

Inverell Shire Cultural and Arts Strategic Plan 2019-2029



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

AUGUST 2019

Yinaa-galgaa bula mari-galgaa bula

Many ladies and many gentlemen and

Gulbiyaay-ngaya nginaay-nya

Welcome I you all

**Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay-ga
guru-mayuu-ga**

To Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay country

**Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay-dhayn-
galgaa gayaa-nha**

Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay people are happy (that)

Nginaay-nya-ga nhalay gaa-gi yanaay

You all to here have come.

**We also recognise the tribal peoples of Kwiambal, Ngarabal,
Bigambul, Jukambal, Wirrayaraay, Nucoorilma & Anaiwan.**

Kelvin Brown
Gamilaroi Tribal Elders

A BURNING CAMPFIRE

.....

*A campfire where glowing embers glow burn bright
The Aboriginal elders tell their dreamtime stories
As children sit by their mothers side.*

*The didgeridoo it's echoing call
Can be heard on mountain sides
As tap sticks tapping are heard
On a dreamtime starry night.*

*The Aboriginal dancers move with the wind
As the flickering flames shine bright
As a full moon is glowing in the sky
On a dreamtime night.*

*And as the fire burns dimmer
And the dreamtime stories told
The Aboriginal people will remember
The dreamtime corroborees of hope.*

*And today as you remember
The Aboriginal people of this red dust land
You will see a flickering flame
Burning on a dreamtime night
In Australia a dreamtime land.*

ESTHER GARDINER

Inverell poet and local Aboriginal storyteller



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Welcome to
INVERELL
the Sapphire city

Inverell Shire Council would like to thank everyone who generously participated in the discussions, meetings, and surveys to develop this Cultural and Arts Strategy.

Your passion and participation has helped create a comprehensive framework that provides a practical and exciting way forward to achieve a cultural and creative future that we all can be a part of and be proud of.

Council looks forward to working in collaboration with our communities across the Shire and key stakeholders to deliver the ideas, projects and actions over the next ten years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inverell Shire Council recognises the important role that culture and arts play in shaping and defining communities: influencing our sense of self and our individual and collective identities; diversifying our local economies; attracting visitors to share our stories, cultural practices and artistic talents and providing opportunities for our established and emerging creatives to pursue their practice and businesses locally.

The Inverell Shire Cultural and Arts Strategy 2019-2029 (the Strategy) sets the values, focus areas and objectives to create a vibrant and sustainable cultural and arts ecosystem that contributes to the economic, social, cultural and creative wellbeing of local communities across our Shire.

The Strategy is underpinned by substantial engagement with community and key stakeholders as well as extensive research. It sets a roadmap for how cultural and arts outcomes can be achieved collaboratively by Council, other levels of government and community partners to deliver on community aspirations and priorities to build a vibrant creative and cultural life in Inverell Shire.

The focus areas and objectives outlined in the Strategy consider emerging trends and challenges faced by regional councils and communities in the provision of arts and cultural facilities, programs and events. Importantly, the Strategy is founded on a strengths-based approach, building on what is already working in our Shire.

The aspirations and objectives outlined in this Strategy can only be delivered effectively if Council and community work together. Quick win opportunities and future ideas have been included under each of the focus areas, which were developed through the conversations and ideas of the community and students and via best practice research.

These opportunities and ideas will be reviewed and integrated into Council's existing planning, resourcing and budgeting processes. In addition, many of the quick wins and future ideas can be taken up and delivered by communities themselves.



Photo source: Cred Consulting

VALUES

'Values' are a set of criteria to help guide decision making around arts and culture for Inverell Shire.

Our community values for Inverell Shire's arts and cultural ecosystem are...

INCLUSIVE	INSPIRING	COURAGEOUS
CONNECTED	COLLABORATIVE	SUSTAINABLE



FOCUS AREAS

Community engagement and research highlighted key cultural and creative needs and opportunities under five focus areas:

We will focus on the following areas to deliver improved arts and cultural outcomes for our community over the next 10 years...

1
FOCUS AREA

CREATING A SHARED IDENTITY & STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING.

PEOPLE

2
FOCUS AREA

PROVIDING PLACES TO PARTICIPATE, EXPERIENCE & SHARE ART, CREATIVITY & CULTURE.

PLACES

3
FOCUS AREA

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, RICH CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LIFE.

PROGRAMS

4
FOCUS AREA

GROWING OUR CREATIVE AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.

ECONOMY

5
FOCUS AREA

STRENGTHENING OUR GOVERNANCE & ADVOCACY.

GOVERNANCE

IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT INVERELL SHIRE

Inverell Shire is a dynamic community with a burgeoning arts profile located on the Northern Tablelands in New South Wales on the Gwydir Highway, 90 minutes north west of Armidale. The Shire stretches north to the Queensland border and is surrounded by Moree Plains, Gwydir, Glen Innes-Severn and Armidale Regional local government areas (LGA).

Inverell Shire is situated in the New England North West region, which includes the Northern Tablelands and the North West Slopes region. The cities of Armidale and Tamworth are major focal points for culture and the arts within the region.

In 2016, around 16,483 people lived in Inverell Shire. The majority of residents live in Inverell township and in Ashford, Bonshaw, Delungra, Gilgai, Tingha and Yetman villages, with further population living in smaller villages and rural areas.

1.2 WHY A CULTURAL AND ARTS STRATEGY FOR INVERELL SHIRE?

Inverell Shire Council recognises that our cultural and arts practices are an important part of building our community identity, connecting our communities, diversifying our local economies and attracting visitors to our area. Our community has told us there are significant opportunities to build our Shire's reputation as a vibrant and creative place to live, work and visit through a strong and supported arts and cultural ecosystem.

This Strategy provides a roadmap for sustainable and purposeful arts and cultural investment and activity over the next 10 years through Council's planning, programming and funding priorities. Key priorities for the Strategy are:

- Embedding a robust and healthy cultural awareness within our community for the long term
- Promoting the Inverell region as a place for creating expression and recreational opportunities
- Identifying new sources of growth and prosperity from the cultural economy and access to a wide variety of cultural products and services
- Fostering the creative industries and supporting local artists, and
- Preserving the unique cultural heritage of our Shire and enabling a shared understanding of the people who live in the region.

1.3 POLICY CONTEXT

This Strategy sits within a wider policy framework at the international, national, state, regional and local levels. This Strategy responds to the following policies:

International:

- UNESCO 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People

National:

- A Culturally Ambitious Nation – Strategic Plan 2014–2019, Australia Council for the Arts

NSW:

- Create in NSW: NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework, 2015-2025
- Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy, 2015–2018
- Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+
- Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan, 2017-2020
- Regional NSW Economic Development Strategy
- Regional NSW Cultural Tourism Toolkit

Regional:

- New England North West Region Plan

Local:

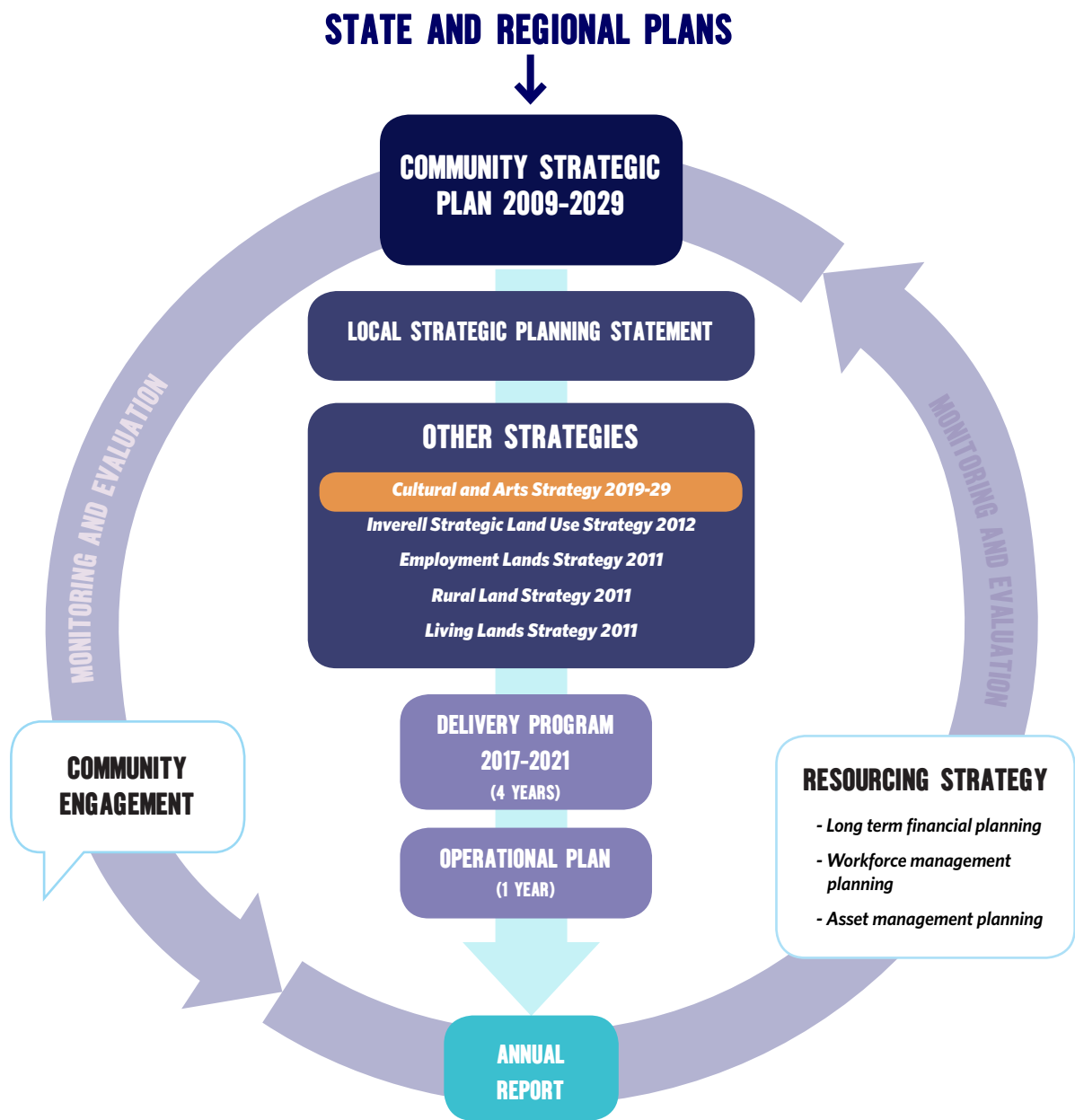
- Inverell Shire Community Strategic Plan, 2009-2029.

1.4 INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING
FRAMEWORK

The Inverell Shire Cultural and Arts Strategy provides a roadmap for arts and cultural outcomes delivered by Council, other levels of government and community partners.

The Strategy sits within Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, connecting with and supporting a whole of Council approach through the integration of strategies across departments.

As shown below, the Framework includes the development of a Community Strategic Plan and four-year Delivery Program with the associated Resourcing Strategy comprising asset management, work force and long term financial plans.



1.5 THE VALUE OF ARTS AND CULTURE FOR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Investing in and supporting arts and culture has immediate and flow on social, economic and health benefits for individuals and communities in regional areas.

Research from the Australia Council for the Arts indicates that the majority of Australians recognise the positive impacts the arts have on our daily lives and in our communities¹.

At the local government level, there is increasing recognition of the importance of cultural planning to bring communities together, activate public space and drive cultural tourism.

Create NSW has identified benefits including:

- Attracting cultural visitors, businesses and skilled talent through creative liveable places
- Delivering opportunities for community participation, contribution to social cohesion, well-being and life-long learning, and
- Generating new economies, business models and artistic practices.

¹ Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey, Australia Council for the Arts, 2016.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY & CONNECTION

Engagement in culture and creativity has been linked to an increased sense of community identity, cohesion and belonging, more inclusive communities and a reduction in social isolation.

