



Creative Places 2019-21

A new vision



Creative Places describes the direction and initiatives for arts, culture and heritage for the Surf Coast Shire Council from 2019 – 2021.

Creative Places provides a new vision for arts, culture and heritage with a focus on celebrating our Aboriginal heritage; enhancing place; showcasing our best artists and helping our creative industries to thrive.

We value what art and heritage brings to our local communities and our environment and recognise their important contribution to community and individual wellbeing.

Through **Creative Places**, we will build participation of individuals and communities in arts, cultural and heritage activities to enhance their lives.

We will evolve our work during the next two years, recognising the vital role arts, culture and heritage plays in helping our communities and environment to thrive.

The 2019-2021 timeframe reflects our aim to align the next Arts, Culture and Heritage strategy with the next Council Plan to be adopted in 2021.

Regional Context

The Surf Coast Shire's distinctive environment and accessibility to Melbourne and Geelong has contributed to a large number of creative practitioners making this place their home.

Visual artists, musicians, software developers, architects, designers and manufacturers are now so concentrated

in the area that the Surf Coast Shire has the fourth highest proportion of jobs in the creative sector throughout regional Australia, compared to jobs in other industries. (Regional Growth Prospects Research Report – Regional Institute of Australia 2018).

Population growth in Surf Coast Shire is greater than Victoria's growth rate and this provides challenges to the character of our townships and the natural environment. This impacts community wellbeing and prosperity.

Creative Places recognises that by further activating arts and culture across the Shire we can better express the character of our region, enriching place and increasing civic pride.

This will have direct impacts on the local economy through increased visitation, longer stays, and more trade.

Council Context

Creative Places links into Council's objectives outlined in the Council Plan 2019-2021:

- Vibrant Economy
- Community Wellbeing
- Balancing Growth
- Environmental Leadership

Creative Places links directly to Council's Municipal Strategic Statement which is a key guide for land use planning, in particular:

- To support and strengthen the individual character and role of each town
- To conserve the cultural heritage of the Shire to enhance the community's appreciation of the history and development of this region
- To encourage a variety of entertainment and recreational opportunities across the municipality which are compatible with the social, economic and cultural characteristics of the local community.

Council's Hinterland Futures Strategy 2019 and the Torquay Town Centre Urban Design Framework 2017 have many links to arts, culture and heritage. Key themes in these documents include:

- Place-making
- Tourism and the local economy
- Reflecting the character of towns and landscapes.

Creative Places themes and initiatives

Four key themes with links to the broader Council objectives are the focus of Creative Places:

1. Celebrating our Aboriginal cultural heritage:
2. Place-making
3. Enhance our creative industries
4. Showcasing our best and brightest

The themes have gained strong support when tested with community members. (see Appendix 1).



Bells Beach, Wadawurrung Country.



"Hooded Plovers", Anglesea Streetscape Sculptures. Artists Cinnamon and Rowan Stephens, 2019.

1. Celebrating our Aboriginal cultural heritage

Our First Peoples' story can be understood better. We can help educate and heal, benefitting our first nations people, the community and the economy.

We know that in New Zealand, more than half of their 3.6 million international visitors take part in Māori cultural experiences (Tourism New Zealand). In Australia, of 9 million international visitors, only 1 million take part in an Aboriginal cultural experience (Tourism Research Australia).

What we will do.

- Develop stronger connections with traditional owners.
- Expand our events and programs such as NAIDOC week to have greater prominence in our community.
- Help non Aboriginal people understand our Aboriginal cultural heritage and its importance better.
- Work with Traditional Owners to grow cultural tourism opportunities.
- Encourage initiatives that celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage via the Arts Development Seed fund.
- Engage more Aboriginal artists in Council projects.

2. Place-making

The Surf Coast Shire's population is growing faster than the state average. Population growth and township character are critical issues for our community. Creative responses can help retain township character and provide people with a much better sense of place. Council continues to be aware of the community need for more dedicated arts/creative spaces.

What we will do.

