresses a distinct identity through creative activity that is locally relevant, ambitious, and uniquely ours.
- **Creativity as part of everyday life**
  Creative experiences are visible, accessible, and embedded in daily life

What Does a Connected Arts and Culture Ecosystem Look Like?

Arts and culture is understood broadly - encompassing creative expression, shared experiences, stories, spaces, and everyday participation. It operates as an ecosystem made up of interrelated activities - from everyday participation through to professional practice and the creative industries.

The purpose of this ecosystem is not simply to support artistic activity. It exists to create opportunities for participation, connection, expression and belonging across our community.



In this Plan, artists and creative practitioners include people working across visual arts, craft, music, performance, dance, writing, literature, design, digital practice, public art and other creative industries. This includes emerging, established, professional and community-based practitioners. Some actions will be designed for particular forms or stages of practice rather than applying to every practitioner in the same way.

How the ecosystem works

- Everyday creativity, cultural participation and audience engagement form the foundation, including opportunities to make, contribute to, experience and appreciate creative work – this includes creative activity in libraries, parks, schools, and neighbourhood spaces.
- Creative practice and the local sector drive experimentation, identity, and new work.

- Creative industries and cultural leadership contribute visibility, economic value, and broader cultural impact.
- All layers are supported by enabling conditions - spaces, partnerships, investment, infrastructure, and systems.

Council's role is to create the conditions that support this movement and help the ecosystem thrive. Our strategic intent is to make creative participation visible, accessible and part of everyday life.

ACTION PLAN 2026-2031

How We Will Deliver

The following actions set out how the City of Charles Sturt will deliver on our key beliefs, translating our beliefs and principles into practical steps.

Council's role will vary across the actions in this Plan. Depending on the opportunity, Council may lead, fund, facilitate, partner, advocate, provide information or create enabling policy and processes. Detailed responsibilities, resources and timing will be established through implementation planning.

These actions are organised across four focus areas that work together to support a strong and connected creative ecosystem through:

1. Artist Access – Making it simple for artists to find space, opportunities, and pathways to create.
2. Artist Practice – Support local artists and creative practitioners across different artforms and stages of practice by creating fair, clear and consistent ways to work with Council.
3. Audience Participation & Development – Growing everyday participation in creative life.
4. Culture in Place – Embedding arts and culture in Council's processes, how places are planned, built, and experienced.

1. Artist Access

Make it easy for artists to do their work by providing opportunities, simplifying pathways, and removing unnecessary barriers. Creative spaces may include studios, rehearsal and development spaces, performance and exhibition venues, community facilities, shared workspaces, public spaces and appropriate temporary or underused properties. Suitability will depend on the activity, including access, affordability, tenure, amenity, technical requirements, safety and potential impacts on surrounding uses.

Actions

Make it easy for artists to find and use spaces

- Identify and facilitate access to Council, partner, private and community spaces suitable for creative activity.
- Publish clear and accessible information about available spaces, including their permitted uses, accessibility, facilities, costs, conditions of use and booking pathways.

- Enable short-term, temporary and pop-up use of spaces through proportionate and streamlined approval processes.

Remove barriers to creative activity

- Match approval processes to the scale and risk of activity.
- Develop a Creative Use Guarantee: a clear and proportionate pathway for suitable low-risk creative activities, with upfront requirements, identified Council contacts and timely advice or decisions.
- Explore partnerships and models, such as Renew Adelaide, that support activation of underused spaces and reduce barriers to creative use.

Support the full creative process

- Facilitate access to spaces for making, rehearsal, experimentation, testing and work-in-progress activity, not only presentation and exhibition.
- Support creative development opportunities alongside public outcomes.

Make opportunities easy to find

- Use clear, accessible communications to promote spaces, opportunities and pathways for involvement.
- Develop an opt-in creative sector network to communicate paid opportunities, spaces, professional information and relevant updates, and investigate whether a public-facing directory would provide additional value to practitioners and those seeking creative services.

Strengthen connections and partnerships

- Connect artists, creative organisations, property owners, businesses and potential partners where there is an identified opportunity for shared cultural benefit.
- Provide information and referral pathways relating to relevant grants, sponsorship, philanthropy and external investment opportunities.
- Explore delivery partnerships with organisations experienced in activating underused properties, where this provides capability or reach that Council cannot efficiently deliver alone.

What this means

- More suitable spaces are used for creative development, practice, presentation and participation, increasing visibility and opportunity across the city.
- Faster and clearer access for artists to spaces.
- Increased creative activity across the city.
- Increased visibility of arts practice across the city.
- Improved connections between artists and business.

2. Artist Practice

Support local artists and creative practitioners across different artforms and stages of practice by creating fair, clear and consistent ways to work with Council.

Actions

Make Charles Sturt a great place to practice

- Provide clear pathways, contacts and information for artists engaging with Council.
- Promote support available through Council, including opportunities, spaces, connections and funding.
- Review existing grants and support programs to ensure they remain relevant, accessible and easy to use.
- Create a distinct communications approach that showcases opportunities for artists and creative practitioners.