Arts activities and projects can re-define regional, rural and remote locations in new and positive ways, providing both residents and visitors with a strong sense of a community's unique identity. For example, the First Coat mural festival and project in Toowoomba has been credited with reducing vandalism from tagging and graffiti, changing the nature of the CBD, attracting tourists and bringing the region to national and international attention.



ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURE AND CREATIVITY HAS BEEN LINKED TO AN INCREASED SENSE OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY, COHESION, BELONGING, MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES AND A REDUCTION IN SOCIAL ISOLATION.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Governments contribute to regional development by supporting employment and wealth generating economic activities. Regional development funding for arts projects can revitalise a local area – a rural town, an urban precinct or an abandoned industrial site.

Developing, operating and maintaining cultural infrastructure creates jobs. For example, when \$8.5M was invested in the Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre it created 130 jobs during construction and now employs about 38 locals in full and part time positions.

REGIONAL JOBS IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES INCREASED BY...

21% (TO 95,660) BETWEEN 2011 AND 2016.

RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMIES

Studies show that a vibrant cultural and creative ecosystem can help drive local economic prosperity and growth, including through attracting visitors, creating jobs, attracting and retaining businesses, and revitalising places¹.

In regional areas, the arts can be a source of income for artists and art workers, and for owners and employees of local businesses. Investment in the arts can benefit the local economy by generating arts-based employment, arts-based cultural tourism, event-based spending and construction of cultural infrastructure.

1. See for example *Measuring the Economic Benefits of Arts and Culture*, Arts Council England, 2010.



INTERNATIONAL ARTS TOURISTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO VISIT REGIONAL AUSTRALIA THAN INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS OVERALL. ARTS TOURISTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE CAPITAL CITIES (42%) THAN OVERALL TOURISTS (34%). THE NUMBER OF CULTURAL TOURIST VISITORS TO NSW GREW BY 20% OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Studies have found that people who participate in a creative or cultural activity are more likely to report good health compared to those who do not, and that participation in arts activities may increase cognitive abilities and have a positive impact on specific health conditions such as dementia and depression.

For example, a 2013 study in Scotland found that people who had participated in a creative or cultural activity were 38% more likely to report good health compared to those who did not; and for those who participated in dance, the figure rises to 62%¹.

1 Leadbetter, C. and O'Connor, N. *Healthy Attendance? The Impact of Cultural Engagement and Sports Participation on Health and Satisfaction with Life in Scotland*, Scottish Government Social Research, 2013.

38%

OF PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATE IN A CREATIVE OR CULTURAL ACTIVITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT GOOD HEALTH.

LIVEABILITY & ATTRACTIVENESS

Regional areas with cultural infrastructure or creative clusters are attractive to people seeking to relocate from cities.

Having a range of arts organisations and events helps to attract and retain professionals to a region, including doctors, nurses or teachers as well as people employed in architecture, design, media or entertainment.

Arts events attract visitors who may otherwise have limited awareness of the area. Arts events and venues such as galleries or performing arts centres contribute to the perception of an attractive destination. Places with cultural attractions and creative industries can attract people with disposable income, either as visitors or new residents.



PLACES WITH A HIGH PROPORTION OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES JOBS ARE LARGELY...

PLACES WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE.

OUR PEOPLE

1.6 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Increasing population size

In 2016, Inverell Shire was home to 16,483 people, an increase of 408 people since 2011. This growth is comparable to the majority of surrounding LGAs. The NSW Government predicts the population will grow by 12.2% to 2031.

An ageing population, with many young people

Inverell Shire is characterised by an older age profile, with a median age of 42 and people aged 65+ making up 21% of our total population. However, our Shire is also home to a high proportion of young people aged 19 years or younger (27%) compared to Regional NSW (24%).

Predominantly family households

The majority of households in Inverell Shire are family households (69%), including couples without children (44%) and couples with children (36%). Our Shire also has a very high proportion of single parent families (19%) compared to regional NSW (11%).

Household income

The median household weekly income in Inverell Shire is \$950, low compared to \$1,168 in regional NSW.

Disability and carers

Inverell Shire has a similar proportion of persons with disability and carers compared to regional NSW. 6.5% of Inverell Shire residents need assistance due to disability and 13% provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability.

High proportion of volunteers

Volunteers are often the driving force behind regional cultural and arts events, festivals and facilities. Inverell Shire has a high proportion of residents who do voluntary work compared to the average across Regional NSW (23% compared to 21%).

Internet connection

Inverell Shire residents are less likely to have an internet connection at home (69%) compared to Regional NSW (73%).

Very high proportion of Aboriginal residents

The Gamilaroi /Kamilaroi is the second largest Aboriginal nation on the eastern coast of Australia. The following tribes of the Kamilaroi Nation have resided in the Inverell area for ten of thousands of years, and continue to live there today: Nucoorilma, Weraerai, Jukambal, Bigambul, Ngarabal & Kwiambal.

In 2016, Inverell Shire had a very high proportion of residents who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (1,412 people, 9%) compared to Regional NSW (6%). This has since increased due to the addition of Tingha. The median age of Aboriginal residents is much younger (21 years) than the Shire average (42 years).

Majority of residents born in Australia

The majority of Inverell Shire residents were born in Australia (84%), slightly higher than Regional NSW (81%). The top countries of birth other than Australia are England, the Philippines and the United States.

Diversity

Inverell Shire has a rich cultural history that is still evident in our demographic profile and urban fabric. The area is proud of its diverse community, enriched by historic and continuing waves of migration including but not limited to Chinese migration to Tingha, Italian to Ashford, Filipino to Inverell and Bruderhof Danthonia to Elsmore.

Low proportion speaking a language other than English

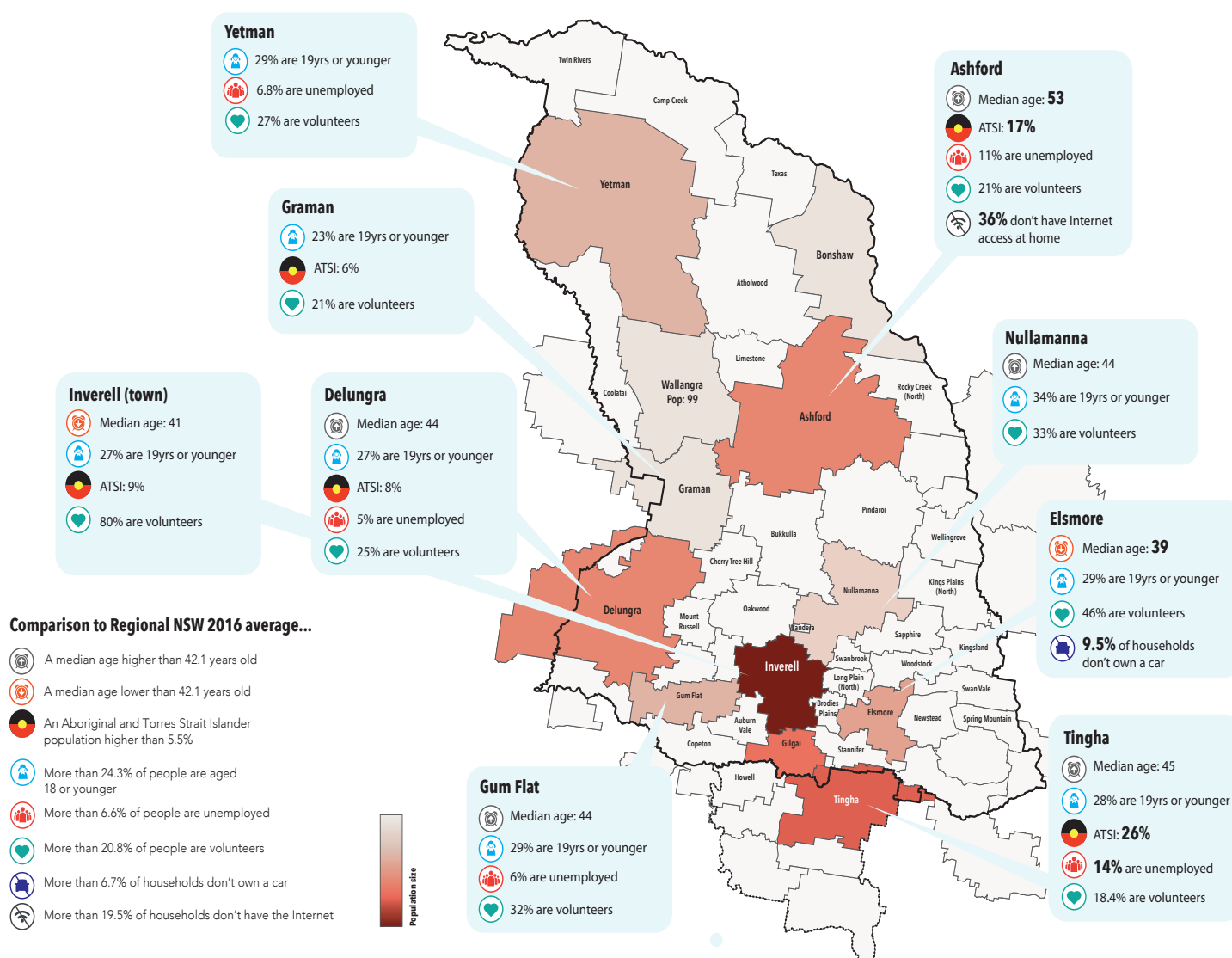
The majority of Inverell Shire residents speak only English at home (89%), a high proportion compared to 87.1% in Regional Australia. The top languages spoken at home other than English were Tagalog, Filipino, German, Italian and Vietnamese.

1.7 A NETWORK OF VILLAGES

Understanding the different demographic characteristics of Inverell Shire's villages gives insight into how to best plan for the type of cultural, artistic and creative activity in each.

Key comparisons compared to Regional NSW are shown in the map below and include:

- Tingha and Ashford have a very high proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents.
- Ashford has a much higher median age.
- Villages with higher proportions of volunteers include Elsmore, Nullamanna, Gum Flat, Yetman and Delungra.
- Villages with higher proportions of young people aged 18 or younger include Yetman, Gum Flat, Delungra, Tingha, Elsmore and Nullamanna.



OUR CULTURAL ASSETS

What are cultural assets?

The diagram opposite illustrates six different types of cultural assets that were considered in the development of this Strategy.

Our cultural assets include buildings and spaces that support culture, such as galleries, halls and public spaces. People are also cultural assets, including groups and creatives that create and share products and experiences. Stories are also cultural assets that reflect local values, identities and histories, and help connect people to community and place.