Develop a Public Art Policy that describes the role of art in place making – including a focus on Aboriginal art in this policy.

- Deliver a Public Art Project every two years.
- Continue to plan and deliver a major Cultural Facility including Library.
- Support community members plan for a community led arts facility.
- Deliver the Winchelsea Memorial Cairns project.



Ashmore Arts, Torquay

3. Enhancing our creative industry

Surf Coast Shire has the fourth highest proportion of creative jobs compared to jobs in other industries in regional Australia (Regional Australia Institute). This is an important sector of our economy that needs to remain strong.

What we will do.

- Partner with local major events to embed Arts and Cultural opportunities in and around events.
- Complete and implement our economic development strategy – Prosperous Places – with a focus on supporting creative industry.



Robin, Geoffrey Carran

4. Showcasing our Best and Brightest

The Surf Coast Shire is home to many world-renowned artists across disciplines such as visual arts, music, literature and performance. We want to increase opportunities to showcase this work locally whilst providing opportunities to help upskill emerging artists.

What we will do.

- Involve leading local artists in Council's Public Art Project.
- Provide opportunities for leading artists to showcase their Work
- Involve leading local artists in the development of cultural facilities
- Provide the opportunity for emerging artists and arts workers to learn from leading artists.

Other Initiatives

- Deliver Council's annual Arts Development Seed funding round.
- Support arts practitioners and arts workers, including
 - Continue the Surf Coast Arts Space with a more community led approach.
 - Evaluate the management model of the Surf Coast Arts Trail in partnership with artists. Introduce Local Area Coordinators as paid skills development opportunities for local arts workers.
 - Further develop the Surf Coast Arts Calendar as an opportunity for artists and arts workers.
 - Further support the conservation of Local Heritage, through sharing knowledge and skills development for local history groups.

Creative Places and Council's Planning Scheme

Heritage initiatives contained in Creative Places focus on understanding, preserving and storytelling. Creative Places does not play a role in planning considerations for sites of historical significance. The Surf Coast Shire Planning Scheme, heritage overlays and relevant policies related to the Planning Scheme will consider strategic and statutory planning topics.

Appendix 1 - What you told us – Summary of feedback

The Creative Places themes were tested via a community survey that was shared directly with more than 800 people in July and August 2019. The survey included a range for responses from 1 – 5; with 1 described as not a priority and 5 described as a high priority. 80 surveys were completed with a high level of support for each theme:

86% of respondents rated Recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage 4 or 5 in terms of priority.

85% of respondents rated Place Making 4 or 5 in terms of priority.

73% of respondents rated Creative Industries 4 or 5 in terms of priority.

66% of respondents rated Showcasing our Best and Brightest 4 or 5 in terms of priority.

Feedback on each theme

Celebrating our Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Feedback suggested that there was a need to lead with this focus area in recognition of the primary place of the First Peoples of this land.

It is recognised that this must be led by local custodians, or in full consultation with custodians.

People indicated support for place-making through Aboriginal art in public spaces; as well as plaques recognising sites of significance and conflict to ensure a better understanding of the history of this place.

Place-making

Respondents indicated social connection and a focus on meeting places as important priorities, noting the rapidly growing and changing community.

Public art and other creative responses that make public spaces welcoming and safe were highlighted as important for the amenity of our townships

People highlighted the importance of unique local responses that suit different townships

Feedback highlighted the need to prioritise and enhance the natural environment through creative responses.

Creative Industries

Simplifying Council planning processes to allow more creative industries to flourish throughout the Shire was a theme that ran throughout responses

Council must look to successful models in other regional areas to support Creative Industries.

Stronger links between Council and successful creative industries is needed to further develop the potential across the Shire

Showcasing Our Best and Brightest

Respondents indicated that many did not know who the best creatives were and this led to “a perception of mediocrity in our arts profile”.

Many noted the opportunity to boost the profile of the Surf Coast as a more sophisticated destination by creating world-class facilities in which our renowned creatives' work could be viewed.