Support fair and sustainable creative practice

- Introduce a Fair Practice Commitment informed by recognised industry standards, including NAVA.
- Improve Council commissioning and engagement processes for artists.
- Build fair and accessible paid opportunities for artists across Council programs and projects.

Embed artists in Council projects and places

- Introduce paid Artist in Residence opportunities within Council projects, teams and initiatives.
- Involve artists and creative practitioners in engagement, planning, design and place-based projects.
- Introduce Creative Micro-Missions: small, paid and time-limited opportunities for artists to explore an idea, respond to a local place or community, or contribute creative thinking to a Council project.

Protect and invest in the future of creative practice

- Pursue partnerships, external funding and investment opportunities that strengthen delivery and expand paid opportunities for artists.
- Investigate a Creative Contribution Model that applies an additional levy to Council projects where an artists and creative practitioners are engaged, recognising the uncompensated use of creative work and intellectual property in generative AI training and reinvesting the contribution in local creative activity. The contribution would be additional to agreed artist fees and creative project budgets. It would recognise the uncompensated use of creative work and intellectual property in generative AI training by directing additional Council investment into paid local creative activity. The model, including when it applies and how contributions are allocated, will be developed through implementation planning.

- Work with industry organisations and partners to connect artists and creative practitioners with cultural leadership development, mentoring and other professional development opportunities.
- Create paid pathways for artists to contribute to community wellbeing, cultural participation and knowledge sharing.

Strengthen the local creative ecosystem

- Support collaboration, networking and knowledge-sharing across artists, organisations, businesses and education providers.
- Facilitate regular opportunities for practitioners, organisations, businesses and Council staff to build relationships, share knowledge and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Identify, promote and strengthen areas where creative activity is already occurring.
- Create opportunities for local businesses and organisations to understand, commission and collaborate with local creative practitioners.
- Work alongside existing organisations and pathways to complement, rather than duplicate, sector activity.
- Actively support opportunities for First Nations artists and cultural knowledge sharing in ways that reflect appropriate cultural protocols.

Tell the stories

- Use Council platforms to share stories about diverse local artists, creative practices and the value of creative work.
- Develop a distinct and accessible communications voice for arts and culture that reflects the sector and feels less "council-y" while remaining aligned with Council values.
- Use clear storytelling to explain opportunities, processes and pathways and demonstrate the cultural, social and community value of creative work.

What this means

- Stronger and more sustainable creative practice occurring in our city.
- Open and transparent connections between artists and Council.
- Clearer and more confident engagement with artists and the creative sector.
- Stronger connections between artists and Council, and between artists one another.
- Increased visibility of artistic practice.

3. Audience Participation & Development

Make it easier for more people to experience, appreciate and take part in creative life. Participation is shaped by cost, time, location, awareness and whether experiences feel relevant and welcoming. The City of Charles Sturt will focus on creating the conditions that make participation visible, accessible and part of everyday life.

Actions

Design for everyday participation

- Create experiences in places people already go.
- Deliver a Culture Everywhere approach by bringing regular, low-barrier creative experiences into libraries, parks, community centres and neighbourhood places that people already use.
- Focus on a consistent and visible presence of creative activity across the city.
- Ensure experiences are welcoming, accessible and affordable.

Make creative opportunities easy for the community to find

- Communicate clearly and consistently about opportunities to participate in creative activities.
- Create a distinct communications voice that promotes creative life and connects to the Vision of this Plan.
- Reach people through a mix of local networks, community organisations, trusted connectors, in-person promotion and digital communication.
- Publish stories and case studies that demonstrate creativity's contribution to connection, wellbeing and pride in place.

Reduce barriers to participation

- Explore a City Cultural Pass that could provide eligible residents or priority groups with free, reduced-cost or supported access to participating local creative experiences.
- Collaborate with schools, community groups and partners to increase access to creative experiences.
- Build partnerships that support local access to arts, culture and wellbeing initiatives.

Support children and young people

- Develop a First Creative Experience Guarantee so children and young people can access at least one quality creative experience close to home each year, through participation, creative learning or engagement with professional creative work.
- Support youth and family-friendly arts and cultural activities.
- Build creative confidence, knowledge and appreciation by connecting children and young people with artists, creative processes and a range of artforms.
- Create opportunities that encourage lifelong participation in creative life.

Create accessible, welcoming and culturally safe experiences

- Design and deliver activity that is welcoming and respectful for First Nations and multicultural communities.

- Embed cultural safety into program design, promotion and delivery.
- Work with First Nations artists and organisations to shape audience experiences and participation opportunities.

Work in partnership

- Co-design experiences with artists, creative organisations and community partners.
- Support arts and cultural experiences that reflect local stories, places and communities.
- Strengthen partnerships that connect arts and culture with wellbeing, community development and social outcomes.