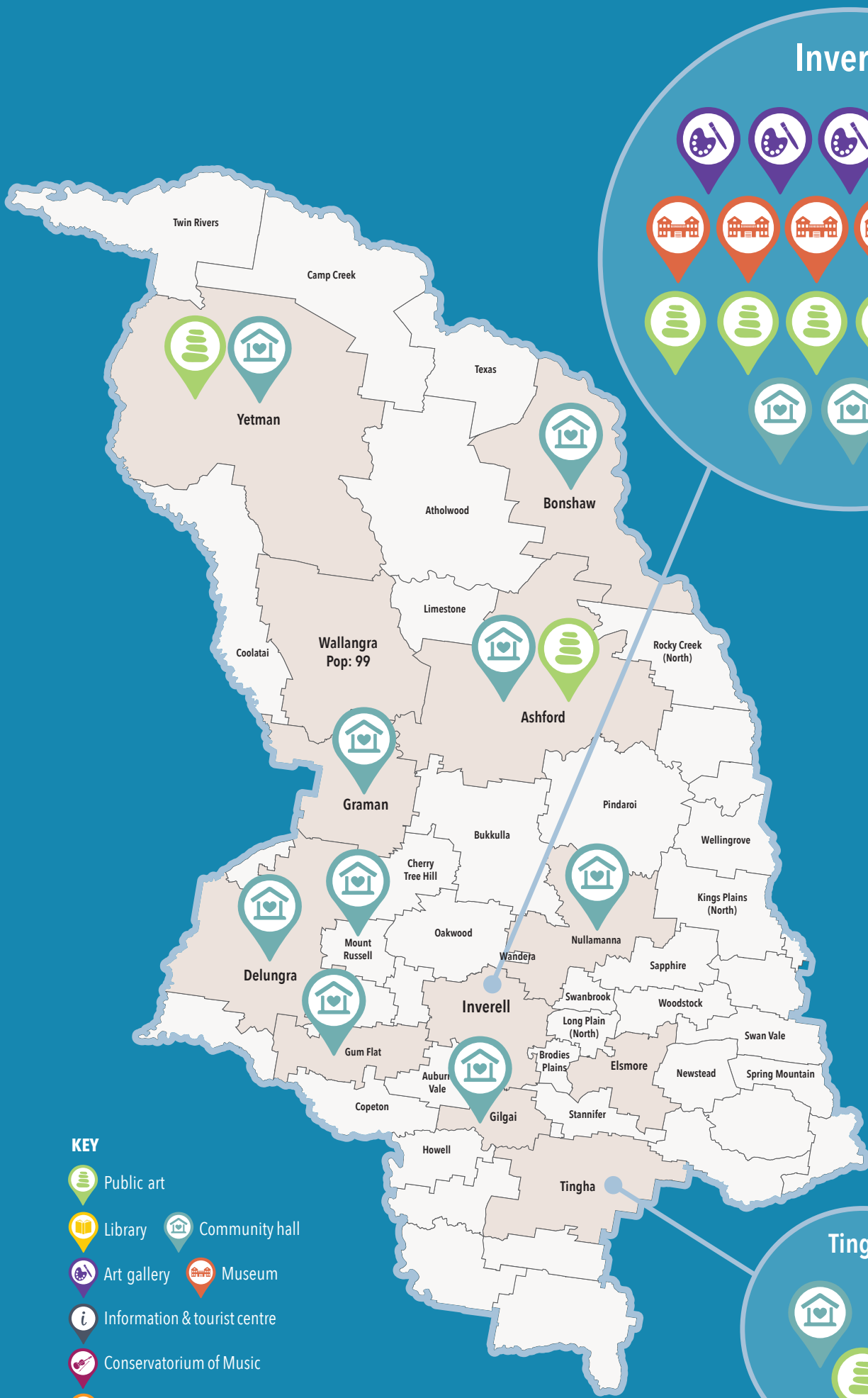
Inverell Shire’s cultural assets are discussed and mapped in detail within the Inverell Shire State of Culture background report (separate document).



What spaces and places do we have?

Inverell Shire has a range of buildings and spaces that support arts, culture and heritage, however these are concentrated within the town centre. In our villages, communities rely on local halls to host all types of activities, events and programs. The map opposite provides a high level audit of cultural infrastructure. Detailed mapping is contained within the background report.

 10 + public artworks	1 information & tourist centre	 Culturally significant Aboriginal sites		
 5 museums	 3 galleries	 1 cinema	 1 library	 12 community halls
 1 Conservatorium of Music	1 theatre / performance space			31,692 ha of National Parks



Inverell



Tingha



KEY

-  Public art
-  Library
-  Community hall
-  Art gallery
-  Museum
-  Information & tourist centre
-  Conservatorium of Music
-  Theatre / performance space

WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

1.8 OVERVIEW

Between May and August 2019, we engaged with our community to ask what culture means to them, how they experience culture in their daily life and what the priorities for arts and culture in Inverell Shire are.

Engagement findings are summarised in the Inverell Shire Cultural and Arts Strategy Community Engagement Report (separate document).

Through this process, we heard a diverse range of challenges, opportunities, aspirations and ideas which have been grouped thematically:

- Arts and culture fosters community connections in Inverell Shire, as well as opportunities to build a strong arts and cultural tourism profile.
- Inverell Shire's distinct villages are focal points for local community and cultural life.
- Increased recognition, visibility and support for Aboriginal arts, culture and people in Inverell Shire.
- Fostering a connected creative sector to share ideas and collaborate.
- Encouraging and supporting young people to engage with arts and culture.
- Improved communication, promotion and information about arts and cultural opportunities, experiences and activities in Inverell Shire.
- Opportunities to share Inverell Shire's diverse cultural heritage and the stories that makes this area and its people special.
- Building a strong and sustainable cultural tourism industry that contributes to Inverell Shire local economy.
- Opportunities to enliven the public domain through arts and cultural activity and expression.
- Inverell Shire's cultural infrastructure and community facilities are a key strength for the local arts and cultural landscape.
- Heritage and events are some of the main ways that the Inverell Shire community engages with arts and culture.

1.9 HOW WE ENGAGED

Stage 1: Information gathering

(What do we have and want, challenges, opportunities, ideas)



Stakeholder interviews (10)



Online community survey (53)



Councillor & staff workshop



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community workshop



Open community workshops (2)



Service provider focus group

Stage 2 - Have we got it right?

(Key findings and strategy directions)



Councillor & staff workshop



Community drop in session



Two school workshops



Creative Cultural Conversation Forum

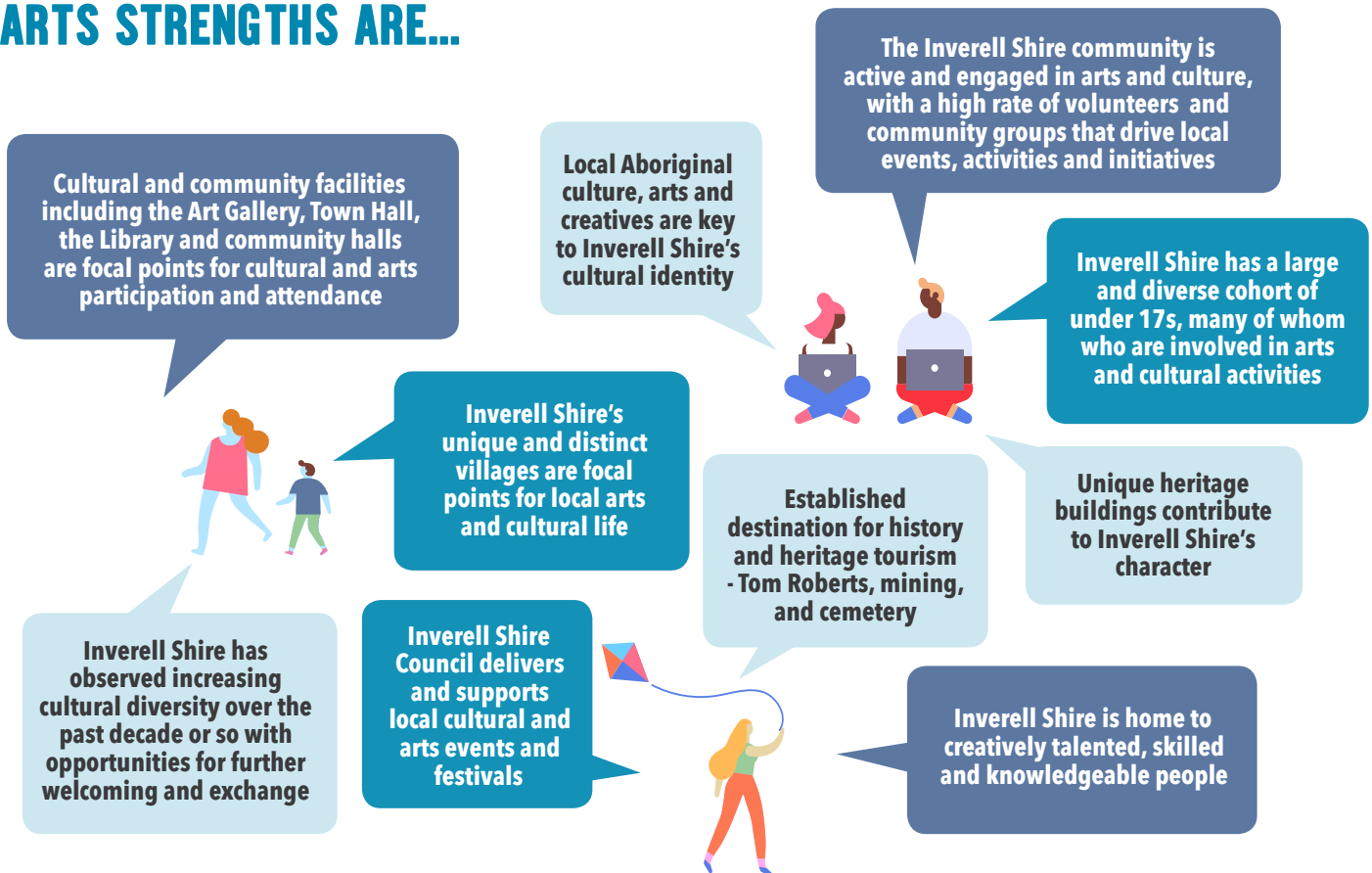


Community BBQ and drop in session with Linking Together Centre

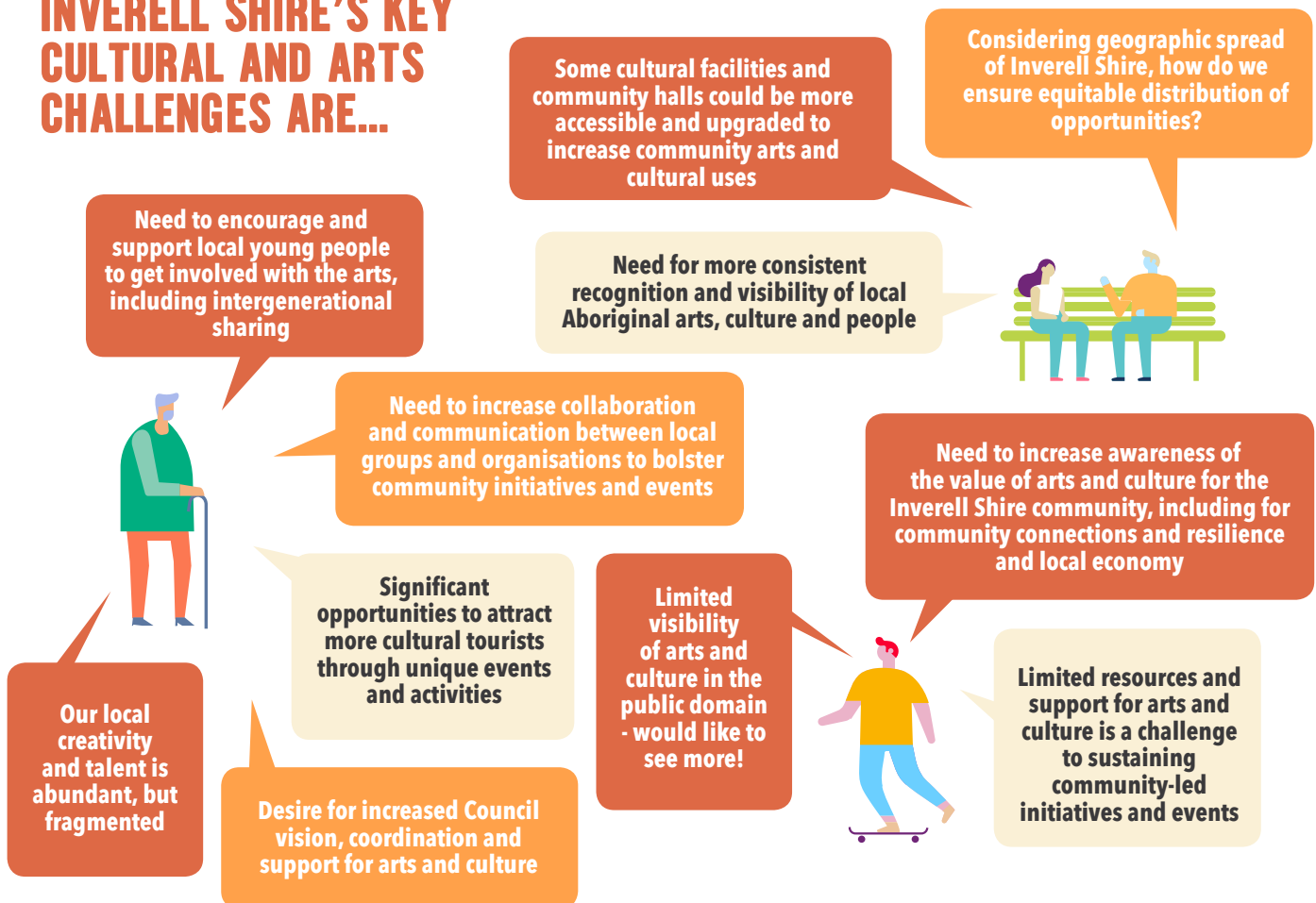


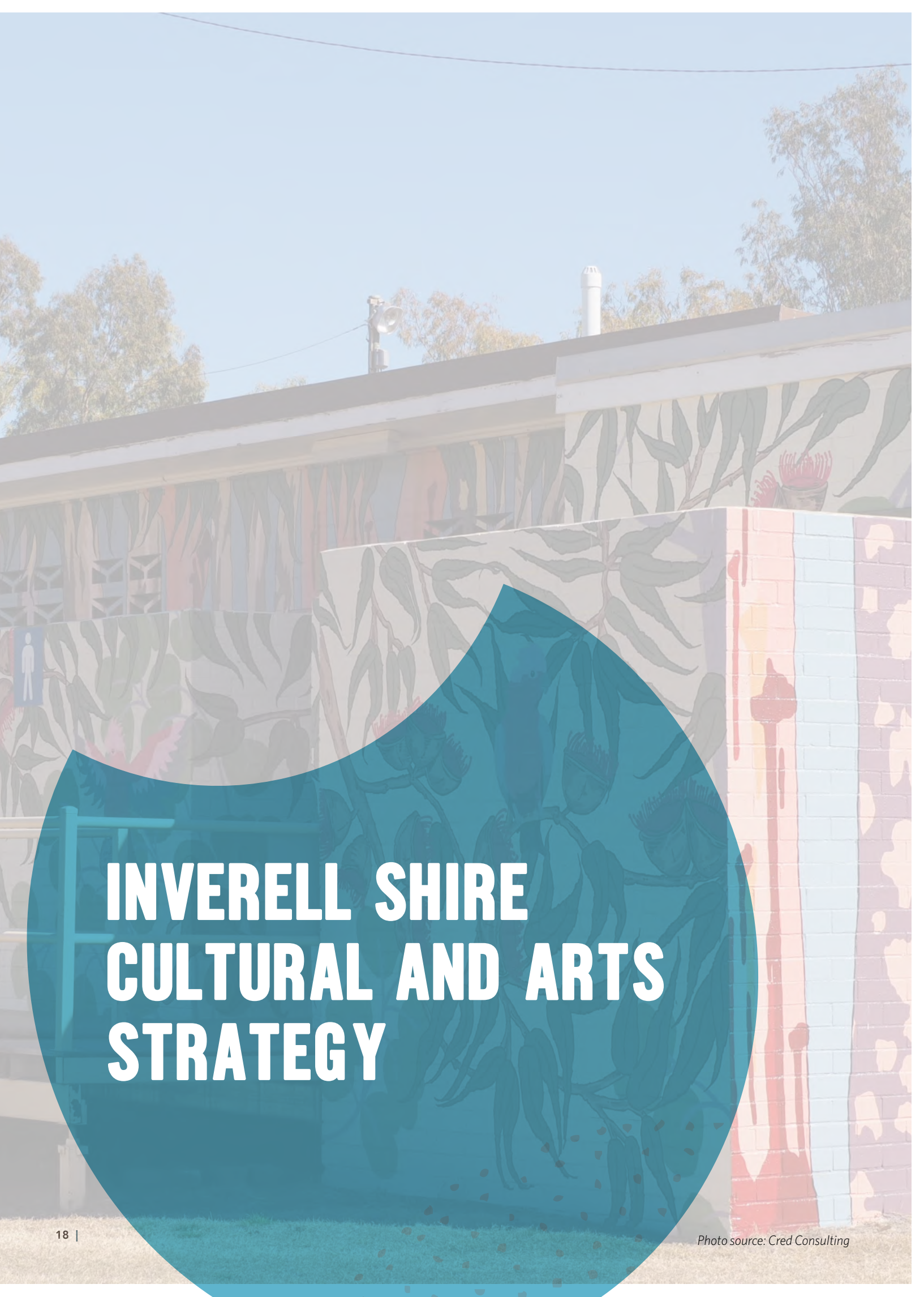
Northern villages discussion at Yetman Store

INVERELL SHIRE'S KEY CULTURAL AND ARTS STRENGTHS ARE...



INVERELL SHIRE'S KEY CULTURAL AND ARTS CHALLENGES ARE...





INVERELL SHIRE CULTURAL AND ARTS STRATEGY

OUR GUIDING VALUES

The following values were identified through engagement and reflect the aspiration of our community for the future cultural life of Inverell Shire. They also guide decision making about how to deliver on the priorities and objectives outlined in this Strategy.

INCLUSIVE

is about respect and inviting everyone to participate in a rich arts and cultural life - no matter who you are, where you're from, how old you are or where you live.

Creating opportunities for our community to feel they belong, that their voice is part of the conversation, and that Inverell Shire is strengthened by its diversity and is inclusive of all people and ideas.

INSPIRING

is about sparking curiosity, innovation, creativity and encouraging us to be bold. We are all creative and have a story to tell.

Being open to sharing these ideas, abilities and passion can inspire others to try something new, expand their interests and potentially discover skills and talents they never knew they had.

COLLABORATION

is about listening, sharing, understanding and being interested in participating, learning, experiencing and growing. It's about feeling invited and welcome to participate.

Celebrating what we have, our collective resilience and enthusiasm for arts and culture.

When we all work together - individuals, practitioners, groups and Council - towards a shared goal we can make things happen.

CONNECTION

is about our Aboriginal people's deep connection to country and the links to our past, present and future. It's about strengthening the connection between our villages and places, our relationship to each other and connecting through stories.

It is utilising the resources we already have - facilities, spaces, programs, partnerships, creative practitioners, and community groups - to build a flourishing arts and cultural environment.

COURAGE

is about being bold and thinking outside the box. It's being ambitious, to break from the status quo and try something new.

It's being a place that welcomes creative expression, cultural difference and opportunities to try something without the guarantee of success. Courage is at the heart of decision making, it's having confidence in what we offer and leading by example.

SUSTAINABLE

is about thinking long term, strategic decision making, financial responsibility, being accountable and having a strong custodianship.

By planning ahead, asking 'what is the impact,' maintaining relationships, resources, finances, infrastructure and the environment, together we create a thriving arts and cultural economy and ecosystem that continues to grow and remain viable for future generations in Inverell Shire.



PEOPLE

FOCUS
AREA

1 CREATING A SHARED IDENTITY AND STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING

Increase the acknowledgment, recognition, visibility and celebration of local Aboriginal, culture, arts and people

Share our diverse cultural heritage and together create new stories and histories

Create Inverell Shire as a place for cultural and creative expression and opportunities

Increase collaboration, coordination and sharing within our local creative community

**OUR PEOPLE, CULTURES,
DIVERSITY AND STORIES
ARE WHAT MAKES US
SPECIAL.**



**THROUGH COLLABORATION,
WE WILL CONTINUE TO
CREATE A COMMUNITY
THAT IS WELCOMING AND
SHARES A LONG LASTING
SENSE OF BELONGING AND
CONNECTION TO EACH
OTHER AND OUR PLACES.**

WHERE WE ARE NOW...

- Our community is highly engaged, with a wide range of volunteers and community groups.
- Our Shire's identity is shaped by a diverse cultural heritage story, including our Aboriginal peoples, subsequent European and Chinese immigration and the changing diversity of our community.
- Our Shire has a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples compared to Regional NSW.
- Events and programs bring our community together, including NAIDOC week, Multicultural Day and the Sapphire Festival.
- While Inverell Shire is not always seen to be a creative place, there is a wealth of creative talent and cultural knowledge that is waiting to be tapped into and elevated.

WHAT WE WANT IS...

- Our local Aboriginal culture and stories "to be part of everyday life" in Inverell Shire with increased recognition and visibility in our town centre, villages and places.
- New and existing community groups to be connected and coordinated to enable a sharing of ideas and creative opportunities.
- Arts and culture to play a more prominent role in Inverell Shire's identity and be a place that everyone can express themselves creatively
- Build knowledge and pride about our diverse and complex history, stories and cultural backgrounds and traditions within the community to increase a sense of belonging and shared identity.
- Further support for artists by offering paid showcases to locals before and after performances by high profile talent.

1.1 Increase the acknowledgment, recognition, visibility and celebration of local Aboriginal culture, arts and people.

Arts and culture are intrinsic to the way Aboriginal people live, connect, grow and thrive. Recognising and supporting the rich cultural and arts traditions and practices of our local Aboriginal people is a priority in Inverell Shire.

There are opportunities to increase visibility of Aboriginal culture within Inverell Town Centre and surrounding village centres and develop new and build on existing Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences to attract visitors and support local employment opportunities.

We know that there are many young Aboriginal people living in Inverell Shire with opportunities to support arts and cultural participation, including intergenerational (skill)-sharing.

1.2 Share our cultural heritage, stories and traditions to create a vibrant living culture in Inverell Shire

Inverell Shire has a diversity of cultural heritage stories, including our Aboriginal peoples, the subsequent, European and Chinese immigration and the new residents and diversity that continues to shape our community today. Our stories, new and old and heritage is visible in the built environment of our town centres and villages and celebrated throughout the year.

The fusion of practices, traditions, storytelling, and language can be expressed via technology and digital means (ie. Goonoowigall Soundtrail) through to classic mediums such as visual arts, music, theatre or literature.

All forms contribute to creating a vibrant 'living culture' building greater viability and awareness of all elements of our complex history to increase a sense of belonging and shared identity and is a foundation also helps to inspire change and redefining our collective stories and histories. Leveraging and promoting Inverell Shire's existing cultural heritage stories, resources, events and buildings can also help attract visitors to the region.

1.3 Create Inverell Shire as a place for cultural and creative expression and opportunities.

Inverell Shire's arts and cultural landscape is multifaceted and a source of strength for our community. It encompasses a broad range of cultural and arts activities, events and places and facilities that enrich our individual and collective lives and bring people together in our township and across our villages and in our rural areas.

Our community told us they want arts and culture to play a more prominent role in the Shire's identity and activities. Whilst Inverell Shire is not always seen to be a place of arts and culture, it has a growing creative profile with significant opportunities to provide support to arts and cultural ideas and initiatives.

1.4 Increase collaboration, coordination and sharing within our local creative community.

Inverell Shire is home to a large number of active and enthusiastic creative practitioners, community groups and businesses that play an important role in sharing skills and knowledge and organising local arts and cultural projects and events that aim to be accessible for everyone in the community to enjoy.

While the majority of groups are based in the Inverell township, there are also a number of local groups in surrounding villages most of which receive no or limited funding and rely on volunteers to run.

Fostering collaboration and communication within our local creative community and providing resourcing and promotion support will bolster their initiatives and our local cultural ecosystem.

“THERE IS A DEFINITE ARTS PRESENCE IN INVERELL WITH THE ART GALLERY AND PRIVATE ART STUDIO BUSINESSES. I THINK A STRENGTH WE HAVE IS THE KNOWLEDGE AND CREATIVITY WITHIN THE LOCAL INDIGENOUS CULTURE”.

- Survey participant



IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES



The following 'quick win' opportunities and future ideas to **create a shared identity and strong sense of belonging** in Inverell Shire were identified by our community and through research.