What this means

- More people taking part in local cultural life
- Broader and more inclusive participation
- Creativity becoming part of everyday life

4. Culture in Place

Build culture into how the city is planned, built, and experienced. Arts and culture contribute to the identity, liveability and everyday experience of places. They should be considered alongside other elements of community infrastructure, helping create places where people feel connected, welcome and proud to belong.

Cultural outcomes are strongest when they are considered early and embedded in how places are planned, built, maintained and experienced. Council has an important role in ensuring arts and culture contribute to the identity, liveability and long-term success of our places.

Actions

Embed culture in planning and design

- Include creative thinking early in planning, design and engagement processes.
- Build cultural capability across relevant Council teams and decision-making panels, including commissioning, artist selection, cultural interpretation and fit-for-purpose community engagement.
- Support public art and creative outcomes that are distinctive, context-responsive and artistically ambitious, with clear processes for managing risk, public value and community input.
- Use culture to shape and reflect local identity, not simply decorate places.
- Involve artists and creative practitioners in place-based projects, planning and design.

Strengthen creative places and precincts

- Identify areas where creative activity is growing or has potential.

- Develop a Creative Precinct approach to build visibility, identity and momentum.
- Support creative places through coordinated planning, activation and investment.
- Collaborate with artists, businesses and property owners to strengthen local creative presence.
- Use place-based partnerships and the creative sector network to support collaboration within emerging creative precincts.

Build cultural outcomes into infrastructure and development

- Ensure cultural outcomes are considered during planning, business case development and project design - not added later.
- Investigate feasible mechanisms for securing cultural contributions through eligible Council capital projects, major infrastructure and development opportunities, including fixed, proportional and negotiated approaches.
- Align cultural investment with identified creative precincts and priority places.
- Apply a flexible Arts and Culture investment approach that responds to project scale, context and opportunity.
- Scope and deliver cultural outcomes where they strengthen place identity, community connection and Plan objectives.
- Establish clear expectations and pathways for cultural contributions in significant developments and major infrastructure projects where Council has an appropriate role or influence.

Treat culture as part of community infrastructure

- Integrate cultural outcomes into asset planning and lifecycle management.
- Develop a Cultural Asset Management approach that supports long-term maintenance and quality.
- Include cultural investment within long-term asset management and financial planning.
- Advocate for cultural outcomes within State Government and partner-led infrastructure projects.

Use the City of Charles Sturt's influence to build cultural value

- Advocate for arts and culture outcomes and artist inclusion within development.
- Collaborate with developers to support creative and cultural opportunities where appropriate.
- Partner with arts, health and community organisations to strengthen wellbeing outcomes.
- Position creative activity as contributing to community wellbeing, identity and social connection.
- Advocate to State and Federal Government for investment in local arts and culture.

Make the value of culture visible

- Demonstrate how culture contributes to wellbeing, identity, connection and place.
- Share local stories that build understanding of arts and culture across the City of Charles Sturt and the community.
- Deliver a Charles Sturt Civic Commission each Council term: a significant paid creative commission that responds to the city's people, places, identity or stories and creates a lasting cultural record.

What this means

- Arts and culture outcomes are considered early in planning and development.
- Stronger and more intentional arts and culture outcomes in projects.
- Increased creative activity and visibility in key areas.
- More effective use of the City of Charles Sturt's influence and investment.
- More consistent and confident delivery of arts and culture outcomes.

Implementation of this Plan

The actions outlined above will be staged through implementation planning, which will identify priorities, responsibilities, partnerships, resources, timing and measures for each action. These actions and measures will provide the basis for annual monitoring and reporting, ensuring we remain accountable for progress over the life of the Plan. The sequence and pace of delivery will reflect Council decisions, organisational capacity, available funding and emerging opportunities. Progress will be assessed through participation data, practitioner and community feedback, access and inclusion measures, partnership activity, use of spaces, paid opportunities and evidence of cultural outcomes in Council projects and places.

What success looks like:

- More people participating in creative life.
- Stronger community connection and belonging.
- Increased community pride and connection to place.
- More visible and accessible creative experiences.
- Easier pathways for artists and communities to participate.
- More paid and sustainable opportunities for artists and creative practitioners.
- More suitable spaces being used for creative development, presentation and participation.
- Arts and culture routinely considered in planning, projects and place-making.

CLOSING STATEMENT

This Plan is about creating the conditions for a connected community. Through arts and culture, people can participate, contribute, share experiences and build meaningful connections with place and with one another. By making creativity visible, accessible and part of everyday life, this Plan helps deliver the Community Vision of Charles Sturt as "a place to call home, a place where we belong".

Together, these four areas:

- Artist Access
- Artist Practice
- Audience Participation & Development
- Culture in Place

Make it simpler for artists to access spaces and opportunities, support fair and sustainable creative practice, grow everyday participation in creative life, and embed culture in how places are shaped and experienced. This integrated approach ensures arts and culture are visible, valued and part of everyday life.

By opening up spaces, reducing barriers, and changing how council works, we can create the conditions for more people to take part - more often.

Success means creativity feels visible, local, and easy to be part of, not something people have to seek out, but something that naturally happens around them.

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