QUICK WIN OPPORTUNITIES:

- Create and install signage acknowledging our local Aboriginal people.
- Include a specific local Aboriginal history section on the "Inverell's history" page on Council's website.
- Actively support NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week activities and celebrations to grow the events and increase inclusion and awareness of the whole of the community.
- Work with Inverell Art Gallery to increase representation and visibility of local aboriginal artists in public and private galleries and buildings.
- Work with Inverell Art Gallery to investigate opportunities for an annual exhibition showcasing established and emerging local Aboriginal artists.
- Work with Pioneer museum and local Aboriginal Elders and communities to increase the representation of Aboriginal history within the museum.
- Prioritise using local artists before artists from outside the area, and/or use the draw card of external talent to create more exposure for locals (i.e. support acts).
- Create a publicly accessible local creatives and skills register through a cultural census.
- Collaborate with local schools and communities to capture local stories and oral histories through audio and video that can be accessed through local libraries.

FUTURE IDEAS:

- Improve cultural signage including the addition of traditional Aboriginal language translations, where applicable, for new street names and facilities, particularly those in high profile locations.
- With local Aboriginal Elders, groups and community, investigate opportunity to expand local Aboriginal history and culture showcased at the visitor information centre.
- Commission a minimum of 1 artwork per year that is done in collaboration with the community, schools, and businesses, that tells stories and histories that connect people to place.
- Develop an local Aboriginal Culture Educational Resource Kit in partnership with local schools and Aboriginal Groups.
- Provide more pathways for Aboriginal artists to exhibit / perform works in main centres and neighbouring Councils.
- Support organisations and groups in their efforts to create an Aboriginal cultural centre / Keeping Place within the Inverell Shire.
- Create a historical walking and tour using GPS and/or app technology
- Organise a storytelling festival focussed on local cultural heritage, traditions and stories.



STUDENT IDEAS:

TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE WORKSHOPS

Workshops for young Aboriginal people to learn traditional culture and language from Elders, and strengthen sense of identity and belonging.



CASE STUDY: ARMIDALE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL CENTRE KEEPING PLACE

The Armidale Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place Inc. (ACCKP) is both a registered organisation and community-based centre dedicated to preserving and educating people on Aboriginal culture.

The centre contains a gallery, historical room, musical section, research room, interactive corner for children, local heroes display, bush tucker walk, lifestyles hallway, movie area and archaeological section. Visitors, including local schools and organisations in partnership with ACCKP, can engage with each section informally, or through cultural tours and activities the centre runs in their workshops. Tokens of the experience can also be taken home through gifts provided in their well-stocked gift-shop.

Not only does the centre engage its local community and target young people, it also facilitates career development opportunities for local artists by exhibiting their work, hosting conferences, partnering with other galleries and improving professional art practice.



CASE STUDY: INTERACTIVE DUAL NAME PLACE SIGNS, CITY OF NEWCASTLE

The City of Newcastle trialled new interactive signage for the names of eight landforms, including the Harbour, Nobbys Headland and Shepherds Hill to bring the language and heritage of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples to a broader audience and to increase visibility at high profile local sites. The dual naming project was an initiative of Council's Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

The signs utilise smart technology to feature the traditional stories of each place. When people walk past, a sensor triggers the sign to play a recording pronouncing the traditional name. Names on the signs include Whibayganba (Nobbys head), Tahibihn (Flagstaff Hill), Khanterin (Shepherds Hill), Yohaaba (Port Hunter), Burrabihngarn (Pirate Point), Coquun (Hunter River south channel), Toohrnbing (Ironbark Creek), and Burraghihnbihng (Hexham swamp).

Contributors and partners in the project include the University of Newcastle, Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, and local company Virtual Perspective.

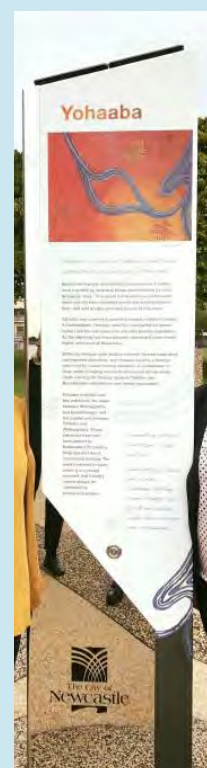
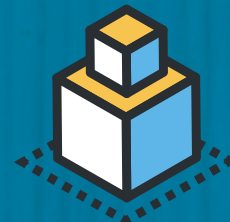


Photo source:
Newcastle Morning Herald

**FOCUS
AREA**

2



PLACES

PROVIDING PLACES TO PARTICIPATE, EXPERIENCE AND SHARE CULTURE AND ART

Unlock the potential of places and spaces across Inverell Shire to support arts and cultural uses and activities

Seek opportunities for arts and cultural expression and participation in public spaces

Build the capacity of all our villages as focal points for local community, arts and cultural life

Preserving our cultural sites and natural areas to ensure their value and stories can be shared and experienced for generations to come.

Photo source: Inverell Shire Council

FACILITIES & PUBLIC SPACES PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY TO COME TOGETHER TO CREATE, SHARE, LEARN, EXPERIMENT AND EXPERIENCE ARTS AND CULTURE.

BY PRESERVING AND UNLOCKING EXISTING SPACES AND 'THINKING OUTSIDE THE BUILDING', WE WILL PROVIDE A SUSTAINABLE FOUNDATION FOR A FLOURISHING ARTS AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.



WHERE WE ARE NOW...

- Our Shire currently has a range of spaces that support arts and cultural uses, with facilities including the Town Hall, the Art Gallery, the Library, at least 12 community halls and 5 museums.
- There are at least 10 public artworks across our Shire.
- The Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial site is a National Heritage listed significant place located just over the Gwydir Shire border.
- Our Shire has stunning natural environment attractions including national and local parks, recreation areas, Lake Inverell and fossicking areas.

WHAT WE WANT IS...

- Existing spaces upgraded to improve opportunities for increased utilisation for arts and cultural activities.
- Arts and culture, our stories and artistic talents reflected in the public domain, including through public art and interpretative signs and wayfinding.
- More outdoor venues for arts and cultural events and activities, including a Botanical garden, upgrade to the McIntyre Creek ecosystem and walking trail and use of less traditional venues such as the Showground, Pioneer Village and heritage properties.
- Aboriginal significant sites to be recognised and supported and appropriately protected.
- Cultural facilities and spaces to be welcoming and inclusive of everyone in the community.
- Cultural facilities to be affordable and accessible.
- More opportunities for arts and cultural expression in parks, streets and laneways.
- To leverage Inverell Shire's heritage sites that attract tourism such as the Newstead shearing shed & homestead, our cemeteries, memorials, Pioneer Village, and historic buildings.



2.1 Unlock the potential of places and spaces across Inverell Shire to support arts and cultural uses and activities.

There is an increased focus on the role of cultural infrastructure in supporting strong regional communities and economies. The Art Gallery and the Town Hall, library and community halls across the area are some main strengths for arts and culture in our Shire, facilitating a broad range of community activities, programs and events.

There are opportunities to increase utilisation of existing spaces for arts and cultural uses, adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and outdoor event infrastructure to support family and youth events. Non traditional spaces, such as shopfronts, parks, streets, the riverfront and rural infrastructure can also support arts and culture.

Providing digital infrastructure also helps to reduce the isolation of regional artists, increasing access to networks, ideas and markets.

2.3 Build the capacity of all our villages as focal points for local arts and cultural life.

Inverell Shire's villages are focal points for local community and cultural life, with the majority hosting community celebrations and events that draw visitors from across the Shire and beyond.

Our residents, their creative skills and energy are our greatest asset. Ensuring the equitable distribution of resources and support across our villages will help grow the local arts and cultural offering and foster grass-roots initiatives.

Understanding the characteristics of our villages and their local communities will help us plan for the type and distribution of cultural services, events and facilities.

2.2 Seek opportunities for arts & cultural expression and participation in public spaces.

Place spaces, such as plazas, parks, the river front and streets; walls, public art, street furniture, signage and lighting all offer a platform and canvas for the expression of culture and creativity.

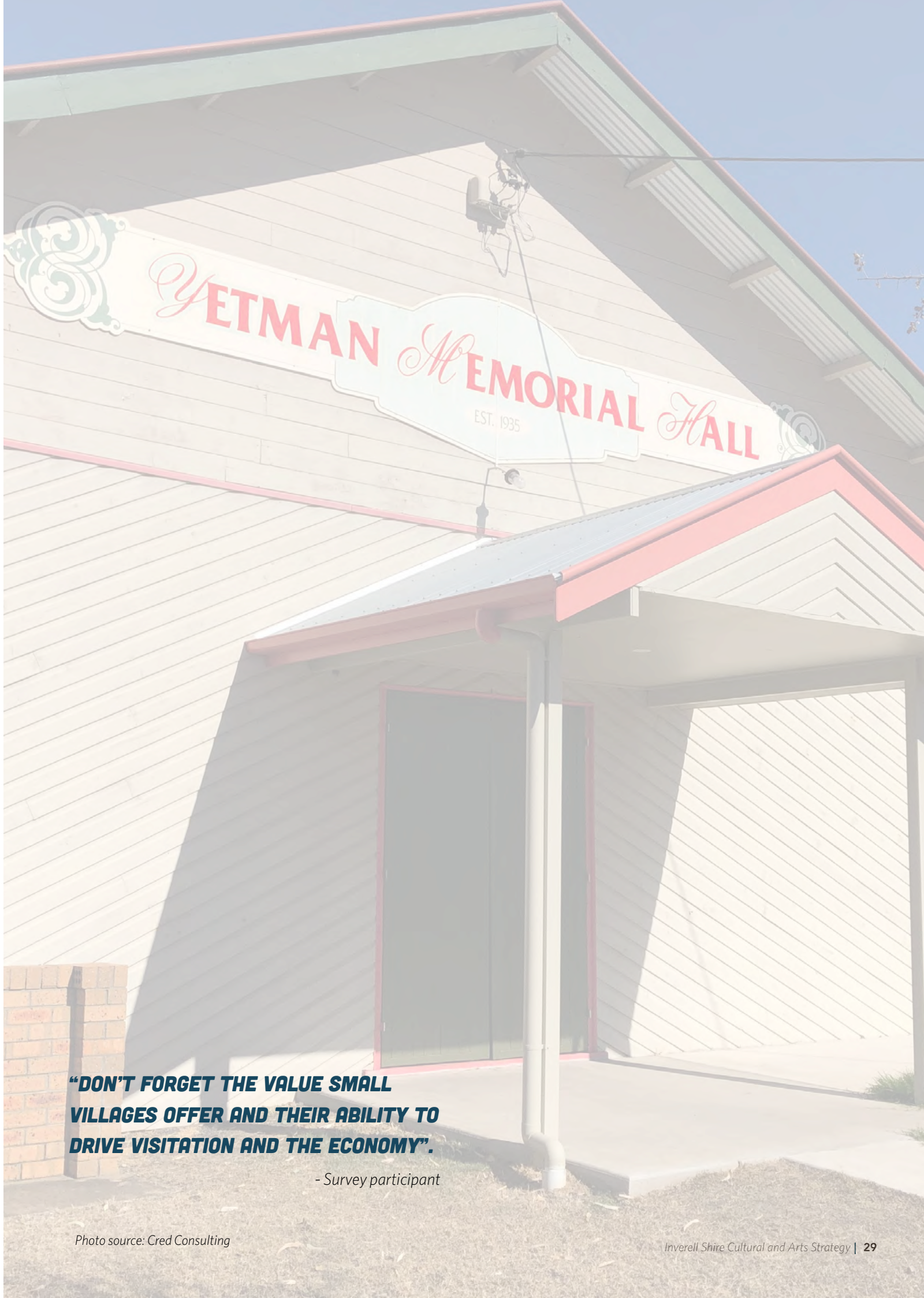
Opportunities to make Inverell Shire's public domain more vibrant and welcoming through arts and cultural initiatives, including opportunities for more public art and murals interpretive signage, in laneways, through creative wayfinding, lighting up buildings, outdoor performance, events and markets in streets and local parks was a priority for the community.

Young people also identified the opportunity to create more 'event ready' spaces like Campbell Park - a recreation space that can also function as an outdoor cultural venue.

2.4 Preserving our cultural sites and natural areas to ensure their value and stories can be shared and experienced for generations to come.

Inverell Shire is home to many stunning natural environment features, including rural landscapes, geological wonders, national parks, waterways, dams and lakes, that contribute to our local cultural identity. Our epithet "the Sapphire City" is in itself evocative of the intersection between nature, art and culture.

Inverell Shire has a number of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage, sacred and nationally important sites. There is opportunity to support local Aboriginal communities and work with them to respectfully identify and protect important sites.



***“DON’T FORGET THE VALUE SMALL
VILLAGES OFFER AND THEIR ABILITY TO
DRIVE VISITATION AND THE ECONOMY”.***

- Survey participant

IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES



The following 'quick win' opportunities and future ideas to **provide places to participate, experience and share culture and art** in Inverell Shire were identified by our community and through research.

QUICK WIN OPPORTUNITIES:

- Support street performance and music culture by creating, signposting and promoting 'Buskers Welcome spaces' (and policy) within the Inverell Town Centre.
- Investigate opportunities to deliver more creative and cultural programs through local libraries and community halls.
- Identify and facilitate temporary or semi-permanent public art and creative projects that are attractive to young people, for example legal graffiti walls and mural painting of skateparks and basketball court.
- Investigate ways to temporarily activate vacant buildings with arts and cultural activities, particularly for young emerging artists to showcase their work (static, digital or performance).



STUDENT IDEAS:

EXHIBITION AND PERFORMANCE SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people said they want a space to practice performing. At the moment, there is no middle ground between school performances or exhibitions, and professional performances in front of hundreds of people.

OPEN STREETS

Open local streets to people and host food stalls, music, pop up shops for local businesses. Held once a month, quarterly or align with existing events.

FUTURE IDEAS:

- Roll out the 'Art-menities' program across villages, with additional engagement with local communities.
- Develop a creative activation strategy for Tingha's main street in partnership with the local community.
- Partner with the Inverell Youth Centre to incorporate arts and culture production and exhibition in programming and design.
- Identify creative partners and investigate opportunities to develop community skills in digital exhibition, presentation and programming (creative lighting, projection).
- Conduct an audit and condition assessment of all Council-owned facilities to understand the capacity and adequacy of buildings to meet the community's creative and cultural needs, and to identify opportunities to increase utilisation.
- Work with building owners to understand how their buildings may be used for arts and culture, and identify any gaps or opportunities in the way the building is used.
- Investigate more ways to share our natural environment and cultural landscape (for example, the Goonoowigall Soundtrail).
- Work with all levels of government, including NSW National Parks to appropriately identify/unidentify Aboriginal sacred sites.
- Review venue hire policy to ensure that venues support arts and cultural activities and increase what is on offer.



CASE STUDY: BUSKERS WELCOME SPACES

A Buskers Welcome Space in the context of Inverell Shire, could be places within the town centre or villages that are pre-approved by Council as appropriate locations for busking. Accompanying these spaces would need to be busking policy which outlines what types of performance is acceptable and permit exempt in these zones.



CASE STUDY: ART-MENITIES, YETMAN

Inverell Shire Council dedicated part of their Youth Opportunities Grant from the NSW Government, to Coolatai artist Kelly Jones to create some vibrant public murals in collaboration with Yetman School Students and councillor Kate Dight. In four weeks, the team painted the Terry Barnes Oval bathrooms with a red gum-themed mural, and the Ashford Post Office front fence with a mural celebrating the town's love of cod fishing.

The project has now affectionately been named ARTMenities. ARTMenities aimed to engage the community (specifically youth), attract tourism to the rural village, and create artwork that depicted the unique biodiversity of the Border Rivers.

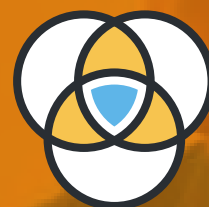


CASE STUDY: PUBLIC SILO ART TRAILS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Public Art Silos in Western Australia were introduced in regional communities to inspire people to drive along the trail, see the artworks, and get to know and understand the different communities. It was a collaborative partnership between an independent cultural organisation FORM and grain grower cooperative CBH group. Six country towns made up of populations less than 300 people were chosen to feature silo arts, with eight artists selected to create artworks that reflect the local communities. The silos have also encouraged economic ventures such as cafes, to thrive off of the cultural tourism along the trail. Within three and a half years, the six silo locations across Western Australia have formed to create a silo mural, and have also been spotted in other Australian states.



Silo Art in Northam by Hense.



PROGRAMS

FOCUS AREA

3

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, RICH CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LIFE

Encourage and provide opportunities for young people to try out and participate in arts and cultural activities

Provide a diverse offering of experiences, events and programs to increase local creative participation

Enable everyone to participate in the arts and cultural life of Inverell Shire

Support local artists and creative to develop and sustain their practise, product and skills

**EVERYONE IS CREATIVE
AND HAS A STORY TO
SHARE.**

**UNLOCKING THIS
REQUIRES INSPIRATION,
OPPORTUNITY AND
THE COURAGE TO TRY
SOMETHING NEW.**

**BY TAPPING INTO
THE TALENTS OF
OUR COMMUNITY AND
OFFERING A RANGE OF
ACTIVITIES, WE WILL
ENABLE EVERYONE -
NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE
OR WHERE YOU'RE FROM
- TO EXPERIENCE A RICH
CULTURAL AND CREATIVE
LIFE.**



WHERE WE ARE NOW...

- Council, in collaboration with the community and local partners, delivers and facilitates a number of programs and events that support culture, arts and creativity.
- Arts and cultural programs mostly take place in Inverell, but villages also host a range of local celebrations and activities.
- Our community is ageing, with 21% aged 65+ years.
- One-quarter of our community are children and young people (aged 19 years or younger).
- Inverell Shire is home to a wide range of community groups and organisations that play a vital role in the local arts and cultural landscape, particularly bands and choirs.
- Our local creativity and talent is abundant, however, it's fragmented.

WHAT WE WANT IS...

- Arts and cultural events and activities that provide opportunities for our community to come together to learn and listen to each others beliefs and knowledge.
- More arts and cultural activities for young people, families and older people, including intergenerational activities.
- Support for community-led events and programs that inspire new ideas.
- More programs, activities and events that celebrate local Aboriginal knowledge, traditions and culture, led by the local community.
- Equitable opportunities for everyone in the community to get involved in arts and culture, including for all ages, backgrounds, abilities, regardless of where they live or what they earn.
- Recognition that arts and culture can help improve our individual and collective health and wellbeing, particularly for our vulnerable communities.
- More music, arts and culture across all of the villages.

3.1 Encourage and provide opportunities for young people to try out and participate in arts and cultural activities.

With over a quarter of the population aged under 20 years, providing affordable access and consistent opportunities for children and young people to participate is a priority. Local schools play a critical role and are already providing a variety of programs and projects to encourage the participation of young people in arts and culture.

Inclusion, diversity and feeling welcome were common values for young people. They told us there is a lack of spaces and activities outside of school, and that they sometimes feel unwelcome when wanting to participate in activities or try new things or their ideas not heard.

There is a strong desire for peer to peer learning amongst young people, activities and events that and having specific spaces that they can participate, create and experience a range of creative and cultural activities.

3.2 Provide a diverse offering of experiences, events and programs to increase local creative participation.

Culture and creativity is part of our everyday life. It encompasses diverse avenues of expression across the arts, music, craft, architecture and design, technology and innovation, history, language, food and education.

Culture is central to how we share our stories. It is an essential and defining human characteristic, it helps to express who we are as an individual and community and how we make and experience the places we live, work, learn and play.

Providing opportunities for a range of activities, events, experiences and programs opens participation to everyone and caters to different interests. There is a strong desire from the community to increase access with a particular focus on young people, people with disability, local Aboriginal people and our culturally diverse communities.

3.3 Enable everyone to participate in the arts and cultural life of the Inverell Shire.

Affordability, transport and the distance between villages and places are significant barriers to participation in culture and creative activities.

While digital outreach opportunities are a great way to reach out to community members and creatives living in rural and remote areas within Inverell Shire, nearly 30% of residents don't have internet access at home.

Inverell Shire's population is also aging and there are opportunities to learn from the creative skills, stories and knowledge of older residents. With many residents living in rural communities and an aging population, supporting creative opportunities and the distribution of arts and cultural activities across the region will improve access, social connection, and benefit community health and wellbeing.

3.4 Support local artists, creatives, makers and cultural practitioners to develop and sustain their practice, product and skills.

Inverell Shire has an abundance of creative talent and is home to creative people, arts and cultural groups, organisations and businesses that are passionate about fostering local creative and cultural opportunities.

These people are at the heart of our local culture and the resources and time they contribute are invaluable, including the local artists, musicians, chutney and jam makers, poets, curators and elders that pass down stories, traditions and skills to younger generations.

Creatives living regionally face additional challenges including distance, lack of support network and limited audience reach. Therefore, supporting training, professional pathways and networks, is critical. Increased engagement with local Aboriginal creatives also provides opportunities for economic self-determination through arts, culture and tourism and supports young people to engage with their culture.

**“WE NEED MORE PROMOTION OF GALLERY
EVENTS, PROVIDING TEEN ART EXPERIENCES
(LIKE PREVIOUS HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS),
ENCOURAGING PERFORMERS TO OUR TOWN,
ADDING COLOUR AND CREATIVE VISUALS IN OUR
TOWN AND PARKS”**

- Survey participant



IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES



The following 'quick win' opportunities and future ideas to **build an inclusive, rich cultural and creative life** in Inverell Shire were identified by our community and through research.

QUICK WIN OPPORTUNITIES:

- Deliver grant writing and creative business skills workshops in partnership with Inverell Business Chamber, Create NSW and ArtsNorthWest.
- Coordinate an annual calendar of events with small northern villages including for example: 1 big event for each hall, travelling workshops, travelling sports matches, travelling school shows.
- Establish an artist in (village) residence program that for 8-weeks artists set up in a village to work and work with the community.
- Investigate more pathways for Aboriginal Artists to exhibit / perform works in main centres and neighbouring Councils.
- Identify opportunities to increase access to and engagement with Creative Kids voucher program.



STUDENT IDEAS:

ASPIRING DESIGNERS SKILLS & SHOWCASE

Students are mentored and engaged in a variety of art, design and making workshops, including mixed and digital media, culminating in an exhibition and shop where young aspiring designers can showcase and sell their ideas/products.

NIGHT MARKET

Hold a night market near the art gallery with food, entertainment and art. Hosted once a month during summer, it would focus on different cultures each time to celebrate our diversity.

INVERELL DRIVE-IN & FOOD FESTIVAL

Drive-in movies and food festival at Campbell Park. Monthly during summer with a focus on a different food culture each time and the movie to match.

FUTURE IDEAS:

- Establish a young curators' program – partnering with the art gallery and local schools to provide pathways for students to learn about art curating, event organising and promotion skills.
- Partner with the Inverell Youth Centre to incorporate arts and culture production and exhibition into their programs and space design.
- Through various mechanisms and partnerships, support more events in the villages, including travelling performances.
- Investigate the provision of transport options for communities who want to participate in events and activities, but do not have access to public transport.
- Grow and reinstate events and activities that celebrate the past and present diversity of Inverell's people, such as the Inverell multi-cultural festival, Tingha lantern festival, Ashford Salami Festival, and village music and family fun day events.
- Establish a living network/database of local Indigenous knowledge - people willing and available to share, speak and teach language and culture to younger generations.
- Review program and venue costs to ensure that art, cultural and creative programs are affordable and accessible to all in the community.
- Review the arts and cultural venues and activities within Inverell Shire to ensure that they are accessible to all.
- Review existing and develop new programs or activities that share Inverell's diversity of cultural identities, histories and stories.



CASE STUDY: YOUNG CURATORS PROGRAM, WATCH THIS SPACE INC, ALICE SPRINGS

With one of the highest rates of arts related jobs in Australia, there is a real need to grow the next generation of arts workers in Alice Springs. Watch This Space is the only contemporary experimental art space in Central Australia.

The Young Curators program brings together students from across Alice Springs to learn about exhibition design, development and display. Supported by teachers, participating students develop the group exhibition, select works from their schools, install and coordinate the exhibition.



Photo source: Watch This Space inc, Alice Springs



CASE STUDY: PERFORMING ARTS PROJECT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY - 'UNSTOP-ABILITY'.

Unstop-Ability grew from several years of performing arts projects for people with disability in Inverell. This non-profit project was designed to promote inclusion and free access to creativity and performance for people of all ability and culture. It is a unique program, because it asks people to look beyond the definition of ability and work together in the creative process. In the process, it builds understanding and empathy.

The program is about movement, dance, light, sound and music, developed by staff and participants to provide opportunities for all people to participate. Unstop-Ability featured the performances of over 100 youth and adults of all abilities. Gamilaroi mentors also supported and performed beside artists in 2019, building on the project's foundation of inclusion, and providing visibility for the rich value within the community.



Image source: Michele Jedlicka, Unstop-Ability



CASE STUDY: HOME IS WHERE THE HALL IS. REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

Between 2011-2019, *Home Is Where The Hall Is* has seen hundreds of community led projects occur in the stunning community halls of regional Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. Early years of the program saw all sorts of activity including bake offs, dance competitions, photography exhibitions and film nights, and the most recent year of the program saw Bollywood dancing, a mad hatters tea party, house concerts and kinder ballet.

Halls are special places, and the past eight years have demonstrated just how much these spaces mean to the diverse communities of Regional Australia. Halls hold memories. They build partnerships. They are the places we gather, mourn, celebrate, share and connect. This project reflected in a very public way the ability for physical places to positively impact our sense of community and communality.



Photo source: homeiswherethehallis.com

4

**FOCUS
AREA**

GROWING OUR CREATIVE AND CULTURAL ECONOMY



ECONOMY

Support the growth of creative industries in Inverell Shire

Build and develop Inverell Shire as a local and regional cultural tourism destination

Encourage locals and visitors to choose local arts and cultural products, experiences and activities

Promote and showcase our local artists, makers and creators within the local area, across the region, state and nation.

Photo source: Drink Live Eat 2015

DEVELOPING LOCAL CULTURAL IDEAS AND CREATIVE ENDEAVORS ARE IMPORTANT TO STRENGTHENING AND DIVERSIFYING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY.

SUPPORTING CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES TO FIND A HOME IN INVERELL SHIRE, IS ALSO AN INVESTMENT IN OUR LOCAL ARTISTS, CREATORS AND MAKERS, BUILDS OUR REPUTATION AS AN ARTS AND CULTURAL DESTINATION AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR SHIRE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES.



WHERE WE ARE NOW...

- Creative industries is one of the fastest growing industries in Regional NSW (up 21% between 2011-2016).
- 40% of cultural tourists in Regional NSW come from within NSW. Cultural tourists in Regional Australia stay longer and spend more money.
- According to 2016 ABS Census data, Inverell Shire contains around 250 tourism-related jobs and 40 full-time creative industries jobs, however it is likely that arts and craft production is underreported.
- Compared to neighbouring council areas, we have slightly lower than average employment in the creative industries - indicating opportunity for growth.
- Challenging to attract and retain creative talent to Inverell, such as music teachers, and emerging and emerging artists.

WHAT WE WANT IS...

- Recognition of the local skills, enterprise and creative/ cultural economy that already exists across the villages of Inverell Shire.
- Opportunities to attract more cultural tourists to Inverell Shire by expanding and promoting our arts and cultural offering.
- To sell more local arts, craft and cultural products in our local shops.
- Council to support local creatives through skills-development, capacity building and networking opportunities.
- Greater promotion and growth of Inverell Shire's 'boutique' identity with a focus on arts and culture offering.
- Greater awareness of the cultural sites and natural assets within and accessible from Inverell Shire to attract tourists to the area.
- Match artists and creatives with suitable spaces across Inverell Shire to grow business and employment opportunities.

4.1 Support the growth of creative industries in Inverell Shire.

Creative industries are important for regional areas and are already thriving. We know that one in six Australian artists live in regional towns, predominately visual artists, craft practitioners, writers and musicians. This also includes local makers of food and crafts products, tour guides, historians and storytellers that are critical to a sustainable creative industries sector.

Regional employment in creative industries has seen a large increase in the last ten years, however employment in creative industries in the Inverell Shire is quite low, and lower than neighbouring council areas.

There is a strong opportunity to grow the creative industries sector in Inverell Shire and attract new cultural and arts practitioners to call our Shire home. This in turn will help to diversify the local economy and provide more genuine opportunities for young people to stay.

4.3 Encourage locals and visitors to choose local arts and cultural products, experiences and activities.

Arts and cultural activities can be a direct source of income for local businesses and services, as well as indirectly for industries such as hospitality, manufacturing, agriculture, and government. It is critical to the sustainability of the sector that residents and organisations "choose local" and support local artists, makers, creators and cultural producers.

Existing arts and cultural products, experiences, events and activities within Inverell Shire include the Art Gallery, museums, heritage architecture and cultural heritage, locally grown and produced food, Aboriginal culture and important sites, natural environment, art and craft products and a variety of festivals and events. There is an opportunity to extend the existing Choose Inverell campaign to include surrounding villages and be specific to supporting locally made arts, craft and cultural products.

4.2 Build and develop Inverell Shire as a local and regional cultural tourism destination.

Cultural tourism can play a big role in diversifying and boosting the local economy. We know that cultural tourists stay longer and spend more. Arts tourists who had visited regional areas are also more likely to attend art/craft workshops and studios, and Aboriginal arts than arts tourists who visited capital cities.

There is significant opportunity to expand Inverell Shire's cultural tourism visitation by building on existing strengths such as the events and festivals, the natural assets and rural environment, cultural heritage and local galleries and museums.

Our people - including local artists, makers and cultural practitioners - are our greatest asset. By developing partnerships with Council and local community groups, and using a variety of communication tools to get the word out about our local offering, we can develop our Shire as a cultural and arts destination.

4.4 Promote and showcase our local artists, makers and creators within the local area, across the region, state and nation.

Inverell Shire has an abundance of local cultural and artistic talent. From nationally known musicians and artists, arts and cultural businesses that have built strong reputations beyond the local area to the local artists, makers and creators living across the Shire that are the hidden gems of our community.

Investment in the creative talents and cultural attributes of the area provides opportunities to boost the local economy, generate arts and cultural based employment opportunities, increase visitation and revenue from cultural tourism and event-based spending.

With investment in infrastructure and people, and supporting local artists, creators and makers to develop their business skills, audiences and professional networks, including digital opportunities for those living remotely, we can attract people to come and experience the cultural and arts offering in Inverell Shire.

**“WE LOVE OUR TOWN, IT IS A BEAUTIFUL LOOKING TOWN
AND HAS GREAT COMMUNITY SPIRIT. I LOVE THAT WE
HAVE A STRONG BOUTIQUE RETAIL SECTOR WHICH IS A
HUGE DRAW-CARD FOR OTHER TOWNS TO VISIT. GREAT
TO SEE THE COUNCIL LOOKING INTO THE ARTS AND
CULTURE AREA AS WE DEFINITELY NEED A BOOST!”**

- Survey participant

IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES



The following 'quick win' opportunities and future ideas to **grow our creative and cultural economy** in Inverell Shire were identified by our community and through research.

QUICK WIN OPPORTUNITIES:

- Establish a relationship with TAFE NSW cultural tourism certificate III course coordinators, the tourism centre, and key service providers, to ensure the pilot course receives sustainable levels of enrollment and can be applied in the real world.
- Develop a program of professional development opportunities for local creatives and cultural practitioners to share their experience and expertise.
- Develop a program of workshops to assist creatives with the broad range of skills required to sustain and grow their practice and businesses.
- Work with the Inverell Business Chamber, local businesses and creatives to develop a creative networking talk series.

FUTURE IDEAS:

- Investigate appropriate locations for a maker spaces within Inverell and in the surrounding villages.
- Digitise the heritage walk and cemetery self guided tour and investigate opportunities for a local volunteers program to lead tours around Inverell town and villages.
- In consultation with the Aboriginal community, assess the opportunity and visibility of Council supporting the creation of an Aboriginal tourism experience as a cultural business and Aboriginal employment initiative.
- Develop a self guided public art tour with input from local artists.
- Liaise with local schools and teachers to understand the best ways to promote local arts and culture to young people and their families.
- Leverage Inverell's 'boutique' identity and existing conglomeration of creatives and makers in the area to further build momentum behind the creative industries.
- Investigate opportunities to create a local creative co-op showcasing and selling local arts and crafts.
- Trial a quarterly arts and craft market that includes demonstrations, artists talks and workshops to promote local creatives and makers.
- Seek opportunities to integrate arts and cultural activities into existing events that showcase local creatives.



CASE STUDY: MAITLAND CREATIVE STREETS

The Maitland Creative Streets program funds artists to create temporary or semi-permanent works for public spaces across the city identified as being in need of transforming and revitalising.

The program encourages works to connect with the place and enable people to engage with the places in which they are situated. The program encourages all art disciplines including, but not limited to, visual artists (including multimedia, printmaking, sculpture and textile), performers, filmmakers, storytellers and designers.



Image source: Maitland City Council



CASE STUDY: MAKE IT TENTERFIELD

Make it Tenterfield opened in June 2019. It was lead by a small organising committee and supported by local businesses and local champions (a large space above the hardware store has been provided rent-free for the first year).

Members of the small organising committee anchor the centre with spinning and knitting, waxed African fabrics, jewellery and bags; a clothing hospital (to recycle and upcycle used clothes); ceramics and leadlighting.

The aim is to seek opportunities rather than profit, which enables them to rent out the spaces to craftspeople for a nominal fee. It also helps pay its way, and support the commercial interests of its participants, by having a sales counter where visitors can purchase the artists' work.

This is a fantastic example of how local community, business and Council can work together to create new opportunities for arts and culture in regional communities.



The Make it Tenterfield sign

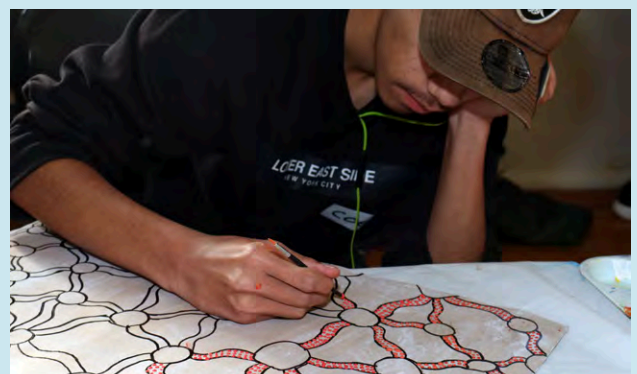


CASE STUDY: ISC YOUTH PROGRAM

In 2018, Inverell Shire Council commenced the 'It Starts With You' program – a calendar of free youth opportunities to connect young people in our Shire with visiting trainers, volunteer organisations and also nurture a sense of place.

The events have focused on inclusive and free creative opportunities for ages 5-20. Since the program commenced, it has engaged over 1,200 young people across the Shire. Activities have included mural installations in Yetman, Ashford and at Inverell Skate Park; school holiday contemporary art classes; 3D art and animation; cooking classes; circus performance; art competitions to design public art for parks and theatre combat classes.

Educators and trainers have included local creatives through to those who have worked internationally in their field. Throughout the project, Council has formed partnerships with more than 15 different stakeholder organisations. The success of the project, along with feedback from schools, participants and families has been a key driver for including the program as a priority project in Council's Delivery Plan.



**FOCUS
AREA**

5

STRENGTHENING OUR GOVERNANCE AND ADVOCACY



GOVERNANCE

Support communities and creative to kickstart their own arts and cultural ideas, projects and initiatives

Establish and maintain strong and productive arts and cultural partnerships, locally and across the region

Maintain effective governance structures that support a thriving arts and culture environment

Ensure communication and promotion of arts and cultural events, programs, groups and activities is effective and inclusive of all.

A THRIVING ARTS AND CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM AND ECONOMY RELIES ON COLLABORATIVE, INCLUSIVE AND COURAGEOUS DECISION MAKING AND ADVOCACY.

STRONG LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES, LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION ENABLES EVERYONE TO BE INCLUDED AND PLAY A ROLE IN CREATING OPENNESS TO NEW IDEAS, PROJECTS AND COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES.



WHERE WE ARE NOW...

- Inverell Shire is a member of regional arts organisation Arts North West.
- Council has received, and supported a range of community members and groups to apply for, funding for cultural and arts projects.
- Council currently delivers a wide range of cultural services, events, facilities and programs.
- Despite Council's multi-platform communication strategy for events and activities in Inverell Shire, the community still feels like they don't know what's on or how to find the information.

WHAT WE WANT IS...

- Stronger advocacy for Inverell Shire as a place of arts and culture within Council and with regional partners.
- A dedicated point of contact to work with communities and deliver arts and cultural outcomes and to strengthen relationships with potential delivery partners.
- Improved promotion and coordination of what is already happening in the area.
- Increased support - communication as well as financial - for the local community's arts and cultural ideas and initiatives.
- Create NSW told us that cultural planning in regional areas is about building on existing cultural identity and resources.
- More effective integration of arts and cultural objectives across Council's planning and activities.
- Consideration of opportunities when we deliver arts and culture via a more a regional approach and working with neighbouring Council areas to attract events and funding.
- More cohesive creative and cultural groups that align and work together.

5.1 Support communities and creative to kickstart their own arts and cultural ideas, projects and initiatives.

Initiative, experimentation and enterprise is at the heart of a thriving cultural and creative environment. We want to support our community to deliver big and small ideas, new opportunities, projects and initiatives, to try out, to discover and to connect.

Council will continue to provide support, information and advice to community groups, but also leverage our strengths, capabilities and mechanisms, including grants and sponsorships, infrastructure, advocacy, services and programs to contribute to a sustainable arts and cultural sector within Inverell Shire and build the capacity of our local community.

5.2 Establish and maintain strong and productive arts and cultural partnerships, locally and across the region.

Culture and arts is about collaboration, connection and productive partnerships. Working with regional partners, such as ArtsNorthWest, our neighbouring councils and other agencies, we strengthen our ability to effectively advocate to other levels of government and arts organisations for policy support, funding for significant projects and investment in the local and regional area.

Important partnerships are also those within our Shire. Partnerships with local businesses, landowners and organisations to provide venues and support arts and cultural activities help to activate our villages. When we all play a part in delivering on shared goals and aspirations, we enjoy a more fulfilling experience.

5.3 Maintain effective governance structures that support a thriving arts and cultural environment.

Inverell Shire Council has numerous mechanisms to support the local cultural and creative life of our community. It is also well placed to ensure that we are able to weave culture and creativity into all aspects of our daily business and in all policy areas.

Creating clear and transparent governance structures allows people to understand and take part in decision making about future arts and culture projects and ideas.

It is especially important that all voices are heard and there is equitable representation around the table, from across the arts and cultural spectrum, young people, culturally diverse and representation from our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

5.4 Ensure communication and promotion of arts and cultural events, programs, groups and activities is effective and inclusive of all.

A wide range of small and large community events and festivals shape Inverell Shire's identity, bring people together and provide opportunities to enjoy and engage with arts and culture. However, if you don't know about it, you can't participate in it.

The community told us that the communication and promotion of arts and cultural events and programs could be more effective. Support for local cultural and creative individuals and organisations to promote their own activities and attract an audience, via Council channels, including Council's website, what's on page and social media is important to gaining a broader appeal.

**AS THE NATIONAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES ACT OF 1965 STATES,
“WHILE NO GOVERNMENT CAN CALL A GREAT ARTIST OR
SCHOLAR INTO EXISTENCE, IT IS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE
FOR GOVERNMENT TO HELP CREATE AND SUSTAIN NOT ONLY A
CLIMATE ENCOURAGING FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, IMAGINATION,
AND INQUIRY BUT ALSO THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS
FACILITATING THE RELEASE OF THIS CREATIVE TALENT.”**

- National Assembly of State Arts Agencies



IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES



The following 'quick win' opportunities and future ideas to **strengthen our governance and advocacy** in Inverell Shire were identified by our community and through research..

QUICK WIN OPPORTUNITIES:

- Create a public art register for Inverell Shire.
- Review existing cultural groups and assess opportunities to assist in presenting and promoting events.
- Work with surrounding councils and Arts North West to identify opportunities for large-scale events and activities.
- Review the terms of reference for Council's cultural advisory group, ensure diversity of age, cultural background, abilities, gender, and interests are represented.
- Review and refine the current 'Whats on' page to increase readership and effectiveness to promote and communicate arts and cultural activities.
- Continue with Arts North West membership and work more closely with the organisation to maximise the value of being part of this cultural network.
- Foster partnerships with arts and cultural organisations and comparable councils to exchange knowledge, experience and ideas.



STUDENT IDEAS:

CREATIVE GRANTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Creation of a specific small grant funding program to support young people exploring different aspects of creativity and culture such as dance, arts, music, cooking and sport.

ARTS AND CULTURE YOUTH EXCHANGE

Scholarship for an Inverell young person to go on exchange to Sydney or Brisbane where there is easier access arts and culture.

FUTURE IDEAS:

- Review this Cultural and Arts Strategy in 5 years and refine actions annually based on changing community needs and aspirations, as well as with new budget information.
- Investigate the future potential for a Council cultural arts officer.
- Establish a series of new grant streams, including local Aboriginal cultural grant; Micro grants to assist with community events (up to \$500); Village grants to assist delivery of creative or cultural events and activities at the local level, or to fund 'local champions' to continue their community building work in the community
- Review alternative models and fee structures for hiring the Town Hall to encourage greater utilisation for arts and cultural activities (i.e. In-kind venue hire fee as a part of a grant)
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Strengthen and establish new partnerships with key service providers in Inverell to delivery the arts and cultural outcomes for the community (including Clontarf Academy, the Linking Together Centre, Armajun Aboriginal Health Service, youth centre coordinators, and others
- Support local community organisation to create and maintain an annual calendar of events to improve coordination and increase participation (i.e. Northern villages arts and cultural calendar).
- Consider options to improve marketing and promotion of arts and cultural events, programs and activities through social media, community notice boards, an arts newsletter and/or roadside banners.



CASE STUDY: CONNECTING PLACES, REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

Connecting Places is a touring and engagement program that works with community presenters to bring quality work to their communities, and develop sustainable presenting skills. The engagement program delivers 12 month mentorships, regional skills development workshops and targeted one on one planning sessions. The touring program consists of works that are accessible, technically appropriate and affordable for small halls and various spaces. Connecting Places recognises the important contribution made by community presenters by placing them firmly at the helm of programming for their community.



Photo source: Regional Arts Victoria



CASE STUDY: BELLINGEN COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL (BCAC)

Incorporated in 1996, the Bellingden Community Arts Council (BCAC) is a not-for-profit, entirely volunteer run community organisation.

The BCAC exists to support and enhance activities of cultural and artistic nature, such as The Bellingden Fine Music Festival; The Nexus Community Gallery; Bellingden Vintage Film Club and more.

The BCAC is financially supported through membership subscriptions and is managed by a committee that meet monthly. Members receive benefits including Member Exhibitions; Individual or Group Show; Publicity; Event Involvements; Meetups and more.



CASE STUDY: CENTRAL HIGHLANDS ARTS AND CULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHACAC was established to support and encourage participation and optimum service delivery for council communities. CHACAC focuses on the arts, cultural and heritage aspects and related community activities, events and festivals.

The CHACAC provides expert advice on issues affecting the arts, cultural and heritage sectors in the region, identifies strategic directions for the arts, cultural and heritage, provides leadership in the development and review of arts, culture and heritage policies and strategies.

It is also a conduit for broader sector and community engagement in consultation processes and to implement the Creative Cultural Futures Strategy and Heritage Action Plan in partnership with council and community.



MAKING IT HAPPEN

1.10 THE ROLE OF COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY

Local government is central to enabling people to participate in the arts, cultural and community life of their village, town and region. We all have a role to play - Council, the community (individuals and groups), local Aboriginal Elders, Land Councils, arts organisations and local practitioners, all levels of government, and in particular our regional neighbours - and must work collaboratively to ensure the successful delivery of services, programs and initiatives that enable the growth of a thriving arts and cultural life for the Inverell Shire.

Planning for arts and cultural outcomes at the local government level is about identifying and leveraging the local community skills, assets and resources, strengthening partnerships and driving the implementation of the values and objectives outlined in this strategy.

1.11 MEASURING SUCCESS

The values and objectives outlined in this strategy are also the framework for measuring success. Implementing tangible actions and initiatives is critical to achieving our community's aspiration for arts and culture in Inverell Shire. This strategy has a 10-year timeframe and should be reviewed and reported on annually. A full review, evaluation and update should occur five years into the plan and then at the completion of the ten year term.

1.12 NEXT STEPS

The values and objectives outlined in this provide the decision making framework to implement projects and ideas that will achieve the community and Council's aspiration for arts and culture in Inverell Shire.

Identified quick win opportunities are those projects that require no or little funding and infrastructure to implement. Therefore, the intention is that they are already being delivered or could be delivered in a short period of time.

Refinement and implementation of future ideas outlined in this Strategy and new ideas, will be through Council's existing mechanisms, such as the 4-year Delivery Program and Operational Plans, and embedded in existing projects, activities, programs and budgets.

One of the key challenges identified by the community was the increased participation of young people in Inverell Shire's arts and cultural activities. The project ideas discussed and developed by the students themselves have been identified separately with the intention that Council work with the schools and students directly to refine and deliver, where possible, these ideas.

Lead and advocate



Research

Developing an evidence base to better understand, plan & advocate for the community



Policy, strategy and regulation

Developing policies and plans that actively respond to arts and cultural needs of the community



Engagement

Talking to the community to understand their needs, aspirations and involving them in the development of plans, policies, programs and projects

Listen, plan and regulate



Leadership

Council's governance is aligned to the needs and aspirations of the community and decision-making is driven by the arts and cultural values



Custodian

Council is the custodian of their community's aspirations and stories



Advocacy

Speaking up for your community needs and making change happen



What is the role of Council in delivering arts and culture

Council is able to deliver on the arts and cultural outcomes from the direct delivery of physical infrastructure, services or grants, through to leading and advocating on issues that may be out of Council's delivery scope, yet still a key issue to raise with other agencies and levels of government



Connector

Council can identify and connect different actors in order to encourage innovation and maximise arts and cultural outcomes



Capacity-building

Unlocking capacity within the community by equipping people with the skills they need contribute and participate in the arts and cultural life of Inverell Shire



Partnerships

Partnering, locally and across the region with organisations and the community to achieve shared goals

Build relationships, partnerships & capacity



Service provision

Council directly supporting the community with the programs an events they need, where and when they need it



Grants & sponsorship

Supporting community groups and organisations through grants and in kind support



Infrastructure

Planning and delivering places and spaces that promote participation in arts and culture

Deliver infrastructure, services & grants



Photo source: Cred Consulting



Australian Government



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